



Office of the Director of  
**Telecommunications  
Regulation**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*  
7<sup>th</sup> October, 1999

### **REGULATOR PROPOSES FRAMEWORK FOR LICENSING DIGITAL TERRESTRIAL TELEVISION (DTT)**

The Director of Telecommunications Regulation today issued her proposals for a licensing framework for Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT).

The introduction of DTT will give the consumer a number of advantages over current analogue TV transmission. Between 24 and 30 channels will be provided, with the transmission of other information services among the consumer offerings possible. It is intended that DTT will also allow multichannel television to be brought to areas which currently do not have access to such a service. In order to access the DTT service, subscribers will need a set top box to enable the digital signal to be displayed on their current television sets, and some households may also need to have a new aerial.

Following the introduction of DTT, there will be a transitional period when analogue and digital services will be "simulcast". It is difficult to predict how long this should last for. A question is posed in the consultation on the possible duration and on the influencing factors which may need to be considered, such as digital take up in Ireland and international developments.

In the Consultation Paper, the Director has stated that she proposes to provide for two different licences. The Programme Services Multiplex Licence will allow a multiplex provider to combine broadcasters' digital signals into a Programme Service Multiplex. The Transmission Licence will allow the DTT transmission service provider to modulate the Programme Service Multiplex and transmit it in the television broadcasting bands.

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“The application of digital technology to television broadcasting has changed the broadcasting environment significantly” said the Director.” My objective in licensing DTT is for the consumer to reap the potential benefits from the full range of digital distribution media.”

The document **ODTR 99/57 “Licensing Digital Terrestrial Television – A Consultation Paper”** can be viewed on the ODTR web-site (<http://www.odtr.ie>). Responses to the Consultation Paper are requested by 5.00 p.m. on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, 1999.

**ENDS**

**Note for editors**

The Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, Ms. Síle de Valera T.D., presented the Broadcasting Bill, 1999 to Dáil Eireann on 27 May, 1999. The Bill provides additional detail in relation to the regulation of digital broadcasting on all platforms, i.e. terrestrial broadcasting, cable/MMDS and satellite. The ODTR has had contact with the Department about the Bill. Appropriate amendments to the licensing regime will be made in the light of enacted legislation.

Earlier this year, regulations for digital cable and MMDS licences were published and licences issued to four of the largest operators. This Consultation Paper outlines the issues being considered in providing for the licensing of digital terrestrial television.