



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

MEDIA RELEASE

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Thursday 13th July 2000*

Telecoms Regulator to consult on New Licences Expanding the Market for Fixed Wireless Access

Etain Doyle, Telecoms Regulator today (Thursday 13th July 2000) announced details of a consultation on additional Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) licences. The Regulator is considering offering two further FWA broadband licences, an additional narrowband licence and allocating additional spectrum for existing and new licensees. She is seeking the views of interested parties.

According to the Regulator “ the purpose of this consultation is to review the emerging demand for fixed wireless access services in Ireland, to determine the extent to which the recently licensed services will satisfy future demand, and to ensure that there is sufficient radio spectrum to meet FWA requirements for the foreseeable future.”

She continued “ the availability of “ mass market “ broadband services is an important factor in facilitating the growth of electronic commerce, information and entertainment services. I am anxious to ensure that the benefits of broadband access are available in all regions and across all sectors of society. The availability of Broadband Fixed Wireless Access licences have the potential to achieve this objective.”

Following the recent award of narrowband and broadband Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) licences in Ireland, the Regulator has decided to review the market

requirements for FWA in the light of recent developments. In the case of a fourth narrowband licence, the 'D' licence, offered in the earlier competition in 1999 there was no eligible applicant.

The Regulator is considering

- Re-advertising of the fourth narrowband 'D' licence;
- The offering of two further national broadband FWA licences;
- The allocation of reserve expansion spectrum for existing and new licensees;
- The likely future demand in Ireland for FWA access services and the form these services are likely to take.

The Regulator said, "Since the original consultation on the introduction of Fixed Wireless Access there have been further international developments in fixed wireless access technology and the nature of the services that are being proposed. In particular, there is an increasing interest in the delivery of broadband interactive services for both business and residential subscribers."

The Regulator said, "I invite the telecommunications industry to take this opportunity to influence the development of these services through your response to this consultation."

The detailed consultation document, **ODTR 00/47** "Extending Choice...Expanding the market for Fixed Wireless Access (FWA)" is available on the ODTR web-site (www.odtr.ie) and copies can also be obtained from the ODTR. The consultation period will run from 14th July 2000 to 18th August 2000.

ENDS

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Note for Editors

FWA provides a uniquely cost effective means to introduce the competitive broadband telecommunication services that users are increasingly demanding. The existing broadband licences were intended to cater for the needs of medium to large users of telecommunications services, enabling services such as PABX connection, broadband Internet access, multimedia, bandwidth-on-demand and fast file transfer.

The narrowband licences are intended as alternatives to copper in the local loop, which at present connects the majority of residential and business customers to their local exchange, offering mainly basic telephony, Internet and ISDN connections, in both urban and rural areas.

Background to existing Fixed Wireless Access Licences

In February 1999, following a public consultation, the Director launched a competition for eight new licences to provide FWA services in Ireland. Four licences were offered for Broadband services and four for narrowband services. Subsequent legal challenges led to a delay in the award of the licences. A settlement was agreed on 10th May 2000 which cleared the way for the award of the narrowband licences and three of the broadband licences. The fourth is subject to a review, the result of which should be published shortly. This review of spectrum was also outlined in the agreement.

Narrowband licences have already been issued to Eircom and Irish Multichannel and Broadband licences have issued to Formus Communications Ireland Ltd and Esat Telecom. The remaining narrowband and broadband licences are expected to be issued shortly.