



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
20th December 2000

Telecoms Regulator to review National Numbering Scheme for Telephony in Ireland

Etain Doyle, Telecoms Regulator today Wednesday (20th December 2000) announced that she is to review the National Numbering Scheme for Telephony in Ireland. This is a major review that looks at future needs for all telephony and related numbers. It forecasts trends for the period 2001-2005 and presents proposals for the future development and management of the whole numbering resource. She has issued a consultation paper on the matter and is seeking the views of interested parties.

The review includes ordinary geographic telephone numbers and STD codes, non-geographic numbering, such as freephone, premium rate and personal numbers, and special short codes of all kinds such as operator assistance. The geographic numbers being reviewed affect all areas of the country, many of which could face shortages during the 5-year period being considered. The review proposes a range of solutions to deal with this.

According to the Regulator “ Liberalisation and the introduction of new technologies and services has created an unprecedented demand for numbers and codes. It is therefore timely to once again review the scheme and to provide a clear medium to long term numbering strategy.”

In the current consultation paper the Telecoms Regulator sets out some proposals for the future development of the numbering scheme. She is conscious that the plan should be user friendly and that there is an adequate supply of numbers and codes.

However there is a need to minimise disruption to users from number changes and keep costs of number changes to an acceptable level. Proposals are also included to minimise inefficiencies introduced by the current industry-standard process of allocating numbers to operators in large blocks.

The ODTR proposes to simplify and clarify the current geographic numbering area regime. The overall approach has been to develop a forecast of demand for numbers over the planning period of 2001-2005. Number changes will be required to provide additional capacity but these changes will also provide an opportunity to simultaneously rationalise and simplify the National Numbering Scheme. The ODTR estimates that by the end of 2005 the total cumulative growth in number requirements will be 74%.

The Regulator added “While the range of services available to users is expected to significantly expand and evolve over the next few years the national numbering scheme must be able to accommodate these changes in a way that maintains an acceptable level of user friendliness. The outcome of this review will set the numbering scene for the next five years of operation. I am very anxious to hear from all interested parties particularly consumers and their representatives. ”

The consultation period will run from Wednesday 20th December 2000 up to Friday 23rd February 2001 and the ODTR welcomes views from all interested parties including consumers, their representatives and local community representatives.

The consultation paper can be viewed on the ODTR website www.odtr.ie Odtr 00/97 “ Consultation Paper on the Review of the National Numbering Scheme for Telephony in Ireland.”

ENDS

Issued by

Brigid Smyth, Public Affairs Manager, ODTR
Phone: 01 804 9639
Mobile: 086 8270905