



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# Ireland's National Roadmap on the Use of the 700MHz Frequency Band

Update to Roadmap published in  
March 2019

May 2020

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to update Ireland's National Roadmap on the use of the 700MHz Frequency band which was published in March 2019.

European Decision 2017/899<sup>1</sup> aims to ensure the mobile phone and wireless broadband operators across Europe can use spectrum in the 694-790 MegaHertz frequency band (the 700MHz band) and Article 5 of the Decision obliges each Member State to publish a roadmap detailing how they will achieve the aims of the Decision.

This document provides an update on developments since March 2019 and sets out the steps that the Irish national regulatory authority, ComReg, has and is taking to award this spectrum for mobile phone and wireless broadband services and the relevant timelines in this regard.

## 2. Existing services successfully moved out of the 700MHz Band

In order to meet the aims of Decision 2017/899, the broadcasting services that were using the 700MHz band had to be moved out to enable the new mobile and wireless broadband services be moved in. The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment entrusted RTÉ<sup>2</sup> with the task of migrating its national digital terrestrial television (DTT) services from the 700MHz band. The work to migrate DTT services was carried out by 2RN, which operates RTÉ's DTT transmission network and DTT services ceased in the 700MHz band on 4 March 2020.

Key milestones are set out below.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision (EU) 2017/899 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on the use of the 470-790 MHz frequency band in the Union.

<sup>2</sup> Raidió Teilifís Éireann, Ireland's national public broadcaster

No.	Milestone	Completion Dates
1	Minister entrusts RTE with the task of migrating its national digital terrestrial television.	15 December 2016
2	Beginning of simulcast of DTT services below the 700MHz band	4 September 2019
3	End of simulcast – DTT services cease in the 700MHz band.	4 March 2020

### 3. Spectrum award April 2020 and MBSA plans

ComReg manages the radio frequency spectrum in Ireland on behalf of the State as part of its role as the statutorily independent regulator of the electronic communications sector. In order to allow mobile phone and wireless broadband services to operate in the 700MHz band it must issue operators with a Wireless Telegraphy Licence under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts.

#### 3.1 Temporary short term licences issued in April 2020

New Regulations<sup>3</sup> under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts were introduced in April to allow the temporary assignment and amendment of rights of use in certain spectrum bands, including the 700MHz band (along with the 2.1GHz and 2.6GHz bands) to help alleviate congestion on telecommunications networks during the exceptional and extraordinary situation raised by the COVID-19 situation. The new framework allows for temporary licences be issued for a period of three months initially, with the potential for operators to reapply if the issues caused by the COVID-19 crisis continue (for an additional period of no longer than three months, if considered necessary and appropriate).

Details of these temporary spectrum management measures and the licences issued for the 700MHz band are available on ComReg's website ([www.comreg.ie](http://www.comreg.ie)) at this

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<sup>3</sup> The Wireless Telegraphy (Temporary Electronic Communications Services Licences) Regulations 2020 ([S.I. No. 122 of 2020](#)) were made on 8 April 2020, with the consent of the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

link: <https://www.comreg.ie/industry/radio-spectrum/spectrum-awards/covid-19-temporary-spectrum-management-measures/>

### 3.2 Long-term rights of use in the 700MHz band

Separate to the temporary spectrum management measures outlined above, ComReg is well advanced in progressing comprehensive plans for the award of long-term rights of use in the 700MHz band. In total, the multi-band spectrum award (MBSA) proposes to award 470MHz of spectrum rights in four bands, being the 700MHz band and the 2.1 GHz, 2.3GHz and the 2.6GHz bands.

Building on the comprehensive steps already taken, the overall projected timings for the MBSA envisage ComReg beginning the award process in Q1 of 2021.

Key milestones and projected timelines to achieve this are set out below.

No.	Key milestone	Completion Date / Projected Completed Date
1	Preliminary consultation on which spectrum bands to award (ComReg Document 18/60).	29 June 2018
2	Response to Consultation Document 18/60 and further consultation on detailed award proposals, including licence conditions, fees and award format (ComReg Document 19/59R).	18 June 2019
3	Response to Consultation Document 19/59R and draft Decision (Document 19/124).	20 December 2019
4	Consultation on draft Information Memorandum (Document 20/32).	14 May 2020
5	Response to Consultation Document 19/124 and publication of final Decision.	Q4 2020

6	Response to consultation (milestone 4) and publication of final Information Memorandum.	Q1 2021
7	Present draft licensing regulations for the consent of the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment.	Q1 2021
8	Award process begins.	Q1 2021

The award process itself typically involves several stages. Following the application and qualification stages of the award process, the next stage would be an auction (i.e. the main and assignment stages), which would then be followed by the notification and grant stage and the issue of licences. The projected timelines for these stages will become clearer once ComReg publishes its final Information Memorandum, expected in Q1 2021.

## 4. Further Information

With respect to the proposed Multi-Band Spectrum Award, further information can be found on the regulators website at [www.comreg.ie](http://www.comreg.ie) or at [this link](#).

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