

BELGIAN INSTITUTE FOR POSTAL SERVICES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

PRESS RELEASE

Five mobile operators deemed admissible for the radio spectrum auction

Brussels, 22 March 2022 – The BIPT has assessed the eligibility of the candidates for the long-awaited auction of the future radio spectrum. Five mobile operators had submitted their candidacies for the upcoming auction and have been deemed admissible following an assessment by the BIPT. The auction regards the assignment of the new 5G and the existing 2G and 3G radio spectrum. This auction, which is due to take place in June 2022, will help shape the telecom landscape in our country for the coming 20 years.

As the regulator of the electronic communications market, the BIPT manages the radio frequencies spectrum. In that capacity, the BIPT grants the user rights for radio frequencies spectrum entirely or partially used for electronic communications services offered to the public. For each radio frequency band the reserve price (i.e. a minimum entry bid for the auction) has to be laid down in the Telecom Act. Per radio frequency band the specific requirements are laid down in the necessary implementation orders (for instance: the minimum speed each operator has to enable in the frequency band concerned, territorial coverage requirements, reserved spectrum for new and existing players, rules regarding maximum spectrum purchases per player). The Royal Decrees have been published in the Belgian Official Gazette on 23 December 2021.

On 14 January 2022, the BIPT invited the parties interested to submit their candidacies for participation in this auction that aims to assign spectrum user rights in the radio frequency bands that are up for auction (i.e. spectrum situated in the 700 MHz, 900 MHz, 1400 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz and the 3400-3800 MHz frequency bands). By means of the radio frequencies assigned, the licence holder will be able to roll out (or further operate) a national network and to provide mobile electronic communications services to the end-users.

Today, the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2100 MHz radio frequency bands are mostly used for 2G, 3G and 4G applications. Five candidacies have been submitted for these radio frequency bands, all of which have been deemed admissible.

The 700 MHz, 1400 MHz and 3600 MHz radio frequency bands are new radio frequency bands that will be the first to be used for the 5G technology.

The 3400-3800 MHz band is considered to be the main radio frequency band for the roll-out of 5G. Also called "capacity band" for 5G at times, because of, among other things, the largely available spectrum in this band. For this radio frequency band as well five candidacies have been submitted and have been deemed admissible.

In addition, the 5 candidates will have the opportunity to acquire spectrum for 5G at 700 MHz. This band is regarded as a "coverage band", suitable for a national coverage and for a better indoor coverage.

Finally, only three candidacies have been submitted and have been deemed admissible for the 1400 MHz band. The 1400 MHz band will be used rather for extra downlink capacity (i.e. the capacity required to allow traffic - e.g. downloading - on a device).

The format chosen for the auction is what is called the "simultaneous multi-stage auction with bids". This is a familiar system as it was also used during the previous radio spectrum assignments for mobile telecom services in our country.

The operators who are deemed admissible, will take part in the auction scheduled for June 2022, anonymously.

The names of the winners will only be made public after the auction, as well as the information regarding the radio spectrum assigned per operator for each of the radio spectrum bands to be auctioned.

For further information:

Jimmy Smedts | Spokesperson



Belgian Institute for Postal Services and Telecommunications

Ellipse Building | Boulevard du Roi Albert II 35 | 1030 Brussels

T +32 2 226 88 22 | **M** +32 478 63 91 82 | **www.bipt.be**

