



## **ESB AND VODAFONE WELCOME EUROPEAN COMMISSION APPROVAL TO ESTABLISH JOINT VENTURE COMPANY**

**COMPANY WILL INVEST €450 MILLION IN 100% FIBRE BROADBAND NETWORK IN IRELAND**

**500,000 homes and businesses in 50 towns to receive world-leading speeds**

Dublin, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014 - Vodafone and ESB have today welcomed European Commission approval of the creation of a joint venture company to deliver a 100% fibre-to-the-building broadband network for the first time in Ireland. The open access network, which will be available to all authorised broadband operators in the country, will help to propel Ireland into the ranks of the world's fastest broadband countries and open up a new world of possibilities for Irish consumers and businesses.

ESB and Vodafone are investing €450M in the joint venture, which will utilise ESB's existing electricity infrastructure to deliver the fibre-to-the-building network across the country. The 100% fibre-to-the-building network will offer broadband speeds from 200 Mbps to 1000 Mbps, initially reaching 500,000 premises in 50 towns in phase one.

The two companies will now go about formally establishing the joint venture. Construction will commence early in the new year and phase one is expected to be fully rolled-out by the end of 2018, with further scope for a second phase thereafter. The first technical trials of the technology are already underway in two estates in Cavan town.

While the ESB and Vodafone joint venture will build and manage the fibre-to-the-building network, open access will be offered to all authorised operators in Ireland on a wholesale basis. This means that other operators can resell the fibre product to their customers, helping to stimulate the development of new services and boosting retail competition in the broadband market for all Irish consumers and businesses.

The Commission's decision was welcomed by Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Alex White TD, who said: *"This decision is great news for Irish broadband customers and providers as it will drive competition in the sector, while giving 50 towns nationwide access to a market leading, future proofed broadband service. It's an important project which complements the Government's National Broadband Plan to ensure that all of Ireland's regions have access to fast broadband."*

*"It is also hugely significant in terms of the National Digital Strategy which aims to get more small businesses online. High speed broadband is a crucial element for Ireland's future competitiveness and this project will help ensure that Ireland is better connected than most countries in the world."*

*“It’s a very ambitious project from two leaders in innovation that has received the endorsement of the Commission. I’ve no doubt that the venture will be highly successful and I wish ESB and Vodafone well as they move to the next phase and establish the company.”*

Pat O’Doherty, Chief Executive of ESB, said: *“This is a huge milestone for ESB. We have invested €6 billion in recent years in transforming and modernising Ireland’s electricity grid, so that it can deliver this type of service. It’s consistent with ESB’s strategy of innovating, modernising and working in collaboration with other industry leaders.”*

*“The fibre-to-the-building broadband network will be the most significant development in Ireland’s broadband sector to date and will be a real boost for regional Ireland and the economy as a whole. We will create an entirely new type of connectivity - seamless, instant and powerful - so that people in towns like Cavan can have the same amazing online experience as Tokyo. I look forward to the establishment of the company with Vodafone and to progressing with roll-out to enable Irish businesses and consumers to advantage of a new world of possibilities.”*

Anne O’Leary, Vodafone Ireland CEO said, *“This project is consistent with Vodafone’s strategy of investing in ambitious projects and technology to deliver the most innovative services. This open-access network, made possible by the coming together of two strong established brands - Vodafone and the ESB, will revolutionise consumers and businesses’ experience of broadband.”*

*“The fibre-to-the-building network will provide a vital boost for the Irish business community, particularly in regional areas, by getting more companies online, enabling them to develop new products and services, creating new international trade opportunities and attracting more FDI to Ireland.”*

**ENDS**

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**Notes to editors:**

### **Background to joint venture**

ESB began a tender process in September 2012 to find a partner in a joint venture company to deploy a fibre-to-the-building network using ESB Networks overhead and underground infrastructure as part of its innovation strategy. Vodafone emerged as the preferred bidder for the project in September 2013, when both companies entered exclusive negotiations. The agreement to form the new joint venture company was signed by the two organisations on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 and 60 people will be employed by the company.

### **About ESB**

ESB is Ireland’s leading sustainable energy company, comprising Power Generation, Networks, Supply and International divisions. Founded in 1927, ESB makes a major contribution to the Irish economy, financing, building and maintaining the State’s vital electricity infrastructure as well as providing a world-class service to the public. As the largest semi-State company in Ireland, ESB has an annual turnover of almost €3bn and invests approximately €1bn per annum in capital expenditure. ESB is the first energy company in Europe to set a date of 2035 to decarbonise its power generation and by 2020 will be delivering one-third of its electricity

from renewable sources. To facilitate sustainability targets and economic growth, ESB is developing an advanced smart networks system and other innovative emerging technologies.  
[www.esb.ie](http://www.esb.ie)

### About Vodafone

Vodafone is Ireland's leading total communications provider with 2.4 million customers across the company's mobile and fixed line business. For more information please visit: [www.vodafone.ie](http://www.vodafone.ie) Vodafone Group is one of the world's largest telecommunications companies and provides a range of services including voice, messaging, data and fixed communications. Vodafone has mobile operations in 26 countries, partners with mobile networks in 50 more, and fixed broadband operations in 17 markets. As of 31 March 2014, Vodafone had 434 million mobile customers and 9 million fixed broadband customers. For more information, please visit: [www.vodafone.com](http://www.vodafone.com)

### List of locations included in the first phase

Arklow, Wicklow	Letterkenny, Donegal
Athlone, Westmeath	Limerick City
Balbriggan, Dublin	Little Island, East Cork
Ballina, Mayo	Longford, Longford
Ballincollig, Cork	Mallow, Cork
Bray, Wicklow	Maynooth/Kilcock, Kildare
Carlow, Carlow	Midleton, Cork
Carrick-on-Shannon, Leitrim	Monaghan, Monaghan
Carrigaline, Cork	Mullingar, Westmeath
Castlebar, Mayo	Naas/Johnstown/Sallins, Kildare
Cavan, Cavan	Navan, Meath
Celbridge, Kildare	Newbridge, Kildare
Clonmel, Tipperary	Portlaoise, Laois
Cobh, Cork	Roscommon, Roscommon
Cork City	Shannon, Clare
Drogheda, Louth	Skerries / Rush, Dublin
Dundalk, Louth	Sligo, Sligo
Ennis, Clare	Swords /Malahide/Portmarnock, Dublin
Enniscorthy, Wexford	Tralee, Kerry
Galway City	Tramore, Waterford
Gorey, Wexford	Tullamore, Offaly
Greystones, Wicklow	Waterford City

Kilkenny, Kilkenny	Westport, Mayo
Killarney, Kerry	Wexford, Wexford
Leixlip, Kildare	Wicklow, Wicklow