

Smart Telecom appoints Eutelsat to deliver broadband via satellite to 527 schools in Ireland

One in eight schools nationwide to benefit from high-speed internet access via satellite

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Smart Telecom, the second largest provider of residential, business and Metro telecommunications services in Ireland, has selected Eutelsat, one of the world's leading satellite operators, to fulfil the satellite requirements of the €6 million contract it was recently awarded to provide high speed internet access to schools throughout Ireland.

The contract was awarded to Smart Telecom by the Ministers for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources and for Education and Science and consists of delivering always on high-speed internet access and routers to **1,041 primary and secondary schools** through a mix of broadband technologies, including wireless, fixed line (DSL) and satellite.

The satellite element of the project will be delivered by Eutelsat's D-STAR satellite broadband product. D-STAR is a satellite broadband solution which is totally independent from terrestrial infrastructure. Operated by Eutelsat's broadband subsidiary Skylogic, D-STAR operates through sub-one metre antennas that communicate directly with broadband hubs in France and Italy via capacity on Eutelsat satellites, which provide reach over Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The satellite equipment which will be installed in 527 schools across Ireland consists of a small dish connected to a 2-way D-STAR terminal which is the size of a standard VCR. Each dish will communicate through Eutelsat's EUROIRD™ 3 satellite with the Department of Education's Internet portal via Skylogic's hub in Turin (Italy) and Smart Telecom's fibre network in Dublin. In order to provide the same interface with satellite as with the DSL terrestrial network, Eutelsat is deploying an original feature, which allows PPP connection over satellite. The first schools will be equipped for satellite from June while the full network will be deployed by the end of 2005.

Announcing the appointment of Eutelsat to operate the satellite element of this project, **Oisín Fanning, Chief Executive of Smart Telecom**, said: "Eutelsat is a first class operator and we look forward to working with them on this assignment. This is a very important project for the Irish educational system as it will open up a variety of learning avenues and tools for children all over the country. There is no doubt that the project will serve as a catalyst to firmly engrain ICT into the Irish education curriculum and provide a springboard for further broadband rollout in Ireland. The project also represents a major step forward in the further development of Smart Telecom as a key player in the Irish telecommunications industry."

Arduino Patacchini, Eutelsat's Multimedia Director, says they are delighted to have been selected by Smart Telecom to provide the service. "This is an excellent example of the importance of satellite for completing national broadband programmes. By operating independently from terrestrial telecommunications infrastructures, Eutelsat's D-STAR service operated via Skylogic will ensure that the many schools beyond the reach of cable and ADSL will not be deprived of the benefits of broadband access".

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Editorial Note on Smart Telecom:

Smart Telecom plc is the second largest provider of residential, business and Metro telecommunications services in Ireland. The company offers homes and businesses the highest quality telecommunications services at the lowest possible rates.

Smart Telecom **employs 330 people** between offices in Dublin and Cork, making it the third largest employer in the Irish telecommunications sector.

All Smart Telecom residential customers benefit from **FREE telephone calls** to other Smart Telecom customers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Customers receive just one bill for line rental and call charges. **'Smart Broadband'** incorporates voice and broadband and is the most competitive on offer in the Irish and European market. The service is four times faster and almost half the price of broadband products offered by rival companies such as Eircom.

In addition, Smart Telecom:

- Is the third largest **Residential Wholesale Line Rental and Carrier Pre-Select** operator in the Irish market with 79,000 customers
- Has **3,000 payphones** across Ireland
- Is also the country's **leading supplier of pre-paid call cards**.

Smart Telecom plc commenced trading on the **Alternative Investment Market (AIM)** of the London Stock Exchange in September 2004 following a fundraising round worth **€15 million** (stg €10million).

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About Eutelsat

With capacity commercialised on 23 satellites that provide coverage from North and South America to Far East Asia, Eutelsat is one of the world's three leading satellite operators. Its satellites are used for broadcasting more than 1,500 television and 800 radio stations to 120 million cable and satellite homes. They also serve requirements for TV contribution services, corporate networks, mobile positioning and communications, Internet backbone connectivity and broadband access for terrestrial, maritime and in-flight applications. Eutelsat's broadband subsidiary Skylogic markets and operates services through multimedia platforms in France and Italy that serve enterprises, local communities, government agencies and aid organisations in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas. Headquartered in Paris, and with staff of 450 commercial, technical and operational experts from 25 countries, Eutelsat generated turnover of €760 million for the 2003/2004 financial year.

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