

Swiss telecoms regulator launches 5G radio frequency awards process

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On 6 July 2018 the Federal Communications Commission (ComCom), jointly with the Federal Office of Communications (OfCom), launched the 5G radio frequency awards process in a press release available in [German](#), [French](#), [Italian](#) and [English](#).

On behalf of ComCom, OfCom will auction frequency spectrum blocs in the following frequencies:

- 700 MHz;
- 1,400 MHz;
- 2,600 MHz; and
- 3.5 to 3.8 GHz (also referred to as the 3.6 GHz band).

These frequencies are important for the introduction of 5G technology in Switzerland and similar auction processes have already taken place or are under way in other jurisdictions.

This announcement follows a consultation process in which the public could gain access to the draft radio frequency tender documents and provide input. Based on the results of the consultation process, ComCom and OfCom re-evaluated the draft documents and issued a (still partly tentative) schedule for the frequency auction process.

Parties wishing to participate in the auction have until 5 October 2018 to submit their candidature dossier to OfCom, which will then determine whether the respective candidate meets the auction's participation requirements.

The auction is tentatively scheduled to take place in January 2019. ComCom has favoured a so-called 'clock auction' model, under which the participants can bid successively until there are no more bidders than frequency blocs.

However, ComCom's aim is not to maximise profit, but to provide an efficient, pro-competitive and technologically neutral allocation of spectrum in order to obtain a good national coverage with high-quality telecoms services. The frequencies will be licensed for 15 years.

If past experience is any indicator of future trends, based on the results of the last major frequency auction in 2012, which paved the way for long-term evolution implementation and netted proceeds of nearly Sfr1 billion, this new auction process may also prove to be a windfall for Switzerland. It is also expected to allow the Swiss telecoms market to remain competitive on an international scale and allow for a prompt roll-out of 5G.

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