



**AN TAOISEACH ENDA KENNY AND MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS ALEX
WHITE UNVEIL SIRO AS IRELAND'S FIRST 100% FIBRE-TO-THE-BUILDING
BROADBAND NETWORK**

- **260 jobs to be created as part of the project - 60 jobs in SIRO with 200 additional construction jobs supported by the roll-out**
- **Ten towns – Cavan, Dundalk, Westport, Castlebar, Sligo, Carrigaline, Tralee, Navan, Letterkenny and Wexford – revealed as Ireland's first Gigabit towns or "fibrehoods"**
- **SIRO's 100% Fibre-to-the-Building Broadband Network showcased as optimum solution for the Government's National Broadband Plan**

14th May 2015 – An Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD and Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Alex White TD today unveiled SIRO as the new brand of ESB and Vodafone Ireland's fibre broadband joint venture company. As part of the launch, Enda Kenny TD revealed that SIRO will employ 60 people, and a further 200 construction jobs will be supported across Ireland as part of the rollout of the network.

SIRO, derived from Sirius the brightest star in the night sky, is set to light up Ireland's communications landscape when it delivers the most powerful network in the country, unlike any other broadband infrastructure in Ireland.

SIRO is investing €450 million in building Ireland's first 100% fibre-to-the-building broadband network, offering speeds from 200 Mbps to 1000 Mbps to 500,000 premises in fifty regional towns, revolutionising the broadband market in Ireland. SIRO is not a retail product. SIRO is unique in that it exclusively offers a wholesale open access network meaning that it will be available to all telecoms operators in Ireland to resell to their customers.

The first ten locations, dubbed Ireland's first Gigabit towns or "fibrehoods", to be included in SIRO's roll-out are Cavan, Dundalk, Westport, Castlebar, Sligo, Carrigaline, Tralee, Navan, Letterkenny and Wexford. Construction on the network began last September delivering 1 Gigabit speeds to 300 homes in Cavan, and continues this summer. The initial phase of the project, which consists of fifty towns, is expected to be fully rolled-out by the end of 2018 with scope for a second phase that will reach 300 smaller towns.

At the event SIRO also announced its interest in tendering for the National Broadband Plan later this year to deliver the optimum solution for bringing high speed broadband to rural Ireland. Backed by two of Ireland's leading companies – Vodafone and ESB – SIRO already has access to €450 million in funding to roll-out the first phase of the project, with additional funding available for future investment and further phases.

SIRO's 100% fibre-to-the-building broadband network will be deployed on ESB's existing overhead and underground infrastructure, ensuring a fast and cost efficient roll-out to every county in Ireland and reversing the digital divide between the capital and regional towns. SIRO's key differentiator is that it is a custom built 100% fibre optic service powered by light, making it different and better than any other broadband infrastructure in Ireland, with no copper connection at any point in the network.

Commenting at the launch of SIRO, An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, said:

"This Government is serious about broadband. High speed broadband is a necessity for all Irish homes and businesses as we connect Ireland to the world and create new jobs. This is why the Government supported the joint venture between ESB and Vodafone to create SIRO. Today's launch of SIRO will light up Ireland."

"As a result of this project, 50 regional towns in 26 counties – the equivalent of half a million homes and businesses around Ireland – will have access to a 1 Gigabit 100% fibre broadband connection, putting us on a par for high speed connectivity with leading international hubs, such as Tokyo and Hong Kong. As a result, Ireland's first Gigabit towns – Cavan, Dundalk, Westport, Castlebar, Sligo, Carrigaline, Tralee, Navan, Letterkenny and Wexford – will ultimately have the same economic opportunities as those that are available in Dublin. I'm also delighted that this new venture will create 60 direct jobs and 200 construction jobs in the development of the new network."

Minister for Communications, Alex White TD, said:

“The formation of SIRO has added a hugely competitive dynamic to the Irish market, and it comes at a critical time in the development of our broadband infrastructure. These developments are encompassed by the National Broadband Plan, which is in the process of delivering high speed broadband to every home, school and business in Ireland, regardless of its location.”

“This is being achieved by a partnership between the Government and commercial telecommunications companies. The commercial sector has responded by investing heavily to provide high-speed access to 70% of Ireland’s premises. The Government will ensure that high speed broadband is delivered to the remaining 30% through a State-funded intervention.”

Anne O’Leary, Vodafone Ireland CEO, said:

“Irish consumers and businesses deserve so much more from their broadband and SIRO is a transformative project which will finally provide the connectivity required to put Ireland on an equal footing with some of the most competitive economies across the globe. SIRO’s launch today will put Vodafone at the heart of delivering the best broadband service to people right across the country. We are very excited at the prospect of offering our customers access to this ground breaking new technology in the autumn.”

“This project is being held up internationally as an example of unique innovation where telecoms operators can re-use existing national electricity infrastructure to provide broadband right into customers’ homes and businesses. It is Ireland’s first fully open access network, which is a huge positive as it will drive welcome competition in the market and much needed investment in broadband infrastructure across regional Ireland.”

Pat O’Doherty, Chief Executive of ESB, commented:

“Together with Vodafone, ESB is investing almost half a billion euro in SIRO to deliver the most powerful broadband service ever available in Ireland by running fibre technology alongside some of our overhead and underground electricity lines. This is the first project of its kind in Europe and will ensure a fast and cost efficient roll-out to every county in Ireland, reversing the digital divide between the capital and regional towns – a potential legacy that we can all be proud of.”

“As an organisation that sits at the heart of towns and communities across the country, ESB takes immense pride from the fact that SIRO’s 100% fibre-to-the-building broadband network will be a key

enabler for a knowledge based, services led economy and will transform the internet experience of SMEs, remote workers and consumers in regional Ireland.”

Sean Atkinson, SIRO CEO, added:

“We are very fortunate to have two parents in the form of ESB and Vodafone, both leading international companies with the technological and infrastructural expertise to make SIRO a reality. This project demonstrates how a commercial semi-state is making efficient and effective use of its assets, along with Vodafone’s fibre expertise, to deliver world leading speeds to the Irish market.

“SIRO will deliver a bright future for Ireland, supporting economic prosperity by delivering services that are cutting edge and transformative and boosting retail competition in the broadband market for all Irish consumers and businesses. Our 100% fibre optic broadband service will help Ireland’s regional areas compete more effectively for investment and jobs, SMEs to work more efficiently and give consumers to unrivalled digital access. I believe that SIRO as a custom built open access FTTB wholesale operator is ideally suited to helping the Government achieve its National Broadband Plan goal of delivering a minimum of 30 Mbps to every premises in the country.”

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Note to Editors:

Locations included in the first phase - Please see the list on the following page.

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 2nd July 2014 with EU regulatory approval secured in November 2014. The brand of the joint venture company was formally unveiled as SIRO on 14th May 2015.

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

About Vodafone Ireland

Vodafone is Ireland's leading total communications provider with 2.3 million customers. At 31st December 2014, the company had 2.1 million mobile customers and 275,500 customers of its fixed portfolio.

Vodafone provides a total range of communications solutions including voice, messaging, data and fixed communications to consumers and to small, medium and large businesses. Since 2011, Vodafone has expanded its enterprise division, offering integrated next-generation fixed and mobile solutions in addition to cloud-based platforms, machine to machine services and professional ICT support.

Vodafone Group is one of the world's leading international mobile communications groups with mobile operations in 26 countries, partners with mobile networks in 54 more, and fixed broadband operations in 17 markets.

For more information, please visit www.vodafone.ie

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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