[DE] Mobile 3.0 Awarded Licences for Nationwide DVB-H Service

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The regional media authorities in Germany have begun awarding the Mobile 3.0 consortium licences to set up and operate a platform for broadcasting mobile television in the DVB-H standard. After the relevant orders had been issued by the regional media authorities in Saxony and Lower Saxony at the end of January, most of the other authorities gave the green light in February for the joint venture between Neva Media GmbH and MFD Mobiles Fernsehen Deutschland GmbH, thus implementing a recommendation made by the Conference of Regional Media Authorities at its meeting on 15 January 2008. In Bavaria, Saxony-Anhalt and the Saarland, the relevant decision has yet to be taken.

The search for a suitable applicant proved difficult: after the nationwide invitations to tender for the capacities in March 2007 (see IRIS 2007-3: 12) none of the plans submitted was initially regarded as capable of being awarded a licence. The documents were said to provide inadequate answers to the fundamental questions arising from the terms and conditions of the licence relating to programme content, the platform operation, customer administration, technical services, the financing of the transmitter network and the organisation of the transmitter pool. They were accordingly returned to the 29 applicants, who were asked to make improvements by 10 August 2007.

In October 2007, the Conference of Regional Media Authorities finally announced their intention to award of the licence to the Mobile 3.0 consortium and thus provisionally turned down the consortium consisting of the mobile telephone companies T-Mobile, Vodafone and O2, which were still in the running at that point (see IRIS 2007-9: 10). However, as Mobile 3.0 was unable to meet the requirement to submit contracts with the broadcasters concerning the transmission of their programmes by the end of November, the applicant was given until the end of the year to conclude the negotiations.

Despite the delays, the launch of the service is still scheduled for 1 June 2008 at the latest so that it will be available for the Euro 2008 football championships. The platform that will now set up is due to carry services from three radio broadcasters in addition to the television channels ARD, ZDF, RTL, VOX, Sat.1, ProSieben, N24 and n-tv. One regional programme channel will also be available.

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The consortium partners of Mobile 3.0 originally submitted separate applications and only joined forces during the bidding procedure in order to increase their chances of success. The publishers Burda and Holtzbrinck are behind Neva Media, while the South African media company Naspers has a stake in MFD, which in Germany already operates the mobile TV service “watcha”, which has been transmitted in the competing DMB standard since June 2006 in 16 urban areas.

The transmission of broadcast signals in the DVB-H standard is initially limited to three years as the legal prerequisites for the long-term operation still have to be created, due to the entry into the market of new players (platform operators, mobile telephone companies). The pilot project is based on the provisions in the regional media acts concerning experimental broadcasts.

The technical operation of mobile radio services in the DVB-H standard is being implemented by the former Deutsche Telekom subsidiary Media & Broadcast, which was recently sold to the French transmission network operator Télédiffusion de France (TDF). The licence for this was already awarded on 15 October 2007 by the *Bundesnetzagentur* (Federal Network Agency). In the regulator’s opinion, the company proved to be best suited to meet the terms and conditions of the invitation to tender. The Deutsche Telekom subsidiary already operates a network of analogue terrestrial broadcasting stations set up by the Deutsche Bundespost (Federal Post Office).

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