

France begins process to allocate 5G frequencies: regulator

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France's telecoms regulator has officially launched the process to allocate to operators frequencies for next-generation 5G mobile telephone networks; this image from April 18, 2019 during Orange Business Summit shows French telecom group Orange's and 5G's logo

France's telecoms regulator on Monday officially launched the process to allocate to operators frequencies for next-generation 5G mobile

telephone networks.

Regulator Arcep said it will, in a mixed tender process, offer the initial batch of frequencies at a fixed price and then hold an auction for the rest.

Arcep began the process with a public consultation, which will finish on September 4. The frequencies will be allocated a few weeks after this, allowing legal completion at the start of 2020 and the first commercial rollout at the end of that year.

The government has yet to announce the price for the frequencies but the process should bring in several billions of euros in income for the state.

Germany in June raised some 6.5 billion euros (\$7.3 billion) from the sale of 5G frequencies to telecoms firms in a three-month auction, far exceeding expectations.

France is "not among the first" to allocate 5G frequencies in Europe but "is not late", Sebastien Soriano, the president of Arcep, told reporters.

The tiny principality of Monaco this month became the first country in Europe to inaugurate a 5G mobile phone network based on technology from Chinese firm Huawei, which is seen by the US as a major security risk.

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