

## WiMAX: ready to go?

A market with a forecast worth of 2.9 billion EUR, and accounting for close to 4% of the global broadband market by 2010.

**In its latest market report, IDATE provides an analysis of the growth prospects for the market built around WiMAX technology. It supplies readers with a detailed view of the offers, both those which are already available, and those in the trial or pre-launch stage, and, through an examination of existing regulatory and competitive restrictions, maps out WiMAX's most likely growth scenarios.**

The headlines being made by WiMAX are proof of the growing interest in the technology amongst the industry's leading players. In France, for instance, the regulatory situation is undergoing major changes, and the procedure for awarding WiMAX authorisations began a few weeks ago. Players' positioning too is taking shape. Cases in point include French ISP Free's recent takeover of Altitude Telecom, holder of the sole national licence to date. In other countries, there has been a series of announced experimental and commercial deployments. In the meantime, Intel, one of the technology's top promoters, has plans to deploy WiMAX in 100 cities around the globe by the end of 2006.

### WiMAX deployment scenarios

Once all of the initial elements are in place to allow the technology to emerge, what remains are questions over the new services that WiMAX will enable. For now, WiMAX's theoretical position in relation to other technologies varies a great deal, depending on market conditions and player strategies:

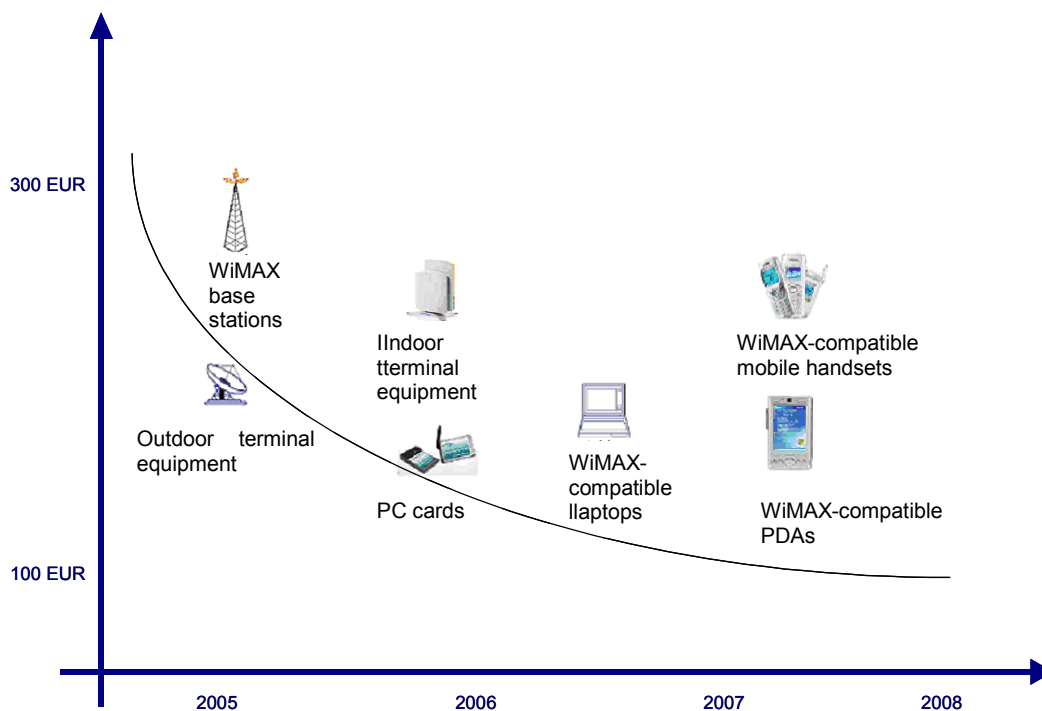
- It is viewed as an alternative technology which is particularly well-suited to covering isolated regions not currently covered by classic, and for the most part wireline, technologies.
- In suburban areas, it can offer a good solution for business districts that do not have high quality DSL access.
- In an urban setting, WiMAX is seen as a way of increasing competition, going up against DSL and broadband cable. The first players to take up a position could be wireless service providers seeking to optimise their infrastructure by using WiMAX, and thus reducing their operating costs.
- In large cities in developing countries, some of which have no cable infrastructure or phone lines capable of supporting DSL, WiMAX could play a key role in satisfying demands for broadband, particularly for businesses and government services.
- WiMAX also appears well-suited to supplying backhauling for Wi-Fi and even 3G networks, both of which are having to contend with the rising bitrates associated with the growing use of data applications.
- For Intel, and a handful of others, the goal is to supply a solution adapted to heavy use of mobile broadband, targeting fixed-line operators and ISPs who do not have a mobile licence, and who will find themselves handicapped when trying to compete with integrated operators' convergent fixed-mobile offers. For licensed 3G operators, WiMAX can exploit its OFDM capabilities, and its capacity to provide a solution for 3G network saturation, and so find its niche for the transition to 4G.
- And, last but not least, some feel that WiMAX could find its place in vertical business applications, in areas such as emergency services or transportation.

**Keys to WiMAX's success**

Forecasts indicate that WiMAX is expected to account for between 3% and 4% of the global broadband services market by 2010. But its ability to achieve its full potential depends:

- **On the technology** itself, and on the actual performance of certified gear (interoperability, indoor reception, lower prices...), at a time of abundant announcements of "rival" technologies (HSDPA, Flash OFDM, 802.20...);
- **On public policies** (competition, spectrum management), and on regional government initiatives;
- **On service operators' enthusiasm, as well as their prudence**, having learned from past experience, and whose interests may be conflicting, depending on the way WiMAX is rolled out;
- And on the **attitudes of the leading equipment manufacturers** and mobile telephony operators.

**Timeline for WiMAX product availability, and forecast price decreases**



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