

# Chinese Gov't Backs Clearwire TD-LTE Band

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The Chinese government is backing the use of the 2.6 GHz band for TD-LTE, the same band Clearwire plans to use for its TD-LTE network in the United States.

The announcement is a victory for Clearwire, which has been working with China Mobile to build global support for TD-LTE in the band through the Global TD-LTE Initiative.

China's decision to officially allocate the 2.6 GHz band for TD-LTE is particularly important, as the market's massive size will help drive economies of scale for the alternate LTE technology.

"As one of the mainstream evolution standards, TD-LTE has great edge in spectrum utilization, and receives widespread recognition from global operators and device manufacturers," said Liu Lihua, deputy secretary for China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, in a statement.

In addition to the band from 2500 to 2690 MHz, China also allocated the 1900 MHz band for TD-LTE. Sprint plans to use the 1900 MHz band for LTE, but is deploying the FDD version instead of the TDD version favored by China. The announcement was made at a Sunday Dubai spectrum workshop hosted by the International Telecommunications Union, China Mobile, the Global TD-LTE Initiative and the TD Industry Alliance.

The move to designate the 2.6 GHz and 1900 MHz bands for TD-LTE follow large-scale trials of the technology conducted by China Mobile. It is currently expanding the trial to 13 additional cities in China, an effort that will have 20,000 TD-LTE base stations installed by the end of this year. The trials will accelerate to a total of 100 cities and 200,000 base stations next year.

ZTE said yesterday it landed the contract for China Mobile's TD-LTE network in Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Shenyang.

Other operators with TD-LTE networks in the 2.6 GHz band include Softbank, the Japanese operator which announced Monday plans to acquire a controlling stake in Sprint.

Clearwire's TD-LTE network will overlay its existing WiMAX network. The operator is designing the network to provide supplemental capacity on a wholesale basis to other providers, and has already signed up Sprint and Leap Wireless International for the service.

The first 5,000 base stations for the network are set to be ready next summer, more than half of the 8,000 WiMAX cell sites Clearwire plans to upgrade with TD-LTE.

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Clearwire recently warned that portions of the buildout may be delayed, but it remains unclear how its plans will be specifically affected.

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