

Taxi Regulator  
An Rialálaí Tacsaithe



Commission For Taxi Regulation  
An Coimisiún Um Rialáil Tacsaithe

# Communication and Data Provision

Commission for Taxi Regulation's  
evaluation of proposed actions for  
building on progress to date

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# 1. Background & Issues

## 1.1 Introduction

Following the publication of the Economic Review of the SPSV Industry (2009), the Commission invited submissions from interested stakeholders regarding the Review's recommendations. Following a review of these submissions, the Commission organised a consultation process with interested parties. This process was used to discuss the Review's recommendations, together with investigating any other issues stakeholders felt necessary to improve the regulation of the SPSV industry.

For its part, the Economic Review recommended that the Commission provide a greater level of market data to potential new entrants in order that they make their investment decision with the fullest amount of market data available. While not explicitly mentioning data collection or communication, it also made a number of other recommendations around enforcement, health and safety and research that would benefit from / have led to additional proposed reforms in this area.

Consultations with external stakeholders also highlighted areas in which the Commission could build on its existing communication practices. Many of these were re-iterated when the Commission held internal workshops on these issues.

The primary objective of this document is to summarise the evaluation of the proposed actions, and in light to of this evaluation, to present the Commission's planned actions in the areas of communication and data provision. The remainder of the document is structured as follows:

- The remainder of *Section 1* summarises the Commission's current practices in terms of providing information and communicating with its stakeholders, and highlights some of the issues associated with these;
- *Section 2* outlines the internally (Commission) and externally suggested options for building on progress to date;
- Following this, *Section 3* presents the Commission's evaluation of the proposed actions;
- *Section 4* outlines the consultation process and summarises the views of stakeholders with regard to this topic;
- Finally, *Section 5* presents the Commission's planned actions for moving forward, together with the associated enforcement and review considerations.

## **1.2 Current Approach**

### **1.2.1 THE COMMISSION'S ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Advisory Council to the Commission for Taxi Regulation (Advisory Council) was established under Part Four of the Taxi Regulation Act 2003. The function of the Advisory Council is to advise the Commission or the Minister for Transport as appropriate in relation to issues relevant to small public service vehicles and their drivers. The Council consists of a chairperson and 17 members as appointed by the Minister of Transport. The Council seeks to be representative of SPSV operators, user/consumer representative groups; local authorities, An Garda Síochána, representative of people with disabilities, business and tourism and specialist expertise.

The Advisory Council may offer advice to the Commission for Taxi Regulation or the Minister. Alternatively the Commission for Taxi Regulation or the Minister may seek the advice of the Council in relation to particular areas or issues. The Commission for Taxi Regulation or the Minister as appropriate may consider the advice of the Council given under the 2003 Act but shall not be bound to act on it.

Since its establishment, the Commission has consulted closely with the Advisory Council and has received advice on a broad range of issues – this is an ongoing process which ensures direct input from a wide and representative group of stakeholders.

### **1.2.2 DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH THE SPSV INDUSTRY**

Since its inception, the Advisory Council (see above) has had representatives from the four main national driver representative unions (namely SIPTU, the National Taxi Drivers Union, the National Private Hire and Taxi Association and the Irish Taxi Drivers Federation). The limousine sector is represented by the National Chauffeur Driver Association, while dispatch companies are represented by the Taxi Company Owners Association.

The Commission also meets with national and regional representatives on an ad hoc basis when undertaking regulatory impact analysis for proposed actions, when developing new initiatives or when rolling out new licensing conditions or programmes. The main methods of communication have included:

- A call for submissions, whereby individual operators and/or representative bodies have been invited to make a written submission with regard to a proposed action or initiative. Recent examples of this include the revision of the national maximum taxi fare, and the Economic Review consultation process;

- Face to face consultations, usually in one-to-one format or through small workshops. These have been held on a regional basis on a number of occasions over the past number of years and usually involve regional representative associations.

### **1.2.3 LIAISING WITH CONSUMERS AND USER REPRESENTATIVES**

The Advisory Council also represents the interest of consumers. General consumer interests are represented by the Consumer Association of Ireland, while the specific requirement of people with additional accessibility requirements are represented by the National Disability Authority. General business users are represented by Chambers Ireland, while the tourism industry has representatives from both Failte Ireland and the Irish Hotels Federation.

Further to liaising with representatives on the Advisory Council, the Commission also invites wider consumer groups and individuals to respond to call for submission on key issues, such as the national maximum taxi fare. Furthermore, the Commission also consults with key user representative groups as it considers specific initiatives, when required.

### **1.2.4 CENTRAL INFORMATION SOURCES FOR STAKEHOLDERS**

The Commission's website ([www.taxiregulator.ie](http://www.taxiregulator.ie)) is the main central repository of information for both industry and consumers. For industry, this includes a wide range of information regarding applications and renewals of licences, the skills development programme, and general information on existing and future initiatives. The consumer section of the website provides users with a wide range of information, including how fares are calculated, their rights and responsibilities, and how to make a complaint.

The Commission also reacts to requests for information and queries from industry operators. The Commission runs an industry contact line (1890 347 347) which provides operators with information and advice. This receives a significant amount of calls per annum, c50,000. This line not only deals with queries in relation to licensing and enforcement processes but also provides a further mechanism for the industry to query and comment on on-going regulatory change. Each call is logged and classified according to nature of contact. Key departments in the Commission review the content of these calls on a regular basis.

The Commission also deals with enquiries from operators who present themselves in person at the Commission offices in Dublin. The Commission also deals with significant levels of written correspondence and emails which reflect the nature of communication through the national industry line.

The Commission also produces an industry newsletter on a quarterly basis which updates stakeholders on any forthcoming initiatives or matters of interest, including industry statistics. This is posted to operators and hosted on the Commission website. The Commission also provides information requested by industry representatives that prepare their own newsletters or publications for their industry.

Further to the website, the Commission also has a National SPSV consumer information line (1890 60 60 90), which consumers can contact to make an enquiry about their rights and responsibilities, as well as to lodge complaints and compliments. This line receives about 8,000 calls per annum.

As the Commission is now entering a new reform period, with an ambitious reform programme ahead of it, a key challenge will be how to best communicate the resultant changes to industry and related stakeholders in an accessible and effective manner over the next two years and on-going.

### **1.2.5 FOLLOWING-UP WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

The Commission spends a lot of time responding to calls from stakeholders which require further research or preparation. This includes time spent:

- Providing written responses to emails and letters sent in by industry stakeholders;
- Providing written and oral feedback to those that have lodged a complaint and require further correspondence;
- Providing oral and then written instruction regarding the transfer and inheritance of licences.

### **1.2.6 COMMUNICATION WITH WIDER TRANSPORT AND POLICY STAKEHOLDERS**

The Commission regularly engages with other stakeholders in the wider transport and policy arena. These include other public bodies engaged in planning and regulating public transport; as well as disability groups and other regulators. This on-going contact informs continuing policy development and system design.

## 1.3 Key Challenges

### 1.3.1 COMMUNICATING WITH WIDE RANGE OF STAKEHOLDERS

Since its establishment, the Commission has been embarking on a wide-ranging, quality-focussed reform programme, which has involved a series of road shows to discuss the work of the Commission. There are a number of challenges regarding communication with stakeholders:

- Regional representatives tend to change on a frequent basis, and do not always inform the Commission of the change of contact details;
- Individual meetings on a frequent basis are difficult to plan and execute;
- Meetings tend to focus on individual concerns, rather than being agenda specific;
- The Commission finds it difficult to demonstrate that significant regional consultation has taken place, despite the fact that these meetings have occurred.

Furthermore, the fragmented and changing nature of the industry creates particular communications challenges. For example, there are a number of national representative bodies as well as an additional group of regional representative bodies. The opinions of these representatives can differ significantly depending on the point under consideration. In addition, a significant portion of the operators in the SPSV industry do not belong or do not claim to be represented by a representative group.

As it prepares to set out its action plan for 2010 to 2012, the Commission needs to consider how to effectively and efficiently engage with the broad range of stakeholders around the country.

### 1.3.2 EFFECTIVELY PRESENTING A WIDE RANGE OF COMPLEX INFORMATION

The Commission has introduced a significant number of often complex reforms since its inception. A key point is that a number of the reforms are introduced on a phased basis, in order to take account of the needs of all stakeholders. This makes communicating reforms and licensing changes more difficult than otherwise would be the case.

The volume of information to be communicated, together with its nature, makes it difficult to layout and present in an accessible manner. A key challenge going forward will be how best to communicate any new reforms through existing and new means of communication, including the website, guide and information leaflets, awareness campaign and information meetings.

### **1.3.3 IMPROVING HOW AND WHAT INFORMATION IS COLLECTED**

The collection of data is complicated by the fact that much of the data to be collected is self reporting (for example with regard to working hours, revenue, operating costs, vehicle utilisation rates and so on). Furthermore, the disparate nature of the industry, and the legacy of different licensing systems means that there is no one central data source.

### **1.3.4 SHARING DATA WITH THIRD PARTY AGENICES**

The sharing of certain data with third party agencies is constrained by a number of factors. Firstly, the Commission is and must be cognisant of data protection constraints regarding personal information. Secondly, the ability of the Commission to physically share data is also restricted by whether the third party has a real interest in sharing data, and/or has the technical ability to accumulate and send and /or receive the data.

## **2. Objectives and Options**

### **2.1 Summary of Objectives**

In light of the challenges outlined above, the Commission has explored a number of proposed options for communication and data sharing with the following objectives in mind:

1. More effective and efficient industry engagement;
2. Making existing and new data and information more accessible;
3. Enhancing data collection and sharing.

A number of potential options for achieving these objectives are outlined below. These were put forward during internal Commission workshops, stakeholder submissions following the Economic Review, as well as in consultations and workshops with industry representatives and stakeholders.

### **2.2 More effective and efficient industry engagement**

Due to the overall size of the organisation and its wide range of functions and responsibilities, communications and data provision need to match existing resource constraints. With this in mind, there were three main options put forward:

- The establishment of a Regulator for various regions;
- The establishment of regional taxi representative meetings on a regular basis;
- Enhance and increase circulation of the Commission's end of year report.

An initial assessment of the potential costs, benefits and impacts of these are outlined in section 3.

### **2.3 Making information more accessible**

A number of possible solutions were proposed regarding improving the accessibility of existing and new information, including:

- Redevelopment of the Commission's website to enhance it as an information provision tool;
- Redevelopment of the Commission's newsletter to industry;
- The provision of market data to new entrants prior to their investment in the industry;
- More proactive provision of enforcement data;
- More specific driver awareness campaigns for niche issues, such as health and safety and working hours.

These options are evaluated in Section 3 of this document.

## 2.4 Enhancing data collection and sharing

A number of possible options to improving data collection and sharing have been suggested. These include:

- The redevelopment of driver licence application and renewal forms to collect more data;
- Further liaison with third party agencies that have an enforcement role (e.g. officials from the Revenue Commissioners, Immigration etc) to identify what data they would be interested in and if and how this data could be exchanged;
- The use of on-board technology to provide relevant data, e.g. average working hours and vehicle utilisation rates.

# 3. Costs, Benefits and Impact

## 3.1 More effective and efficient industry engagement

<b>OPTION 1: ESTABLISHING A SERIES OF REGIONAL REGULATORS</b>		
<p><b>Description:</b> The current model regulates the SPSV sector on a national basis, with single points of contact for all SPSV enquiries. Under this option, instead of having one centralised Commission for Taxi Regulation, there would be a number of regulators created for regions/areas with significant population areas.</p> <p><b>Likely Impact:</b> The aim of this proposal is to provide more resources and focus on particular regions on a full time basis.</p>		
<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Exchequer	None	The establishment of regional offices (capital and current expenditure) would likely be significant.
New Entrants	The ability to call in to a regional office, assuming drop-in facilities were provided.  A central information line already exists for industry.	Probable increase in licence fees.  If regulators for specific regions were allowed make their own regulations, there would be the cost of changing from the existing to the new system (e.g. meeting new vehicle standards etc)
Existing Drivers	The ability to call in to a regional office, assuming drop-in facilities were provided.  A central information line already exists for industry.	Probable increase in licence fees.  If regulators for specific regions were allowed make their own regulations, there would be the cost of changing from the existing to the new system (e.g. meeting new vehicle standards etc).
SPSV Users	The ability to call in to a regional office, assuming drop-in facilities were provided.  A central information line already exists for consumers.	Possible fare increases if the licensing costs to drivers are significant.  Possible confusion of rights and responsibilities, and fares structure, in different regions.
Dispatch Operators	The ability to call in to a regional office, assuming drop-in facilities were provided.  A central information line already exists for industry.	If regulators for specific regions were allowed make their own regulations, there would be the cost of changing from the existing to the new system (e.g. meeting new licensing standards etc)
Fleet Owners/Multiple Licence Holders	None	Probable increase in licence fees.
The Commission	None.	Recruitment and set-up costs.  Cost of communicating the changes to industry and other stakeholders.
<p><b>Critical Success Factor(s):</b> The availability of funds to set up regional offices, which is highly unlikely in the current economic climate. There seems to be no real business case for this.</p>		
<p><b>Other Requirements/Issues:</b> The 2003 Act does not provide for regional regulators. To have regional regulators making different regulations would require primary legislation and is therefore not an option. The Economic Review of the SPSV Industry (2009) found no fault with the current regulatory model.</p>		

**OPTION 2: REGIONAL SPSV MEETINGS**

**Description:** Regular, agenda specific meetings with agreed attendees. Attendees would include representatives for specific regions. A new draft of potential attendees would have to be developed, whereby the Commission calls for potential attendees to fill out a pro forma document which details their contact details and who they represent. Then, depending on the demand, a number of regional SPSV groupings will be formed. Attendees will be required to meet certain terms and conditions, including establishing and following meeting agendas, codes of conduct etc.

**Likely Impact:** Puts information sharing on a more formal, recorded footing. Gives regional representatives a designated means of interaction with the Commission. Industry better informed of developments and Commission activities. Addresses any perceived concerns of the regions not being adequately represented.

Stakeholder	Benefits	Costs
Exchequer	None	None
New Entrants	None	None
Existing Drivers	Better informed of developments.  Ability to highlight concerns on an ongoing basis.	None
SPSV Users	None	None
Dispatch Operators	Better informed of developments;  Ability to highlight concerns on an ongoing basis.	None
Fleet Owners/Multiple Licence Holders	None	None
The Commission	Adds further structure to regional communication process.  Helps ensure regional trends/differentials are considered – better information gathering.  May be used to disseminate data and information.  Further evidences the evidence based decision policy/decision making process.	Cost of establishing up-to-date list of regional representatives.  Staff time spent at meeting.  Facility rental.

**Critical Success Factor(s):** A contract between all parties on the purpose, attendees, agenda and code of conduct for the meetings. Industry representatives must also undertake to communicate the outcomes of the meetings to the operators they are representing.

**Other Requirements/Issues:** In order to be successful, attending representatives would have to undertake to actively and accurately forward the results of meeting to their members.

**OPTION 3: ENHANCE AND INCREASE CIRCULATION OF END OF YEAR REPORT**

**Description:** Following the audit of its regional and national representative contact details, the Commission will be better placed to disseminate essential data to the most relevant stakeholders. This will include the end of year report.

**Likely Impact:** Greater assurance that the correct stakeholders are receiving up-to-date and relevant information.

Stakeholder	Benefits	Costs
Exchequer	None	None
New Entrants	Better informed of developments, assuming their representatives keep them informed or direct them to the information.	None
Existing Drivers	Better informed of developments, assuming their representatives keep them informed or direct them to the information.	None
SPSV Users	None	None

Dispatch Operators	Better informed of developments;	None
Fleet Owners/Multiple Licence Holders	None	None
The Commission	Adds depth to the information provision process.	Admin and Postage.
<b>Critical Success Factor(s):</b> Industry representatives must undertake to communicate the information to the operators they are representing, or at least point them to the information		
<b>Other Requirements/Issues:</b> End of year report available on website and is often out of date with current events by the time it is published as it must first be approved by Minister and laid before the Houses.		

## 3.2 Making Information more accessible

<b>OPTION 4: REDEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE AS AN INFORMATION PROVISION TOOL</b>		
<b>Description:</b> The development of the Commission's website to make it more user friendly and to host the WAV register, the public register, and provide up-to-date market and other data.		
<b>Likely Impact:</b> A more user-friendly and interactive information provision tool. A number of existing and planned initiatives will also require the use of the website. For example, the planned creation of a section for people with additional accessible booking requirements.		
<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Exchequer	None	None
New Entrants	Will find the website more informative and easy to navigate.	None
Existing Drivers	Will find the website more informative and easy to navigate.	None
SPSV Users	Will find the website more informative and easy to navigate.  May have a section specifically for people with a disability who wish to avail of a SPSV service.	None
Dispatch Operators	Will find the website more informative and easy to navigate.	None
Fleet Owners/Multiple Licence Holders	Will find the website more informative and easy to navigate.	None
The Commission	May reduce the number of queries from industry and consumers.  May form part of the Commission's objectives regarding making the licensing process as efficient as possible, and the objective of improving accessibility to SPSV services.	Cost of redeveloping the website.
<b>Critical Success Factor(s):</b> Clear understanding of user-requirements for the website. Clear policy on managing and updating the website.		
<b>Other Requirements/Issues:</b> Ongoing internal management of the website to ensure it is up to date at all times.		

**OPTION 5: REDEVELOPMENT OF THE INDUSTRY NEWSLETTER**

**Description:** Redevelopment of the industry newsletter to make it more accessible (in terms of language and layout) and to include data relevant to operators.

**Likely Impact:** The Commission can use the newsletter to provide readers with updates on developments.

Stakeholder	Benefits	Costs
Exchequer	None	None
New Entrants	Will find the newsletter more informative and easy to navigate.	None
Existing Drivers	Will find the newsletter more informative and easy to navigate.	None
SPSV Users	None.	None
Dispatch Operators	Will find the newsletter more informative and easy to navigate.	None
Fleet Owners/Multiple Licence Holders	Will find the newsletter more informative and easy to navigate.	None
The Commission	May reduce the number of queries from industry.	Cost of redeveloping the newsletter.

**Critical Success Factor(s):** Clear understanding of user-requirements for the newsletter.

**Other Requirements/Issues**

**OPTION 6: THE PROVISION OF MARKET DATA TO NEW ENTRANTS PRIOR TO THEIR INVESTMENT IN THE INDUSTRY**

**Description:** The Commission to make data available to potential new entrants regarding the market conditions in their area, together with entry costs and earnings capability (where available). This could be hosted on the website and made available with licence application forms.

**Likely Impact:** This will help inform the decision making of those considering making an investment and entering the SPSV industry, thus reducing irrational market entry.

Stakeholder	Benefits	Costs
Exchequer	None	None
New Entrants	Easier to make rational business case for market entry.	None
Existing Drivers	Don't have to compete as many drivers if irrational entry is reduced.	None
SPSV Users	None	None
Dispatch Operators	None	None
Fleet Owners/Multiple Licence Holders	None	None
The Commission	Helps reduce irrational market entry.	Low if data on website only. Higher costs if the data has to be distributed to Garda stations and driver skills development test centres.

**Critical Success Factor(s):** the availability of relevant information, and this being communicated in an accessible fashion.

**Other Requirements/Issues:** The Commission must ensure that it presents the data in a neutral fashion, i.e. that it is neither promoting or discouraging the investment decision.

**OPTION 7: MORE PROACTIVE PROVISION OF DATA ON ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY AND PROSECUTIONS**

**Description:** Enforcement activity and prosecutions to be proactively communicated, in the newsletter, website, regional SPSV and local newspapers. Subject to only providing data which is publicly available.

**Likely Impact:** More widespread communication of enforcement and prosecutions may act to disincentives inappropriate or illegal practices by SPSV operators. Greater understanding by industry of the level of enforcement.

Stakeholder	Benefits	Costs
Exchequer	None	None
New Entrants	None	None
Existing Drivers	May increase compliance levels	None
SPSV Users	May increase compliance levels	None
Dispatch Operators	May increase compliance levels	None
Fleet Owners/Multiple Licence Holders	None	
The Commission	Increased compliance, assuming publication of data acts as a deterrent. Better able to demonstrate level of effort in this area on an ongoing basis.	None

**Critical Success Factor(s):** Interest from stakeholders. For example, the Commission cannot control whether journalists are interested in attending court and reporting on prosecutions in the SPSV industry.

**Other Requirements/Issues:** Only publicly available data can be published. Also, the Commission must be cognisant of over-emphasising its enforcement activities if it is likely to have an unwarranted negative impact on demand for SPSV services.

**OPTION 8: DRIVER AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS**

**Description:** The Commission to run, alone or in conjunction with other groups, driver awareness campaigns. Possible topics suggested include: working hours and health and safety.

**Likely Impact:** The aim will be to provide drivers with information that will be to their benefit, and possible to their customers also.

Stakeholder	Benefits	Costs
Exchequer	None	None
New Entrants	None	None
Existing Drivers	Benefit of information provided to them.	None
SPSV Users	Depending on the information provided to them.	None
Dispatch Operators	Benefit of information provided to them	None
Fleet Owners/Multiple Licence Holders	None	None
The Commission	Form part of the approach to reaching policy objectives around health and safety, quality improvement and so on.	Will depend on how information is delivered (e.g. website, newsletter, media), and whether it is co-funded with other agencies.

**Critical Success Factor(s):**

**Other Requirements/Issues:** Government wish to see cutback in advertising spend, therefore any commitment in this area must be cost effective.

**OPTION 9: BUSINESS PROCESS GUIDE TO EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS**

**Description:** The Commission cannot licence the sale of equipment in the SPSV industry. Therefore under this option, the Commission could invites companies to register interest in receiving updates re equipment changes (roof signs, meters etc)– creates a database of interested suppliers. Commission prepares a leaflet/information pack for suppliers and distributes, including recommended dos and don'ts and how to interact with the Commission to ensure that they are providing equipment to bona fide operators.

**Likely Impact:** Makes it more difficult for illegal operators to access equipment, plus ensures that suppliers are up-to-date with equipment standards and correct controls to put in place.

Stakeholder	Benefits	Costs
Exchequer	None	None
Equipment Suppliers	Kept up-to-date on vehicle equipment requirements  Reduced the commercial costs and negative publicity of being found to provide equipment which does not meet the Commission's standards, or equipment to illegal operators	Admin costs of contacting the Commission/checking customers driver licence forms etc.
New Entrants	Greater confidence that supplier is selling equipment that will meet vehicle standard requirements.	None
Existing Drivers	Greater confidence that supplier is selling equipment that will meet vehicle standard requirements.	None
SPSV Users	Further ensures SPSV service provision in licensed vehicles	None
Dispatch Operators	None	None
Fleet Owners/Multiple Licence Holders	None	None
The Commission	Makes it more difficult for unlicensed operators to access equipment. Easier to implement changes (e.g. roof sign and the Q mark, coding numbers, set operating requirements for meters etc)  Helps identify suppliers for consultation	Minor set-up costs.

**Critical Success Factor(s):**

**Other Requirements/Issues:**

### 3.3 Enhancing data collection and sharing

<b>OPTION 10: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON APPLICATIONS AND RENEWAL FORMS</b>		
<b>Description:</b> With a focus on data relevant to tax compliance, insurance, visa status, other employment status etc.		
<b>Likely Impact:</b> The collection of additional information on application and renewal would enable a greater understanding of the shape of the industry. Data collected would also facilitate third party enforcement checks by agencies such as the Revenue Commissioners (tax), Department of Social and Family Affairs (welfare), Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (visa status) and insurance companies.		
<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Exchequer/Govt	A potentially low cost means of checking that operators are compliant in areas relevant to the Exchequer (e.g. welfare, tax)	None
New Entrants	Levels the playing field for compliant drivers by reducing competition from drivers that are operating illegally.	Time related to providing information.
Existing Drivers	Levels the playing field for compliant drivers by reducing competition from drivers that are operating illegally.	Time related to providing information.
SPSV Users	Improvements in compliance is to the benefit of consumers.	None
Dispatch Operators	Affiliated drivers more likely to be 'fit and proper'.	None
Fleet Owners/Multiple Licence Holders	If they are renting licences, then they benefit from greater assurance that driver is fit and proper.	None
The Commission	Greater assurance that operators are fit and proper persons.  Facilitates the collection of data that will ensure an up-to-date picture of the shape of the industry	If the Commission takes over the process this will require additional resources and systems development. This would build on their existing systems.
An Gardai	Greater assurance that operators are fit and proper persons.	Would increase the administrative costs to Gardai. Gardai would have to redevelop their IT systems and information collecting practices.
<b>Critical Success Factor(s):</b> More feasible if Commission is licensing authority. Information collected subject to data protection legislation – some information may not be within the Commission's remit or powers to collect.		
<b>Other Requirements/Issues:</b> Also dependent on third party data sharing and IT developments.		

### OPTION 11: FURTHER DATA SHARING WITH THIRD PARTY AGENCIES

**Description:** Further liaison with third party agencies that have an enforcement role (e.g. officials from the Revenue Commissioners, Immigration etc) to identify what data they would be interested in and if and how this data could be exchanged.

**Likely Impact:** The Commission is not responsible for enforcing compliance with regard to visa status, tax affairs and so on. However, as it collects data through the licensing process, it is in may be in a position to pass data to other agencies as part of their compliance checking activities. This would help facilitate the enforcement activities of third party agencies.

Stakeholder	Benefits	Costs
Exchequer	A potentially low cost means of checking that operators are compliant in areas relevant to the Exchequer (e.g. welfare, tax)	None
New Entrants	Levels the playing field for compliant drivers by reducing competition from drivers that are operating illegally.	Time related to providing information.
Existing Drivers	Levels the playing field for compliant drivers by reducing competition from drivers that are operating illegally.	Time related to providing information.
SPSV Users	Greater assurance that operators are fit and proper persons.	None
Dispatch Operators	Affiliated drivers more likely to be 'fit and proper'.	None
Fleet Owners/Multiple Licence Holders	If they are renting licences, then they benefit from greater assurance that driver is fit and proper.	None
The Commission	Greater assurance that operators are fit and proper persons.	If the Commission takes over the process this will require additional resources and systems development. This would build on their existing systems.

**Critical Success Factor(s):** the exchange of any data would be subject to the usual data protection and privacy laws. The ability to exchange data is subject to the third parties having compatible data management systems in place.

**Other Requirements/Issues:**

### OPTION 12: USE OF IN-VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY TO COLLECT DATA

**Description:** The use of on-board technology such as tachographs of the taximeter to provide relevant data, e.g. average working hours and vehicle utilisation rates

**Likely Impact:** Using sample returns from agreeable operators has the potential to improve estimates of data on vehicle utilisation rates, working hours, industry earnings etc. This would help inform the policy making process.

Stakeholder	Benefits	Costs
Exchequer	None	None
New Entrants	Access to more up-to-date industry data, which would help inform the entry decision – therefore reduces irrational entry.	Minimal. The on-board technology will not be introduced primarily for the purpose of data collection, but rather for other purposes (e.g. the use of a tachograph would be primarily for health and safety and working hours, a taximeters primary function is the calculation of the fare).
Existing Drivers	Access to more up-to-date industry data.	Minimal. The on-board technology will not be introduced primarily for the purpose of data collection, but rather for other purposes (e.g. the use of a tachograph would be primarily for health and safety and working hours, a taximeters primary function is the calculation of the fare).
SPSV Users	None	None
Dispatch Operators	None	None

Fleet Owners/Multiple Licence Holders	None	None
The Commission	<p>Reduces data collection costs (e.g. surveys of drivers)</p> <p>Provides almost real-time updates on industry trends.</p> <p>Increases the accuracy of data as it reduces the reliance on self-declaration.</p>	The cost of investigating the use of on-board technology.
<b>Critical Success Factor(s):</b> the availability of low cost, effective technology. The collection of data would be subject to the normal data protection and privacy rules.		
<b>Other Requirements/Issues:</b>		

### 3.4 Other Impacts

The analysis above gave particular attention to the market impact of the proposed actions, the compliance burden for market operators, together with the impact on stakeholders (including those with additional accessibility requirements). The Department of the Taoiseach's Revised RIA guidelines (2009) also recommend that proposed measures are considered with respect to their impact on the environment, national competitiveness, the rights of citizens, and North-South and East-West relations. None of the options above would likely have a negative impact in any of these areas.

# 4. Consultations

## 4.1 Introduction

This section outlines the consultation process, and summarises the views expressed by various stakeholders. These views have helped to develop the proposed actions and have informed the Commission's analysis of the costs, benefits and impact of each measure.

It should be noted that this section gives only a high level summary of views expressed in the consultation process for ease of reference. Furthermore, the Commission is cognisant that the views of certain representatives may not be aligned to that of every single stakeholder.

## 4.2 The Consultation Process

The Commission seeks to consult with stakeholders on an ongoing basis. Following the publication of the Economic Review, the Commission invited interest parties to make a submission regarding the Economic Review recommendations. A number of these submissions addressed the subject of communication and data collection and provision, both highlighting issues and in some cases suggesting actions for improvement.

Following the receipt and review of the submissions, the Commission ran a national and regional consultation process to discuss this subject, together with wider industry issues. This concluded in June 2009. This included face-to-face consultations, phone consultations, and workshops. Communication and data collection and sharing was discussed with a broad range of stakeholders, including:

- **National driver representative groups:** The Commission held a number of one-to-one consultation with national driver representative groups, including SIPTU, the National Taxi Drivers Union (NTDU), Irish Taxi Drivers Federation (ITDF) and the National Private Hire and Taxi Association (NPHTA). A workshop with the umbrella group for these four organisations was also held;
- **Regional representatives:** The Commission invited over 25 regional representatives to workshops around the country. In the cases where representatives could not attend these meetings, the Commission made a number of follow-up telephone calls to these, to discuss accessibility and other issues;
- **Dispatch operators:** The Commission held a workshop with the Taxi Company Owners Association (a representative group) together with City Cabs, Xpert Cabs, and National Radio Cabs;

- **Policy Groups:** the Commission discussed met with a wide range of policy groups, including disability awareness groups.

Following the conclusion of consultation process, the Commission presented a summary of the process to the Advisory Council. Feedback from the Advisory Council has also informed this process.

## 4.3 Industry Representatives

In summary, industry representatives made the following recommendations and requests. In relation to communication they highlighted the following:

- Regional reps call for regional taxi for more structured ongoing consultations. The consultation process indicated that the ad-hoc nature of the Commission–regional representative communication approach has led to an underestimation by representatives about the significant efforts spent by the Commission on consultation;
- Greater pre-warning to industry groups prior to publicly announcing initiatives and reforms. Some representatives did acknowledge the logistical difficulties with this however;
- Greater demonstration or indication that their suggestions or points of view had been listened to and considered.

Representatives' main points regarding data provision included:

- Enforcement activity and prosecutions need to be proactively communicated, in the newsletter, website and local newspaper, so that it will act as a disincentive for incompliant behaviour. An interesting discovery at the regional consultations was the evident underestimation by representatives of Commission enforcement activity in their region;
- Entry and operating costs, and income potential data for taxis, hackneys and limo operators should be produced and provided to applicants, so that they don't over estimate the earning potential in the industry;
- That the Commission industry newsletter and website be made more "interesting" and accessible to all readers;
- Efforts should be made to share data that ensure operators are tax compliant. Some representatives felt that "double-jobbers" may not be tax compliant, and this was unfair to compliant operators.

## 4.4 Policy Groups

The Deafhear representative stressed the need for the greater promotion of alternative accessible booking services for the hearing impaired. A number of the disability awareness groups also stressed the need to identify and promote dispatch operators with significant wheelchair accessible fleets.

Improving accessibility, through data collection and provision and other means, is discussed in great detail in the Commission's accessibility RIA (forthcoming).

# 5. Actions & Dependencies

## 5.1 Introduction

Based on the evaluation of the proposed actions, this section presents the Commission's preferred actions for moving forward. Consideration is then given to how these actions will be enforced, and the arrangements that will be put in place to periodically review their effectiveness.

## 5.2 Preferred Actions

### 5.2.1 MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ENGAGEMENT

#### **ACTION 1 REGIONAL SPSV COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Commission will update its list of regional industry representatives. Interested representatives will be invited to submit their contact details and details of who they represent. This updated regional representative list will be used as the basis for communication in 2010, including regional representative meetings with the Commission. For example, there might be six regional representatives on a "south west" panel that meets with Commission representatives twice a year. The agenda for each meeting may be agreed before the meeting takes place. The practice of meeting with the national representative bodies would continue.

### 5.2.2 MAKING INFORMATION MORE ACCESSIBLE

#### **ACTION 2 REDEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE AS AN INFORMATION PROVISION TOOL**

The Commission will re-develop its website. The reforms and actions to be carried out over the 2010 – 2012 period will be communicated through the website, together with the national and regional stakeholder meetings. It is also planned that the website will host a section on promoting and identifying accessible SPSV service providers.

#### **ACTION 3 THE PROVISION OF MARKET DATA TO NEW ENTRANTS PRIOR TO THEIR INVESTMENT IN THE INDUSTRY**

The Commission will develop data and business planning information which will be made available to those considering entering the SPSV market. This will include the latest available data on operating costs and other market statistics.

### 5.2.3 ENHANCING DATA COLLECTION AND PROVISION

#### **ACTION 4 EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS' GUIDELINES**

The Commission will develop a set of guidelines that equipment suppliers should follow to ensure that they are providing vehicle equipment that meets the requisite standards, and to make certain that they follow a process of ensuring they do not facilitate illegal SPSV industry activities (e.g. what questions to ask the customer, when to call the Commission etc).

#### **ACTION 5 MORE PROACTIVE PROVISION OF DATA ON ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY AND PROSECUTIONS.**

The Commission will build on its existing practice of providing data on enforcement and prosecutions through the use of the website, newsletter and other available media.

#### **ACTION 6 COLLECTION OF ADDITIONAL DRIVER DATA DURING APPLICATION AND RENEWAL PROCESS**

The Commission will, subject to co-operation of the Gardai who are the current driver licensing authority, seek to collect additional data on drivers during the licence application and renewal process. This may be used to collect more detailed industry-related statistics, and to facilitate third party enforcement activities for which the Commission has no responsibility (e.g. tax compliance). The Commission is seeking to take over the administration of the driver licensing process from the Gardai. Amongst other things, this will facilitate more frequent and in-depth data collection.

#### **ACTION 7 INCREASED DATA SHARING TO FACILITATE THIRD PARTY ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES AND COMPLIANCE**

The Commission will interact further with third parties to consider what data can be collected and shared to facilitate them in their enforcement activities. This will be subject to existing data protection and privacy legislation and guidelines.

## **5.3 Enforcement and Compliance**

There are no significant enforcement or compliance issues related to these actions.

## **5.4 Reviewing the Effectiveness of the Actions**

The Commission will review the effectiveness of the measures on an ongoing basis. In particular, feedback from industry and user representatives will be sought.