



Commission for  
**Communications Regulation**

# **Information Notice - Wholesale High Quality Access Market Review**

Further consultation on certain aspects of the MI WHQA Market

## **Information Notice**

**Reference:** ComReg 17/28

**Version:** Final

**Date:** 07/04/2017

**An Coimisiún um Rialáil Cumarsáide**  
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## Additional Information

Document No:	17/28
Date:	7 April 2017

## ComReg's intention to further consult on the Wholesale High Quality Access Market

1. In August 2016, ComReg published its consultation on its market analysis of the Wholesale High Quality Access ('**WHQA**') markets ('**WHQA Consultation**').<sup>1</sup>
2. WHQA services, also commonly known as "wholesale leased line" services, play an important role in facilitating the provision of Information and Communications technology ('**ICT**') services to medium and large sized businesses, including multi-national businesses, as well as public sector institutions (e.g. hospitals, Government departments, educational facilities). In this respect, WHQA is a wholesale input into the provision of various retail data connectivity services for businesses, including for use in the provision of internet access, facilitating connectivity between a businesses' site locations for the purpose of transferring information and/or communications, and data backup/remote storage solutions such as cloud stage/computing. WHQA services are also important network inputs for service providers themselves.
3. In the WHQA Consultation, ComReg set out its preliminary view that there were a number of separate WHQA markets, each of which were national in their geographic scope. These were<sup>2</sup>:
  - a. a Low Bandwidth Traditional Interface Wholesale High Quality Access market ('**LB TI WHQA Market**');
  - b. a High Bandwidth Traditional Interface Wholesale High Quality Access market ('**HB TI WHQA Market**'); and
  - c. a Market for Modern Interface Wholesale High Quality Access ('**MI WHQA Market**').
4. Furthermore, ComReg was of the preliminary view that no Service Provider ('**SP**') was likely to have Significant Market Power ('**SMP**') in the HB TI WHQA Market or the MI WHQA Market.

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<sup>1</sup> Market Review: Wholesale High Quality Access at a Fixed Location, ComReg Document No. 16/69, dated 18 August 2016 ('**WHQA Consultation**'). See <https://www.comreg.ie/publication/market-review-wholesale-high-quality-access-fixed-location/> for further details.

<sup>2</sup> The analysis underpinning ComReg's preliminary views on the definition of the WHQA markets is set out in section 5 of the WHQA Consultation.

5. In October 2016, ComReg received 12 submissions from respondents regarding the analysis set out in the WHQA Consultation (**'Respondents' Submissions'**).<sup>3</sup> The Respondents' Submissions, subsequent meetings with industry stakeholders and retail end users, alongside further data gathered by ComReg, have raised a number of issues that ComReg considers require further detailed consideration.
6. These considerations largely relate to matters relevant to the MI WHQA product and geographic market definition and, as a consequence, to the assessment of competition in that market. They include (but are not limited to) the following:
  - Many Respondents' Submissions disagreed with ComReg's preliminary view that MI WHQA provided over point-to-point (**'P2P'**) radio links were an effective substitute for wired MI WHQA connectivity.
  - Some Respondents' Submissions raised issues surrounding the use of MI WHQA services as network inputs by SPs such as for 'backhaul' services, which can be used, in turn, to support the supply of a range of wholesale and retail services.
  - Many Respondents Submissions raised concerns around the use of MI WHQA to supply connectivity to multi-site retail customers who have multiple premises in geographically dispersed locations.
7. Having assessed such information and having regard to other data gathered, ComReg intends to further consult on the above (and related) matters.

## Next Steps

8. In seeking to further assess the above issues, ComReg intends over the coming weeks to collect further information from service providers using its statutory information gathering powers
9. ComReg understands that further consultation in relation to the MI WHQA Market may impact on stakeholders in terms of the future regulatory environment in which they will operate. Given this, ComReg will of course endeavour to complete this market analysis as expeditiously as possible, and in any event to publish a response to the initial WHQA Consultation and further consultation (**'Response and Further**

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<sup>3</sup> Market Review: Wholesale High Quality Access at a Fixed Location – Non-Confidential Responses Received to ComReg Document 16/69 , ComReg Document No. 16/69, dated 18 August 2016 (**'Respondents Submissions'**). See <https://www.comreg.ie/publication/market-review-wholesale-high-quality-access-fixed-location-non-confidential-responses-received-comreg-document-1669/> for further details

**Consultation**') in Q3 2017. This timeline is, however, predicated on the analysis of responses to the Statutory Information Requests.