



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

Directory Information Access Codes

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Directory Information Access Codes

Introduction

The Director of Telecommunication Regulation (“the Director”) is committed to facilitating the development of competition for liberalised telecommunications services, and to taking the necessary regulatory initiatives to ensure transition to a fully liberalised and competitive market.

From 1st December 1998, the Director will allocate blocks of telephone numbers to all appropriately licenced telecommunications service providers, who will in turn, either individually or in blocks, allocate those numbers to their customers. It is essential for the development of the industry, and also in the consumer interest that comprehensive directory information is available on all allocated numbers. Callers to a directory information service may not know which telecommunications service provider has allocated the number to the person whom they wish to call, so it is essential that the directory information service which they call has listings for all allocated numbers.

A directory information service in its basic form is not a telecommunications service. However in a multi-operator environment, it is necessary for users of telecommunications services to have ready access to comprehensive directory information. The most common access method is by dialling a short code.

This document invites applications for access codes from eligible persons, to provide directory information services.

This is not a legal document. The Director may amend it from time to time. This document is without prejudice to the legal position and to the rights and duties of the Director to regulate the market generally.

Background

In July of 1998, the Director published Decision Notice D2/98, "Numbering in Ireland for the 21st Century". That Decision Notice presented the outcome of a public consultation on numbering, including its related programme of actions. It also took account of the decision to bring forward the date for full telecommunications liberalisation in Ireland to 1st December 1998. The programme of actions for the ODTR included allocation of directory information access codes. In D2/98, the Director stated that the three existing Irish Directory Assistance codes (i.e. 1190, 1197, 1198) will be withdrawn and these will be replaced by new codes which will provide access to services from a number of competing directory information service providers. The new codes will use numbers beginning with the digits 118, as

recommended by the CEPT¹ for harmonised European directory information access codes.

Since then, the Director has set up the advisory group “Task Force on Numbering” (TFN), whose deliberations have included consideration of the various options for allocation of directory information access codes. The TFN has concluded its consideration of this question, and has provided a recommendation to the Director.

Regulatory Regime

A new licensing regime, under section 111 of the Postal and Telecommunications Services Act, 1983 (as amended) is now commencing. All telecommunications service providers to whom blocks of numbers are allocated by the Director are required to possess a “General Telecommunications Licence” as defined in ODTR document 98/44. This licence includes provisions relating to access to database listings for the purpose of provision of directory information services. Further information on licensing may be obtained from the ODTR web site at <http://www.odtr.ie/>.

At present, a directory information service is not a licensable service under section 111 of the Postal and Telecommunications Services Act, 1983 (as amended). However the provision of certain value added services may require a licence if they involve provision of telecommunications services.

Article 6 of the European Parliament and Council Directive 98/10/EC of 26 February 1998 includes provisions relating to directory services. Regulations transposing this directive into Irish law are currently being prepared by the Department of Public Enterprise. The regulatory regime for directory information services will need to take account of these regulations and all legislation in force from time to time pertaining to directory information.

The Director will review the regulatory regime for directory information services in the first quarter of 1999, and following this review may amend the conditions of allocation of directory information access codes. All directory information access code allocations made before this review will expire on 31st May 1999, unless the relevant directory information service provider has in the meantime fully satisfied the conditions of the prevailing regime, as amended following such review.

Definitions

Directory service: means a service which provides information on telephone numbers of subscribers who have consented to being included in such a service, and is otherwise in conformance with Data Protection requirements.

National Directory service: A directory service which provides information on allocations of numbers to subscribers from the Irish numbering scheme to callers

¹ Committee of European Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authorities.

located in the Republic of Ireland. A national directory service includes geographic numbers allocated to subscribers in Northern Ireland.

International Directory service: A directory service which provides information on allocations of numbers to subscribers from the numbering schemes of other countries.

Services

Directory information access codes will be allocated to eligible directory information service providers offering national only, or national and international directory information services. Provision has been made in the Irish numbering scheme to access geographic telephone numbers in Northern Ireland (by dialling 080/048). All national directory information services shall include full support for accessing Northern Ireland geographic numbers using this method. International directory information services may also provide support for Northern Ireland numbers.

Access Codes

All directory information services will be accessed using numbers in the following range:

118 10 to 118 89.

A single code or pair of codes will be allocated to each eligible applicant, depending on whether the applicant intends to provide national only or national and international directory information services.

Enhancements (e.g. call completion) may be included with basic directory information services, in order to provide added value to service users. However, applicants should clearly understand that the short codes being provided are for the basic directory information service, which should therefore form the core of the service offered. Provision of value added services might require the directory information service provider to obtain a telecommunications services licence under section 111 of the Postal and Telecommunications Services Act of 1983.

Directory information access codes shall only be used for providing access to directory information services; use for any purpose other than those described above may result in code withdrawal.

Service Level

In order to ensure that allocated directory information access codes are used to provide comprehensive services, it is the Director's intention that each recipient of code(s) provides a full national directory information service, which is capable of providing information on all allocated numbers (subject to data protection requirements).

Directory information service providers will require access to relevant numbering databases of telecommunications service providers licensed under section 111(2) of the Postal and Telecommunications Act, 1983 (as amended), in order to provide a full national directory information service. The Director is considering how best to achieve this, having regard to relevant legislation and licensing provisions. The Director considers that all recipients of directory information access codes should have the same rights and obligations in this regard.

In addition, the Director considers that recipients of directory information access codes will ensure the widest possible access to their service is available from the telecommunications networks of licensed telecommunications service providers, subject only to completion of commercial negotiations with network operators.

The mechanisms for enforcing conditions are under consideration.

Eligibility

Each applicant shall provide adequate information in its application to satisfy the ODTR that the allocation sought is justified and that it will be used for the purposes specified in this document. Supporting information should include/demonstrate the following:

- a description of the services planned, including (at outline level) expected growth patterns;
- evidence of technical capabilities for the implementation of own services;
- description of the degree to which any services to be offered rely on or are a re-direction / re-routing of directory information services fundamentally provided from elsewhere;
- a summary of the applicant's marketing plan for the intended services, including launch dates. This should include a description of any arrangements already made, by which telecommunications network operators will promote the applicant's services;
- plans, preparations or completed actions for accessing / accumulating comprehensive database information from any Irish network providers;
- availability of or definite plans for access to a call centre suitably equipped to handle directory information services
- quality of service targets;
- timescales for commencement of service following the allocation of code(s);
- any other information deemed by the applicant to be relevant to its application.

The ODTR reserves the right to request additional information at any time. Failure to provide sufficient information to process any application may delay the allocation, or cause the application to be excluded from the start-up allocation procedure.

Selection of Code

Qualifying applicants will be given the option to indicate their preferred choice from the available access codes. Preferences should be indicated using the form attached at annex 1.

With the exception of the “start-up” procedure, directory information access codes will be allocated on a *first-come-first-served* basis, subject to adequate information being provided in the application. Failure to provide adequate information may result in processing of the application being delayed.

On the first day of allocation of directory information access codes, it may be expected that a number of coinciding applications will be received for the same code. To cater for this possibility, a separate “start-up” application procedure will be used, as described below.

Start-up Allocation Procedure

At the start-up of allocation of directory information access codes, there will be a short period during which all applications received from eligible applicants will be deemed to have been received at the same time. This “open” period will end at 17.30 on **3rd December 1998**.

In the first instance, all applications will be assessed for eligibility, and all eligible applications will progress to selection of the directory information access code. No further distinction will be made between eligible applicants; they will be regarded as equal.

Up to two codes will be allocated to each applicant, one for national directory information access, and one for international directory information access. Applications received during the “open” period should indicate the five preferred codes for each service, clearly showing the order of preference, as shown in annex 1.

Applications may be made for only a national directory information access code or for both national and international codes.

All national directory information access codes will be allocated first, before any international directory information access codes are allocated.

If a first preference code is available, the applicant is deemed to be eligible, and no other application has been received for that code, then it will be selected for the applicant.

Where two or more coinciding first preference applications are received for the same code, a fair and neutral mechanism will be used to decide who is selected for allocation of the code, e.g. lottery. All first preference codes will be allocated before commencing with second preferences, and similarly for 3rd, 4th and 5th preferences.

Conditions of Allocation

Conditions of allocation will include, but will not be limited to the following:

Withdrawal or Change of Code

A directory information access code may be withdrawn by the Director if it is not being used to provide a full directory service to the public; if the individual or company to whom it has been allocated is found to be in breach of the conditions of allocation, is declared bankrupt, or if withdrawal is in the overall national interest.

Service Level

Directory information service providers to whom access codes are allocated will be required to provide a comprehensive service. Failure to do so may result in recovery of the allocated code.

Transfer and Ownership

A directory information access code shall not be transferable, and may only be used to route calls to the individual or company to whom it has been allocated by the ODTR.

The individual or company to whom a directory information access code has been allocated shall have a right of use in relation to the allocated code, (subject to allocation conditions), but shall have no proprietary rights in relation to that code.

Duration and Expiry of Allocation

Allocations made to any directory information service provider who does not comply with the regulatory regime as amended following the review, will expire on 31st May 1999. The Director may set a time limit for the allocation, which will be communicated to the licensee before 31st May 1999.

Charges

At present, there is no charge for code allocations. This situation may change in the future.

Date of Operation

Code allocations will be made to all initially qualifying applicants on the same notification date, *11th December 1998*. The Director will also specify the date from when service may commence on the allocated codes.

Withdrawal of Existing 119X Codes

To provide continuity for consumers, the current 119X directory information access codes will continue in operation for a suitable period after the new 118 XX codes have been allocated. Telephone directories published in 1999 should include the new 118XX access codes in place of the old 119X codes. The old 119X access codes will be withdrawn in January 2000.

Invitation for Applications

The Director now invites applications for directory information access codes, in accordance with this document. The applicant should indicate its preferred code or code-pair, by identifying the 118 XX code(s) requested.

Applications should be addressed to:

Commission for Communications Regulation,
Abbey Court,
Irish Life Centre,
Lower Abbey Street,
Dublin 1.

Applications can also be emailed to numapps@comreg.ie

Applications should be marked:

"Directory Information Access Codes - Applications".

Annex 1

Preferred Directory Information Access Codes

Name and Address of Applicant: _____

Preferred National Directory Information Access Code in the range 118 10 to 118 89:

1. 118 __
2. 118 __
3. 118 __
4. 118 __
5. 118 __

Preferred International Directory Information Access Code in the range 118 10 to 118 89:

1. 118 __
2. 118 __
3. 118 __
4. 118 __
5. 118 __