



**competition commission**  
*south africa*

**Media Statement**

**For Immediate Release**

**16 September 2022**

**ONLINE INTERMEDIATION PLATFORM MARKET INQUIRY CALLS FOR COMMENTS FROM  
SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION AND TRAVEL SERVICE PROVIDERS**

The Online Intermediation Platform Market Inquiry (OIPMI) calls on stakeholders including short-term accommodation providers, hotels, activity providers, and travel service providers to submit comments, by 30 September 2022, on the provisional findings and recommendations set out in Chapter 2 of the provisional report.

The call for comments follows the July 13, 2022, release of the provisional report which outlines its findings and recommendations after 14 months of evidence-gathering, public hearings, and in-camera hearings into online intermediation platforms: including eCommerce, app stores, travel & accommodation platforms, food delivery, and online classifieds.

The purpose of the OIPMI is to follow an evidenced-based approach in identifying market features of online intermediation platforms that may impede, distort or restrict competition; and to improve the participation of SMEs and HDPs in these markets.

The OIPMI covers platforms such as Booking.com, Google, Airbnb, Travelstart, Lekkeslaap, Viator, Rentalcars, Busbud, Tripadvisor and more.

Some of the notable findings of Chapter 2 of the provisional OIPMI report include:

- Booking.com and Airbnb have been identified as leading platforms for accommodation service provision as they attract the predominant online consumer traffic in their market category, on which accommodation providers are relatively dependent on to access online customers.
- The OIPMI has identified features that may impact competition between platforms and accommodation providers including the application of wide and narrow price parity clauses and aggressive accommodation-funded discounts (often in exchange for enhanced visibility on the platform). Other restrictive features include the excessive sale of visibility or sponsored ranking on the platform and a lack of clear identification of sponsored results as advertising, and commission fee discrimination between independent accommodation providers and large global hotel chains.

- Contractual issues that appear to be unfair between platforms and accommodation providers including a lack of parity in payment terms, dispute resolution, and onerous overbooking and cancellation policies.

Lastly, the OIPMI has identified concerns in relation to Google Search. While these concerns mostly impact competition between platforms that depend on the search engine to drive consumer traffic, travel and accommodation service providers may also depend on Google Search as part of their marketing strategy.

Written submissions can be sent via e-mail to [oielmi@compcom.co.za](mailto:oielmi@compcom.co.za), alternatively, the OIPMI team is amenable to in-camera meetings. The OIPMI is able to treat your identity as confidential although the information you provide will be used by the OIPMI as part of evidence gathering.

Comments from other stakeholders such as academics, think tanks, public interest groups, are also welcome. We encourage travel and accommodation providers to provide their written comments to the provisional report by **30 September 2022**. The full report on Travel and Accommodation (Chapter 2) and the Provisional Summary Report can be obtained [here](#).

The final OIPMI report is due to be released in November 2022.

**[ENDS]**

**Issued by:**

Siyabulela Makunga, Spokesperson

On behalf of: The Competition Commission of South Africa

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