



Future developments

By the end of 2010, we are likely to see the transposition of a new Interoperability Directive - replacing the existing Directives - into UK law. This will extend the scope of interoperability, and introduce various features aimed at making the system more responsive to the needs of the rail industry, including:

- Type approval of subsystems
- Formalised process for checklist for cross-acceptance
- Enhanced role for national rules
- New definition of 'project in advanced stages'
- New procedure for derogations
- Changed procedures for authorisation, including incorporation of Safety Directive provision on placing in service of in-use rolling stock (Article 14)
- Simplification of registers
- Infrastructure register to contain existing assets
- Enhanced cost : benefit analysis requirements

To realise the wider opportunities of an interoperable railway system, the Department will be working to improve the structure of Technical Specifications for interoperability. Greater cooperation at Member State level will be required to optimise the commercial value of the TSI drafting process and new systems will be developed to improve the quality and reduce the duration of the TSI drafting cycle. Consideration will also be given to the ability of Interoperability to improve the capacity of new suppliers to access and add value to the UK railway. The development and application of Interoperability Constituents has the potential to add substantial value to the UK, but further work with the Commission is required to ensure that this approach delivers optimal value to UK industry.

The extent to which the interoperability process may advance railway innovations is under discussion with the European Railway Agency. While specific processes exist to enable the delivery of railway innovations, these processes are expected to evolve significantly with the lessons learned from the placing of new innovations within an interoperable railway system. To this end, the Department is keen to develop further processes which ensure that the UK railway industry is fully engaged with the interoperability process and able to provide the Department with advice on specific areas and of the need for future developments.

Advancing the processes to assess commercial and technical proposals, which aim to extend the interoperable railway environment, will be key to future developments. The Department intends to work with the industry to understand the cost-benefit of current practice and to determine the extent to which specific whole life costs and long-term benefits may be achieved with the adoption of new interoperability

proposals. Similar discussions will be undertaken at Member State level to ensure that the European Commission has sufficient technical and commercial data to develop legislation that continues to add value to the UK railway industry.

For related documents, pages and internet links, see the column on the right.