1. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE SIZE AND MAGNITUDE OF THE BUS & COACH SECTOR IN SOUTH AFRICA?

a. The sector is responsible for about 26% of all public transport commuter trips (450 million per annum). More than twice the size of the commuter rail services and representative of around 17 000 buses and coaches in SA.

b. Commuter services are provided in urban areas, rural – urban areas and deep rural areas. These services are provided by the private sector, municipalities as well as provincial bus companies and includes school bus services.

c. Long distance, inter-provincial and inter-state services are also provided with typical commuter buses, semi-luxury buses and coaches. These services also focus on tourist and charter services.

d. The sector also employs thousands of people in various capacities, many of whom are frontline staff dealing with the public daily, highlighting the risks associated with contact for all parties.

e. SABOA as an Industry association represents approximately 73% of the buses operating in the sector.

2. WHAT KIND OF ENGAGEMENTS HAVE YOU HAD WITH THE DIFFERENT BUS OPERATORS SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19?

a. SABOA is in daily contact with member organisations and has structured communication channels to both disseminate information and receive updates.

b. SABOA is actively engaging to keep abreast of the situation and address any arising challenges with the relevant authorities.
c. Member Operators have been proactive, and essential measures have been implemented:
   i. Awareness and education around the Covid-19 virus, with emphasis on the personal and individual responsibility for basic hygiene,
   ii. Elevated cleansing and sanitising of buses,
   iii. Focused business continuity strategies to minimise the risks and impact of the Covid-19 Virus.

f. A common challenge being experienced is the lack and availability of gloves, masks and alcohol-based sanitizers. This concern has been raised with the National Department of Transport.

3. HAVE YOU CONSIDERED CUTTING THE NUMBERS OF COMMUTERS IN A SINGLE BUS TO MINIMISE THE RISKS?
   a. At a meeting with the DoT on the 17 March 2020, SABOA proposed the reduction of bus loads.
   b. Operators require permission from the Transport Authorities to implement these measures, as it would mean additional trips to transport commuters, which have financial implications for government.
   c. Most commuter bus services are operated on behalf of the Transport Authorities and have strict contracting conditions attached to them.
   d. SABOA is awaiting government’s response in this regard.

4. WHAT PROGRAMMES HAVE YOU IMPLEMENTED AS PEOPLE START TRAVELLING TO DIFFERENT DESTINATIONS?
   a. Bus companies have heightened the focus on cleansing procedures. Buses are sanitised at depots.
   b. Drivers have been provided with gloves and masks albeit with stocks running low and or out.
   c. Companies have also introduced awareness programmes for staff and passengers that includes the general guidelines on washing of hands, social distancing, reporting of illnesses etc.
5. HOW HAS THE CLOSURE OF SOME BORDERS OF ENTRY AFFECTED THE BUS SERVICE?

a. The borders that were closed are mostly smaller border posts with low levels of commercial and public transport traffic.

b. The borders that we mainly operate through would be the main borders of Swaziland, Lesotho, Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia. These borders remain open and people still travel through them.

c. It is difficult at this stage to make a call on direct impact but the related agencies like the Cross-Border Agency and entities like CBBASA would be better positioned to make comment thereon.

6. HOW CAN COMMUTERS WHO ARE STILL PLANNING ON TRAVELLING GET INFORMATION ON YOUR INTERVENTIONS SO THAT THEY ARE AWARE AND CAN PERHAPS PREPARE THEMSELVES?

a. SABOA has made a detailed proposal to the DoT on actions to be taken to mitigate the risks of public transport (bus, rail and taxi).

b. The SABOA proposal, along with input from other transport sector stakeholders was planned for discussion at an Inter-Ministerial meeting schedule for the 20 March 2020.

c. SABOA awaits a public announcement by the National Department of Transport. The industry may also be called to a meeting to discuss implementation and other matters to be decided upon. We must, however, just be conscious of the overall limitation of 100 people per gathering.

d. For immediate and ongoing access to information, commuters generally have access to the service provider being used and their communication channels.

e. The public is also free to access SABOA via the traditional communication channels and platforms i.e. website, Twitter and Facebook pages.

f. SABOA will provide ongoing updates as the situation progresses.