



## **ADVOCACY WORKING GROUP**

### **2017-2020 Work Plan**

#### **MISSION**

The mission of the Advocacy Working Group (AWG) is to undertake projects, to develop practical tools and guidance, and to facilitate experience-sharing among ICN member agencies, in order to improve the effectiveness of ICN members in advocating the dissemination of competition principles and to promote the development of a competition culture within society.

Advocacy reinforces the value of competition by educating citizens, businesses and policy-makers. In addition to supporting the efforts of competition agencies in tackling private anti-competitive behavior, advocacy is an important tool in addressing public restrictions to competition. Competition advocacy in this context refers to those activities conducted by the competition agency, that are related to the promotion of a competitive environment by means of non-enforcement mechanisms, mainly through its relationships with other governmental entities and by increasing public awareness with regard to the benefits of competition.

#### **ORGANISATION**

The AWG has 68 ICN member agencies from 66 jurisdictions and 89 non-governmental advisors (NGAs).

The AWG is co-chaired by the Mexican Federal Economic Competition Commission, the Competition Commission of Singapore and the Swedish Competition Authority.

#### **LONG TERM GOALS**

In order to fulfill its mission, the AWG will seek to:

1. Provide a forum for ICN members to share their experiences and practices in the area of competition advocacy;
2. Provide practical tools and guidance in order to improve the effectiveness of members' advocacy activities;
3. Promote the use of the ICN's existing work products and tools in the area of competition advocacy.

## 2017-2020 STRATEGIC PLANS

Over the next three years, the AWG will guide its work program based on the following considerations.

### **Goal 1: Providing a forum for ICN members to share their experiences and practices in the area of competition advocacy.**

The AWG will continue to offer experience-sharing teleseminars on an ad-hoc basis and to organize workshops on topics of interest to its members. These activities will provide input for new work to be undertaken in the future.

In addition, the AWG will also consider developing initiatives with other international organizations and non-governmental organizations. In particular, the AWG will explore the possibility to continue organizing a joint Contest for Competition Advocacy, whereby the AWG will seek initiatives to promote the contributions made by ICN members to the Competition Advocacy Contest.

To better achieve Goal 1, the AWG will work with the Secretariat to create a “library of competition advocacy” and ensure that the ICN website will integrate all or most of AWG current resources, work-products and materials in a way that it will enhance the possibility of experience sharing and maximize its value, given the great diversity and creativity across competition agency advocacy initiatives.

### **Goal 2: Providing practical tools and guidance in order to improve the effectiveness of members' advocacy activities.**

#### *Continuing the Advocacy Strategy Project*

In the 2017-2020, the AWG will encourage experience sharing and discussion among ICN AWG Members and NGAs on the ways to improve the definition of their advocacy strategies by focusing on the different steps, processes and considerations around their advocacy actions, For instance, the project will consider the elaboration of an advocacy strategy and the consequent monitoring of the results and adjustment of the strategy. The ultimate objective of this project is to outline guiding principles in setting an effective advocacy strategy.

#### *Continuing the Market Studies Project*

In 2017-2020 the AWG will continue to expand the Market Studies Information Store with new input provided by ICN members. This project provides an opportunity to share the experience of ICN members with market studies experience in particular sectors. This can assist ICN members with identifying issues for study, approaches to particular market problems and other ICN members who may assist and advise them further.

#### *Implementing the Competition Assessment Project*

In 2017-2020 the AWG will focus on the implementation of the Recommended Practices on Competition Assessment through various awareness initiatives including the use of hypothetical case scenarios.

#### *Potential Future Topics*

Over the next three years, building on insights from the above projects and input by ICN members and mindful of potential overlap with other activities within the ICN or OECD, the AWG will explore new topics and issues, the opportunity to update existing Work Products as well as the potential for new guidance work.

**Goal 3: Promoting the familiarity with and use of AWG work products in the area of competition advocacy.**

In line with its Mission and long-term Work Plan, the AWG will also promote familiarity with and use of the AWG work products. The AWG will primarily focus on specific work products, such as the Recommended Practices on Competition Assessment, the Market Studies Good Practice Handbook and Guiding Principles, the Advocacy Toolkit and the Competition Culture Report. Specific initiatives to this end will include:

- a. Promoting the existing work products (with a focus on the most recent ones) in the context of teleseminars and/or workshops;
- b. Liaising with the ICN Advocacy and Implementation Network (AIN), responsible for the Advocacy and Implementation Support Program (AISUP);
- c. Promoting broader member and NGA involvement in the AWG activities; and,
- d. Improving the AWG's web-based tools and re-organizing the AWG section of the ICN website.

Specifically, the AWG will create a “library of competition advocacy” to allow for a greater visibility of AWG work products and create a platform where members are encouraged to inform others directly of their advocacy work and get value from the experience sharing.

## 2017-2018 Work Plan

### **Project 1 – Updating the existing AWG Market Studies Work (“Market Studies Project”).**

Objective: The Project seeks to update and revamp the existing AWG work-products on market studies and increase their dissemination among ICN members so that they can be more effectively used as a resource for authorities that have recently started conducting market studies, or are considering introducing market studies in their toolkit.

The Market Studies Project 2017-2018. The AWG will update the [Market Studies Information Store](#) and promote implementation initiatives in relation to the 2017 guiding principles in selecting and conducting market studies and the 2016 Market Studies Good Practice Handbook.

The AWG will continue the constructive dialogue with the OECD about synergies, complementarities and possible duplications between the groups’ work-streams on market studies, especially in relation to the OECD project concerning the drafting of a manual on how to perform market studies.

### **Project 2 – ICN Library of Competition Advocacy (“Library Project”)**

Objective. The AWG will improve the working group’s web-based tools and re-organize its section of the ICN website to allow for a greater visibility of the AWG work products.

The Library Project in 2017-2018. The AWG will reconsider the way that all past and current AWG work, resources and projects, can be integrated and enriched with new inputs from ICN members in one single database (a “Library of Competition Advocacy”) in a dedicated section of the new ICN website. In particular, the AWG will develop a configuration for the Library, identifying the structures and the building blocks of the Library. The aim of this is to create a platform where members are encouraged to inform others directly of their advocacy work and get value from the experience sharing.

### **Project 3 - General Principles for planning and evaluation of advocacy strategies (“Strategy Project”)**

Objective: The aim of the project is to improve the way competition agencies define their advocacy strategies, by encouraging experience sharing and discussion among ICN AWG Members and NGAs on this topic and defining general principles.

The Strategy Project in 2017-2018. In 2016-2017, the AWG gathered information from its members about the stages that precede and follow the advocacy actions, i.e. the elaboration of the advocacy strategy (analysis of the environment, priority setting, definition of the advocacy objectives, feasibility study) and the consequent monitoring of the results and refining of the strategy. In 2017-2018, the AWG will use this information with a view to drawing general principles that can be shared within the ICN.

### **Project 4 - Fourth Edition of the World Bank – ICN Competition Advocacy Contest (“Contest Project”).**

Objective: The Contest Project aims to raise awareness of the key role of competition agencies in promoting competition and showcase their successful advocacy stories.

The Contest Project in 2017-2018. Following the success of the joint editions [2014-2015](#), [2015-2016](#), and [2016-2017](#), the AWG and the World Bank will work on the organization of a fourth joint edition, including

the definition of the general theme and the four categories and the selection of the Contest Judges, with a view to attracting new participants among ICN members and increasing the opportunity of experience sharing.

Project leaders: Italian Competition Authority and World Bank Group.

**Dissemination, implementation and outreach (“Implementation Project”).**

The AWG will continue to carry out initiatives to develop the awareness of the AWG products, including the Recommended Practices on Competition Assessment, the Market Studies Good Practice Handbook, the Benefits Platform and the Market Studies Guiding Principles. This will primarily be achieved by holding teleseminars. Acknowledging that the discussion of hypothetical scenarios is a format that has been particularly appreciated by delegates at the 2016 ICN Advocacy Workshop and the advocacy sessions at the 2017 ICN Annual Conference, the AWG will explore the possibility to undertake these in virtual meetings.

The AWG co-chairs will cooperate closely with the ICN AIN (Advocacy and Implementation Network) to disseminate AWG work product.

Finally, the AWG and the World Bank will explore the possibility of a joint publication describing the winning stories of the 2016-2017 edition and organize an event to present them.