



ICN Agency Effectiveness Working Group Long-Term Strategic Plan

A. Introduction and Background

Effectiveness of the competition agencies is the primary focus of the Agency Effectiveness Working Group (AEWG), which was previously named Competition Policy Implementation Working Group (CPIWG)¹. It aims to focus on various aspects contributing to efficient and effective enforcement of competition rules, such as institutional and operational characteristics of competition agencies, and to enable exchange of experience among the ICN members.

Until 2008-9, the AEWG engaged in gathering information and data concerning agencies' activities in order to identify the most important issues that may impact effectiveness.

After analyzing the gathered information, the medium-term objective for the AEWG was established. The objective is to develop a comprehensive "Competition Agency Practice Manual" (Manual). This Manual intends to cover six themes in the form of chapters of the Manual:

- Strategic Planning and Prioritisation;
- Effective Project Delivery;
- Effective Knowledge Management;
- Ex-post Evaluation;
- Human Resource Management;
- Communication and Accountability.

The Manual will provide "practical guidance" for agencies on these themes. This guidance will be based on ICN member experience and other relevant information.

In 2009-10, the AEWG engaged in projects on the first two themes of the Manual as follows:

1. The Strategic Planning and Prioritisation project consists of (i) the collation of strategic objectives or mission documents of ICN member agencies; (ii) the exchange

¹ Following the ICN Steering Group decision on 13 May 2009, the CPIWG changed its focus to agency effectiveness. Accordingly, the new mandate of the CPIWG changed the title of the working group to AEWG. See in this respect the reports prepared by the CPIWG in 2008 and 2009, and the summary report on the effectiveness seminar held in Brussels in January of 2009.

of experiences on drawing up work programmes and criteria used by agencies in case prioritisation and (iii) the exchange of good practices on how to balance discretionary and non-discretionary workload. The chapter on this theme will be presented for adoption to the 2010 Annual Conference.

2. The Effective Project Delivery project consists of the examination of tools and techniques for optimal case management (e.g. performance indicators, criteria taken into account during the formation of teams who will be in charge of cases), exchange of good practices on internal quality control mechanisms, and on institutional and organisational solutions ensuring compliance with agency decisions. Although the chapter on this theme was planned to be presented to the 2010 Annual Conference for adoption together with “Strategic Planning and Prioritisation”, the works during 2009 and 2010 indicated that it would be valuable to allocate more time on it to secure participation of more agencies and to gather more information to produce a high quality chapter. Therefore, the presentation of this chapter will be realized during the 2011 Annual Conference as provided below.

B. Future Mission and Goals

The mission of the AEWG remains “to identify key elements that contribute to successful capacity building and competition policy implementation in developing and transition economies” within its primary focus, which is effectiveness of competition agencies.

From 2010-12, the main goal of the AEWG is to develop the remaining chapters for the Manual.

To achieve this goal, the working group will provide a forum for ICN members to share their experience and specific practices related to the themes of the Manual.

In 2010-2011, the AEWG will complete the “Effective Project Delivery” chapter to be submitted to the 2011 Annual Conference and solicit member feedback on the “Strategic Planning and Prioritization” chapter. In addition, the AEWG will also work on another chapter on one of the two themes: “Human Resource Management” or “Knowledge Management”.

The AEWG will also hold a second Agency Effectiveness Workshop for agency heads, which will be held in London on 12-13 July 2010, to be hosted by the Office of Fair Trading.

The Agency Effectiveness Workshop will explore issues of people and knowledge management within competition authorities in some depth at agency head level. The current suggested list of topics includes:

- The culture within the agency (looking at the benefits of thinking about the agency's culture in guiding its mission, structure and processes; ethics and relations with third parties; and what the culture of an effective competition agency might look like both from the inside and from the perspective of external parties);
- Getting the best out of your people (including recruitment and retention; attracting new talent; people and career development; skills building; staff secondments/movement of people between competition agencies; how to capture and disseminate learning; and how to keep up with new business practices); and
- Leadership and succession planning.

It should be considered that the experience of drawing up the first two chapters of the Manual highlighted the need to review the delivery schedule of the remaining chapters, in order to involve as many agencies in the process as possible, with the aim of producing a high quality and representative material, without overloading project participants.

C. Future Work

For the long term, the priority of the AEWG is to verify how the Manual has been used by ICN members and how it has impacted the effectiveness of their work. In other words, which agencies have taken into account or implemented guidance contained in the Manual, what the respective outcomes are and what should be improved.

To perform this verification, the AEWG will provide questionnaires, teleconferences, and other ways of collecting the ICN member agencies' feedback.

From this result, the AEWG will assess the need for additional written work product.