

Note from the Chair for the July 19, 2012 Steering Group Meeting

July 12, 2012

Dear colleagues,

At next week's Steering Group meeting we will discuss:

- member assistance with implementation,
- the new approach to work plans, and
- topics for future Steering Group meetings.

If Steering Group members would like to include additional items for discussion, please contact the ICN Secretariat (Secretariat.ICN@bc-cb.gc.ca) by Tuesday, July 17.

Member Assistance

At the June 2012 Steering Group meeting, we began a discussion on how to implement the vision statement's goal of supporting members' requests for assistance. We agreed that I would set out some principles and processes based on that discussion. We will consider these at the July 19 meeting.

Principles

- ICN practices have become an important benchmark for the competition community. While implementation of ICN practices and principles is already impressive, a number of ICN members indicated in the Second Decade interviews and elsewhere that they would like to engage in additional reforms to conform to some or all of ICN's practices. As the Steering Group, we want to assist ICN members seeking external support for domestic reforms (usually amendments to laws or amendments / new regulations).
- Upon member request, we will describe consistencies between proposed reforms and ICN practices or principles. Often the results of this analysis will take the form of a letter, but it may take other forms as well, such as presentations or speaking engagements.
- For written comments, the Steering Group will have an adequate opportunity to review a draft before it is sent to the ICN member seeking support.
- Requests for assistance or support outside of these parameters will be considered by the Steering Group on a case-by-case basis.
- The Advocacy and Implementation Network will continue to provide more in-depth technical assistance through AISUP.

Processes

- When a request is received, Steering Group members are informed by e-mail.

- The Chair, together with interested Steering Group members and the Advocacy and Implementation Network, prepare comments. They consult with the relevant Working Group Chairs as needed.
- Comments will usually take the form of a letter, signed by the Chair or a vice chair, of the Steering Group.
- The proposed draft letter will be circulated to the Steering Group with adequate time for review, normally not less than one week.

I envision that we would apply these principles and processes to provide assistance to one or two members, and then revisit the initiative at a Steering Group discussion later this year.

Work Plans

As outlined in the accompanying memo from Vice Chair Andreas Mundt, Steering Group members will be asked to approve a proposal to prepare a work plan template. Under this proposal, work plans will cover a three year period, updated on a rolling basis each year. The memo asks the Steering Group to endorse also a practice of submitting draft work plans at least two months before the annual conference, with the possibility to revise the work plans until shortly after the annual conference.

Topics

We should prepare a notional schedule of topics we will discuss at the Steering Group meetings this ICN year. My initial thoughts are that we could address: member engagement and the international cooperation Steering Group project at the September meeting; implementing the visibility of competition policy and principles goal of the vision statement and the investigative process project at the October meeting; and NGA engagement and the courts and judges project at the November meeting.

Some other suggestions for possible topics include implementation, communications, and workload. I welcome your thoughts on whether we should address these or other topics at future meetings, as well as the proposal for sequencing of topics at our fall meetings.

I welcome also your thoughts on whether we consider having one-off discussions on “hot topics” that we don’t intend to take forward as projects but may want to hear one another’s views on, for example, cloud computing?

Outreach

I want to share with you a few of my recent efforts to promote member outreach, as this is one of the principal goals of the vision statement. On June 21, we held the first ICN Town Hall Meeting. John Fingleton presented the Second Decade findings, I presented the vision statement, and Bill Kovacic moderated the discussion. Approximately 75 participants from more than 30 jurisdictions joined, and we had a robust discussion about the future direction of the ICN.

To promote awareness of our current work, earlier this week we sent an email to all ICN members highlighting this year's projects and inviting them to join Working Groups. Also this week, together with the US FTC, I hosted a lunch on the margins of the UNCTAD meeting to introduce the ICN to non-members and to solicit feedback from members about on-going initiatives.

I look forward to speaking with all of you next week.

Best regards,

Eduardo