

ICN Steering Group Meeting
Wednesday, October 24, 2012
OECD Conference Center Room D 8:15 – 9:30 am (Paris)

Attendees

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Brazilian Administrative Council for Economic Defense
- Competition Bureau Canada
- European Commission DG Competition
- French Autorité de la concurrence
- German Bundeskartellamt
- Japan Fair Trade Commission
- Italian Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato
- Korea Fair Trade Commission
- Mexico Federal Competition Commission
- Netherlands Competition Authority
- Polish Office of Competition and Consumer Protection
- Russian Federal Antimonopoly Service
- Turkish Competition Authority
- South African Competition Commission
- United Kingdom Office of Fair Trading
- United States Department of Justice
- United States Federal Trade Commission

Item 1. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The Steering Group approved the proposed agenda for the current meeting and the minutes of the September 25, 2012 meeting.

Item 2. Workload

Vice Chair Andreas Mundt led a discussion on workload, addressing issues of quality, quantity, and participation.

Steering Group members agreed that the number and breadth of ICN projects means that work needs to be prioritized and that there should be a greater focus on implementation. There was a broad consensus that the number of projects and new work products should be considered carefully to avoid their being produced by a limited number of ICN members, in an effort to promote greater inclusion and ownership and broader participation. Implementation of the already existing work products will also help to increase and ensure inclusiveness of the work, in particular for new members. When appropriate, revisiting existing work product can be a way to engage new members or members that weren't involved in creating that particular work product. It will be necessary to find the right balance between implementing and revising the existing work products and creating new work products.

As further means to achieve this, many Steering Group members suggested that efforts to increase member engagement would help address issues of workload, and that Working Group chairs and the annual conference and workshops should all view member engagement as a key component.

There were mixed views on whether or not Working Groups should team up to hold joint workshops. Some Steering Group members thought that joint workshops would address resource and capacity issues, but other Steering Group members noted that the workshops are aimed at case handlers and so the audience for each substantive area workshop would be different. Two Steering Group members suggested having additional regional workshops or meetings to engage better globally.

A key question in prioritization was whether the Steering Group should “steer” Working Groups more. While generally Steering Group members were inclined to engage more in steering by reviewing work plans and giving feedback, etc., there was acknowledgement that this needs to be done together with Working Groups, who are best placed to judge, for example, the workload involved and the current participation in projects.

Other ideas put forth were: more translation of existing work product to promote implementation and use, new modes of working that are more efficient, better coordination with other organizations, and more focus on training.

Vice Chair Mundt will put forward a proposal for how the Steering Group might help prioritize workload at the December 5, 2012 meeting, and will consult with the Horizontal Coordinator, Chair, and others (e.g., Working Group chairs) in preparing the proposal.

Item 3. Increasing the Visibility of Competition Policy

The Chair presented the two proposals for taking forward the Vision Statement goal of increasing the visibility of competition policy: (1) developing messages on the benefits of competition policy to be delivered to economic policymakers and (2) prescriptive work in the form of best practices or principles that builds on the OECD competition assessment toolkit. The Chair indicated that this work would be taken forward with the Advocacy Working Group.

Steering Group members supported both projects, noting the importance of adding value to existing work. For example, one Steering Group member suggested including examples from non-OECD countries and of issues with local subsidies as good additions to the OECD toolkit work. Other Steering Group members stressed the importance of choosing examples for the messages project that would address popular issues, such as telecommunications, agriculture, and energy.

Item 4. International Cooperation Project

USDOJ reported on survey responses and rates, noting the need to encourage more non-OECD members to reply. DOJ suggested future work might include recommended practices on cooperation in the area of cartels, mergers, and unilateral conduct, as well as projects such as a model bilateral agreement. DOJ suggested any future work would be done with the respective Working Group members and NGAs.

Item 5. Advocacy and Implementation Network

The Steering Group approved the updated role of AIN and AISUP.

Item 6. Other Business

Topics for the December 5 meeting include the investigative process project of the Agency Effectiveness Working Group, member and NGA engagement, and a continuation of the workload discussion.