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 behaviour, 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 in regard to the benefits of competition.

ORGANISATION

The AWG has 59 ICN member agencies from 56 jurisdictions and 49 non-governmental advisors (NGAs).

The AWG is co-chaired by the French Autorité de la concurrence, the Italian Competition Authority, and the Competition Commission of Mauritius.

From 2001 to 2003, the AWG’s original mandate was to undertake projects with a view to recommending best practices and providing information to members in support of their advocacy functions. The group then reconvened in 2008.

LONG TERM GOALS

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

1. Provide a forum for ICN members to share their experiences and specific 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.
2014-2017 WORK PLAN

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 specific practices in the area of competition advocacy.**

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

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

The AWG will continue its work on providing ICN members with tools, strategies and arguments for promoting a competition culture in their own jurisdictions. This work strives to analyse the relationship between competition agencies and competition culture and its constituent parts, and it has developed along several directions.

*Continuing Development of the Competition Culture Project*

The Competition Culture Project seeks to define competition culture, and learn how members interact with the constituent parts of a competition culture and what role each constituent plays or potentially could play. In 2014-2017, the AWG will finalize work on Competition Culture based on the insights gained during previous AWG webinars and the results of the 2014 competition culture survey. A reference to the available resources to other ICN work-products of relevance to competition culture will also be provided.

*Finalising the Competition Assessment Project*

In 2014-2017 the AWG will consider complementary work to the Recommended Practices, based on competition agency examples, case studies and experience sharing. This work may include a typology of competition assessment regimes in place in ICN members’ jurisdictions and a discussion of how competition agencies evaluate and quantify harm to consumers through competition assessment.

*Continuing Development of the Benefits Project*

The Benefits Project seeks to provide ICN members with knowledge, strategies and arguments for explaining the benefits of competition in support of their competition advocacy efforts toward government and non-government stakeholders. In 2014-2017, the AWG will develop, in the form of an online resource platform, practical guidance gathered under the Project, taking into account the outcome of the Competition Culture Project in order to exploit synergies and avoid potential overlaps. The AWG’s online resource program may also include existing case studies (whether
prepared by competition agencies or by international organizations) highlighting the benefits of competition to consumers and the economy.

**Further Scoping Activity on the Working with Courts and Judges Project**

The AWG will continue to provide a platform for discussion on the scope and objective of this Project, by organising conference calls to assess the ICN members’ current needs in this area. In addition, the AWG will explore synergies with other Working Groups in order to further develop the topics of this Project from different perspectives.

**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, as well as the opportunity to update existing Work Products.

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

In line with its Mission and Long-Term Work Plan, the AWG will also engage in promoting the 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 and the Advocacy Toolkit. 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-organising the AWG section of the ICN website.
2014-2015 PROJECTS

Pursuant to its Mission and long-term Work Plan, during 2014-2015 the AWG will pursue the following:

1. NEW & ONGOING WORK

Project 1 – Promoting Competition Culture (“Competition Culture Project”)

- **Objective.** The Competition Culture Project seeks to define competition culture, to learn how members interact with the constituent parts of a competition culture and to see what role each constituent plays or potentially could play.

- **The Competition Culture Project 2014-2015.** The AWG will draft the final report of the Competition Culture Project, which will provide comprehensive material to competition authorities for promoting a competition culture. A major benefit to newer agencies is that the report may be referred to for guidance on how to approach a wide range of constituents including politicians, government officials, journalists, business associations, the judiciary, the antitrust legal community and academic centres. The report will be based on insights developed during previous AWG webinars and the results of the 2014 competition culture survey. A reference to the available resources to other ICN work-products of relevance to competition culture will also be provided.

- **Project leader:** Competition Commission of Mauritius.

Project 2 – Competition Impact Assessment (“Competition Assessment Project”)

- **Objective.** It seeks to offer guidance to competition agencies in relation to competition impact assessment of draft and existing legislation, regulations and policies, so that they are better recognized by policymakers as a source of expertise to prevent unnecessary restrictions to competition.

- **The Competition Assessment Project 2014-2015.** In 2014-2015, the AWG will consider additional work to complement the Recommended Practices on Competition Assessment approved at the 2014 Annual Conference in Marrakech. In particular the AWG will develop a **typology of competition assessment regimes in place,** as an accompanying work to the Recommended Practices, which will include examples from ICN members. In addition, the AWG will start working on issues related to measurement of advocacy efforts, by organising a teleseminar to provide AWG members with an opportunity to become aware of academic studies or agencies’ reports available in this area and considering other opportunities for experience sharing related to competition assessment and measurement of harm (e.g., at AWG workshops).

- **Project leaders:** Autorité de la concurrence (France) and Mexican Federal Economic Competition Commission for the typology and NGA volunteers for the advocacy measurement teleseminar.
Project 3 - Explaining the Benefits of Competition (“Benefits Project”)

- **Objective.** The Benefits Project seeks to provide ICN members with knowledge, strategies and arguments for explaining the benefits of competition in support of their competition advocacy efforts toward government and non-governmental stakeholders.

- **The Benefits Project 2014-2015.** The AWG will continue to work on the two stages of the Benefits Project: “Explaining the benefits of competition to Government and legislators” and “Explaining the Benefits of Competition to Business”, with a view to developing a **web-based toolbox** to be integrated within the Advocacy Toolkit. The output is intended to be an online interactive platform for members to browse and search for examples of messages and arguments, documents and case studies. The material available on the platform should assist the competition agencies in their effort to explain the benefits of competition to government, business, media and the general public.

- **Project leaders:** Portuguese Competition Authority, Italian Competition Authority and other volunteers.

Project 4 – Third Advocacy Workshop

- The AWG will hold a workshop hosted by the Competition Commission of Mauritius at the end of 2014.

- **Project leaders:** the AWG co-chairs.

Project 5 - Working with Courts and Judges (“Working with Courts and Judges Project”)

- **Objective.** The Project seeks to identify the ways and methods in which the cooperation between competition authorities and courts could be strengthened, thereby promoting effective competition enforcement.

- **The Working with Courts and Judges Project 2014-2015.** The AWG will consider potential future directions in order to further develop the issues considered by the Project. The AWG will first explore potential synergies with the projects of other ICN Working Groups. In this perspective, for instance, the issue of drafting decisions through the prism of court review might be addressed in cooperation with the AEWG, in the context of the processes put in place by agencies to enhance their effectiveness. Similarly, the issue of presenting economic evidence in courts might be explored in the wider context of competition agency’s communication strategy while a module of the Curriculum Project might be devoted to training the judges.

- **Project leaders:** Polish Competition Authority and Italian Competition Authority.

2. **DISSEMINATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTREACH**

- The AWG will promote the familiarity with and use of the Recommended Practices adopted at the 2014 Annual Conference in Marrakech through teleseminars. To reach out to a wider audience, the
AWG will hold teleseminars on this topic also in other languages (Spanish and French) and will offer a translation of the Recommended Practices into Arabic, French, Spanish and other languages.

- The AWG will promote other existing work products (with a focus on the most recent ones) in the context of teleseminars and the workshop in Mauritius;
- The AWG will reach out to new or less active members and NGAs in order to promote broader involvement in the AWG activities; and,
- The AWG will seek to improve the AWG’s web-based tools (e.g., the Market Studies Information Store) and re-organise its section of the ICN website to allow for a greater visibility of the AWG work products.