



ICN Advocacy Working Group

MISSION

The mission of the Advocacy Working Group (AWG) is to develop practical tools and guidance, and to facilitate experience-sharing among ICN member agencies and existing and prospective NGAs, 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.

ORGANIZATION

The AWG has 72 ICN member agencies from 71 jurisdictions and 138 non-governmental advisors (NGAs).

The AWG is co-chaired by the Hong Kong Competition Commission, the Norwegian Competition Authority and the Colombian Competition Authority.

2020-2023 LONG TERM STRATEGIC GOALS

Over the planning period 2020-2023, the AWG guide its work program based on the following strategic goals:

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

Advocacy Working Group

2020-2021 Annual Work Plan

The Advocacy Working Group will in the period 2020-2021 have the following main activities in its work to achieve its mission and strategic goals.

Strategic goal	2020-2021 Work Plan activities	Status for 2020-2021 plan
A. Forum for sharing experiences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Webinars and member calls 2. ICN/World Bank Advocacy Contest 3. Plenary and break-out sessions at the ICN Annual Conference 4. Advocacy Workshop 5. Competition Advocacy in Times of Crisis 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Planned for Q3/4 of 2021</p> <p>Planned for Q3/4 of 2020</p>
B. Provide practical tools and guidance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approaches to Identify Policies for Competition Assessment 2. Update of the ICN Advocacy Toolkit 3. Building Compliance Program and Culture 	<p>New chapter finalized</p> <p>Prioritized, building on previous work</p> <p>New project</p>
C. Promote the use of work products and tools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update and promote the use of the ICN Advocacy Toolkit 2. Dissemination, implementation and outreach (“Implementation Project”) 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

A1. Webinars and member calls

The AWG will arrange a series of regular webinars and members calls, which will focus on the AWG prioritized and ongoing work (see B1, B2 and C1 in table above) of relevance for a diverse range of ICN members, and allow members to share brief summaries of successful advocacy stories.

By encouraging members to share experiences of advocacy efforts, for example typical challenges faced and the different tools and methods used to overcome these challenges - and by extension, the relevant AWG work product that can be of assistance in these efforts – the webinar and members calls series will take a holistic approach to the implementation of AWG work product as a whole.

An additional strategy is to promote the work products through the ICN’s established platforms, namely the website, and each agency’s websites, as well as social media platforms. This will allow the work products to reach a wider audience that would otherwise be rather difficult to track.

Title	Webinars and member calls
Description and output	Webinars on prioritized AWG workflows and members calls with updates on AWG work as well as members sharing recent 'success stories' on advocacy
Output achieved	Member updates, awareness, exchange of experience and member and NGA engagement
Relation to strategic goals	Goal A (Forum sharing experiences and practices) but also B (Provide practical tools and guidance) and C (Promote work products and tools)
Assessment of Timing	Regular members calls and topical webinars related to B1, B2, B3 and B4 respectively
Entities/Persons Responsible	Rotation by co-chairs
Implementation	N/A
Evaluation	
Other comment(s)	The webinars and members calls will also be part of reaching strategic goal C "Promote the use of work products and tools", and the "Implementation Project" described below under C2.

A2. Plenary and break-out sessions at ICN Annual Conference

The AWG will plan break-out and plenary sessions at the ICN Annual Conferences with a view to fulfilling its mission and strategic goals.

The AWG will work to ensure that the sessions assigned to the AWG at the Annual Conferences are linked to prioritized work products or work-streams. In this manner, we ensure that the efforts of the AWG are coherent and efficient, even if they are carried out at different stages or moments in time.

The 2020 annual conference will be turned to be an online event. The AWG's plenary session will be adapted accordingly, and focus on "Competition Advocacy in the Digital Age".

Title	Plenary and break-out sessions at ICN Annual Conference
Description and output	Plenary and break-out sessions at ICN Annual Conference
Output achieved	
Relation to strategic goals	Goal A (Forum sharing experiences and practices) but also B (Provide practical tools and guidance) and C (Promote work products and tools)
Assessment of Timing	September 2020
Entities/Persons Responsible	Jointly by co-chairs
Implementation	N/A
Evaluation	
Other comment(s)	The AWG plenary and break-out sessions will also be part of reaching strategic goal C "Promote the use of work products and tools", and the "Implementation Project" described below under C2.

A3. ICN/World Bank Advocacy Contest

This contest aims to highlight the key role competition agencies play in promoting competition through showcasing their advocacy success stories. This project has attracted the attention of both younger and experienced agencies and has positioned itself as an important incentive to promote advocacy actions throughout the world.

Following the success of the five joint editions between 2014 and 2020, the AWG and the World Bank will work on the organization of the next joint edition, including the definition of the general theme and 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.

Given the unusual circumstance this year, the winning agencies of the 2020 edition will receive awards at a virtual Awards Ceremony and Sharing Session that is planned in September 2020 shortly after the online ICN Annual Conference.

Title	ICN/World Bank Advocacy Contest
Description and output	Promote advocacy actions by showcasing advocacy success stories
Output achieved	Showcase of advocacy success stories
Relation to strategic goals	Goal A (Forum for sharing experiences)
Assessment of Timing	Submission of advocacy stories by competition agencies: October 2020 - January 2021 Review by Contest Judges: February-April 2020 Present awards: At 2021 ICN Annual Conference
Entities/Persons Responsible	Italian Competition Authority and World Bank Group
Implementation	
Evaluation	
Other comment(s)	



A4. Advocacy Workshop

The Advocacy Working Group is planning to organize a workshop with the objective of fostering experiences and best-practices-sharing in advocacy among competition officials and non-governmental advisors (NGAs).

The sessions assigned to the Advocacy Workshop 2020-21 will be linked to the prioritized AWG work products or work-streams.

Title	Advocacy Workshop
Description and output	Workshop with the objective of fostering experiences and best-practices-sharing in advocacy
Output achieved	Experience sharing and capacity building
Relation to strategic goals	Goals A (Forum sharing experiences and practices), B (Provide practical tools and guidance) and C (Promote work products and tools)
Assessment of Timing	Called for interest in May 2020 Workshop planned for 4th qtr. 21, considering the Covid-19 situation
Entities/Persons Responsible	Jointly by co-chairs and workshop host
Implementation	Workshop will include NGA experience
Evaluation	Workshop will be evaluated by participants
Other comment(s)	The workshop will also be part of part of reaching strategic goal C "Promote the use of work products and tools", and the "Implementation Project" described below under C2.

A5. Competition Advocacy in Times of Crisis

This timely project aims to facilitate the Member Agencies' discussion on their recent advocacy actions during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak. Via a brief survey and an online discussion, the project will collate agencies' advocacy efforts in response to the public health crisis, focusing on: i) advocacy measures *during the crisis* and ii) advocating measures *coming out of the crisis* that supports a speedy economic recovery from the recession by ia. informed government policy designed in a way that safeguards a competitive environment after the crisis.

Title	Competition Advocacy in Times of Crisis
Description and output	Facilitate the Member Agencies' experience sharing of their recent advocacy actions during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak
Output achieved	In-depth discussion via webinar open to all Member Agencies and NGAs and a summary table detailing the corresponding advocacy efforts
Relation to strategic goals	Goal A (Forum for sharing experiences)
Assessment of Timing	Webinar in Q3/Q4 2020
Entities/Persons Responsible	Norwegian Competition Authority
Implementation	Input from AWG members
Evaluation	N/A
Other comment(s)	Will build on existing and upcoming OECD discussions and work products on Competition Policy in times of Covid-19

B1. Approaches to Identify Policies for Competition Assessment

Based on member input, the AWG has drafted a report on approaches to identify candidates for competition assessment. The emphasis has in particular been to identify innovative approaches, in line with the focus of the work of the ICN Advocacy Working Group for 2018-2020. The draft report synthesizes members' input and complements previous work by the AWG on Competition assessment, i.e. Recommended Practices on Competition Assessment (2014) and Framework of Competition Assessment Regimes (2015).

The draft report has been circulated among AWG member Q2 2020 and was supposed to be presented in a BOS at the 2020 Annual conference. With the new situation, the report will be finished for approval by the SG by September 2020.

Title	Competition Assessment
Description and output	New chapter on approaches and experiences with <i>ex officio</i> identification of candidates for competition assessment. Evaluation of implementation and use. Update of 2014/2015 Framework/Recommended Practices.
Output achieved	
Relation to strategic goals	Goal B (Provide practical tools and guidance)
Assessment of Timing	Topic break-out at 2020 ICN Annual. New chapter and update in 2020.
Entities/Persons Responsible	Norwegian Competition Authority
Implementation	Questionnaire and input from AWG members
Evaluation	N/A
Other comment(s)	Will build on existing and updated OECD work products on competition assessment

B2. Update of the ICN Advocacy Toolkit

The ICN Advocacy Toolkit, which was published in 2011, has provided ICN member agencies with a useful and practical guide for their competition advocacy work. In particular, the ICN Advocacy Toolkit presents components/steps of effective advocacy projects including:

1. Identifying issues
2. Identifying key stakeholders
3. Implementing and monitoring of advocacy activity
4. Evaluating effectiveness of advocacy interventions
5. Promotion mechanisms/types of competition advocacy messages.
6. Media relations
7. Extending the reach of a competition agency's website.
8. Research and consultation

Case studies are used in the advocacy toolkit to provide examples of how competition agencies conduct their advocacy activities in practice.

Since 2011, the operating environment of competition agencies have changed (e.g. growth of digital markets has significantly transformed markets' characteristics and their competitive dynamics). In addition, many ICN member agencies have gained more experiences in conducting competition advocacy projects. It is therefore timely to review the components/steps of effective advocacy projects to ensure they are relevant for the current operating environment, and to refresh the case studies with recent examples.

This project will be a multi-year project with the initial year concentrating on the first four steps of effective advocacy projects (i) identifying issues; (ii) identifying key stakeholders; (iii) implementing and monitoring of advocacy activity; and (iv) evaluating effectiveness of advocacy interventions. The second part will focus on the remaining components i.e. (i) promotion mechanisms/types of competition advocacy messages; (ii) media relations; (iii) extending the reach of a competition agency's website; and (iv) research and consultation. Both parts of the project will include getting ICN member agencies' inputs on the components/steps as well as collating suitable case studies. Following the collection of information, a literature review on best practices for competition advocacy will be done, and the advocacy toolkit will be updated accordingly. Where relevant, plenary/breakout sessions on the topic will be organised at the ICN Annual Conference and the ICN Advocacy Workshop. A teleseminar on a related topic may also be organised.

Title	Advocacy and Digital Markets
Description and output	Collect inputs from ICN member agencies on the steps of the effective advocacy projects and suitable case studies to further update the advocacy toolkit accordingly.
Output achieved	-
Relation to strategic goals	Goal B (Provide practical tools and guidance) and Goal C (Promote the use of work products and tools)
Assessment of Timing	Part 1 (focus on first four components) August to November 2020: collection of inputs from ICN member agencies and conduct literature review on best practices for competition advocacy.
Entities/Persons Responsible	Superintendencia de Industria y Comercio of Colombia
Implementation	Questionnaire, webinar and input from AWG Members



International
Competition
Network

Evaluation	N/A
Other comment(s)	Nil

B3. Building Compliance Program and Culture

Compliance has long been an important non-enforcement tool for competition agencies in combating cartels, alongside with effective enforcement of competition law. This project aims to promote the exchange of competition agencies' experiences in assisting businesses in building compliance program and culture.

The project will also facilitate agencies' dialogues with NGAs who will be able to contribute with their valuable insights on how compliance culture/ program could be best planted and fostered within a business. For example, an in-house/ external counsel may advise on how to get a company's top executives to buy-in.

Via a WG-wide survey, the project will collate Member Agencies' as well as businesses' efforts in promoting compliance. Also, there will be discussion sessions in the forthcoming Advocacy Workshop and webinar allowing Member Agencies and NGAs to hold in-depth discussions on the subject-matter. Materials presented in those sessions will in turn become input to the project.

A report will be produced based on Member Agencies and NGAs' input. Also, the report will make reference to and be built based on the past, relevant ICN materials, such as Anti-Cartel Enforcement Manual Chapter 8: Cartel Awareness, Outreach and Compliance. Noting that the CWG has also previously conducted webinar/ discussion sessions on this topic (with a focus on the interface of compliance and enforcement work), AWG could consider cross-WG collaboration (e.g. a joint webinar) as appropriate.

Title	Building Compliance Program and Culture
Description and output	Collate Member Agencies' as well as businesses' efforts in promoting compliance via a WG-wide survey and through in-depth discussions at forthcoming webinar and Advocacy Workshop
Output achieved	-
Relation to strategic goals	Goal B (Provide practical tools and guidance)
Assessment of Timing	Webinar in December 2020 Survey report in March 2021
Entities/Persons Responsible	Hong Kong Competition Commission
Implementation	Questionnaire and input from AWG members
Evaluation	N/A
Other comment(s)	Nil



C1. 1. Update and promote the use of the ICN Advocacy Toolkit Market

Please see the details under B2.

C2. 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 and 2019 ICN Advocacy Workshop and the advocacy sessions at the 2017 and 2019 ICN Annual Conference, the AWG will explore the possibility to undertake these in virtual meetings.

In the regular member calls, the co-chairs will include an item on the agenda where members can present brief summaries of success advocacy stories.

Finally, the AWG and the World Bank will explore the possibility of a joint publication (in form of writing, presentation slides or video) describing the winning stories and organize an online and interactive event to facilitate exchanges between winning agencies and AWG members.

Title	Implementation Project
Description and output	Enhance awareness of the AWG products
Output achieved	
Relation to strategic goals	Goal C (Promote work products and tools)
Assessment of Timing	Continuous
Entities/Persons Responsible	Jointly by co-chairs
Implementation	
Evaluation	
Other comment(s)	