



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 Superintendence of Industry and Commerce of Colombia, the Philippine Competition Commission and the Competition Authority of Kenya.

2022-2025 LONG TERM STRATEGIC GOALS

Over the planning period 2022-2025, 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

2022-2025 Annual Work Plan

The Advocacy Working Group will in the period 2021-2022 have the following main activities in its work to achieve its mission and strategic goals.

Strategic goal	2021-2022 Work Plan activities	Status for 2021-2022 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. 2023 Advocacy Workshop 5. Expansion of Market Studies Info Store with a new session dedicated for international collaborative studies 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Planned for Q4 of 2023</p> <p>New project</p>
B. Provide practical tools and guidance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Optimizing Advocacy to Enhance International Cooperation towards more Effective Enforcement 	<p>Planned for 2022-2023 (multi-year)</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 – Part 2 2. Dissemination, implementation and outreach (“Implementation Project”) 	<p>Planned for 2022-2023</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, C1 and A5 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 A5 and B1, respectively
Entities/Persons Responsible	Rotation by co-chairs
Implementation	N/A
Evaluation	N/A
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. 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 past joint editions between 2014 and 2022, 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.

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	To discuss with the AGCM and the World Bank Group
Entities/Persons Responsible	Italian Competition Authority and World Bank Group
Implementation	N/A
Evaluation	N/A
Other comment(s)	N/A

A3. 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.

Title	Plenary and break-out sessions at ICN Annual Conference
Description and output	Plenary and break-out sessions at ICN Annual Conference
Output achieved	Highlight lines of work of the AWG and discuss hot topics that can lead to future work products
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	
Entities/Persons Responsible	Jointly by co-chairs
Implementation	N/A
Evaluation	N/A
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.

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 2023-24 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	Workshop planned for Q4 2023 /Q1 2024 in Kenya (In-person)
Entities/Persons Responsible	Jointly by co-chairs and workshop host – CAK (Kenya)
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. Expansion of Market Studies Info Store with a new session dedicated for international collaborative studies

The proposed project will build a new session under the Market Studies Info Store – an online library - that will collect and collate market studies/ research reports that are jointly conducted or as the result of collaborations between competition agencies. It is observed that in recent years competition agencies, especially those being in the same region or sharing similar economic background, have increasingly cooperated to carry out studies and research projects, in particular on digital economy and other sectors which have the fundamental character of transnationality. These collaborative advocacy work include Autorité-BKA’s joint study on algorithms and competition, the Nordic Competition Authorities’ joint memorandum on digital platforms and the future of European policy, and Benelux competition authorities’ joint paper on challenges of digitization. These cross-agency studies often serve as the first step for competition agencies to have a better understanding of these emerging markets/ issues, potential impacts on competition and thus lay the groundwork for agencies’ future enforcement work and further cooperation.

This project recognizes and highlights the ever-growing importance of international cooperation between competition agencies in the realms of enforcement as well as advocacy work.

The proposed work builds on the AWG’s existing Market Studies Info Store, which will be further promoted among the AWG Members as the Info Store’s expansion is undertaken. The proforma used for the existing Info Store may need to be readjusted and refined to include details specific to the international collaboration and that would be useful for readers to know, e.g. agencies involved, division of work, allocation of resources and etc.

This new session of the online library shall be updated on a regular basis, e.g. at the interval of three years.

Title	Expansion of Market Studies Info Store
Description and output	A new session of the Info Store is expected to cover most of the major international collaborative market studies/ research projects that have been conducted in the last five years
Output achieved	A new session of the Info Store
Relation to strategic goals	Goal A (Provide practical tools and guidance)
Assessment of Timing	2022 - New session of the Info Store to be ready on ICN AWG webpage
Entities/Persons Responsible	Competition Authority of Kenya (CAK)
Implementation	N/A
Evaluation	N/A
Other comment(s)	This initiative will also allow the sections of each country to be updated, which will help to have more up-to-date market studies within the Info Store.

B1. Optimizing Advocacy to Enhance International Cooperation towards more Effective Enforcement

This project will provide practical guidance and support for Competition Agencies in availing of advocacy to further improve cooperation efforts towards more effective cross-border enforcement.

The Project will have two phases: (i) sharing and collection of national experiences in the use of advocacy as a means to improve international cooperation in enforcement activities. This could include lessons and insights Competition Agencies have gained in dealing with cross-border competition issues; and (ii) from this exercise, derive and consolidate a set of good practices and modalities in optimizing advocacy as a tool to improve international cooperation in enforcement activities. This consolidation will include an identification of strategies that may be adopted by Competition Agencies to remove or address limitations to international enforcement cooperation.

Just as the Joint OECD/ICN Report, this Project aims to improve international cooperation, albeit through advocacy efforts, underscoring what has worked well and exploring and showcasing new ways to address the limitations pointed out in the report.

Title	<u>Optimizing Advocacy to Enhance International Cooperation towards more Effective Enforcement</u>
Description and output	Q3 2022 - Webinar – Success Stories and National Experiences Q4 2022 - Draft Report – Good Practices and Modalities ICN Annual Conference 2023 – BOS highlighting the project's findings
Output achieved	Report on good practices and modalities in optimizing advocacy as a tool to improve international cooperation in enforcement activities
Relation to strategic goals	Goal B (Provide practical tools and guidance)
Assessment of Timing	Multi-year project
Entities/Persons Responsible	Philippine Competition Commission and Superintendence of Industry and Commerce of Colombia
Implementation	Roundtable discussion, Call for Contributions, Webinar
Evaluation	N/A
Other comment(s)	Will build on the joint OECD/ICN Report on International Cooperation in Competition Enforcement, the OECD Report on the Implementation of the Recommendation Concerning International Co-Operation on Competition Investigations and Proceeding, and existing AWG work products

C1. 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 is 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 first part was updated by the AWG Co-chairs in 2021-22 and was subsequently approved by the ICN Steering Group on April 2022.

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. As Part 1 of the project, the second part 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 webinar on a related topic is also going to 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	Update toolkit Part II
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 2 2022 – 2023 (focus on second four components)



Entities/Persons Responsible	Superintendence of Industry and Commerce of Colombia
Implementation	Part 2: Webinar, Call for Contributions and Working Group calls with experts.
Evaluation	N/A
Other comment(s)	Nil

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.

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)	