



ICN Advocacy Working Group Long-Term Strategic Plan

A. Introduction and background

The current mission of the Advocacy Working Group (AWG) is to develop practical tools and guidance to improve the effectiveness of ICN members' advocacy activities.

The AWG's original mandate was to undertake projects with a view to recommending best practices and to provide information to members in support of their advocacy functions. This work took place from 2001 to 2003. In 2008, the AWG was reconvened and a revised work plan reflecting developments in the field, including the increased use of market studies, was approved by the Steering Group. In 2008-9, the AWG engaged in a review and update of existing ICN advocacy work, and examined in greater detail members' experiences conducting market studies as part of their advocacy efforts.

The AWG engaged in two projects in 2009-10:

1. Competition Advocacy Experience Sharing Project (Subgroup 1). Following the recommendations of the 2008-9 Review and Update Project Report, the project group conducted a series of five teleseminars whereby ICN member agencies shared their experience in advocating competition in certain institutional and sectoral areas where competition advocacy efforts are most frequently engaged or required. The topics covered were: building relationships between a competition authority and the private bar; government involvement in markets; the role of international organizations in advocacy; competition in the financial markets; and evaluation of certain agencies' competition advocacy programmes.
2. Market Studies Project (Subgroup 2). Building on the wealth of experience collected during the survey in 2008-9 and the recommendations of the Market Studies Report presented at the ICN's 8th annual conference in 2009, the project group prepared a draft Market Studies Good Practice Handbook, outlining good practice for the process of conducting market

studies and gathering together accumulated experience and learning of member agencies. Agencies from over 30 jurisdictions participate in the Market Studies Project. 13 of those agencies were involved in the formal drafting and peer review of the handbook, which was additionally peer reviewed by non-governmental advisers representing the legal and economic communities and consumer organisations. The project group also prepared a Market Studies Information Store, an online information store of market studies conducted by ICN member agencies within the last five years.

In addition to the work of the AWG, in 2009 the ICN Steering Group developed a series of messages about the value and benefits of competition policy to economic stability and growth, both in the design of recovery measures and for the long term well being of economies worldwide, in order to support ICN members' domestic advocacy efforts and help create a consistent voice internationally.

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 anticompetitive behaviour, advocacy is an important tool in addressing public restrictions on competition.

B. Future mission and goals

The mission of the AWG from 2010-12 will be as follows:

'to develop practical tools and guidance, and to facilitate experience sharing between ICN member agencies, in order to improve the effectiveness of ICN members' advocacy activities.'

In order to fulfil this mission, the working group will:

- provide a forum for ICN members to share their experience and specific practices in the area of competition advocacy;
- provide practical tools and guidance in order to improve the effectiveness of members' advocacy activities; and
- promote use of the ICN's existing work products in the area of competition advocacy, including the Competition Advocacy Toolkit, the Market Studies Good Practice Handbook and the Market Studies Information Store.

C. Future work

In light of feedback received from ICN member agencies, the working group proposes the following structural changes:

- Following the ICN's 9th annual conference in 2010 the AWG will operate as a single working group, no longer divided into two subgroups.
- The merits of continuing the AWG in its present organisational form following the ICN's 11th annual conference in 2012 will be reconsidered in 2011, according to the needs of member agencies in terms of further advocacy work and the most appropriate forum in which to carry out this work in the context of the ICN as a whole.

The Steering Group has suggested that working groups consider the following factors in preparing their long term plans: the audience for the work product; a balance between promoting existing work product versus creating new work product; a balance between work that is ripe for convergence efforts versus comparative dialogue; projects that complement the institutional strengths and impact of the ICN's mission; projects that encourage broader member and NGA engagement; and initiatives that are well-suited to the ICN's practical, project-oriented nature.

Considering these factors, the working group proposes the following five areas of future work in 2010-12:

1. Continue the programme of experience sharing teleseminars.
 - Working group members have indicated that they would be particularly interested in focusing on particular types of advocacy or particular categories of markets or market problems (e.g. former state monopolies, self-regulated markets, after-markets, public procurement).
 - In order to encourage broader member and NGA engagement, the seminars will take the form of panel discussions involving member agencies and NGAs from diverse geographies and backgrounds.
2. Update the Competition Advocacy Toolkit.
 - In order to promote use of the toolkit once updated, the working group will hold a publicity teleseminar on relevant sections of the toolkit with a selection of agency advocacy experts and NGAs.

3. Provide a web-based facility on the ICN website, as part of the Competition Advocacy Toolkit, for member agencies and participating NGAs to post information on their recent advocacy activities, relevant speeches and articles, and any advocacy issues they may wish to discuss.
4. Maximise the usefulness of the Market Studies Good Practice Handbook and Market Studies Information Store through 'road testing' by members in 2010-11, and making any necessary revisions in 2011-12.
 - In order to 'road test' the handbook, member agencies which are planning to carry out market studies or review their regimes in 2010-11 will be asked to report on their experience of referring to the handbook in the context of setting up a market studies regime, reviewing existing regimes and/or the carrying out of market studies, and to suggest any necessary revisions in light of their experience. ICN member agencies and NGAs (including those not participating directly in the AWG) will be invited to post further comments, queries and suggestions via the ICN website throughout the 2010-11 ICN year.
 - The ICN Secretariat will monitor the number of hits on the Market Studies Information Store section of the ICN website in order to assess its usefulness. In 2011-12, ICN members will be surveyed to test the usefulness of the Market Studies Information Store. ICN members and NGAs will also be encouraged to provide feedback on the information store on an ongoing basis via the ICN website. It is intended that the information store will be updated annually.
5. Liaise with the ICN Advocacy and Implementation Network (AIN) (responsible for the Advocacy and Implementation Support Program (AISUP)) on competition advocacy experience sharing issues, in order to facilitate the advocacy activities of AIN beneficiary agencies in conjunction with the AISUP.
 - AIN supporting agencies (those providing advisory assistance to the beneficiary agencies) will examine the needs of the beneficiary agencies in recommendations on competition advocacy issues and prepare such recommendations jointly with the AWG: the AWG will participate in drafting and/or reviewing these recommendations.