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President Bundeskartellamt

29 August 2024

Note from the Chair for the Steering Group Meeting on 4 September 2024

Dear colleagues,

Our next SG meeting will take place on 4 September. I look forward to welcoming the Philippine Competition Commission as a new ex-officio SG member.

Transition Process

The meeting will focus on the transition process and the future of our network. In a joint email with Matthew Boswell I reached out to all of you on 18 July because we believe that all SG members should be involved in deciding the best timing and approach for the transition of the ICN Secretariat as well as the ICN Chair to ensure an effective transfer of knowledge while avoiding disruption. The Canadian Competition Bureau will be stepping down from its role as the ICN Secretariat. It is willing to play an active part during a reasonable transition period. Furthermore, the Chair and the Chair's Office will be passed on at the 2025 ICN Annual Conference in Edinburgh. In accordance with the procedure as set out in the Operational Framework, expressions of interest are to be invited two months before the Annual Conference.

The ICN Operational Framework does not include any guidelines on how to select and hand over the Secretariat. Selecting also the Secretariat at the ICN Annual Conference would lead to a simultaneous change of the Secretariat and the Chair's Office, which I regard to be quite disruptive for the network given the enormous institutional knowledge and expertise the agencies currently fulfilling these roles have accumulated over the years. A slightly earlier transition of the Secretariat, for example at the SG meeting in December, could provide stability and continuity. By the time the new Chair's Office takes over at the Annual Conference, the new Secretariat team will have had time to establish its own routine while still benefiting from the experience of the members from the CCB.

In order to address the important aspects of inclusion and diversity in the selection process and to give potential candidates for the role of Chair more time to learn about what is expected of

them and to familiarise themselves with the duties and responsibilities associated with the role, we could consider inviting preliminary expressions of interest before the process specified in the Operational Framework is initiated, perhaps also in December. Moreover, the Framework could be adapted as part of its ongoing review, allowing the official process to already be initiated one month earlier, i.e. three months before the Annual Conference.

At our next SG meeting, we will also discuss possible ways of structuring and organising the new Secretariat. While we believe that the Secretariat needs an “anchor” agency, it would very much reflect the nature of the ICN as a network of agencies if more agencies were invited to take on discrete tasks within the wider Secretariat team. Another question that needs to be discussed is whether these tasks should be limited to SG members or whether, for example, former SG members and co-chairs could also contribute their experience and resources.

Operational Framework

The Operational Framework Working Group circulated a redline version of the revised Operational Framework and asked for comments by 7 August. At our meeting, the group will give us a status update and outline the next steps.

Annual Conferences

The 2025 Annual Conference will take place in Edinburgh from 7 to 9 May 2025. The conference team will provide an update on the planning, including an outline of the overall timeline. We have already selected the hosts for the 2026 and 2027 Annual Conferences. Many thanks again for your valuable input. As usual, the host for 2026 will be formally announced at the 2025 Annual Conference and the host for 2027 at the 2026 Annual Conference.

Workshops

The Merger Working Group will propose the Mauritius Competition Commission as host of the 2025 ICN Merger Workshop.

Membership

The Membership Working Group will present the applications from the competition agencies of Rwanda, Aruba and Libya for SG approval. The relevant documents will be circulated in preparation of our meeting.

Please register for the meeting in advance. I look forward to seeing you next week.

Best wishes,

Andreas Mundt