Agency Effectiveness Working Group

2022-2025 Work Plan

MISSION

The mission of the Agency Effectiveness Working Group (AEWG) is to identify key elements of a well-functioning competition agency and develop best practices for agency strategy, planning, operations, and procedures.

ORGANISATION

The Working Group comprises over 100 ICN members as well as legal, economic, and academic NGAs from around the world. The Working Group's co-chairs for 2022-2023 includes the Mexican Federal Economic Competition Commission, the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore and the Hungarian Competition Authority. The Working Group holds periodic virtual meetings and webinars, which are both open to all members and NGAs.

LONG TERM GOALS

In order to fulfil its mission, the AEWG will strive to:

- provide a forum for sharing agency operational experiences and practices;
- encourage agencies to evaluate their effectiveness and improve the quality of agency strategy, planning, operations and procedures;
- develop operational guidance for an effective agency, including investigative process;
- promote implementation of the Working Group's work product; and
- provide a forum for economists to share their experiences.

2022-2025 STRATEGIC PLANS

Over the next three years, the AEWG will guide its work program based on the following considerations:

Goal: Build consensus and develop agency guidance.

The Working Group will pursue topics of relevance to the functioning of a competition agency, welcome widespread input from members and NGAs, identify and share agency experiences, and develop work product that provides useful guidance to member agencies. The AEWG has as its objective to provide competition agencies with ideas, tools, procedures and best practices that can help them enhance their effectiveness.

Goal: Create new work product that addresses the needs of ICN members.

Topics for possible consideration of new work over the next three years include:

- Digitalisation as a tool for agency effectiveness and the strategies used by competition agencies when equipping themselves to be fit to meet the new demands of the digital economy.
- Methods and processes to plan, monitor and measure an agency's effectiveness.
- Best Practices economics topics: examine cutting-edge antitrust economic topics either via virtual meetings or webinars, as well as workshops.
- How agencies can ensure effective working methods during crises, with a specific focus on issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Goal: Promote implementation of existing work product

The Working Group will continue to promote, encourage implementation of, assess the use of, and consider feedback on its existing work. Formats for promotion and implementation will include Working Group calls and webinars, workshops, and efforts to solicit feedback on and gauge the use of the work product(s).

Goal: Strong member and NGA participation

The Working Group will continue to engage ICN members and NGAs through the development of new work product(s) of value to Working Group participants; implementation efforts for existing work product(s); virtual meetings, webinars and discussion calls on timely topics of interest; workshops; and other interaction. NGAs will remain an integral part of the AEWG's work, with all members encouraged to invite and involve active NGA participation from their respective jurisdictions.

Agency Effectiveness Working Group

2022-2023 Annual Plan

Projects Summary

In the period 2022-2023, the AEWG will have four main pillars in its work to achieve its mission and strategic goals:

1. Agency Effectiveness Post-Covid-19
2. Planning, Monitoring and Measuring Effectiveness
3. Digitalisation, Innovation and Agency Effectiveness
4. The Role of Chief/Senior Economists for Effective Enforcement

Project 1 – Agency Effectiveness Post-COVID-19

Title	Agency Effectiveness in Response Post-COVID-19
Description and output	As the world enters into a new normal after the COVID-19 pandemic, this project will continue to analyse how competition agencies responded and adapted themselves derived from this emergency and how they can be better prepared to face future similar emerging situations. Following the work done last year, a report based on the replies to the survey, as well as the input from the discussions from the webinar and Annual Conference sessions, will continue to be drafted. The project will keep its focus of analysing topics such as work environments, digitalization of procedures, new investigative tools or processes, communications and engagement with stakeholders and general agencies' operations.
Output achieved	Written product: A report on the agencies' experiences on this topic.
Assessment of timing	2022-2023
Entities/Persons responsible	Mexican Federal Economic Competition Commission: Heidi Sada (hsada@cofece.mx), Edgar Jaimes (ejaimes@cofece.mx).
Implementation	Project team comprising AEWG members and NGAs will continue drafting the report based on the responses received from members. The report will be

	also sent for comments of the AEWG membership before submitting it for approval to the Steering Group.
Evaluation	Feedback from member agencies and NGAs, draft report approved by the Steering Group.

Project 2 – Planning, Monitoring and Measuring Effectiveness

Title	Planning, Monitoring and Measuring Effectiveness
Description and output	Planning, monitoring and measuring agency effectiveness are vital steps to increase the likelihood of an agency successfully achieving its objectives. This multi-year project will focus on member agencies' best practices and experiences in identifying clear objectives and strategies, assessing progress as well as evaluating effectiveness. Areas to explore include methods and processes employed by agencies to plan their work (e.g. annual planning, 5-year strategic framework), monitor the progress of their plans or review their plans, and measure effectiveness (e.g. key performance indicators and targets). The project will also explore the challenges agencies face in these areas. This project will also explore the setting up of an avenue for ICN member agencies to share their respective agencies' current and upcoming work priorities.
Output achieved	Webinar(s) and (or) short written product (compilation of member inputs) where competition agencies share their experience and good practices.
Assessment of timing	2022-2023
Entities/Persons responsible	Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore: Raymond Ng (raymond_ng@cccs.gov.sg), Yvette Yoong (yvette_yoong@cccs.gov.sg).
Implementation	Questionnaires, virtual meetings and webinars to obtain member inputs.
Evaluation	Feedback from member agencies and NGAs.

Project 3 – Digitalisation, Innovation and Agency Effectiveness

Title	Digitalisation, Innovation and Agency Effectiveness

Description and output	This multi-year project explores various strategies and approaches used by competition agencies when harnessing digitalisation to improve agency effectiveness. Based on the AEWG Report on "Digitalisation, Innovation and Agency Effectiveness", summarising member agencies' digital transformation experiences, this project will further explore different strategies used by competition agencies in order to digitalise and innovate their authorities in line with the growing digitalisation in society. In particular, the project may look at: (i) how the deployment of various innovative digital tools or solutions can accelerate agencies' internal operations and investigative capacity, especially with regard to IT forensic work and cartel screening; (ii) how automation, artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies can be strategically integrated into the work of competition agencies to augment their staff capabilities and achieve greater efficiency; (iii) creating a forum for non-traditional digital roles within competition agencies to discuss specific digital issues (e.g., in the form of targeted webinars or specific work streams); (iv) providing space for facilitating the development of open-source tools that could be disseminated among ICN members, as well as assisting agencies in overcoming any legal or technical barriers in this area.
Output achieved	Webinar(s) and (or) short written product (compilation of member inputs) where competition agencies share their experience and good practices. To the extent that best practices can be identified, these may be developed in subsequent years. The project may also lead to a topic for 2022 ICN Annual Conference.
Assessment of timing	2022-2023
Entities/Persons responsible	Swedish Competition Authority: Graeme Jarvie (Graeme.Jarvie@kkv.se)
Implementation	The project will continue to offer a forum for discussion to allow for the constructive exchange of good examples of agencies' digital transformation initiatives, in particular, how the deployment of innovative digital tools (including various automation, artificial

	intelligence and machine learning solutions) can accelerate agencies' internal operations and investigative capacity.
Evaluation	Feedback from member agencies and NGAs.

Project 3 – The Role of Chief/Senior Economists for Effective Enforcement

Title	ICN Chief/Senior Economist Workshop
Description and output	This project is focused on increasing the involvement of Chief/Senior Economists and NGAs within the ICN to further develop and emphasize the importance of economics in competition analysis. In 2022-2023, planning for the AEWG's 3rd Chief/Senior Economist Workshop will continue. As with the previous workshops, sessions will likely combine teaching from world-renowned academics in economics, case presentations by agencies, and discussions amongst audience.
	The 3rd Chief Economist Workshop was originally planned to take place in April 2020, but the event was postponed when the pandemic hit in early 2020. We hope to organize the Workshop in 2022 or 2023.
Output achieved	As a result of the Workshop, agencies will better share information and best practices, discuss case examples, and network to support the importance of economics in competition analysis.
	We will be able to continue to engage with economists and NGAs within the ICN.
Assessment of timing	TBD – Depending on the availability of a host.
Entities/Persons responsible	Canadian Competition Bureau
Implementation	Teleseminars
Evaluation	Feedback from member agencies and NGAs.

Dissemination, Implementation and Outreach

Project 1 - Promotion and Implementation of AEWG Work

The AEWG will pursue opportunities to include webinar material in existing work products, promote its existing work, solicit and consider feedback, and gauge its use by and usefulness to members.

The AEWG will also use opportunities at ICN events, such as workshops and annual conferences as well as periodic virtual meetings/webinars to highlight its existing body of work, notably the topics addressed in the ICN Agency Practice Manual.

Title	Promotion & Implementation
Description and output	Includes outreach to members, workshops, and promotion and implementation of existing AEWG work.
Output achieved	Promotion of AEWG work via virtual meetings/webinars and ICN events highlighting AEWG work-related themes.
Assessment of Timing	Ongoing efforts
Entities/Persons Responsible	AEWG co-chairs
Evaluation	Feedback from users and workshop participants.

WORK PRODUCTS 2021-2022

Economics Webinar "Use of Screens in Antitrust" 1 March 2022.

This webinar focused on bringing an economic perspective into the discussion of recent investigations involving screens in detecting anticompetitive behaviour. A recording of this webinar is available on the ICN YouTube Channel.

"Shaping agency digital transformation: the role of digital experts" 15 March 2022.

This webinar is part of the Digitalization, Innovation and Agency Effectiveness project. During the discussion agencies shared how they are acquiring and integrating digital expertise in order to achieve effective and efficient enforcement in the digital age.

"Agency Effectiveness Post-Covid-19" 7 April 2022.

This webinar explored how the pandemic has led to changes in the agencies' work methods, the relevant lessons learned from the pandemic and how these can help agencies to be better prepared for facing future similar emerging situations.