



**INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION NETWORK**  
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# TOPICS FOR PLENARY AND BREAKOUT SESSIONS



International  
Competition  
Network



**PHILIPPINE  
COMPETITION  
COMMISSION**

*Ensuring businesses compete and consumers benefit*

## ADVOCACY WORKING GROUP

### PLENARY SESSION

#### **Innovative Ways to Advocate Competition Benefits**

This session will examine innovative ways to communicate the benefits of competition to a wider audience. Participants will discuss how competition authorities can use new communication ways, including social media, digital campaigns, guidelines, storytelling, to increase public understanding and support for pro-competitive policies. The discussion will also explore how such initiatives can be used to raise public awareness on competition law, explain and promote key enforcement instruments (e.g. leniency), thereby encouraging compliance and preventing future infringements. It will consider how authorities can engage different audiences - businesses, policymakers, consumers, and the media - through different modern tools and platforms.

Format: Expert panel discussion followed by interactive Q&A; 75 min total — 60 min panel + 15 min audience dialogue. No. of speakers: 4.

### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### **Competition Advocacy to Foster Sustainability Initiatives through Fair Competition**

The business community has sometimes criticized competition law for interfering with effective sustainability initiatives undertaken jointly by competitors. However, in recent years, a number of competition authorities have issued sustainability guidelines, demonstrating that competition law is flexible enough to accommodate joint activities aimed at sustainability goals—such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions—that ultimately benefit citizens. This session will provide an opportunity for ICN members to share their experiences and discuss future perspectives.

Format: Key Points presentations + small group discussion; 75 min total (40 min presentation + 25 min group discussion + 10 min Report on group discussion). No. of Speakers: 4.

## **Ensuring Competitive Neutrality: Addressing Anti-Competitive State Measures in National Markets**

This session will explore how competition authorities can safeguard competitive neutrality by addressing anti-competitive state measures that distort market dynamics. It will highlight practical tools to assess the impact of government interventions, such as exclusive rights, subsidies regulatory advantages and preferential treatment of state-affiliated businesses, and how effective competition advocacy can lead to pro-competitive reforms. Through case experiences and lessons learned, participants will discuss how to engage policymakers, prioritize high-impact sectors and balance competition objectives with legitimate industrial policy goals.

### **Advocacy in the design of public tenders: Pro-competitive Tenders to Prevent Cartels**

Advocacy efforts are crucial as the design of tenders has an influence on the incentives of companies to compete. Furthermore, civil servants responsible for tenders play a key role in identifying collusive signs. It is also a timely subject to discuss as the European Commission is reviewing its public procurement Directives. This session could cover examples of successful advocacy efforts among NCAs in the field of public tenders. Such as e.g. trainings for Contracting Authorities / Public Procurement Service Staff to prevent bidding cartels, with a focus on how to design tenders in order to eliminate collusion.

Format: Panel discussion 60 min + 20-30 min small group discussion. No. of speakers: 4.

## AGENCY EFFECTIVENESS WORKING GROUP

### PLENARY SESSION

#### **Strategic Planning and Prioritization: Building Agile and Forward-Looking Agencies**

Building on [ICN Agencies' Experiences in Gathering and Using Information for Effective Strategic Planning \(2023\)](#), [ICN Agencies' Case Prioritisation and Initiation \(2021\)](#), [Competition Agency Practice Manual, Chapter 1: Strategic Planning and Prioritisation \(2010\)](#), the session will explore the following possible areas:

- revisiting strategic planning as a cornerstone of agency effectiveness;
- how to prioritize enforcement and advocacy activities in times of economic and geopolitical uncertainty;
- integrating data-driven planning tools and stakeholder consultation into agency strategies;
- lessons from younger and/or smaller agencies on prioritization and resource allocation;
- enhancing transparency and accountability in planning and prioritization.

Format: Expert panel discussion followed by interactive Q&A; 75 min total — 60 min panel and 15 min interactive dialogue with attendees. Moderator 1, Panel Speakers: 4

### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### **Agency Training Programs and Good Practices for Capacity Building**

Building on [Competition Agency Practice Manual, Chapter 7: Staff Training Programmes \(2017\)](#), AEWG's ongoing 2024–2025 project on staff training programs and checklist of good practices, the session will focus on: AEWG project outputs (training checklist and comparative practices); effective use of blended learning, digital tools, and peer exchanges; tailoring training programs to different agency maturities and resource levels; how to build and sustain institutional memory and knowledge transfer.

Format: a combination of room-wide presentations and small group discussions.

## **The Role of Economics in Competition Cases**

This session will focus on: strengthening the integration of economic analysis into case prioritization and decision-making; the evolving role of economic evidence in merger, cartel, and unilateral conduct cases; building and retaining in-house economic capacity within agencies; cooperation and consistency between legal and economic approaches to enforcement.

Format: small group discussion, with each table moderator leading a discussion on the role of economic analysis in specific areas (e.g., mergers, unilateral conduct, cartels, market studies).

## **The Interplay between Competition and Consumer Policies: Integrating Effectiveness and Public Impact**

As competition and consumer agencies face new challenges in digital markets, data use, and misleading commercial practices, understanding how to align competition and consumer policy tools is critical for effective enforcement, coherent advocacy, and sustained public trust. The session will address the following questions: What models of coordination between competition and consumer functions exist across ICN members? What lessons can be drawn from agencies that have successfully integrated both mandates? How should the competition–consumer interface evolve to address the challenges brought by digital markets? How can agencies capture the combined impact of competition and consumer interventions? How can competition agencies enhance their effectiveness by strategically managing the interface between competition enforcement and consumer protection and capturing the combined impact of these two policies?

Format: a combination of room-wide presentations and small group discussions.

## CARTEL WORKING GROUP

### PLENARY SESSION

#### **Algorithmic Collusion and Challenges for Cartel Enforcement in the Digital Era**

The plenary will explore how algorithms, AI-based pricing tools, and data-driven market intelligence systems can inadvertently or deliberately facilitate collusion. It will examine the evolving evidentiary standards, enforcement challenges in proving “meeting of minds” in algorithmic contexts, and best-practice frameworks adopted by leading jurisdictions. Key issues include algorithmic transparency, accountability of human oversight, and cross-border cooperation.

Format: Expert panel discussion followed by interactive Q&A; 75 min total — 60 min panel + 15 min audience dialogue. No. of Panel Speakers: 5

### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### **Public Procurement and Bid-Rigging Cartels – Detection strategies, case studies, and preventive compliance measures.**

This session will focus on patterns of collusion in public procurement, detection techniques (including data analytics and screening tools), and lessons from notable cases. It will also highlight preventive compliance measures for procurement agencies and vendors. Key issues include bid-rotation patterns, digital traceability, and inter-agency coordination.

Format: Case-study presentations + moderated discussion; 90 min total (60 min. presentation + 30 min open floor). No. of Speakers: 5

## **Corporate Compliance and Prevention – Fostering internal detection through dynamic compliance and leniency programmes**

This discussion will address how corporations can integrate dynamic compliance programs that evolve with data-driven risk mapping, promote whistle-blowing, and strengthen internal detection. Key issues include behavioural incentives, board-level responsibility, and the interplay between leniency policies and compliance efforts.

Format: Discussion with compliance heads + audience Q&A; 75 min. total (60 min presentation + 15 min open floor).

## **Maximizing Cartel Enforcement Impact: Practical, Cost-Effective Strategies and Tools**

Agency Strategies to achieve the biggest gains/impact in Cartel Enforcement with the least cost – Capacity-building and practical tools for effective enforcement.

The session will present innovative strategies that competition agencies use to optimize limited resources for maximum enforcement impact. Discussion will cover prioritization of cases, use of digital forensics, cross-training of investigators, and leveraging inter-agency cooperation.

Format: Round-table of agency representatives + tool demonstrations/ discussion; 75 min. Total (60 min presentation + 15 min open floor)

## MERGER WORKING GROUP

### PLENARY SESSION

#### **Navigating through the ever-changing economic and political landscape: are merger control policies flexible enough?**

The global and national economic and political environment is becoming increasingly volatile, posing new challenges for merger control. These developments are testing the boundaries of established merger control frameworks and raising questions about how flexible and resilient conventional approaches truly are.

This session will explore how these economic and political dynamics are evolving, together with the complexities and challenges that they bring along for merger control. Participants will also discuss and share their experiences on the extent to which existing merger control laws provide sufficient adaptability to address these emerging challenges, or whether a reconsideration of these laws may be needed.

### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### **Merger procedures in hostile takeovers: From notification to rights of target**

This session will address the main challenges with reviewing hostile takeovers. This includes the lack of information from one of the parties in the file, the difficulty to design a remedy based on the target assets, and the potential impact the merger review process may have on the takeover itself.

Format: Small moderated roundtable discussions followed by plenary feedback.

#### **Use of Shares and Concentration indicators: When do they reflect harm to competition**

This session will explore different structural indicators used by competition authorities to assess market power in merger cases and how their use has evolved in recent times to adapt to new market challenges. Structural indicators might include shares (based on sales, capacity, active users, etc.), concentration levels

and other market features such as diversion ratios, profit margins, capacity constraints, a firm's pivotality or the assessment of switching costs. The use of safe harbours and, conversely, positive rebuttable presumptions will also be discussed.

Format: Interactive panel discussion with moderated Q&A

### **Remedies Involving Digital Markets on Multijurisdictional Transactions**

This session explores the challenges of designing and enforcing remedies for digital markets when transactions span multiple jurisdictions. It will examine how differences in timing, enforcement powers and platform dynamics complicate remedy effectiveness. Participants will also explore the issue of asymmetric effectiveness and discuss coordination tools to address remedy shortfalls.

Format: Hypothetical scenario with moderated roundtable discussion

## UNILATERAL CONDUCT WORKING GROUP

### PLENARY SESSION

#### **Striking the balance between effectiveness, predictability and accuracy in the enforcement of unilateral conduct rules**

Predictability is an important attribute of effective enforcement against unilateral conduct. Clear rules and structured legal tests streamline the enforcement process and support deterrence objectives by allowing companies to evaluate their practices. At the same time, to accurately target harmful behaviour, especially in the context of evolving markets and novel types of conduct, enforcement needs to remain flexible and take due account of the circumstances of each case. This plenary session would allow participants to share their reflections on how to strike the right balance between these important objectives in the enforcement of unilateral conduct rules.

Format: Panel presentation/discussion followed by audience Q&A: 75 min. total (60 min. panel + 15 min. open floor). No of Panel Speakers: 4-5.

### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### **Defining Relevant Markets in Digital Ecosystems**

As digital ecosystems become increasingly complex and interdependent, traditional methods for defining relevant markets face significant challenges. This session will examine how digital interconnections—spanning multiple products, services, and user groups—reshape competitive boundaries. Participants will discuss emerging analytical approaches that go beyond strict substitution tests, focusing instead on complementarities, network effects, and dynamic interactions. The discussion aims to explore how market definition can remain a useful and flexible tool for understanding competition in digital environments.

Format: Panel discussion/cases followed by audience Q&A; 75 min. total (60 min presentation + 15 min open floor). Speakers: 4.

## **Effective remedies for unilateral conduct: challenges and best practices**

Remedies have an essential role to play in the effective enforcement against unilateral conduct, yet remedy design and implementation is a complex exercise. This session would explore challenges identified in this respect, lessons learned and recent developments in the participants' jurisdictions. Issues to discuss could include: how to tailor the remedy to the nature of the abuse, choice of remedy type (from simple "cease-and-desist" order, to ex gratia payments, to structural remedies), remedies in prohibition decisions vs commitments offered by the parties (e.g., commitment decisions), interplay with regulation.

Format: Panel presentation/discussion followed by audience Q&A: 90 min. total (60 min. panel + 30 min. open floor). No. of Panel Speakers: 4-5.

## **Exclusive Dealing: Case Experiences and Policy Perspectives**

Exclusive dealing refers to situations where a supplier or a dominant undertaking requires distributors or retailers to purchase exclusively from them or avoid dealing with competitors. Such practices may restrict competition by hindering rival undertakings or foreclosing market access for new entrants. Exclusive arrangements may arise either through contractual agreements between suppliers and distributors, which are assessed under the anticompetitive agreement framework, or as a result of unilateral conduct by dominant undertakings. This break out session will primarily focus on unilateral conduct and its potential to constitute abuse of dominance. A key discussion point will be whether exclusive dealing should be treated as a per se infringement or assessed under a rule of reason approach. This session also aims to explore how competition authorities evaluate foreclosure effects and efficiency justifications in practice. Overall, it will serve as a platform for exchanging opinions, case experiences, and policy perspectives on exclusive dealing.

Format: Case-study presentations + moderated discussion; 90 min total (60 min. presentation + 30 min open floor). No. of Speakers: 4-5.

## ICN STEERING GROUP SPECIAL PROJECT ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE MARKETS

There is a renewed focus and interest in the functioning of food and agriculture markets, both within national markets and at the global level. Encouragingly, this focus extends beyond competition authorities and now includes national government departments and multilateral institutions. With this new interest, it is likely that governments may consider enhancing interventions aimed at stabilising food price volatility and protecting their populations from food insecurity. Regardless of the paths that new policies may take, it is important that improving competition in these markets remains a central goal for policymakers.

The Special Project on Competition in Food and Agriculture Markets has been collecting the experiences of competition authorities throughout the world as they responded to high, rising food prices over the last two to three years. While the risks of climate and geopolitical shocks remain, global food prices have stabilised, providing an opportune moment for reflection and looking towards the future. In the current year the SP has focused on three related areas – developing price and market monitoring toolkits, policy advocacy and market studies in key sectors - identified following the 2024 ICN conference and feedback, with work product planned in each of them as will be reviewed in the plenary session.

### PLENARY SESSION

#### **Promoting Competition in Food and Agriculture Markets**

This panel will explore how competition agencies can foster competition in food and agriculture markets towards more competitive outcomes through proactive monitoring, research into key value chains and market inquiries including to support advocacy. Drawing on the ICN Special Project's outputs, the session will highlight practical tools, lessons from experience, case studies, and policy strategies relevant to both middle income and developing economies.

## Objectives:

- Draw comparative insights from methodologies and experiences of price and market monitoring and highlight the actions this work has enabled to date.
- Review of cross-border challenges in mergers and enforcement as highlighted in the selected markets and industries of commodity traders and poultry
- Consider the use of market inquiries and related advocacy strategies for embedding competition principles into food policy, especially in the context of climate change and food security.

Format: A single moderated panel (45 mins total) with rotating speakers representing diverse jurisdictions and perspectives. The session will conclude with a roundtable discussion and audience Q&A.

## **BREAKOUT SESSION**

### **Food and agriculture markets advocacy showcase**

While enforcement actions against anti-competitive conduct remain important, policy advocacy has emerged as a critical tool for competition agencies. By engaging with policymakers, sector regulators, and stakeholders, agencies can help shape frameworks that encourage efficiency, reduce barriers to entry, and foster inclusive and competitive markets.

This breakout session will explore the tools/strategies used by different jurisdictions to influence agriculture and food policy — from pricing and subsidies to procurement, sustainability, and digital platforms. It aims to identify effective strategies, shared challenges, and actionable insights for ICN members.

The session will:

- Showcase jurisdictional experiences in advocating for pro-competitive policies and tackling market power in food and agriculture value chains through market inquiries. Explore partnerships that promote competition in food and agriculture markets, including cross-border trade and regional cooperation.
- Examine how policy advocacy by authorities can assist with addressing current challenges (price volatility, sustainability goals and digital disruption) and can influence the nature of state intervention.
- Generate recommendations for agencies engaging in policy advocacy in politically sensitive or economically strategic sectors.

Format: 4 roundtable discussions, each focusing on one of the identified focus areas, for 45 min. Each table discussion will be led by a panelist. The moderator will then lead the discussion by the 4 panelists who will summarize the key points from the table discussions, for 20 min. We will allow 20 min. for audience Q&A.

## ICN TECHNOLOGIST FORUM

### BREAKOUT SESSION

#### Tech Group Showcase

The session will outline the main pieces of work undertaken by the Tech Group throughout the year.

# ICN STEERING GROUP SPECIAL PROJECT ON INTERNATIONAL ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION

## BREAKOUT SESSION

### International Cooperation for Making Enforcement Effective

Focus areas:

- Guidance on how to undertake different types of enforcement co-operation and showcase enforcement cooperation more effectively.
- Presentation of the developed work (new cooperation facilitating tools, capacity building initiatives, checklist with lessons learnt).
- Discussion and advice on how to make cooperation more effective.

Format: combination of room-wide presentations and small group discussions.

# ICN COMPETITION AUTHORITY PROCEDURES (CAP) FRAMEWORK

## PLENARY SESSION

### **CAP 2.0: Strengthening the Pillars of Procedural Fairness**

Since its introduction in 2019, the ICN Framework for Competition Agency Procedures (CAP) has provided members with a framework of key principles and best practices that strengthen procedural fairness in competition law enforcement. This panel will set the stage for the revitalisation of the CAP initiative – Project ‘CAP 2.0’. It will promote the CAP, showcase its principles and address key challenges that enforcers face in meeting the goals of the CAP framework.

Format: Interactive expert discussion and Q&A; 30 min. No. of speakers 3 - 4.

## BREAKOUT SESSION

### **CAP in Action**

This session will consist of two parts. It will begin with the findings of the CAP Report and will highlight practical takeaways from it, followed by a discussion of individual principles as well as general trends in a second step which will place particular emphasis on the active involvement of all participants in table discussions.

## BRIDGING PROJECT

### BREAKOUT SESSION

#### **Resilience and Innovation: Implementing Competition Policy in Complex and Resource-Constrained Environments for Young and Small Agencies**

This session explores how young and small competition agencies can foster resilience and drive innovation while implementing effective competition policy in challenging environments. Participants will learn practical strategies for navigating resource constraints, managing complexity, and leveraging creative approaches to enforcement and advocacy. The discussion will highlight practical cases, tools, and collaborative solutions that empower agencies to remain agile and impactful despite limited capacity.