



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**10 October 2018**

### **ASEAN ESTABLISHES COMPETITION ENFORCERS' NETWORK, REGIONAL COOPERATION FRAMEWORK, AND VIRTUAL RESEARCH CENTRE**

The ASEAN Experts Group on Competition ("AEGC") has established the ASEAN Competition Enforcers' Network ("ACEN") to facilitate cooperation on competition cases in the region and to serve as a platform to handle cross-border cases. The first meeting of the ACEN was held on 9 October 2018 on the side-lines of the 22<sup>nd</sup> AEGC Meeting, which was hosted by the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore ("CCCS") from 8 to 10 October 2018.

2. The ASEAN Economic Community ("AEC") Blueprint recognises the importance of competition policy and law ("CPL") in promoting economic development and integration. Under the AEC Blueprint 2025, competition policy is a key pillar under the thrust to create a competitive, innovative, and dynamic ASEAN.

3. Enforcement cooperation is increasingly important as cross-border cases become more common. It is timely for competition authorities in the region to come together to facilitate the exchange of information to better deal with such cases. The aims of the ACEN are to enable mutual understanding of each other's enforcement goals and objectives and to encourage information sharing between ASEAN competition authorities. The ACEN will also look into facilitating cooperation on mergers and acquisitions with a cross-border dimension. One of the topics discussed during the meeting was recent cases including Grab's acquisition of Uber in Southeast Asia which was reviewed by several jurisdictions in ASEAN such as Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam and saw competition authorities cooperate on the case. Competition enforcement in ASEAN has also been further strengthened with the formation of the Lao Competition Commission and Myanmar Competition Commission.

4. Recognising the need to catalyze research on competition issues in ASEAN and East Asia, the AEGC launched the Virtual ASEAN Competition Research Centre ("Virtual Centre"). The Virtual Centre hosts a repository of research articles which are useful reference for researchers and competition authorities examining competition issues in the region, such as an article authored by Dr. Cassey Lee from the ISEAS –

Yusof Ishak Institute which studied the dynamics of ride-sharing competition, a trending topic in the region.

5. The Virtual Centre also includes profiles of researchers / academics with an interest on competition policy and law in the region, as well as a section aimed at promoting research collaboration on competition in ASEAN. The Virtual Centre can be accessed at <https://asean-competition.org/research/>

6. As current Chair of the AEGC, CCCS also led other initiatives to strengthen the enforcement of competition policy and law in ASEAN, increase the awareness of competition policy and law in the region, and create a level playing field for companies operating in the region.

### **Other Initiatives Launched under CCCS's Chairmanship**

#### *ASEAN Regional Cooperation Framework*

7. A Regional Cooperation Framework ("RCF")<sup>1</sup> serves as a set of guidelines for ASEAN Member States ("AMSs") to cooperate on competition cases. The RCF, which has been endorsed by the ASEAN Economic Ministers ("AEM"), sets out the general objectives, principles, and possible areas of cooperation among ASEAN Member States that may be undertaken on a bilateral, multilateral, sub-regional or regional approach, and on a voluntary basis, in relation to the development, application and enforcement of competition laws. Cooperation under the RCF will be founded on mutual respect, transparency, goodwill, flexibility, and the availability of resources.

#### *ASEAN Competition Compliance Toolkit*

8. The ASEAN Competition Compliance Toolkit<sup>2</sup> provides guidance to ASEAN Member States on promoting business compliance with competition law, as well as facilitates competition compliance by businesses in the region. The Toolkit provides businesses with information on the basic principles of competition law, benefits of competition compliance, as well as guidelines on how to implement an internal competition compliance programme.

---

<sup>1</sup> Undertaken with the support of the AANZFTA Competition Law Implementation Programme (Phase II).

<sup>2</sup> The Toolkit was supported by the ASEAN-German Competition Policy and Law Phase II project. It may be accessed via <https://www.ccs.gov.sg/-/media/custom/ccs/files/media-and-publications/publications/aegc/competition-compliance-toolkit-for-businesses-in-asean.pdf> or <https://asean-competition.org/read-publication-competition-compliance-toolkit-for-businesses-in-asean>

### Studies to Examine State of Competition in ASEAN

9. Two studies<sup>3</sup> looking into the state of competition in ASEAN were initiated. The first study will review the impact of policies and regulations on competition in the logistics sector in ASEAN, while the second study will assess the impact of state-owned enterprises on competition in the logistics sector in ASEAN. ASEAN decided to focus on the logistics sector as it is an important sector in terms of catalyzing development and connectivity among Member States.

### Capacity building efforts from New and Existing Development Partners

10. Development partners recognise the economic significance of ASEAN as a region and the importance of competition policy and law in order to build a competitive, innovative and dynamic ASEAN. To this end, these development partners provide various forms of technical and funding assistance to AEGC projects.

11. Apart from continuing the close collaboration with existing development partners, including Australia, New Zealand<sup>4</sup>, Germany, and Japan, the AEGC forged engagements with new development partners which will assist ASEAN in its capacity building efforts. The new development partners include the Organisation for Economic Co-operation, Canada, the European Commission, and the United Kingdom.

### International Competition Network Workshop

12. An International Competition Network<sup>5</sup> (“ICN”) Promotion and Implementation Workshop for ASEAN Competition Officials will be held on 12 October 2018, on the sidelines of the 22<sup>nd</sup> AEGC Meeting. The workshop will leverage on the ASEAN Competition Compliance Toolkit as a basis to explore how ASEAN competition authorities can enhance their efforts to encourage greater competition compliance by the business community in their respective jurisdictions. Speakers from Australia, Canada, and Germany will also participate in the workshop where they will share their respective experiences and insights into how ASEAN Member States can strengthen businesses’ competition compliance.

---

<sup>3</sup> Undertaken with the support of OECD and UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

<sup>4</sup> Collaboration with Australia and New Zealand on competition policy is conducted under the auspices of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) Competition Law Implementation Program (CLIP).

<sup>5</sup> The International Competition Network is the international body dedicated exclusively to competition law enforcement. Its members represent national and multinational competition authorities.

## Further information

13. Mr. Toh Han Li, Chief Executive, CCCS said:

*“Projected to become the world’s fourth largest single market by 2030 – behind only the US, China, and the European Union – ASEAN is an extremely attractive destination for businesses to operate in. The ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 envisages a competitive, innovative and dynamic ASEAN with well-functioning markets, supported by operational and effective competition rules to provide a level playing field for businesses to operate in.*

*As chair of the AEGC, CCCS is honoured to be able to contribute to the development of competition policy and law in ASEAN through the initiatives launched today such as the ASEAN Competition Enforcers Network, the Regional Cooperation Framework and the Virtual ASEAN Competition Research Centre. We look forward to continuing this momentum and to create a competitive ASEAN.”*

14. CCCS will hand over the chairmanship of the AEGC to Malaysia in 2019.

-End-

## **About the ASEAN Experts Group on Competition**

The ASEAN Experts Group on Competition (“AEGC”) was established in August 2007 as a platform to look into competition policy and law issues in ASEAN. The AEGC is an official body comprising representatives from the competition authorities and agencies responsible for competition policy and law in AMSs. It oversees cooperation activities relating to competition policy and law in ASEAN as well as implementation of measures under the ASEAN Economic Community (“AEC”) Blueprint. CCCS represents Singapore at the AEGC and has been an active contributor to the various initiatives and activities at the AEGC.

## **About the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore**

The Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (“CCCS”) is a statutory board of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. CCCS administers and enforces the Competition Act (Cap. 50B) which empowers CCCS to investigate and adjudicate anti-competitive activities, issue directions to stop and/or prevent anti-competitive activities and impose financial penalties. CCCS is also the administering agency of the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (Cap. 52A) or CPFTA which protects consumers against unfair trade practices in Singapore. Our mission is to make markets work well to create opportunities and choices for business and consumers in Singapore.

For more information, please visit [www.cccs.gov.sg](http://www.cccs.gov.sg)

### **For media clarifications, please contact:**

Ms. Grace Suen  
Senior Assistant Director (Communications)  
Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore  
Email: [grace\\_suen@cccs.gov.sg](mailto:grace_suen@cccs.gov.sg)  
DID: 6325 8216