

Terms of Reference for UNCTAD Research Partnership Platform on Competition and Consumer Protection

Introduction

UNCTAD Research Partnership Platform on Competition and Consumer Protection (RPP) was established in 2010 as an informal framework to bring together academic institutions and scholars working on competition and consumer protection issues and disseminate their research developments to competition authorities and consumer protection agencies from across the world. Over time, the RPP has grown significantly, and the secretariat decided in 2020 to review how the platform runs to better engage research partners in the UNCTAD's priority topics of work on competition and consumer protection, considering the needs and interests of developing countries. As part of the efforts, this note proposes a work reorganization to enhance transparency and efficiency of the RPP.

Mission Statement¹

UNCTAD supports member States in the fields of competition and consumer policies through its three pillars of work: consensus building; research and analysis; technical assistance and capacity building.

The RPP aims to strengthen the impact of UNCTAD's work in the pillars of research and analysis and technical cooperation, by deepening the substantive edge of its research and policy analysis and enhancing the added value of its technical assistance activities, especially in developing countries. It also contributes to building an international platform for discussions and the exchange of information and ideas on competition and consumer protection issues.

The RPP provides competition and consumer protection authorities, governments, researchers on competition and consumer policies, business and civil society organisations research papers, studies and reports for effective regulation and law enforcement, and will foster a deeper

¹ Adapted from text on the webpage: [Research Partnership Platform on Competition and Consumer Protection | UNCTAD](#)

understanding of how competition and consumer laws and policies can promote economic growth and inclusive and sustainable development.

The RPP facilitates research cooperation between its partners and informs them of ongoing research and opportunities to encourage partners and delegates to participate in UNCTAD events related to competition and consumer policies.

Method of work

A. Mandate

The United Nations General Assembly entrusted UNCTAD to be the focal point within the UN on competition and consumer protection issues, as contained in General Assembly resolutions 35/63 of 22 April 1980 for competition and 70/186 of 22 December 2015 for consumer protection.

The purpose of the competition and consumer policies programme is to contribute to poverty reduction and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by improving markets' functioning through strengthened competition and consumer protection. The programme fulfils this mandate through three key functions: providing a forum for intergovernmental deliberations; undertaking research, policy analysis and data collection; and providing technical assistance to developing countries.

The RPP was established in 2010 as an informal mechanism to engage researchers in UNCTAD's work on competition and consumer protection. The eighth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices, held from 19 to 23 October 2020, recognised "the useful role of the platform in strengthening UNCTAD research and policy analysis capacities and linking research findings to the UNCTAD technical cooperation pillar".²

B. Activities

² TD/RBP/CONF.9/9

The RPP undertakes the following activities.

1. The UNCTAD secretariat hosts the annual meeting of the RPP on the margins of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy and on Competition Law and Policy meetings.
2. The secretariat can engage RPP partners in joint research projects. Research partners can seek collaboration with UNCTAD in other formats.
3. The secretariat disseminates information about relevant events organised by UNCTAD or its partners.
4. The RPP promotes research on competition and consumer policies in developing countries.

C. Membership and participation

The RPP is an open and informal network that welcomes researchers and academic institutions working on competition and consumer protection issues. To join the RPP, applicants should contact the UNCTAD secretariat and provide their basic information and the complete information gathering form. Researchers and academic institutions from developing countries or with research interests in developing countries are encouraged to join the RPP.

Partners are expected to participate regularly in RPP activities and provide updates on their ongoing research projects and activities.

D. Resources

The RPP does not provide funding for any research project or other collaboration activities.

E. Procedures

The UNCTAD secretariat will develop internal guidelines and procedures as needed and provide general guidance to prospective or current partners regarding membership and collaboration.

Appendix

Introduction

This appendix specifies requirements regarding the activities referred to in the Term of Reference for UNCTAD Research Partnership Platform on Competition and Consumer Protection (RPP). It is at the UNCTAD secretariat's discretion to review and adjust the operation of the RPP.

Activities (section B under Method of Work)

1. Annual meeting

The UNCTAD secretariat organises the annual meeting of the RPP on the margins of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy and on Competition Law and Policy meetings. The secretariat circulates the invitation before the meeting. Interested partners should write to the secretariat in advance in case they would like to share research and analysis developments or propose topics for discussion.

2. Joint research projects

The UNCTAD secretariat can engage RPP partners in joint research projects.

a. Proposal

Research proposals from RPP partners should contain information about research questions, methods, timeline, relevance to developing countries and UNCTAD's roles. The secretariat can provide a template. Please note that the expected project duration should be shorter than two years.

b. Eligibility

The research proposal must be submitted by a research institution or by a scholar affiliated with a university or research centre. The secretariat does not accept individual proposals from students.

c. Selection

The secretariat will assess research proposals in the light of UNCTAD's priority areas of work and will select research proposals based on an internal evaluation which also considers resource constraints within the secretariat.

d. Support from UNCTAD

In a joint research project, UNCTAD secretariat can assist in the following areas:

- i. Providing overall guidance;
- ii. Providing substantive inputs and review;
- iii. Facilitating contact with authorities and other stakeholders with a global reach;
- iv. Disseminating research findings to UNCTAD's diverse and broad networks;
- v. Linking projects with other pillars of work at UNCTAD.

e. Funding

RPP does not encompass any funding to support research. Research projects within the RPP framework should not impose additional financial costs on UNCTAD.

f. Outcomes

Outputs of RPP research projects may pave the way to UNCTAD publications¹, academic publications, seminars, etc. RPP partners and research projects may be linked with UNCTAD's technical cooperation projects for developing countries.

g. Monitoring and evaluation

If a research proposal is selected, UNCTAD secretariat will advise on formalities, such as an exchange of letters. The UNCTAD secretariat will monitor project implementation. The secretariat reserves the right to cancel the joint project if there is no progress for six months.

3. Other collaboration

RPP partners can seek collaboration with UNCTAD in other formats, such as requesting specific types of information or coordination support from the secretariat.

4. **Research dissemination**

The UNCTAD secretariat disseminates information about relevant events organised by UNCTAD or its partners, with a focus on promoting research in developing countries through awareness-raising, outreach and other activities.

RPP partners can request research information to be circulated among UNCTAD's networks on competition and consumer protection. The UNCTAD secretariat will decide on the best suited channel for circulation.