



Working Group on Consumer Protection in E-Commerce 2023 – 2024 Work Plan

1. Background information

The Working Group on Consumer Protection in E-Commerce (WGE) reported on its work to the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy (IGE) in its seventh session on 3-4 July 2023. The IGE extended the mandate of the WG in its agreed conclusions (TD/B/C.I/CPLP/37, forthcoming):

8. *Emphasizes* the importance of regional cooperation in the enforcement of consumer protection law and policy; invites consumer protection authorities to strengthen their national legislative frameworks for international, regional and bilateral cooperation, in the light of guidelines 79 to 94; and requests the UNCTAD secretariat to continue to explore, gather and promote best practices for international cooperation;

[...]

10. *Decides* to renew the mandate of the working group on consumer protection in e-commerce, to continue work on dark commercial patterns and consumer vulnerability in e-commerce, aimed at producing accessible outputs to assist less experienced consumer agencies, calling upon member States to provide a generic email address as a key contribution to the working group, and to report on its continued work to the eighth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy;

[...]

The Report of the Working Group on Consumer Protection in E-Commerce (WGE) to the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection¹ suggested the following possible work areas and strategies for 2023-2024:

- *Each WGE meeting can feature at least one relevant subject hosted by a WGE member for discussions.*
- *Proposed work areas could include dark commercial patterns online (potentially including Artificial Intelligence) and consumer vulnerability in e-commerce.*
- *The WGE should focus on accessible outputs designed to assist less experienced national agencies, for example through webinars, short toolkits, or other brief materials.*

¹ See [Report of the WGE to the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection](#), June 2023.



2. Organisational changes agreed at the first meeting of the WGE on 26th October 2023

Prof Riefa was appointed as the coordinator for the WGE on consumer protection in e-commerce. She is supported by the Secretariat (which remains the point of contact for all stakeholders) and the Steering Group (membership below). Any Member States wishing to take part in the Steering group is invited to contact the Secretariat. The WGE membership continues to comprise participants from member States, notably consumer protection agencies, alongside civil society, and academia.

Coordinator: Prof. Christine Riefa, University of Reading

Secretariat team and contact details: Elizabeth Gachuri, Economic Affairs Officer (elizabeth.gachuri@un.org) and Valentina Rivas, Programme Management Officer (valentina.rivas@un.org).

Steering Group meeting membership: DNDCYAC (Argentina), SIC (Colombia), CAK (Kenya), PROFECO (Mexico), INDECOPI (Peru) UOKiK (Poland), the Central Bank of Rwanda, Konsumetverket (Sweden), CMA (United Kingdom), FTC (United States of America).

3. Work Plan October 2023 – July 2024

Below is the schedule of WGE meetings and activities planned for the current work year. The secretariat will organize 5 WGE online meetings between October 2023 and June 2024 to discuss, agree on and implement the work plan (blue in the table below). Participants are strongly encouraged to contribute to the discussions by sharing their experiences and challenges they face and send written contributions (even if not able to participate in the meetings). This will help the Secretariat and the Steering group in delivering the outputs outlined in the work plan. It will also host 3 meetings for the Steering group to discuss proposals and prepare the technical notes and reports to be put to the WGE for approval (grey in the table below). The below table also contains dates for receipt of comments or contributions (light blue).

The meetings will be held on MS Teams or Zoom platform on Thursday afternoons normally between 2:30 - 4:00 p.m. (Geneva Time). For webinars on specific topics, it may be recommended that meetings be held at other times to allow the participation of a wider group of member States.



Dates	Subject
26 October 2023	WGE all group meeting: Discuss areas of work and proposed work plan
16 November 2023	Steering group meeting
28 November 2023	Coordinator and Secretariat to circulate proposed workplan. Comments from members by email welcome by 7 th December to finalize work plan.
30 November 2023	Deadline for provision of generic email addresses to the Secretariat to be added to the master list to facilitate Cross border exchanges (email Secretariat).
1 February 2024	Webinar 1 on Artificial Intelligence (part 1 led by India)
29 February 2024	Webinar 2 on Artificial Intelligence (part 2 -led by Poland)
21 March 2024	Webinar 3 on consumer vulnerability in e-commerce (led by Sweden)
18 April 2024 TBC	Discussion of Technical Notes by Steering group
2 May	Meeting of the steering group to discuss draft report for IGE before putting it to the membership & and review second draft of technical notes.
23 May 2024	Discussion of the WGE report for the IGE and technical notes to the IGE 2024
7 June	Deadline for comments on the WGE report to the IGE 2024
1 and 2 July 2024	IGE 2024

4. Proposed outputs

The Steering group recommends the following outputs this year:

- 3 Webinars (2 on AI and 1 on vulnerable consumers)
- Report on cross-border practice (led by FTC). This will conclude the work undertaken in the last 2 years by the WGE and Steering group.
- Technical note on the use of AI by consumers and in consumer enforcement (led by coordinator). This will allow to consolidate work done with UNCTAD/ EnfTech project in the form of an online conference in 2023 as well as include new experiences and learning shared during this year's webinars (including the consumer risk angle proposed by USA, India's dark pattern angle. In as much as digital environment create vulnerabilities this also will serve as a bridge for our vulnerability topic)
- Technical note on vulnerable consumers and e-commerce (led by Sweden) which will consolidate the learning from the webinar.