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Protecting and Empowering Consumers in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Contribution

The Competition Council
Algeria

Contribution – Algeria

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Introduction

In the Algerian context, the role of consumer protection and market regulation has been institutionally reinforced by the establishment of the **Competition Council** (Conseil de la Concurrence), pursuant to **Ordinance No. 95-06 dated January 20, 1995**. This independent administrative authority was created to ensure the proper functioning of the market economy by promoting fair competition and safeguarding consumer interests against monopolistic practices, abusive market dominance, and anti-competitive agreements.

The Council is mandated to investigate and adjudicate cases related to restrictive business practices and to issue binding decisions that can include sanctions or corrective measures. It also provides opinions on draft legislation and regulatory texts related to competition and may initiate actions *ex officio* or respond to referrals from public authorities, businesses, or consumers.

In light of the digital economy and the emergence of Artificial Intelligence, the role of the Competition Council is increasingly relevant. The deployment of algorithmic pricing, data-driven market segmentation, and platform-based monopolies introduces complex dynamics that necessitate a re-examination of traditional competition law principles. The Council, therefore, is expected to adapt its mechanisms to address new challenges posed by digital platforms and AI systems, while continuing to uphold transparency, fairness, and consumer rights in the evolving economic ecosystem.

1. Consumer Protection in the AI Era

The era of Artificial Intelligence (AI) represents a paradigm shift in the relationship between consumers, markets, and technology. The proliferation of AI systems into commercial sectors—ranging from digital finance to ecommerce, smart appliances, healthcare applications, and automated customer service—has revolutionized how consumers interact with products and services. While AI promises to enhance efficiency, personalization, and user satisfaction, it also introduces unprecedented challenges concerning consumer rights, safety, transparency, and autonomy.

1.1 Defining Consumer Protection in the Context of AI

Consumer protection traditionally refers to policies and laws that safeguard buyers of goods and services against unfair practices, unsafe products, fraud, and information asymmetry. However, the integration of AI systems into these domains necessitates a redefinition of what consumer protection entails. In this context, protection must extend beyond physical product safety to encompass:

Algorithmic transparency: Ensuring consumers understand how decisions are made by AI (e.g., credit scores, content filtering, pricing).

Data protection: Securing personal data processed and stored by AIdriven platforms.

Right to explanation: Empowering consumers to demand justifications for automated decisions that affect them.

Nondiscrimination: Preventing algorithmic bias based on race, gender, geography, or socioeconomic status.

Digital literacy: Educating consumers about AI systems, how they function, and how to safely engage with them.

These principles are aligned with international ethical frameworks, such as the OECD Principles on Artificial Intelligence (2019) and the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI (2021), which advocate for AI systems that are transparent, humancentered, and rightsrespecting.

1.2 Algeria's Legal Framework and Institutional Approach

In Algeria, consumer protection is governed primarily by **Law No. 09/03 of February 25, 2009**, which was **amended and supplemented by Law No. 18/09 of June 10, 2018**. These legislative frameworks were originally crafted to mitigate traditional market risks—such as product defects, unfair commercial practices, misleading advertising, and fraudulent sales. The laws enshrine key consumer rights, including the right to information, the right to safety, and the right to redress, while imposing obligations on producers, importers, and service providers to ensure the quality, conformity, and transparency of goods and services placed on the market.

In recent years, as Algeria accelerates its digital transformation, the scope and application of these laws have expanded to encompass **digital services, e-commerce, and emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI)**. Although the original texts do not explicitly reference AI, their general provisions are being interpreted to cover algorithmic decision-making, online consumer profiling, and digital contract formation. This legal evolution reflects a growing awareness of the risks posed by data asymmetry, opaque algorithms, and potential discrimination embedded in AI systems. As such, Algerian consumer protection law is progressively aligning with international standards and best practices, calling for **greater institutional capacity**, **enhanced digital literacy**, and **collaborative regulatory frameworks** to ensure effective enforcement in the age of digitalization.

Key protective measures include:

Article 8: Guarantees consumers the right to full and accurate information, which, in the AI context, requires companies to disclose whether a product or service involves automated decisionmaking, and how it affects the consumer.

Article 9: Enshrines the right to safe and secure products, encompassing digital security and privacy in AIintegrated devices.

Article 15: Allows consumers to test or try products, which could be extended to include the right to preview or simulate AI functionalities before committing to use or purchase.

In addition, Algeria has adopted Law 18/07 of July 10, 2018, which focuses specifically on the protection of personal data—a critical issue in the age of AI. This law imposes obligations on organizations using AI systems to:

Process data lawfully and transparently (Articles 4–6);

Obtain prior, informed consent from individuals (Article 17);

Implement security measures to prevent misuse or unauthorized access to personal data.

Together, these laws form the backbone of Algeria's response to AI-related consumer challenges, though ongoing reforms are needed to address the nuances of emerging technologies.

1.3 Emerging Risks and Challenges in AI-Driven Markets

As AI becomes embedded in consumer environments, it introduces risks that challenge traditional forms of regulation:

Opacity and "Black Box" Algorithms: Many AI systems, particularly those based on deep learning, operate as "black boxes," meaning their internal logic is not easily understandable. This lack of transparency makes it difficult for consumers to know how or why certain outcomes (e.g., pricing, rejection of service) occurred.

Behavioral Manipulation and Dark Patterns: AI can be used to exploit consumer psychology through hyperpersonalized advertising and interface design. For example, platforms may employ "dark patterns" that nudge users toward purchases or data sharing they may not fully understand or intend.

Autonomous Decision-Making: AI systems can make decisions independently of human intervention. In such cases, determining legal responsibility becomes complex—especially in scenarios involving harm, discrimination, or financial loss.

Discrimination and Bias: Algorithmic decisions may unintentionally replicate or reinforce societal biases, especially if training data are unbalanced or exclusionary. This is particularly concerning in financial, health, and employment services.

Data Security and Privacy Violations: AI systems rely on vast amounts of data to function effectively. Without strong safeguards, this can lead to breaches of privacy, identity theft, or surveillance.

These issues underscore the importance of evolving consumer protection strategies that are anticipatory, rights-based, and adaptable to the speed of technological change.

1.4 Comparative Global Developments

Globally, consumer protection in the AI age is an active area of regulatory development:

The European Union's proposed AI Act (2021) categorizes AI systems based on risk and imposes strict requirements on highrisk systems, particularly those used in consumer contexts. It also mandates transparency for AI systems that interact with humans or generate content.

The United States Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has issued guidelines warning companies against deceptive or unfair use of AI in marketing and decisionmaking, emphasizing accountability and fairness.

South Korea and Singapore have developed national AI governance frameworks that emphasize consumer rights, algorithmic transparency, and public education.

Algeria, as part of the global digital economy, stands to benefit from harmonizing its national frameworks with such international standards, especially to facilitate crossborder trade, data flows, and collaborative AI governance.

1.5 Institutional and Societal Responses

Beyond legislation, Algeria has taken institutional steps to strengthen consumer protection in the AI era:

- The creation of the Higher School of Artificial Intelligence (2021) reflects a national strategy to develop local AI expertise and foster innovation in alignment with ethical principles.
- The establishment of the Scientific Council for Artificial Intelligence and Computer Science (2023) provides a policy advisory body to monitor AI developments and their implications for society.

Civil society organizations, consumer advocacy groups, and media watchdogs also play vital roles in raising public awareness, monitoring corporate practices, and holding institutions accountable. Their involvement is critical in bridging the gap between legal frameworks and everyday consumer experiences.

Consumer protection in the age of AI is no longer a secondary policy issue—it is a core requirement for equitable and sustainable technological advancement. As Algeria modernizes its economic and digital infrastructure, the need to establish a forwardlooking, rightsbased, and consumercentered AI governance framework becomes increasingly urgent. This includes revisiting existing laws, adopting global best practices, investing in digital education, and ensuring that every citizen, regardless of their technological literacy, is empowered and protected in this new digital era.

2. The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Algerian Consumers

The emergence and rapid deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI) have profoundly transformed consumer behavior, preferences, and modes of access to goods and services. In Algeria, like in many developing economies, AI technologies are increasingly integrated into digital platforms, commerce systems, and communication tools, shaping the daily experiences of consumers. The shift is not merely technological—it also carries socioeconomic, cultural, and regulatory implications that demand careful attention.

AI's influence on the Algerian consumer landscape is evident in multiple sectors, but two key domains—targeted advertising and ecommerce—represent areas where the effects are both immediate and farreaching.

2.1 Targeted Advertising

Artificial Intelligence has redefined the nature and scope of advertising. Traditional mass advertising, which once relied on broad demographic categories and generic messages, is being replaced by hyperpersonalized, datadriven campaigns. AI systems collect and process vast amounts of consumer data, including browsing habits, purchasing history, location data, and even emotional cues derived from interactions with digital content. These systems then tailor advertisements to align with individual preferences, habits, and predicted behavior patterns.

In Algeria, this form of advertising is increasingly common across social media platforms, search engines, and mobile applications. Local businesses, especially those operating online, are leveraging AI tools provided by global tech giants (like Google Ads and Meta/Facebook Ads) to reach consumers with high precision. This shift has several implications:

➢ Influence on Consumer Autonomy: While personalization can enhance user experience, it also raises concerns about psychological manipulation. Consumers may not always be aware that their exposure to products or services is algorithmically curated to maximize engagement or spending.

➢ Behavioral Profiling and Privacy Risks: Targeted advertising depends on the construction of digital consumer profiles, often without explicit consent or understanding. This raises ethical and legal concerns about data ownership, consent, and the right to be forgotten, especially in contexts where data protection laws are still evolving.

➢ Unequal Access and Digital Discrimination: AI advertising algorithms may prioritize certain groups over others, leading to algorithmic exclusion—where lowincome, rural, or nondigitalsavvy users are marginalized from accessing specific offers or services.

➢ From a regulatory standpoint, the Algerian legal framework does not yet fully address the subtleties of AIbased advertising. While Law 09/03 prohibits misleading commercial practices, it does not explicitly regulate the use of algorithmic profiling or personalization strategies. This gap needs to be addressed through AIspecific consumer protection provisions that guarantee transparency in advertising algorithms and ensure ethical data use.

Moreover, public awareness about how digital marketing functions remains limited. Many consumers do not realize they are being exposed to AIdriven persuasion tactics, making media and digital literacy an essential policy area to empower citizens in resisting manipulation and making informed decisions.

2.2 ECommerce and Digital Platforms

The second significant area where AI is transforming consumer life in Algeria is electronic commerce (ecommerce). Over the past decade, the country has witnessed a surge in digital commercial

activity, with over 150 ecommerce websites operating across sectors such as clothing, electronics, home appliances, cosmetics, and digital services. AI technologies have played a central role in this transformation by optimizing logistics, personalizing shopping experiences, enhancing payment systems, and improving customer service through chatbots and recommendation engines.

Several interrelated factors have driven the expansion of ecommerce in Algeria:

➢ Governmental Support for Digital Trade: Public authorities have increasingly supported the development of a national digital economy through strategic plans, infrastructure investment (e.g., expanding 4G and fiber optic coverage), and legislative reform. The inclusion of digital economy objectives in national development policies has encouraged entrepreneurship in ecommerce and increased the supply of digital services.

➢ Changing Consumer Behavior and Awareness: Algerian consumers—especially the youth and urban populations—have shown growing awareness of the benefits of online shopping. These include convenience, diversity of choice, price comparison tools, and access to global markets. AI has enhanced this process by simplifying navigation, customizing homepages, and suggesting products based on previous browsing or purchase history.

➢ Ease of Access and Efficiency: AI systems have optimized the customer journey, reducing friction in every step of the buying process. This includes AIpowered search engines, predictive typing, voiceassisted shopping, automatic inventory updates, and realtime delivery tracking. As a result, consumers are able to complete purchases quickly and reliably.

Despite these advances, there remain structural challenges to the equitable development of AIenabled ecommerce in Algeria:

- Limited Payment Infrastructure: Although online banking and digital wallets are expanding, many Algerian consumers still rely heavily on cashondelivery methods due to limited trust in online transactions. This reduces the effectiveness of AI tools that optimize digital payments and financial services.

- Logistical and Delivery Barriers: In remote areas or underdeveloped regions, logistical infrastructure (warehousing, postal systems, transport routes) remains insufficient. AI's potential to optimize delivery and supply chains is limited by these physical constraints.

- Regulatory Oversight and Consumer Protection: While AI enhances the efficiency of digital commerce, it also introduces risks such as counterfeit products, data breaches, and service fraud. Algeria's consumer protection authorities must therefore update regulatory frameworks to address these issues, especially as global platforms and crossborder transactions increase.

From a comparative perspective, Algeria's progress in digital trade has earned it recognition from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), particularly in the B2C ECommerce

Index, where it ranks favorably among African nations. This performance reflects both the potential and the responsibility to develop AIbased commerce systems that are inclusive, transparent, and secure.

The impact of AI on Algerian consumers is multidimensional. On one hand, it promises more personalized, convenient, and efficient experiences—especially in advertising and online shopping. On the other, it introduces complex ethical, legal, and technological challenges related to privacy, autonomy, fairness, and inclusion.

For Algeria to fully benefit from AI in consumer markets, a proactive approach is needed—one that combines regulatory reform, consumer education, infrastructure development, and alignment with global digital governance standards. Only through such a comprehensive strategy can the country ensure that the digital transformation is not only innovative but also equitable and empowering for all Algerians.

3. Risks Associated with AI and Digital Deception

While Artificial Intelligence offers unprecedented potential for innovation, productivity, and personalized services, it also introduces significant and multifaceted risks—especially in the domain of consumer rights and market integrity. These risks are particularly pressing in emerging digital markets like Algeria, where regulatory maturity may lag behind technological adoption.

3.1 Deceptive Content and Algorithmic Manipulation

One of the most concerning risks is the creation and dissemination of AIgenerated deceptive content. Through advanced models like deepfakes, synthetic media, and automated text generation, malicious actors can craft misleading advertisements, fake consumer reviews, or fraudulent websites that manipulate consumer perception. Such content not only distorts market competition but also erodes consumer trust.

This phenomenon, often referred to as "digital deception," exploits psychological vulnerabilities. For instance, emotionally persuasive AIgenerated content may lead consumers to make purchases based on false promises or misrepresented features. Without adequate regulatory mechanisms or content verification tools, consumers in Algeria may find it increasingly difficult to distinguish between genuine and manipulated information in digital spaces.

3.2 Legal Liability and Accountability Gaps

AI systems, especially those powered by machine learning and autonomous decisionmaking, challenge traditional frameworks of legal liability. For example, if an AIpowered financial assistant recommends a faulty investment, or if a smart appliance malfunctions and causes harm, who bears responsibility—the developer, the vendor, the platform, or the algorithm itself?

These questions become even more complex in crossborder scenarios where AI applications are developed in one jurisdiction and deployed in another. Algerian law, like many legal systems, is not yet fully equipped

to handle such cases of diffuse responsibility, calling for urgent reforms and international legal harmonization.

3.3 Intellectual Property and AIGenerated Content

Another major challenge lies in the domain of intellectual property rights (IPR). According to the 2025 International Scientific Report on Advanced AI Safety, there are persistent ambiguities surrounding ownership of content generated by AI. For instance, if an AI tool creates a design, text, or music sample, who owns it—the user, the developer, or the AI system? Moreover, the training of AI models often involves the use of vast datasets that may include copyrighted content, sometimes without proper authorization.

In Algeria, this creates tension between supporting innovation and respecting creators' rights. Without clear guidance, consumers and producers alike may unknowingly infringe upon IPR, resulting in legal disputes or loss of creative incentive.

3.4 Privacy and Data Protection

Perhaps the most critical risk in the AIconsumer relationship involves data privacy. AI systems rely heavily on collecting, storing, and analyzing vast amounts of personal data to function effectively. This includes sensitive information such as location history, purchasing behavior, financial details, biometric data, and even voice or facial recognition inputs.

Improper handling of this data can lead to serious violations of consumer privacy, financial exploitation, or unauthorized profiling. In extreme cases, it can pave the way for mass surveillance, undermining individual freedom and autonomy. Given Algeria's evolving digital infrastructure, the urgency to implement data governance protocols and consumer data rights is particularly high.

4. Legal and Regulatory Framework in Algeria

To address these emerging risks, Algeria has begun strengthening its legal and regulatory framework concerning AI and digital consumer protection. Although still under development, significant progress has been made through the adoption of foundational laws and institutions.

4.1 Law No. 09/03 on Consumer Protection (as amended by Law 18/09)

This law forms the bedrock of consumer protection in Algeria. While initially designed for traditional markets, its provisions can be applied to AIenabled services in a digital economy.

Article 8 mandates the right to full and transparent information. In the context of AI, this implies disclosure of whether a product or service utilizes AI, and how such systems affect decisionmaking or outcomes.

Article 9 ensures the right to safety, which must now include protection against algorithmic bias, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, and AI system failures.

Article 15 grants consumers the right to test or preview products, a principle that could be expanded to allow users to simulate AI functionalities before purchase or use—helping them avoid manipulation or exploitation.

4.2 Law No. 18/07 on Personal Data Protection (2018)

This law directly addresses data governance, particularly relevant to AI systems. Key provisions include:

Articles 4–6: Define the conditions for lawful data processing, including the purpose, proportionality, and security of data use.

Article 17: Requires explicit consumer consent for data collection and processing. It also mandates transparency in how personal data is used and necessitates robust protection against unauthorized access or misuse.

Algeria's legal framework is increasingly being revised to align with international norms, including the European Union's AI Act, the OECD Guidelines on AI, and UNESCO's AI Ethics recommendations. These frameworks emphasize transparency, fairness, nondiscrimination, and human oversight in AI governance.

5. Strengthening Consumer Protection Capacity

Recognizing the rapid pace of digital transformation, Algeria has shown strong institutional and political will to build a comprehensive AI governance ecosystem. Several key developments illustrate this momentum:

❖ The Higher School of Artificial Intelligence (Established in 2021): Aims to train a new generation of AI professionals capable of developing responsible, ethical, and locally relevant solutions.

❖ The Scientific Council for AI and Computer Science (Created in 2023): Provides advisory support to the government on AIrelated risks, innovation opportunities, and regulatory gaps.

❖ Digital Literacy Initiatives: Algeria has also focused on enhancing digital literacy and public awareness, recognizing that a wellinformed citizenry is essential for resisting digital manipulation and exercising consumer rights.

Despite these advances, several challenges persist:

➢ Limited Technical Expertise in regulatory agencies may hinder their ability to monitor AI systems effectively.

➢ Lack of Coordination between different regulatory bodies (e.g., competition authorities, data protection agencies) can weaken enforcement.

Digital Divide: Many rural and lowincome consumers remain excluded from the digital economy, raising concerns about AI inequality and algorithmic exclusion.

To overcome these barriers, Algeria needs to combine scientific research, technical infrastructure, and policy innovation. This includes developing riskassessment models, promoting opensource AI tools, and engaging in international regulatory cooperation.

6. Future Outlook: Empowering Consumers in the Age of AI

The future of consumer protection in Algeria hinges on the capacity to adapt to a digitally transformed economy. AI is not just changing products—it is reshaping the very logic of consumption. In this evolving environment, Algerian consumers must be empowered to make intelligent, autonomous, and secure choices.

6.1 Intelligent DecisionMaking

AI systems, particularly in ecommerce, finance, and health, are increasingly involved in decision support. For example, recommendation engines suggest products, AI advisors offer investment options, and smart health applications propose personalized treatments. While these tools offer convenience, they can also diminish human agency if consumers are unaware of how decisions are made.

To empower consumers, explainability and algorithmic accountability must become guiding principles. Consumers should be able to understand how AI reaches conclusions, challenge automated decisions, and access redress mechanisms in case of harm.

6.2 From Traditional to Digital Consumption

Algeria's consumer market is gradually shifting from physical marketplaces to digital platforms, influenced by mobile commerce, digital banking, and egovernment services. AI is a key enabler of this transformation, reducing reliance on human intermediaries and traditional infrastructure.

This transition offers greater autonomy, speed, and choice, especially for younger consumers. However, it also risks excluding those without digital skills or access to technology. Bridging the digital divide through affordable internet, education, and inclusive design is critical to ensuring equitable participation in this AIdriven market.

6.3 Enhanced Service Quality and Consumer Trust

AI applications continuously evolve to improve user experience. In competitive markets, service providers are incentivized to use AI for optimizing delivery, predicting demand, and offering realtime support. However, trust remains a decisive factor.

To build and maintain trust, AI systems must be:

- Reliable (delivering consistent performance),

- Transparent (clear in their operations),
- Secure (protected from breaches), and
- Ethically designed (respecting consumer dignity and rights).

Public and private sectors must therefore invest not only in technological sophistication but also in ethical AI development, supported by thirdparty audits, certification mechanisms, and consumer engagement platforms.

As Algeria advances toward digital sovereignty and AI integration, it must ensure that consumer protection evolves alongside technology. This means moving beyond reactive regulation toward proactive governance—where laws, institutions, and citizens are prepared to navigate the promises and pitfalls of AI. The focus should be on building a market environment where innovation and protection coexist, enabling Algerian consumers to confidently participate in the AI age with agency, security, and trust.

7. Recommendations

In light of the comprehensive analysis of the opportunities and risks associated with Artificial Intelligence (AI) in consumer markets—particularly within the Algerian context—it is clear that a multidimensional and coordinated response is essential. Policymakers, regulators, civil society, businesses, and international partners must collaborate to ensure that AI systems serve the public good, respect consumer rights, and foster inclusive economic development. The following recommendations aim to guide national efforts in achieving this vision.

1. Recognize AI as a National Priority for Consumer Protection

AI must be positioned as a crosssectoral strategic priority—not only for innovation but also for safeguarding economic justice, consumer safety, and social equity. Algeria should develop a National Strategy for Responsible AI that integrates consumer protection as a core objective. This strategy should identify highrisk sectors (e.g., digital finance, ecommerce, health technologies), establish monitoring mechanisms, and mandate consumer impact assessments before deploying largescale AI systems.

This recognition should also be reflected in the mandates of public institutions, including regulatory bodies such as the Ministry of Commerce and the Competition Council, ensuring that AIrelated consumer risks are systematically addressed.

2. Accelerate the Adoption of Ethical AI in Key ConsumerDriven Sectors

AI technologies offer transformative potential in several consumerfacing sectors such as industry (e.g., smart manufacturing), agriculture (e.g., precision farming), and services (e.g., logistics, banking, retail). Algeria should promote the responsible integration of AI across these domains to:

- Improve product availability, affordability, and customization;

- Enhance service delivery and reduce transaction costs for consumers;
- Strengthen competitiveness and foster innovation among domestic enterprises.

However, the adoption of AI should be coupled with ethical safeguards. Businesses should be encouraged to develop and publish AI codes of conduct, conduct regular algorithmic audits, and implement consumer redress mechanisms in cases of harm caused by automated systems.

3. Strengthen the Legal and Regulatory Framework for AI Governance

To protect consumers effectively in the digital age, Algeria must advance its legal infrastructure in three key directions:

Data Protection: Ensure robust enforcement of Law 18/07 (2018) on personal data protection. Consumers must be guaranteed transparency, informed consent, and the right to opt out of AI profiling.

Algorithmic Transparency and Fairness: Update Law 09/03 on consumer protection to include explicit references to AIpowered services and the right to explanation for automated decisions (e.g., loan refusals, dynamic pricing).

Product and Service Safety: Introduce standards and certification protocols for AIintegrated goods and services to guarantee reliability, nondiscrimination, and interoperability.

In addition, Algeria could consider establishing an AI Regulatory Sandboxing Framework, allowing for the supervised testing of innovative AI applications in controlled environments before widespread deployment.

4. Strengthen the Role of the Algerian Competition Council in the AI Economy

The Algerian Competition Council (Conseil de la Concurrence), established under Ordinance No. 95-06 of January 20, 1995, is an independent public authority tasked with ensuring free and fair competition in the national market. It is legally empowered to prevent, investigate, and sanction anti-competitive practices such as abuse of dominant position, cartel agreements, and market concentration that undermine consumer welfare and economic efficiency.

Initially designed to operate within traditional market structures, the Council's role has become increasingly critical in the context of digital transformation and the AI economy. As AI technologies enable new forms of algorithmic pricing, behavioral targeting, and data-driven monopolies, the risks of unfair competition and consumer exploitation have grown significantly. The Council's institutional mandate must therefore evolve to address these challenges proactively.

To respond effectively to AI-related market risks, the Competition Council should:

➢ Monitor Digital Market Concentration: Develop the capacity to analyze market dominance in digital sectors, particularly where a small number of AI-driven platforms may exert outsized control over pricing, consumer data, and market access.

- Promote Transparency and Fairness: Investigate discriminatory pricing algorithms, exploitative personalized offers, or algorithmic favoritism that distorts competition and restricts consumer choice on e-commerce and digital service platforms.
- Issue Guidelines on AI and Competition: Publish regulatory guidance and sector-specific policy notes on how AI impacts market dynamics, including potential collusion via algorithmic coordination or exclusionary practices in digital marketplaces. These efforts can be informed by global precedents such as the European Commission's Digital Markets Act and competition authorities in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.
- Enhance Technical Expertise: Invest in capacity-building initiatives to train legal, economic, and technical staff in digital market forensics, algorithmic auditing, and AI economics, ensuring the Council remains institutionally competent in overseeing next-generation markets.
- Collaborate with International Bodies: Join global forums such as the International Competition Network (ICN) and foster regional cooperation to harmonize competition law enforcement in response to the global nature of AI-driven business models.

5. Promote International Cooperation and Alignment with Global Ethical Standards

AI is inherently a transnational technology, and its regulation cannot be confined within national borders. Algeria should therefore actively engage in international AI governance dialogues and align its domestic frameworks with recognized global principles, including:

- The OECD Principles on Artificial Intelligence (2019);
- The UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021);
- The European Union's AI Act, particularly its riskbased regulatory model.

Such alignment will facilitate crossborder trade, data interoperability, and international investment, while also ensuring that Algerian consumers are protected according to international best practices.

Algeria should also participate in AI capacitybuilding programs offered by international organizations, share knowledge through SouthSouth cooperation, and contribute to global initiatives promoting inclusive and ethical AI development.

6. Enhance Digital Literacy and Consumer Awareness

No legal or technical system can protect consumers fully unless they are informed, critical, and digitally literate. Algeria should launch national digital literacy campaigns aimed at:

Raising awareness of consumer rights in AIenabled environments;

- Educating users on how AI systems work (especially personalization, recommendation engines, and dynamic pricing);

- Encouraging safe online behavior, such as protecting personal data, identifying deceptive content, and exercising digital consent.
- This initiative should target youth, rural populations, elderly citizens, and informal sector participants, ensuring that no group is left behind in the digital transition.
- Schools, universities, NGOs, and media institutions must be mobilized to play a central role in this civic and educational mission.

Artificial Intelligence is not merely a technological advancement—it is a societal shift that touches on ethics, equity, law, and trust. As Algeria embraces digital transformation, it must ensure that consumer rights are not diminished but reinforced in this new paradigm. By recognizing AI as a national priority, fostering ethical innovation, strengthening regulatory capacity, empowering oversight institutions such as the Competition Council, and engaging in global cooperation, Algeria can shape an AI future that is inclusive, just, and beneficial for all its citizens.

Conclusion:

In an era increasingly defined by digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence, consumer protection must evolve beyond traditional legal safeguards to address new, complex risks inherent in algorithmic systems and data-driven markets. While AI promises significant economic and societal benefits, it also introduces profound challenges related to transparency, accountability, and fairness—particularly in the digital marketplace where asymmetries of information and power can easily emerge.

Algeria's legal framework, notably **Law No. 09/03** as amended by **Law No. 18/09**, reflects a growing responsiveness to these challenges, extending consumer protection to include digital services and online transactions. However, legal provisions alone are insufficient without strong institutional mechanisms. In this regard, the **Algerian Competition Council**, established by **Ordinance No. 95-06**, holds a pivotal role in ensuring that AI-enhanced business practices do not undermine market integrity or consumer rights. Its mission must now expand to encompass algorithmic oversight, digital market surveillance, and cooperation with global regulatory bodies.

To safeguard consumers in the AI economy, Algeria must pursue an integrated approach—strengthening legal instruments, enhancing institutional expertise, promoting digital literacy, and fostering cross-sector collaboration. Only through such a multidimensional strategy can the country ensure that technological progress is matched by ethical responsibility and legal equity, preserving both consumer trust and economic competitiveness in the digital age.