

Competition Reforms in Key Markets for Enhancing Social & Economic Welfare in Developing Countries (CREW Project)

About the National Reference Group (NRG)

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 CUTS has undertaken a project entitled, Competition Reforms in Key Markets for Enhancing Social and Economic Welfare in Developing Countries (CREW Project, www.cuts-ccier.org/CREW) to better demonstrate how greater attention to competition reforms in developing countries can help achieve tangible benefits for consumers and producers. Supported by DFID (UK), BMZ (Germany) and facilitated by GIZ (Germany), the aim of the three-year long CREW project is to develop an approach which can be applied in developing countries to assess tangible benefits of competition reforms on consumers and producers in specific product markets. The aim of the project is to provide tangible evidence to further competition reform processes in key sectors in select developing countries – and facilitate the uptake of the methodology in other countries as well.

1.2 The CREW project is being implemented in four countries – **Ghana, India, The Philippines and Zambia**, and in two (common) sectors – **Staple Food** and **Passenger Transport**, across these countries. The project activities would be implemented in three stages:

- a) The first is a **diagnostic phase**, which will identify components of competition reforms in the two sectors and assess their implications on consumers and producers. This would be documented in country-specific Diagnostic Country Reports (DCR). Efforts would also be made to estimate how refining / addressing some ‘existing concerns’ that consumers and producers face in these sectors would lead to benefits for consumers and producers as well.
- b) The second phase will be the **design phase**, in which a methodology/framework will be developed based on the outputs and understanding gained during the diagnostic phase for computing benefits of competition reforms for consumers and producers in the two sectors.
- c) The final phase will be the **validation phase**, in which the methodology will be applied (in some micro-locations in each project country) and adjusted to finalise a framework for analysis of impact of competition reforms on consumers and producers. The framework would be popularised within the countries and in others to provide impetus to the process of competition reforms in them.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS NOTE

2.1 The purpose of this note is to introduce the project and the role of National Reference Group (NRG) members. It would be sent to prospective NRG members in each of the project countries to be identified jointly by the country-specific partner organisations and CUTS. There would be a few rounds of NRG meetings, where the NRG members would be updated of the project progress and their inputs solicited on key deliverables. The partner organisations and/or CUTS would even meet some of the NRG members separately to gain deeper insights. The first round of NRG meeting (NRG-I) would tentatively take place in July, 2013 in all the project countries¹.

¹ Detailed timeline of all the NRG Meetings has been provided later in the Note.

3. NRG – IN DETAIL

3.1 Amongst the many activities to be undertaken by the partner organisations during Phase I in the project countries is the identification of members of a multi-stakeholder group of experts and practitioners (e.g. government departments/agencies, competition agencies, sector regulators, business chambers, media organisations, etc.) referred to as **the National Reference Group (NRG)**². The partner countries would finalise the group in consultation with CUTS to constitute a comprehensive group from all relevant stakeholders for the CREW project. The group would comprise of 12-15 members that would be identified by CUTS and country partners jointly.

3.2 Role of NRG

NRG members would be carefully chosen jointly by CUTS and respective country partners. The role of the members would involve (not limiting to):

- Providing guidance and support to the process of project implementation in each of the four project countries.
- Providing inputs in helping design components of the research to be undertaken in the project.
- Reviewing important project findings like the Diagnostic Country Report, Framework for Competition Promotion (FCP), etc.
- Providing country specific network of institutions for data (literature, statistics, market environment, etc) and project application tools.
- Participating in the NRG meetings and other important events under the project.

3.3 Constitution of NRG

The NRG members from each project country would include:

S.N	NRG Groups	Include
1	Ministries	Executives from the relevant ministries of agriculture, transport, trade and other relevant divisions
2	Government Agency / Regulator	Specific public sector agencies like the food corporation, transport regulator, competition authority, etc.
3	Sectoral Collectives	Collective groups, societies or association within the staple food / agriculture and passenger transport sector.
4	Business Associations (national level)	Apex associations of business ⁷
5	Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)	CSOs with interest on competition, regulation and consumer protection
6	Media Organisations	Working in the related sectors and with interest on competition and consumer protection issues
7	Development Partners	Development Partners (donor) representatives with interest and experience on related issues and/or sectors
8	Other	As suggested by project partners

² CUTS would not provide any honorarium to the NRG members, but would support the cost of their participation in NRG meetings and other important events.

3.4 NRG Meetings and Timelines

NRG	Tentative Timeline	Purpose
NRG – I	July, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on project, objectives & outcomes • Update on progress of country specific work • Discussion on Conceptual Framework for Phase I • Discussion on DCR methodology and outline
NRG – II	October, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on the prepared Draft of DCR • Discussion on DCR findings and refinements
NRG – III	January, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation on the common findings of the final DCR • Discussion on the development of ‘Draft’ FCP
NRG – IV	July, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the sector specific FCPs • Sharing of sector specific FCP findings • Discussion on the FCP for fine tuning and refinement
NRG – V	November, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the final FCP • Planning of country specific implementation of FCPs
NRG – VI	May, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on the findings of the FCP after implementation (Impact analysis)

3.5 The country partner organisations along with CUTS, would draw the experience and understanding of the NRG members, within and outside the NRG meetings and develop the CREW project framework.
