Capacity Building for SMEs and Competition Policy: Brief Report on the Workshop

Marco Polo Ortigas, Manila, The Philippines
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INTRODUCTION

This report provides a brief on the conduct of the Workshop as part of the APEC Project EC 07 2014A. It reports on the conduct of the Workshop, participant evaluation and lessons learned.

Project Background

The aim of the Capacity Building for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Competition Policy Project (APEC Project EC 07 2014A), is to build the capacity of SMEs in relation to competition policy with a particular focus on The Philippines. This includes not only the specific SMEs themselves, but working with other government, industry groups and associations related to the work of SMEs.

The project aims are being delivered through a combination of written reports and engagement with relevant stakeholders in the Philippines.

Workshop Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the Workshop was to draw relevant participants together to identify a range of tasks and activities that could be realistically and reasonably undertaken to addressing competition policy and law issues in the Philippines.

The primary objective of this Workshop was to draw on inputs from key stakeholders of the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) to inform the development of an Action Plan for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) on Competition Policy and Law (CPL) Issues. This Action Plan builds on the outputs of previous Focus Group Discussions and research conducted under this project.

Secondary objectives for the workshop include informing key stakeholder groups of outputs of the Project, and identifying lessons for application in other development APEC member economies.

The Action Plan for SMEs on CPL issues

The main output of the Workshop will be the development of an Action Plan. The Action Plan will provide a roadmap of activities to address CPL-related issues for SMEs in the Philippines. It will also distil lessons that could be more broadly applicable to APEC member economies. The core focus of the Action Plan will be derived from those identified throughout the Project, the Workshop was important in refining and developing actions with relevant stakeholders participants.

The Action Plan is currently being developed and will not be substantially reported upon in this document.

Activity Format

The Workshop drew on a broad range of stakeholders from across government agencies and regulators, trade associations, SME owners and APEC member economies. Overall

The Workshop agenda was designed to facilitate the dissemination of the research outputs from the project, allow for commentary and presentations from international experts, and facilitate the engagement and active participation of attendees towards achieving the primary objective of the Workshop. The Workshop Agenda is presented in Annex 2.
Overall, the Workshop was considered a success by organisers and participants. The achievement of the multiple objectives with a large group of participants over a two-day period was not an easy task. Through the Workshop significant steps were taken towards the achievement of the primary objective through the identification of key elements to be part of the Action. The secondary objectives of sharing project findings and drawing on lessons from other APEC member economies were also achieved through the duration of the Workshop.

What worked

The Workshop was considered successful across several measures.

As part of the broader project, the work on identifying priority areas to focus on within the Action plan served to validate the earlier findings of the baseline report and Focus Group Discussions. Specifically, the identification of government regulatory restrictions, advocacy, access to finance and credit, and the competition environment (including infrastructure and taxation) reflected the core topics within the Policy Notes. The commonality in these key themes between the three core means of data collection within this project should give the PCC confidence that the Action Plan reflects the core priority issues.

In relation to the primary objective, the Workshop was a qualified success. The Workshop was able to identify strategies, activities and means of evaluating them through the breakout groups. However, as noted below, it was not possible to refine them to ensure coherence between the strategies, activities and evaluation elements, nor was it possible to identify time-bound commitments from organisations given participants were not senior enough to make such commitments. Nevertheless, the outputs of the Workshop do provide a sound basis to build an Action Plan document for the PCC.

Throughout the Workshop, the design and facilitation was able to set the basis for an interactive and dynamic environment to discuss the issues. Workshop attendees participated actively in both the small group breakout sessions as well as within the open Plenary. As discussed below, the qualitative feedback from the Workshop identified the environment it was conducted in as one of its key strengths.

The participation of the APEC Member Economy representatives was very positive. Facilitators within the breakout groups noted that the APEC representatives were actively involved in the discussions, including providing examples from their own economy’s experience. Their participation within the plenary was also positive, with all APEC representatives making comment throughout, including both insights from their experiences, as well as possible lessons from the Workshop. The primary lessons relating to the Workshop methodology, its design and integration of different government, industry and SME stakeholders, that could be applied elsewhere were noted.

Limitations

While the original focus of the Workshop was to encourage participants to identify specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound activities, including the assignment of responsibility to a specific person or office in a department or other organisation, this was not always possible. In relation to the activities, there was not always a coherence between the issues identified, the strategy and activities to address it, and the means of evaluating progress. Given the number of participants, it was not possible to refine these plans further within the time available. In relation to the allocation of responsibility and timelines, for many of the participants they were not of a level of seniority in their organisations to be able to make commitments on behalf of their organisations. While the
invitations to organisations requested senior-management level participants, the majority of those who attended were in more technical roles.

**Evaluation feedback**

The evaluation feedback obtained indicated the Workshop was well received by participants. Evaluation Forms were disseminated in the afternoon of Day 2. As noted in Table 1, the overall assessment of the use of the Workshop for progressing discussion and action was excellent (4.86/5). The Workshop achieved scores of above 4.5/5 for six of the eight evaluation questions, including criteria for clear objectives and purpose (4.68), for ease of following (4.71), achieving stated purpose and objectives (4.65), stimulating learning on subject matter (4.65) and living up to expectations (4.65).

While still receiving high scores, the two lower performing areas were to relevance to their job (4.47) and ability to contribute their opinions and perspectives (4.32). In reviewing the evaluation feedback, it is interesting that the ability to contribute inputs received the lowest evaluation score, given that from qualitative feedback the strongest positive feedback related to the way in which the Workshop was structured and participants engaged.

**Table 1 – Participant responses to the Workshop evaluation form (n = 34 responses)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation question</th>
<th>Score (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Overall the Workshop was a useful forum to progress discussion and action on competition policy issues as they relate to SMEs</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Workshop purpose and objectives were clearly spelt out</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Workshop lived up to my expectations</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Workshop content was relevant to me/my job</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Workshop content and structure stimulated my learning on competition policy issues as they relate to SMEs</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Workshop was easy to follow and understand</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I felt that I was able to contribute my opinion and perspective to the Workshop discussions</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The Workshop achieved the stated purpose and objectives</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In relation to areas for improvement, the most prominent feedback was that a broader range of relevant stakeholders could have been invited. The lack of attendance by the representatives of local government units, specifically the Department of the Interior and Local Government, was noted as a shortcoming as local governments were identified as significant players within priority areas. However, this was beyond the scope of the organisation committee’s control because these stakeholders declined the invitation to attend the Workshop. Other areas for improvement included providing more opportunity for participants to discuss the results of breakout group discussions in the plenary forum as well as including a broader range of SMEs within the group.

Of note, 30 of the 34 evaluation respondents noted their interest in further participation and engagement with the development and implementation of the Action Plan. This, along with other qualitative and quantitative feedback from participants, demonstrates that the Workshop was
successful, and served the broader purpose of engaging with stakeholders of the PCC in a positive and productive way.

**NEXT STEPS**

The Workshop served as a useful stepping-stone in progressing the development of the Action Plan. As noted by a number of participants, they felt it would be useful to have another iteration of the Workshop format to further refine and progress work going into the Action Plan. While the plan itself is still under development, this could be something for the PCC to consider. Specifically, the presence of a refined Action Plan document could provide a strong basis for engaging more senior staff from the various stakeholder organisations who would need to 'buy-in' to the plan to see it implemented. While this is beyond the scope of the current project, the PCC should consider this further.

If the PCC is to progress with another Workshop, the conduct of this event provides some lessons. For the next iteration, it would be essential to deliver the draft document to stakeholders in advanced, including a clear outline of Workshop objectives. Consideration could also be given to which participants would need to be involved. While the inclusion of government, trade associations and SMEs has been useful to drawing out different experiences and perspectives on these issues, it may be that the PCC finds more utility in more targeted engagement with key stakeholders in the certain groups.
## ANNEX 1: WORKSHOP AGENDA

### Day 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Lead</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:00</td>
<td>Registration and networking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-10:15</td>
<td><strong>Session 1: Overview and Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Dr. Arsenio Balisacan, PCC Chairperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:15</td>
<td>Welcome remarks</td>
<td>Prof. Mark Williams, Sustineo Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15-10:15</td>
<td><strong>Presentation</strong>: “Introduction to the project and workshop”. The opening presentation will introduce the Capacity Building for SMEs in CPL project and outline the purpose and objectives of the workshop.</td>
<td>Prof. Mark Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Presentation</strong>: “Levelling the playing field – key project findings” The presentation will provide an outline of the key findings from the project. It will report to participants on contents of the policy notes in relation to: • Government restrictions of competition for SMEs • Advocating for SMEs and Competition Policy • Enforcement priorities in competition for SMEs • Infrastructure, competition and SMEs • Levelling the playing field • Lessons for CPL for SMEs in APEC developing economies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15-10:30</td>
<td>Photo Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-10:45</td>
<td>Morning Tea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-12:30</td>
<td><strong>Session 2: Competition Policy and Law issues for SMEs</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Plenary session</strong>: Presentations and panel of international experts on Competition Policy and Law issues related to SMEs. Speakers will provide short presentations (20 minute) with particular reference to issues relevant in developing APEC economies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50-11:10</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 1</strong>: Dr. Michael Schaper, Deputy Chair, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) <strong>Presentation</strong>: “SMEs and Competition Law: Observations for Asia and Australia”</td>
<td>Dr. Michael Schaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:10-11:30</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2</strong>: Dr. Hassan Qaqaya, Former Head, UNCTAD Competition and Consumer Policies <strong>Presentation</strong>: “Should competition cases affecting SMEs be prioritized by competition agencies?”</td>
<td>Dr. Hassan Qaqaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-11:50</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 3</strong>: Ms Shila Dorai Raj, Former Chief Executive Officer, Malaysia Competition Commission <strong>Presentation</strong>: “Capacity Building for SMEs on Competition Policy and Law - The Malaysian Experience”</td>
<td>Ms Shila Dorai Raj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50-12:30</td>
<td><strong>Open discussion – Q&amp;A</strong> The Session Chair will lead a facilitated panel discussion with the expert speakers. This will cover issues raised in their presentations as well as the project findings outlined in Session 1. Workshop participants will be invited to participate through Q&amp;A.</td>
<td>Prof. Mark Williams (Session Chair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-1:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Session 3: Identifying a common vision

**Session objective:** Agree upon the vision, purpose and goals of the Action Plan

**Break out session:** Workshop participants will break into three groups, aligned with the sector they are from. The focus of the discussion will be to review, discuss and refine a vision, purpose and goals for the Action Plan. They will prepare to present this to the Plenary at the end of the session.

**Plenary session:** Each of the three groups will briefly present the outputs of the Break out session to the plenary. The Session Chair will lead facilitate the synthesis of these inputs, and propose a common vision, purpose and goals for the group.

### Session 4: Identifying priorities

**Session objective:** Identify priority issues to be addressed within the Action Plan. Agree to a priority list of issues within the plenary.

**Break out session:** Workshop participants will break into the same three groups as in Session 3. Their task will be to identify the priority issues to address for SMEs in relation to CPL in the Philippines. They will prepare to present this to the Plenary at the end of the session.

**Plenary session:** Each of the three groups will briefly present the outputs of the Break out session to the plenary. The Session Chair will lead facilitate the synthesis of the priority issues, aligned with the goals identified in Session 3.

### Summary

Session Chair draws together the key points, summarise Workshop Day 1 and provides an outline of the plan for Day 2.

### Day 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:00</td>
<td>Registration and networking</td>
<td>Tom Sloan (Session Chair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:45</td>
<td><strong>Session 5: Review Day 1 Outputs</strong></td>
<td>Tom Sloan (Session Chair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Session objective:</em> revisit Day 1 outputs and endorse as the basis for Day 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Plenary session:</strong> Workshop participants review the Day 1 outputs, specifically the proposed vision, purpose, goals and priorities of the Action Plan. Chair to outline the agenda for Day 2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45-10:30</td>
<td><strong>Session 6: Identification of actionable items</strong></td>
<td>Tom Sloan (Session Chair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Session objective:</em> identify specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) activities, including the assignment of responsibility, to address priority issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Breakout session:</strong> Workshop participants will return to the three groups from Session 5. Their task will be to start to identify SMART activities and responsible stakeholders to address the priority issues endorsed in Session 5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-10:45</td>
<td>Morning Tea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-12:30</td>
<td><strong>Session 7: Identification of actionable items (continued)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Session objective:** identify specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) activities, including the assignment of responsibility, to address priority issues.

**Breakout session:** Workshop participants will return to the activity from Session 6. They will prepare to present these SMART activities to the Plenary at the end of the session.

**Plenary session:** Each of the three groups will present their SMART activities to the Plenary. Points of commonality between different groups will be identified and synthesised. The Session Chair will seek to refine as required to get participant endorsement on those outputs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12:30-1:30</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1:30-2:30 | **Session 8: Refinement of Action Plan and Next Steps**  
*Session objective:* refine and synthesise the SMART activities identified. Identify next steps and responsible agencies for progressing the Action Plan.  
**Breakout session:** Workshop participants will return to group from Session 5-7 to review the activities identified in Session 7. Their task will be to ensure there are stakeholders with responsibilities allocated to tasks. Time permitting, groups will be engaged to identify means through which progress towards Action Plan objectives will be monitored and evaluated. Each group should also identify ‘next steps’ which are key to progressing the implementation of the Action Plan. The group will be expected to provide comments on proposed activities, monitoring and evaluation, and next steps to the plenary.  
**Plenary session:** Each of the three groups will present to the Plenary. The Session Chair will seek to synthesise these inputs and identify a number of agreed upon next steps. The Action Plan and next steps will be presented for endorsement. |

| 2:30-2:45 | Afternoon tea |
| 2:45-4:00 | **Session 9: Panel discussion, reflections and lessons learned**  
**Plenary session:** The panel of experts will be invited to make comment on the achievements of the Workshop and the form of the Action Plan. Further comment will be sought from the participants from other APEC member economies, specifically in terms of lessons that could be applied in other contexts. This will be followed up Q&A and a facilitated discussion to provide an opportunity for any additional reflections on the Action Plan. |

| 4:00-4:30 | **Workshop summary, next steps, and closing remarks**  
PCC to provide some comment on the next steps, outcomes and proposed pathways. |

Tom Sloan (Session Chair)
ANNEX 2: WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

Capacity Building for SMEs on Competition Policy and Law: Workshop

Please circle your response to the items. Rate aspects of the workshop on a 1 to 5 scale:
1 = “Strongly disagree”; 2 = “Disagree”; 3 = “Neither agree nor disagree”; 4 = “Agree”; 5 = “Strongly agree”

OVERALL ASSESSMENT (circle one response to each item)

1. Overall the Workshop was a useful forum to progress discussion and action on competition policy issues as they relate to SMEs
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (circle one response to each item)

| 2. The Workshop purpose and objectives were clearly spelt out | 1 2 3 4 5 N/A |
| 3. The Workshop lived up to my expectations | 1 2 3 4 5 N/A |
| 4. The Workshop content was relevant to me/my job | 1 2 3 4 5 N/A |
| 5. The Workshop content and structure stimulated my learning on competition policy issues as they relate to SMEs | 1 2 3 4 5 N/A |
| 6. The Workshop was easy to follow and understand | 1 2 3 4 5 N/A |
| 7. I felt that I was able to contribute my opinion and perspective to the Workshop discussions | 1 2 3 4 5 N/A |
| 8. The Workshop achieved the stated purpose and objectives | 1 2 3 4 5 N/A |

9. What were the key strengths of the Workshop?

__________________________________________________________________________________

10. Which aspects of the Workshop would you amend or improve?

__________________________________________________________________________________

11. Would you be interested in further participation and engagement with the outputs of this Workshop? (Including the refinement and implementation of the Action Plan)

__________________________________________________________________________________

If yes, please note the capacity you would like to be engaged in AND a contact email.

__________________________________________________________________________________

12. Do you have any further comments or suggestions?

__________________________________________________________________________________

Your organisation: __________________________________.                                      Thank you!

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