



Competition Bureau
Canada

Bureau de la concurrence
Canada

Protecting competition in uncertain times

Annual Plan 2020-2021

Canada

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Cat. No. Iu50-5E-PDF
ISSN 2367-9670
Date: 2020-07-06

Aussi offert en français sous le titre *Protéger la concurrence en période d'incertitude : Plan annuel 2020-2021.*

Message from the Commissioner



The Competition Bureau has always played an essential role in making markets work for Canadians. This year, as the world faces the significant economic impact and uncertainty arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of competition to empower consumers and drive our economy forward is more important than ever.

This annual plan supports our new [*Strategic Vision for 2020-2024*](#), which will guide our efforts to become a world-leading competition agency that is at the forefront of the digital economy and champions a culture of competition for Canada.

First, we will continue to protect Canadians through our core enforcement work with a focus on key sectors of the economy, such as digital services, online marketing, financial services and infrastructure, where competitive markets are more important than ever given the current context. We will remain vigilant against potentially harmful anti-competitive activity, mergers and deceptive conduct. We will use all the tools at our disposal to put a stop to such conduct across Canada. Enhanced intelligence-gathering methods and injunctions will be at the forefront of our efforts to ensure that Canadian consumers and businesses can thrive in the digital economy.

On the advocacy side, we will focus our efforts on the health and telecommunications sectors, two areas that currently matter deeply to Canadians. We will also seize opportunities to promote procompetitive policy-making throughout the economic recovery, by equipping regulators and policymakers with the information needed to drive Canada's competitiveness.

In addition, I am looking forward to hosting our first virtual Digital Enforcement Summit, which will enhance our effectiveness in the digital economy by exploring new solutions and tools, sharing best practices, and tackling emerging issues with our enforcement partners.

To accomplish all of this, we will ensure that our workforce is healthy, well supported and equipped with the tools it needs to conduct effective and timely work. We will train and develop our workforce to increase digital expertise and recruit people with the diverse skills needed to meet the needs of competition enforcement in the digital era. Investing in our organization and our people remains a top priority for the Bureau as we work to support a fair and equitable digital marketplace for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Boswell', written in a cursive style.

Matthew Boswell

Commissioner of Competition



Our upcoming year at a glance

2020-2024 Strategic Vision objectives

Protecting Canadians through enforcement action

- Take timely action on matters that are important to Canadians using all the tools at our disposal
- Increase proactive enforcement in order to address anti-competitive activity across Canada
- Be a leader in the gathering, processing and analyzing of data and digital evidence

What we will do in 2020-2021

- Focus enforcement efforts on key sectors of the economy, such as digital services, online marketing, financial services, and infrastructure
- Use all available tools to address anti-competitive activity, mergers and deceptive conduct, including warning letters, injunctions and other judicial proceedings, where appropriate
- Continue to advance early detection of anti-competitive activity through various intelligence-gathering techniques, such as:
 - Advancing our bid-rigging detection tool using public procurement data and leveraging our bid-rigging Tip Line
 - Establishing a Monopolistic Practices Intelligence Unit that will examine and analyze trends in the marketplace to deter anti-competitive behavior before it happens
- Continue to vigorously advance enforcement in the digital economy by pursuing anti-competitive activity so that Canadian consumers and businesses can thrive in the digital economy
- Host the first virtual events in the Digital Enforcement Summit Series to experiment with new solutions and tools, share best practices, and tackle emerging issues with our enforcement partners
- Develop new digital tools and innovative processes to optimize our ability to handle large volumes of data, such as:
 - Completing and expanding a robotic process automation pilot to find efficiencies in reducing manual data entry
 - Finalizing a cloud strategy to pilot and test new investigative tools and concepts
- Continue to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by:
 - Actively monitoring the market for scams and deceptive marketing practices related to COVID-19 and taking appropriate enforcement action

2020-2024 Strategic Vision objectives

Promoting competition in Canada

- Seize opportunities to encourage competition and innovation in areas that matter to Canadians
- Play a leadership role, both domestically and internationally, in adapting to the impact of the digital economy on competition policy
- Build awareness of consumer and competition issues through enhanced communication, outreach and engagement

What we will do in 2020-2021

- Encourage policy makers and regulators to consider competition and adopt pro-competitive policies to facilitate Canada's economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Continue to advocate for competition with a focus on the health and telecommunications sectors by working with policymakers and regulators to provide evidence-based recommendations that improve competitive outcomes, such as:
 - Continuing our participation in the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC) review of mobile wireless services
 - Participating in the CRTC's review of wireline access prices to further foster competition
- Continue our leadership roles in multilateral organizations including the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, International Competition Network, and International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN)
 - Assuming the ICPEN presidency for the 2020-2021 term, drawing on our experiences in fraud prevention, big data, and marketing practices in the digital economy to promote truth in online advertising and build consumer confidence in the online world, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond
- Deepen relationships with key domestic and international partners, including in respect of responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and crosscutting issues in the digital era, such as privacy
- Raise awareness of deceptive marketing practices among Canadian consumers and businesses
- Reach out to Canadians and Canadian businesses, using tools such as public opinion research, surveys and call-outs to better inform our work
- Continue to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by:
 - Developing a competition assessment toolkit to equip regulators and policymakers with key tools to adopt pro-competitive regulations and policies during and after COVID-19
 - Helping Canadians protect themselves from scams related to COVID-19 by way of consumer and business alerts, as well as consumer tips on social media

2020-2024 Strategic Vision objectives

Investing in our organization

- Support continuous learning and development of our people while encouraging a culture of well-being
- Modernize our processes and technology to work more effectively and keep pace with the digital economy
- Recruit from diverse educational and professional backgrounds to ensure that our teams benefit from wide-reaching expertise and varying perspectives

What we will do in 2020-2021

- Continue to invest in our people to ensure they have the opportunities to develop the necessary skills and competencies to deliver on our work, particularly with new working realities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Train and develop our workforce to increase digital expertise across our organization and to maximize their proficiency with existing and emerging technologies, such as:
 - Identifying opportunities to use artificial intelligence and new investigative applications
 - Continuing to provide online tools for employees, including specific training on the conduct of digital investigations
- Update processes and procedures to align with the digital era, through our governance committees
- Launch the Bureau Innovation Garage to provide a platform where Bureau employees can experiment with new concepts, facilitate design-thinking, pilot big ideas and explore new digital technologies
- Increase recruitment of speciality skills to meet the Bureau's needs in the digital era, such as data scientists and data engineers to advance analytics, algorithms, machine learning and data mining
- Continue to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by:
 - Increasing our efforts to protect the health and safety of our employees and continuing to ensure that they have flexible work arrangements and remote access capabilities
 - Continuing to support activities that encourage workplace wellness, helping employees cope with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic