



Competition Bureau
Canada

Bureau de la concurrence
Canada

Competition in the digital age

The Competition Bureau's Strategic Vision
for 2020-2024

Canada

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A message from the Commissioner



I am pleased to present the Competition Bureau's strategic vision for 2020-2024. This document defines how we will renew the Bureau and build on past successes to make our vision a concrete reality. It will be the cornerstone for the Bureau's future.

The three supporting pillars of our strategic vision—protecting Canadians through enforcement, promoting competition in Canada, and investing in our organization—will help us become a world-leading competition agency, one that is at the forefront of the digital economy and champions a culture of competition for Canada.

For Canadian consumers and businesses to thrive in the digital economy, the Bureau needs to continually seize opportunities to encourage competition and innovation in areas that matter to Canadians. The Bureau needs to take timely enforcement action and invest in new tools suited for the digital age so that Canadians can benefit from strong and vigorous competition.

As the digital economy disrupts and reshapes markets, competition authorities across the globe face a new set of challenges. We will continue to build strong relationships with both our domestic and international partners. We will focus our international approach, anchored in open dialogue, collaboration and cooperation. This will help advance and align competition policy and tools, and help protect Canadian consumers and businesses from anti-competitive conduct.

Our ability to achieve our vision centres around our greatest resource, our employees. As we forge ahead, we will recruit employees with diverse educational and professional backgrounds to ensure that our teams benefit from wide-ranging expertise and varying perspectives. We will invest in new tools and training to increase our capacity and ability to handle and analyze the vast amounts of data common to today's digitally-focused investigations.

If we truly want Canadian markets to thrive in the digital economy, we must develop a culture that embraces competition. With the continued dedication of our employees and the invaluable collaboration of our domestic and international partners, I am confident that we will achieve this and continue to deliver the benefits of competition to Canadians—lower prices, more choice and greater innovation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Boswell', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Matthew Boswell

Commissioner of Competition

Our vision

To be a world-leading competition agency, one that is at the forefront of the digital economy and champions a culture of competition for Canada.

Protecting Canadians through enforcement action

Our desired outcomes

- Consumers and businesses enjoy the benefits of competition, particularly in key sectors of the economy that matter most to Canadians
- Anti-competitive activity is detected and addressed early
- New and innovative tools are used to enhance our capabilities to process large volumes of data and digital evidence, enabling investigations to hone in on probative evidence more quickly

What we will do

- Use all of the tools at our disposal to address anti-competitive activity, including interim orders
- Expand our proactive intelligence gathering efforts across the Bureau
- Use new intelligence-gathering tools, such as advanced analytical models, algorithms, automated processes and artificial intelligence capabilities
- Host an annual Digital Enforcement Summit Series

Strong enforcement is essential to hold companies accountable and protect consumers. As Canada's competition enforcer, the Competition Bureau (Bureau) uses all the tools at its disposal to ensure that Canadians fully benefit from competitive markets across the country, leading to lower prices, increased choice, and greater innovation.

Taking timely action on matters that are important to Canadians using all the tools at our disposal.

As digital transformation disrupts and reshapes markets, competition authorities across the globe face a new set of challenges. Given the rapid pace of change in today's economy, timely action is essential to protect competition for the benefit of consumers.

Over the next four years, active enforcement will be our main focus. We will take timely and evidence-based enforcement action against harmful mergers, abuses of market power, cartels and deceptive marketing practices. This will include using remedies such as administrative monetary penalties and restitution, seeking injunctions where needed, and bringing forward principled cases before the courts when we cannot reach a timely and appropriate consensual resolution.

Where possible, we will focus our enforcement action on sectors of the economy that matter most to Canadians, so that they can have confidence in the marketplace. These sectors include online marketing, telecommunications, financial services, health and infrastructure.

Increasing proactive enforcement to address anti-competitive activity across Canada.

Digitization has led to new and more sophisticated methods of anti-competitive and deceptive conduct. To keep pace, a more proactive intelligence-led approach to enforcement is essential.

We will expand our proactive intelligence gathering efforts and modernize our technology to better detect and stop anti-competitive activity across Canada. In particular, we will look for opportunities to innovate and deploy new digital tools, such as advanced analytics and artificial intelligence, to optimize our effectiveness, and detect potential anti-competitive activity earlier.

Proactive enforcement also includes active monitoring of remedies to maximize the effectiveness of our enforcement work. To that end, we will enhance our internal capacity to oversee the design and monitoring of remedies.

Being a leader in the gathering, processing, and analyzing of data and digital evidence.

Being at the forefront of enforcement in the digital economy means being a leader in all aspects of digital evidence. The amount of data collected and analyzed throughout the investigative process is growing exponentially. Although not all of our investigations relate to conduct in the digital economy, most of the evidence we collect is now digital. To continue to deliver the benefits of competition in the digital age, the Bureau must have the right tools at its disposal.

Over the next four years, we will develop and deploy new tools suited for the digital age. We will strengthen our capacity to investigate and analyze increasingly complex competition issues and growing data sets by improving our processes and modernizing our technology. For example, we will pilot and implement advanced analytical models, algorithms, automated processes and artificial intelligence capabilities. Starting in 2020, we will host an annual Digital Enforcement Summit Series that will bring together domestic and international stakeholders to foster open dialogue and collaboration on the challenges and opportunities of competition enforcement in the digital era.

Promoting competition in Canada

Our desired outcomes

- Regulators and policymakers give increased consideration to competition when developing regulations and policies
- We have a stronger role and presence on the domestic and international stage to enhance enforcement and promotion efforts
- Our expertise contributes to positioning the Canadian economy for success in the digital age
- Businesses of all sizes are aware of their obligations under Canada's competition and labelling laws
- Consumers and businesses are aware of how they can protect themselves from anti-competitive and deceptive practices

What we will do

- Provide advice to regulators and policymakers in sectors of importance to Canada's economy through influential advocacy initiatives, ranging from market studies to more targeted opportunities
- Deepen our relationships with key international and domestic partners
- Focus our fraud prevention and deceptive marketing practices outreach on at-risk segments of Canada's population
- Publish new and updated guidance on processes, enforcement policies and transparency
- Broaden our outreach efforts to Canadian businesses and adapt them to the digital economy

Our enforcement work is complemented by a strong focus on promoting competitive markets throughout Canada. This involves working with regulators and policymakers, as well as our stakeholders, to build a culture of competition in Canada so that Canadian businesses and consumers can truly thrive in an increasingly digital economy. It also means giving Canadians the information they need to protect themselves from fraud and deceptive marketing and improve trust in the online marketplace.

Seizing opportunities to encourage competition and innovation in areas that matter to Canadians.

As Canada's competition expert, we will provide regulators and policymakers forward-thinking advice on how to foster competition and innovation in marketplaces across the country to ensure that start-ups and small

and medium-sized businesses can enter markets, disrupt incumbents and deliver innovative products and services. Our work will use a range of tools, from advice to regulators and policymakers to large-scale public market studies examining how competition can be increased in an industry.

We will maximize the impact of our work by focusing advocacy efforts on markets that matter to Canadians and may be held back by a lack of competitive forces. This will include telecommunications markets, and other sectors where policies impacting competition are taking shape. We will provide insights on how to unlock the competitive potential of these industries and deliver the benefits of competition to all Canadians.

Playing a leadership role, both domestically and internationally, in adapting to the impact of the digital economy on competition policy.

The rapid rise of the digital economy is a borderless phenomenon that requires close collaboration and cooperation between competition authorities. Over the next four years, we will continue to build strong relationships with our core international partners, including through our leadership roles and ongoing participation in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Competition Network (ICN), the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN) and other international fora.

We will advance discussions on how competition law and policy can adapt to meet the challenges of enforcement in the digital era. Working with our colleagues at Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED), we will consider critical issues such as the impact of digital transformation on competition; emerging issues for competition in data accumulation, transparency, and control; the effectiveness of current competition policy tools and marketplace frameworks; and the effectiveness of current investigative and judicial processes.

We will also strengthen our strategic relationships with our domestic enforcement partners and look to build new strategic partnerships to advance competition policy and support strong collaboration on enforcement.

Building awareness of consumer and competition issues through enhanced communication, outreach and engagement.

Building awareness of competition issues and the work that we do goes hand-in-hand with a more proactive approach to enforcement and intelligence gathering. Consumers and businesses play an important role in bringing competition issues to our attention, and this facilitates more meaningful action. Over the next four years, we will enhance our communications efforts to be more transparent about our work, communicate more often about the actions we are taking by leveraging the networks of our federal and provincial partners, and demonstrate the value of our work to consumers and businesses in Canada.

We will continue to help consumers avoid falling victim to fraud and deceptive marketing practices through targeted outreach. In particular, we will focus our work on at-risk sections of the population, such as seniors and new Canadians.

We will continue to provide guidance and act as a resource to help businesses across the country understand their obligations to comply with the *Competition Act* and labelling statutes, as well as recognize and report potentially anti-competitive or deceptive conduct in the markets in which they operate.

Investing in our organization

Our desired outcomes

- Our organization fosters a healthy and positive workplace that embraces diversity, innovation and teamwork
- Our employees have the right skills and technology to enhance our enforcement activities and keep pace in the digital economy
- Our workforce is comprised of professionals with diverse expertise relevant to digital enforcement and promotion

What we will do

- Encourage a healthy, respectful and inclusive workplace where employees can thrive
- Support a culture of innovation and continuous improvement to maximise the impact of our work
- Build and acquire the right skills to keep pace with the digital economy
- Create a Digital Enforcement Office to drive our work in the digital economy forward
- Establish communities of practice within our organization to share and advance knowledge on data governance, digital evidence, advanced analytics

Supporting continuous learning and development of our people while encouraging a culture of well-being.

Our strength lies in our people. As such, making sure that our workforce has the right tools, training and environment to excel is the key to maximizing our impact and delivering on our mandate.

To support a culture of well-being, we will continue to foster a positive and healthy work environment that empowers our employees to participate in decision making and embraces diversity, innovation, and teamwork.

Over the next four years, we will continue to roll out training and development opportunities that engage our staff by building on their ideas and perspectives. We will also leverage our strong relationships with domestic and foreign partners to reap the benefits of specialized training and interchange opportunities.

Modernizing our processes and technology to work more effectively and keep pace with the digital economy.

To deliver on strong, effective enforcement that holds companies accountable and protects consumers, we need to modernize our processes and technology.

Over the next four years, we will form a Digital Enforcement Office to provide specialized technological support to drive our work in the digital economy forward.

We will also form internal communities of practice that will serve as a platform for knowledge sharing, mentoring and collaboration. They will be challenged to increase innovation, experimentation and continuous learning in key strategic competencies focused on data governance, information management, digital evidence, and advanced analytics.

Recruiting from diverse educational and professional backgrounds to ensure that our teams benefit from wide-reaching expertise and varying perspectives.

As the sophistication and reach of anti-competitive conduct increases, having the right skills and expertise is critical. Over the next four years, we will broaden our areas of expertise by hiring employees with new and complementary skill sets to create an optimal mix of talent to address enforcement within the digital economy. Our Digital Enforcement Office will play an important role in strengthening our investigative talent by enhancing the knowledge and skills of current staff and providing insights into the recruitment of new employees.