



COMMENTARY ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

93. In a knowledge-based and globalised economy where national borders matter less, even for small or domestically oriented enterprises, the ability to access and utilise technology and know-how is essential for improving enterprise performance. Such access is also important for the realisation of the economy-wide effects of technological progress, including productivity growth and job creation, within the context of sustainable development. Multinational enterprises are the main conduit of technology transfer across borders. They contribute to the national innovative capacity of their host countries by generating, diffusing, and even enabling the use of new technologies by domestic enterprises and institutions. The R&D activities of MNEs, when well connected to the national innovation system, can help enhance the economic and social progress in their host countries. In turn, the development of a dynamic innovation system in the host country expands commercial opportunities for MNEs.
94. The chapter thus aims to promote, within the limits of economic feasibility, competitiveness concerns and other considerations, the diffusion by multinational enterprises of the fruits of research and development activities among the countries where they operate, contributing thereby to the innovative capacities of host countries. In this regard, fostering technology diffusion can include the commercialisation of products which imbed new technologies, licensing of process innovations, hiring and training of S&T personnel and development of R&D co-operative ventures. When selling or licensing technologies, not only should the terms and conditions negotiated be reasonable, but MNEs may want to consider the long-term developmental, environmental and other impacts of technologies for the home and host country. In their activities, multinational enterprises can establish and improve the innovative capacity of their international subsidiaries and subcontractors. In addition, MNEs can call attention to the importance of local scientific and technological infrastructure, both physical and institutional. In this regard, MNEs can usefully contribute to the formulation by host country governments of policy frameworks conducive to the development of dynamic innovation systems.

X. COMPETITION

Enterprises should:

1. Carry out their activities in a manner consistent with all applicable competition laws and regulations, taking into account the competition laws of all jurisdictions in which the activities may have anti-competitive effects.
2. Refrain from entering into or carrying out anti-competitive agreements among competitors, including agreements to:
 - a) fix prices;
 - b) make rigged bids (collusive tenders);
 - c) establish output restrictions or quotas; or
 - d) share or divide markets by allocating customers, suppliers, territories or lines of commerce.
3. Co-operate with investigating competition authorities by, among other things and subject to applicable law and appropriate safeguards, providing responses as promptly and completely as practicable to requests for information, and considering the use of available instruments, such as waivers of confidentiality where appropriate, to promote effective and efficient co-operation among investigating authorities.
4. Regularly promote employee awareness of the importance of compliance with all applicable competition laws and regulations, and, in particular, train senior management of the enterprise in relation to competition issues.





COMMENTARY ON COMPETITION

95. These recommendations emphasise the importance of competition laws and regulations to the efficient operation of both domestic and international markets and reaffirm the importance of compliance with those laws and regulations by domestic and multinational enterprises. They also seek to ensure that all enterprises are aware of developments concerning the scope, remedies and sanctions of competition laws and the extent of co-operation among competition authorities. The term “competition” law is used to refer to laws, including both “antitrust” and “antimonopoly” laws, that variously prohibit: a) anti-competitive agreements; b) the abuse of market power or of dominance; c) the acquisition of market power or dominance by means other than efficient performance; or d) the substantial lessening of competition or the significant impeding of effective competition through mergers or acquisitions.
96. In general, competition laws and policies prohibit: a) hard core cartels; b) other anti-competitive agreements; c) anti-competitive conduct that exploits or extends market dominance or market power; and d) anti-competitive mergers and acquisitions. Under the 1998 Recommendation of the OECD Council Concerning Effective Action Against Hard Core Cartels, C(98)35/Final, the anticompetitive agreements referred to in sub a) constitute hard core cartels, but the Recommendation incorporates differences in member countries’ laws, including differences in the laws’ exemptions or provisions allowing for an exception or authorisation for activity that might otherwise be prohibited. The recommendations in these **Guidelines** do not suggest that enterprises should forego availing themselves of such legally available exemptions or provisions. The categories sub b) and c) are more general because the effects of other kinds of agreements and of unilateral conduct are more ambiguous, and there is less consensus on what should be considered anti-competitive.
97. The goal of competition policy is to contribute to overall welfare and economic growth by promoting market conditions in which the nature, quality, and price of goods and services are determined by competitive market forces. In addition to benefiting consumers and a jurisdiction’s economy as a whole, such a competitive environment rewards enterprises that respond efficiently to consumer demand. Enterprises can contribute to this process by providing information and advice when governments are considering laws and policies that might reduce efficiency or otherwise reduce the competitiveness of markets.
98. Enterprises should be aware that competition laws continue to be enacted, and that it is increasingly common for those laws to prohibit anti-competitive activities that occur abroad if they have a harmful impact on domestic consumers. Moreover, cross-border trade and investment makes it more likely that anti-competitive conduct taking place in one jurisdiction will have harmful effects in other jurisdictions. Enterprises should therefore take into account both the law of the country in which they are operating and the laws of all countries in which the effects of their conduct are likely to be felt.
99. Finally, enterprises should recognise that competition authorities are engaging in more and deeper co-operation in investigating and challenging anti-competitive activity. See generally: Recommendation of the Council Concerning Co-operation between Member Countries on Anticompetitive Practices Affecting International Trade, C(95)130/Final; Recommendation of the Council on Merger Review, C(2005)34. When the competition authorities of various jurisdictions are reviewing the same conduct, enterprises’ facilitation of co-operation among the authorities promotes consistent and sound decision-making and competitive remedies while also permitting cost savings for governments and enterprises.

