

2020/CTI-EC/DIA/013

#### How Could Competition Policy Provisions of Free Trade Agreements / Economic Partnership Agreements Help Ensure Inclusiveness and Equal Opportunity?

Submitted by: Canada



Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on Competition Related Provisions from a Business Perspective 17-18 September 2020 Competition Bureau Canada and Government of Canada

# How could competition policy provisions of FTAs/EPAs help ensure inclusiveness and equal opportunity?

Trade and competition policy with a gender inclusive lens

Presented by: Nadia Vassos



#### **Overview**

- Gender based analysis plus (GBA+)
- Inclusive trade policy
- Inclusive competition policy
- Inclusive consumer protection
- Trade and COVID-19 recovery

#### Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)

- Tool for analysis
- Mainstreaming identity factors (gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, geography, religion and more).
- GBA+ course free online:
  - https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gbaacs/course-cours-en.html



#### **Inclusive trade policy**

- Canada has taken an inclusive approach to trade, including:
  - Integrating under-represented groups
  - Addressing gender equality and women's economic empowerment
  - Provisions targeting small and medium enterprises
  - Helping indigenous peoples and indigenous-owned businesses.
  - Through trade agreements, but also other policies and programs.

#### **Inclusive Trade Action Group**

- Canada, Chile and New Zealand established ITAG in 2018 to advance inclusive trade initiatives.
- Goal is to have the benefits of trade and investment more broadly shared.
- Developed a standalone Global Trade and Gender Arrangement to increase women's participation in trade.

#### **Trade and Gender chapters**

- Gender chapters included in Canada's modernized agreements with Chile and Israel
- These chapters:
  - Reaffirm the importance of incorporating a gender perspective into trade and economic issues
  - Reaffirm commitments to international agreements on gender equality and women's rights
  - Framework for further cooperation on issues related to trade and gender
  - Establish a trade and gender committee

#### Gender and competition

- Requested to conduct a GBA+ analysis of the competition chapter.
- Led to the initial question of "what does competition have to do with gender considerations?"
- There was very little research.
- OECD did some initial research and the first discussion took place in November 2018 at the OECD Global Forum.

#### Inclusive competition policy

- Initial findings: bi-directional relationship
  - Competition can impact gender equality
  - Gender can impact competition

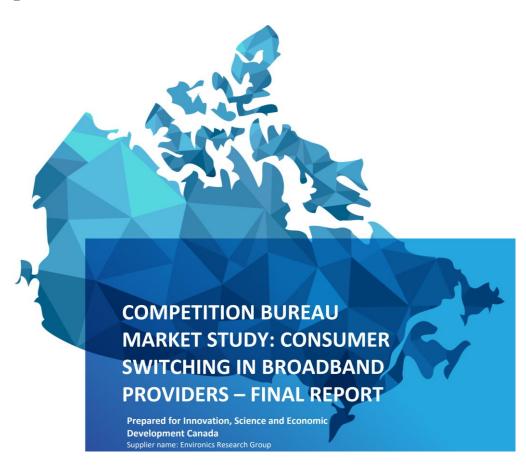
 Potential for double dividend – improve competition and equality at the same time

#### Areas of work to apply gender inclusive lens

- Enforcement
  - Product market definition
  - Case prioritization
  - Remedies
- Advocacy
  - What industries/sectors are targeted, who benefits?
- Compliance
  - How do identity factors influence compliance?

#### **Competition Bureau - Example**

- Broadband market study
  - Public opinion research
    - Gender
    - Age
    - Income
    - Education
    - Location (rural vs urban)
  - Analyse responses by cluster
  - Different switching behaviour



#### **Questions**

- Are there specific groups that may be affected?
- Are there different types of consumers? Do they behave differently?
- Are there vulnerable consumers in this market?
- What data is out there? What is possible to gather?
- How can we engage different consumers?
- Are there barriers to how we communicate? Are we missing different perspectives?
- Do my own identity factors impact my perspective?

#### **Evolving area of research**

- Government of Canada has partnered with the OECD to do more research in this area.
- Call for proposals active right now.
- http://www.oecd.org/daf/competition/gender-inclusivecompetition-call-for-proposals.pdf



#### Inclusive consumer protection

- Relatively new area for trade agreements.
- Area of joint jurisdiction in Canada (federal and provincial/territorial)
- Consumer protection provisions in competition policy chapters (CPTPP, CUSMA)
  - Also in Electronic Commerce/Digital Trade chapters.
- Questions we can ask in daily work, similar to competition

## Trade agreements and implications for COVID recovery

- Trade agreements are a framework that enable further cooperation.
- They provide a foundation of rules, but don't get into every detail.
- In practice, for areas like competition and consumer protection policy a lot happens beyond trade agreements.
- Relationships and cooperation go beyond the trade agreement.

### Thank you

Contact: Nadia.Vassos@Canada.ca

https://www.linkedin.com/in/nadia-vassosa2689aa8/