



ECOWAS REGIONAL COMPETITION AUTHORITY  
AUTORITÉ RÉGIONALE DE LA CONCURRENCE DE LA CEDEAO  
AUTORIDADE RÉGIONAL DA CONCORRÊNCIA DA CEDEAO

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# INAUGURAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ECOWAS REGIONAL COMPETITION AUTHORITY (ERCA)

## THEME

### **Competition Policy and Market Integration in ECOWAS: Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities**

## CALL FOR PAPERS,

### **Background**

Regional economic integration is a key driver of economic transformation, industrialisation, and sustainable development in West Africa. In an increasingly globalised and digital economy, effective competition policy is essential to ensure efficient markets, promote innovation and investment, enhance consumer welfare, and support inclusive growth.

Recognising this, ECOWAS established a regional competition framework and operationalised the ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA) in 2019. Since then, ERCA has made progress in developing enforcement tools, reviewing cross-border mergers, supporting Member States in strengthening national competition regimes, promoting cooperation among competition authorities, conducting market studies, and raising awareness of competition principles across the region.

Despite these achievements, significant challenges remain. These include fragmented markets, divergent legal frameworks, limited institutional capacity in some Member States, high levels of informality, market concentration in key sectors, and emerging complexities linked to digital markets, data governance, and artificial intelligence. In addition, coordination between regional, national, and continental competition regimes, including under the AfCFTA Competition Protocol, continues to raise important implementation issues.

Against this background, the central policy question is how competition policy can be strengthened to better support market integration, investment, innovation, competitiveness, and inclusive development within ECOWAS.

The inaugural ERCA Annual Conference therefore provides a platform for dialogue among policymakers, regulators, competition authorities, academics, legal practitioners, and development partners. The accompanying Call for Papers seeks to generate evidence-based research and policy analysis to inform discussions and strengthen regional competition policy and enforcement.

As part of the Conference, ERCA invites scholars, economists, regulators, legal practitioners, judges, policymakers, researchers, development partners and competition professionals to submit abstracts and papers related to the Conference theme.

Priority areas include:

### **A. Institutional Strengthening and Governance**

- Operationalization and modernization of ECOWAS competition law;
- Institutional strengthening of ERCA and NCAs;
- Independence and autonomy of competition authorities;
- Legislative reforms and enforcement effectiveness;
- Capacity building and technical assistance.

### **B. Harmonization and Cooperation**

- Alignment of national laws with ECOWAS competition rules;
- Cross-border cooperation and information sharing;
- Relations between ERCA, UEMOA, COMESA, EAC and AfCFTA;
- Jurisdictional conflicts and conflict of laws;
- Comparative experiences from other regional competition regimes.

### **C. Strategic Sectors and Market Regulation**

- Competition in telecommunications, energy, transport and agribusiness;
- Industrial policy, sustainability and state-owned enterprises;
- Market concentration and barriers to entry;
- Competition and investment promotion.

### **D. Competition and Economic Transformation**

- Regional value chains and intra-ECOWAS trade;
- Innovation and productivity;
- Economic inclusion and consumer welfare.

### **E. Digital Markets and Emerging Competition Issues**

- Regulation of digital platforms and gatekeepers;
- AI and competition law;
- Digital market investigations;
- Data governance and market power;
- Algorithmic collusion;
- Lessons from international practice.

### **F. Informal Markets and Market Dynamism**

- Competition policy and informality;
- SME development and formalization;
- Market transparency and data collection.

### **Submission Guidelines**

### **Abstracts**

- Maximum 500 words;
- English, French or Portuguese.

### **Full Papers**

- Between 6,000 and 10,000 words.

### **Timeline**

- Call for Abstracts Opens: 25 June
- Abstract Submission Deadline: 15 July
- Notification of Abstract Acceptance: 17 July
- Full Paper Submission Deadline: 14 August
- Submission through Email: [annualconf@erca-arcc.org](mailto:annualconf@erca-arcc.org)

### **Author Information**

- Name(s);
- Institutional affiliation;
- Contact details;
- Short biography (maximum 200 words).

Selected papers may be presented during plenary sessions, thematic panels, policy roundtables, and breakout sessions and may be considered for publication in Conference proceedings or ERCA knowledge products.

**Enquiries:** Please submit any enquiries to the Conference Chair:

Dr. Simeon KOFFI, by email at: [annualconf@erca-arcc.org](mailto:annualconf@erca-arcc.org)