



competition commission
south africa

Media Release

For Immediate Release

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**THE COMMISSION LAUNCHES A MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAMME FOR
HIGH QUALITY RESEARCH PROPOSALS**

At the 15th Annual Competition Law, Economics and Policy Conference, the Competition Commission South Africa has launched a Multidisciplinary Research Grant Programme (MRGP) aimed at promoting multidisciplinary research at South African tertiary institutions that can inform and enhance competition law enforcement in the country. The launch has now officially opened an invitation for high quality and substantive multidisciplinary research proposals relevant to competition law enforcement that may contribute to informing and improving enforcement in South Africa. The initiative is responsive to the broad mandate derived from the Competition Act (89 of 1998) as amended, and new challenges to competition law enforcement that do not only demand a stronger research community in South Africa to debate and inform appropriate enforcement, but also demand a far more multidisciplinary approach which benefits from the technical expertise and insights from fields other than competition economics and law.

Proposals may align but not limited to these themes:

- How the protection of different constitutional rights might inform specific enforcement approaches;
- Methodological and analytical approaches in the evaluation of public interest issues, including areas introduced by the new amendments;
- The incorporation of gender or environmental issues in public interest;
- Remedial design and efficacy, including an impact assessment of interventions;
- Enforcement approaches designed to foster growth and development;
- Insights into SA consumer behaviour and how this shapes actual competition;
- Development of markets for data whilst balancing privacy and security;
- Algorithmic pricing within South Africa, including benefits and harms of personal pricing using big data;
- Cartel detection techniques and tools relevant to South Africa;
- Criminisations, fines and deterrent effects;

- Addressing competition issues in regulated sectors, and the use of regulation to address competition issues; and
- Design and building enforcement institutions.

Proposal format should include the following:

- Name and CV of the lead researcher as well as the members of the research team, including their contact details;
- A summary of the main research question, methodology, data and expected contribution to competition law enforcement in South Africa; and
- A technical proposal with more details on the methodology and data.

The date for submission of research proposals is **31 January 2022** while final adjudication will be concluded on **28 February 2022**. Presentation for selected papers will take place at the Competition Commission and Tribunal Annual Conference in **October/November 2022**.

The evaluation process and criteria for acceptance of research proposals will be conducted by an Academic Reference Group (ARG) and an internal Commission Research Grant Committee (RGC). The primary role of the ARG will be to ensure that the research proposals submitted meet a minimum standard for technical merit for the proposal, capacity building and technical capabilities of the research team. The combination of these factors will determine whether a proposal meets the minimum score required for acceptance. The primary role of the internal RGC will be to assess enforcement relevance which is an additional factor considered for acceptance. The ARG will comprise of senior members of the academic community and senior practitioners in the field, including former members of the Commission, Competition Tribunal and/or Competition Appeal Court. The ARG will make recommendations of suitable research proposals to the RGC for collective decision-making on acceptance and the grant size. The total number of grants awarded is subject to a budget cap.

In launching the MRGP, the Commission hopes to not only stimulate multidisciplinary research on substantive issues facing competition law enforcement in this country, but also to develop a new generation of academics that will continue to support research in this field in future.

Enquiries on final submissions of research proposals should be sent to Yongama Njisane (YongamaN@compcom.co.za).

[ENDS]

Issued by:

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