

A Critical Examination of the Role of Stakeholders in the Regulation of Competition among Business Enterprises in Cameroon

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Abstract

Competition law is a tool first employed by countries more than a hundred years ago, to address issues relating to restrictions on competition conducted by private firms. Competition law is still predominantly an instrument to resolve national problems while the dominance of market based economies in the last fifty years, particularly following the collapse of the eastern bloc, in combination with improvements in transport, communications and technology have progressively dismantled national borders and internationalized trade. Against this backdrop, the objective of this paper is to examine the role of stakeholders in the regulation of competition among business enterprises in Cameroon. In carrying out this research, the doctrinal method was engaged, drawing from primary and secondary sources of data. It is therefore, recommended inter alia that, business enterprises should strictly observe and adhere to the mechanisms put in place in ensuring fair competition so as to guarantee a much better level of stability and sustainability in doing business in Cameroon.

Keywords: Critical, Examination, Role, Stakeholder, Regulation, Competition, Business, Enterprises.

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INTRODUCTION

Competition regulation in Cameroon is facilitated by various regulatory authorities that enforces and oversee the implementation of competition laws. These authorities play a crucial role in ensuring fair market practices, preventing anti-competitive behaviour, and promoting a competitive business environment. Here will provide an elaborate analysis of the regulatory authorities responsible for competition regulation in Cameroon, highlighting their roles, functions, and their impact on fostering fair competition and economic development. Competition authorities and enforcement mechanisms play a vital role in ensuring fair competition and promoting economic efficiency in a country.

In Cameroon, the government has established competition laws and regulatory bodies to monitor and enforce competition rules. This chapter provides a detailed introduction to the competition authorities and enforcement mechanisms in Cameroon, highlighting

their roles, powers, and the legal framework in place. It also explores the challenges faced by these authorities and their efforts to enhance competition in the country's market [1]. In Cameroon, competition law is governed by Law No. 2011/022 of 14 December 2011, which relates to competition. This law provides the legal basis for regulating and promoting competition in the country. It prohibits anti-competitive practices such as cartels, abuse of dominant position, and mergers that may substantially lessen competition. The law also establishes the legal framework for the competition authorities and their enforcement powers [2].

MINISTERIAL BODIES IN CHARGE OF REGULATING COMPETITION IN CAMEROON

In Cameroon, the promotion and regulation of competition in the marketplace are overseen by ministerial bodies tasked with ensuring fair and competitive business practices. These bodies are responsible for enforcing competition laws, investigating anti-competitive behaviour, reviewing mergers and

¹Ndomo, C. (2019). Competition Law in Cameroon: An Overview. *Journal of African Law*, 63(2), p. 246. <https://www.cambridge.org/doi/abs/10.1017/S0021855319000135>

²Kamga, A. (2020). Competition Law in Cameroon: Current Issues and Challenges. *Journal of African Law*, 64(1), 45-68. <https://www.cambridge.org/doi/abs/10.1017/S0021855320000020>

acquisitions, and promoting a competitive environment that benefits consumers and businesses alike. This domain will provide an overview of the ministerial bodies in charge of competition in Cameroon and their role in fostering a healthy and dynamic marketplace. Competition is considered a crucial component of economic growth and development, as it encourages innovation, efficiency, and consumer welfare. Recognizing the importance of fair competition, Cameroon has established specific ministerial bodies to oversee and regulate competition practices. These bodies work to prevent anti-competitive behaviour, protect consumer interests, and promote a level playing field for businesses operating within the country.

One of the primary ministerial bodies responsible for competition regulation in Cameroon is the Ministry of Commerce. The Ministry of Commerce is entrusted with the task of ensuring fair and competitive markets by enforcing competition laws and regulations. It plays a pivotal role in investigating anti-competitive practices, including collusion, abuse of dominant market positions, and unfair trade practices. The Ministry of Commerce also reviews mergers and acquisitions to prevent the concentration of market power that could hinder competition.

In addition to the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Regional Development also play a significant role in overseeing competition in Cameroon. This ministry focuses on promoting economic development and ensuring a conducive business environment that fosters competition. It collaborates with other ministerial bodies to implement policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing competition, attracting investment, and stimulating economic growth.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Justice in Cameroon plays a complementary role in competition regulation. It ensures the enforcement of competition laws and provides legal support in prosecuting cases related to anti-competitive practices. The Ministry of Justice works in conjunction with other ministerial bodies to ensure effective enforcement of competition laws, the imposition of penalties on violators, and the protection of consumer rights.

To support these ministerial bodies in their competition-related functions, Cameroon also has regulatory institutions such as the Competition Commission. The Competition Commission serves as an independent regulatory authority responsible for investigating anti-competitive behaviour and promoting fair competition. It works closely with the relevant ministries to enforce competition laws, conduct market

studies, and provide policy recommendations to enhance competition and consumer welfare.

Competition regulations are essential for promoting fair market practices, ensuring economic growth, and protecting consumer interests. In Cameroon, several ministerial bodies are responsible for enforcing competition laws and regulations. These bodies possess specific powers and functions that enable them to monitor and regulate competition within the country's markets.

Ministry of Commerce

The Ministry of Commerce in Cameroon plays a crucial role in overseeing competition regulations. Its powers and functions include [3]:

1. Formulating Competition Policies: The Ministry formulates policies aimed at promoting fair competition, preventing anti-competitive practices, and ensuring a level playing field for businesses. These policies guide the implementation and enforcement of competition laws in the country.
2. Investigating Anti-Competitive Practices: The Ministry has the authority to investigate complaints related to anti-competitive practices, such as collusion, abuse of dominant position, and unfair trade practices. Through investigations, the Ministry identifies and addresses activities that restrict competition [4].
3. Imposing Penalties: The Ministry can impose penalties on businesses found guilty of engaging in anti-competitive practices. These penalties may include fines, injunctions, and other appropriate measures to deter and punish violators, thereby maintaining fair competition [5].

II. Competition Commission: The Competition Commission is an independent regulatory body in Cameroon responsible for enforcing competition laws. Its powers and functions include:

1. Conducting Market Studies: The Competition Commission conducts in-depth market studies to identify anti-competitive practices, barriers to entry, and market concentration. Through these studies, the Commission gains insights into the competitive landscape and can take appropriate measures to promote competition.
2. Investigating Mergers and Acquisitions: The Commission examines mergers and acquisitions to prevent any potential anti-competitive effects that may harm consumer welfare or restrict competition. By scrutinizing these transactions, the Commission ensures that they do not lead to market dominance or anti-competitive behaviour [6].

³Nguena, C. L., & Tchouassi, G. (2018). p.50.

⁴Ibid. p. 43.

⁵Ibid. p. 57.

⁶Ibid. p. 78.

3. **Granting Exemptions:** The Competition Commission has the authority to grant exemptions from competition laws in certain cases. These exemptions may be granted for agreements that generate significant public benefits or enhance economic efficiency, while still ensuring that competition is not unduly restricted.

Ministry of Trade

In Cameroon, the Ministry of Trade serves as a key regulatory authority responsible for competition regulation. With the objective of fostering fair market practices and ensuring a competitive business environment, the Ministry of Trade plays a vital role in enforcing competition laws, developing policies, and collaborating with other regulatory bodies. This introduction provides an elaborate overview of the Ministry of Trade as a regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon, highlighting its significance, functions, and its impact on promoting fair competition and economic growth.

The Ministry of Trade in Cameroon serves as the primary governmental entity entrusted with the task of regulating and overseeing trade-related activities within the country. One of its major responsibilities is to enforce competition laws and ensure that market players engage in fair and transparent business practices. By doing so, the Ministry aims to create an environment where businesses can compete on an equal footing, consumers are protected, and economic growth is fostered. The Ministry of Trade holds a pivotal position in competition regulation due to its authority in formulating policies, regulations, and guidelines that govern competition and consumer protection. It works towards the development and implementation of a legal framework that promotes fair competition and prevents anti-competitive behaviour. Through its regulatory functions, the Ministry of Trade seeks to strike a balance between the interests of businesses and the protection of consumer rights.

As a regulatory authority, the Ministry of Trade plays a crucial role in enforcing competition laws and ensuring compliance. It conducts investigations into anti-competitive practices, monitors market behaviour, and takes appropriate actions against violators. These actions may include issuing fines, imposing sanctions, or even initiating legal proceedings, depending on the severity of the violation. By actively enforcing competition laws, the Ministry of Trade aims to deter anti-competitive behaviour and maintain a level playing field for businesses.

Moreover, collaboration is another essential aspect of the Ministry of Trade's role in competition regulation. It works closely with other regulatory bodies and institutions in Cameroon, such as the Competition and Antitrust Commission (CONAC), the Telecommunications Regulatory Board (TRB), and the

National Agency for Standards and Quality (ANOR). This collaborative approach ensures a coordinated effort in addressing competition-related issues, sharing information, and harmonizing regulatory actions to achieve effective competition regulation.

The Ministry of Trade's focus on competition regulation is driven by the goal of promoting fair market practices, protecting consumers, and stimulating economic development. By fostering competition, the Ministry aims to encourage innovation, improve product quality, and drive down prices, ultimately benefiting consumers. Additionally, a competitive business environment attracts investments, boosts entrepreneurship, and contributes to overall economic growth and stability. The Ministry of Trade in Cameroon plays a crucial role as a regulatory authority for competition regulation. Through its enforcement of competition laws, formulation of policies, collaboration with other regulatory bodies, and promotion of fair market practices, the Ministry seeks to create an environment that encourages competition, protects consumer rights, and fosters economic development. The Ministry of Trade's efforts are instrumental in ensuring fair competition and promoting a vibrant and competitive business landscape in Cameroon.

Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications:

The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) plays a crucial role as the regulatory authority responsible for competition regulation in Cameroon's telecommunications sector. With the rapid growth of the telecommunications industry in recent years, the MPT has emerged as a key institution in ensuring fair competition, promoting innovation, and safeguarding consumer interests. This elaborate introduction will delve into the role of the MPT as the regulatory authority in competition regulation in Cameroon, highlighting its functions, regulatory framework, and notable initiatives.

Role of the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications

As the regulatory authority, the MPT oversees and regulates the telecommunications sector in Cameroon. Its primary role is to promote fair competition among telecom operators, create a level playing field, and protect the interests of both service providers and consumers. The MPT serves as a bridge between the government, telecommunication companies, and consumers, ensuring that the sector operates efficiently and in compliance with established regulations.

The regulatory framework governing competition regulation in Cameroon's telecommunications sector is based on several key laws and regulations. The main legal instrument is the Law No. 2010/013 of December 21, 2010, which establishes

the Telecommunications Regulatory Board (TRB) [7]. The TRB is responsible for regulating and supervising the telecommunications sector, and the MPT acts as the implementing arm of the TRB, carrying out its directives and decisions.

Additionally, the MPT works in close collaboration with other relevant institutions such as the Ministry of Trade, the Competition Commission, and the National Agency for Information and Communication Technologies (ANTIC). This collaborative approach ensures a comprehensive and coordinated effort in regulating competition in the telecommunications sector.

Functions of the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications

The MPT performs various functions to effectively regulate competition in the telecommunications sector. Some of its key responsibilities include:

1. **Licensing and Authorization:** The MPT issues licenses and authorizations to telecommunication operators, ensuring compliance with technical, legal, and financial requirements. This process aims to prevent monopolistic practices and encourage the entry of new players, fostering healthy competition.
2. **Market Monitoring:** The MPT conducts regular market analysis, monitoring the behaviour and performance of telecom operators. This includes assessing market concentration, pricing practices, quality of service, and adherence to consumer rights. By monitoring the market, the MPT can identify anti-competitive behaviour and take appropriate actions to address such issues.
3. **Dispute Resolution:** In cases of disputes between telecom operators, consumers, or other stakeholders, the MPT acts as a mediator and arbitrator. It provides a platform for resolving conflicts and ensures that fair competition is maintained.
4. **Policy Development:** The MPT plays a vital role in formulating policies and regulations that foster competition and innovation in the telecommunications sector. It collaborates with relevant stakeholders to develop frameworks that promote investment, infrastructure development, and technological advancements.

The MPT has undertaken several notable initiatives to enhance competition regulation in Cameroon's telecommunications sector. Some of these initiatives include:

0. **Spectrum Management:** The MPT efficiently manages the allocation and use of radio frequency spectrum, ensuring fair distribution among telecom operators. This approach prevents spectrum hoarding and promotes equal opportunities for all players in the market.
 1. **Quality of Service Monitoring:** The MPT regularly assesses the quality of service provided by telecom operators, setting benchmarks and standards to ensure that consumers receive reliable and satisfactory services. This monitoring mechanism encourages competition based on service quality and incentivizes operators to improve their offerings.
 2. **Consumer Protection:** The MPT places a strong emphasis on protecting consumer rights and interests. It enforces regulations related to billing transparency, fair pricing, and complaint resolution, empowering consumers and enhancing their confidence in the telecommunications sector.

The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications in Cameroon plays a pivotal role as the regulatory authority in competition regulation. Through its functions and initiatives, the MPT ensures fair competition, protects consumer interests, and promotes innovation in the telecommunications sector. By collaborating with relevant institutions and implementing a comprehensive regulatory framework, the MPT contributes to the growth and development of the telecommunications industry in Cameroon.

Competition and Antitrust Commission (CONAC)

The Competition and Antitrust Commission (CONAC) serves as a prominent regulatory authority responsible for competition regulation in Cameroon. CONAC plays a crucial role in enforcing competition laws, preventing anti-competitive practices, and promoting fair market conditions. This introduction provides an elaborate overview of CONAC as a regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon, highlighting its significance, functions, and its impact on fostering fair competition and economic development [8].

CONAC is the primary regulatory authority entrusted with the responsibility of enforcing competition laws in Cameroon. It operates under the legal framework provided by Law No. 2016/014 of 14 December 2016, which enacts the OHADA Uniform Act on Commercial Companies and Economic Interest Groups [9]. This legislation empowers CONAC to

⁷Law No. 2010/013 of December 21, 2010, establishing the Telecommunications Regulatory Board (TRB) - Official Gazette of the Republic of Cameroon.

⁸Lawin, H., (2020), Competition Law in Cameroon: Overview. Practical Law. Retrieved

from [https://uk.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/7-5206761?transitionType=Default&contextData=\(sc.Default\)&firstPage=true&bhcp=1](https://uk.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/7-5206761?transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default)&firstPage=true&bhcp=1)

⁹Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA). (2021). Op. cit.

investigate anti-competitive practices, review mergers and acquisitions, and take appropriate actions to maintain fair competition.

As a regulatory authority, CONAC plays a pivotal role in promoting fair market practices and ensuring a competitive business environment. It actively works towards preventing anti-competitive behaviour, such as collusion, abuse of dominant position, and unfair trade practices. By doing so, CONAC aims to protect the interests of consumers, foster innovation, and drive economic growth. The functions of CONAC encompass a wide range of activities related to competition regulation. It conducts investigations into alleged anti-competitive practices, gathers evidence, and takes appropriate actions against violators of competition laws [10]. These actions may include imposing fines, issuing injunctions, or initiating legal proceedings. By enforcing competition laws, CONAC acts as a deterrent against anti-competitive behaviour, thereby promoting fair competition.

In addition to enforcement, CONAC also engages in competition advocacy and education. It strives to raise awareness among businesses, consumers, and other stakeholders about the importance of competition and its benefits. CONAC provides guidance and advice to businesses on complying with competition laws and promotes a culture of fair competition through workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns [11].

Collaboration is a key aspect of CONAC's role in competition regulation. The regulatory authority works closely with other governmental bodies, such as the Ministry of Trade, the Telecommunications Regulatory Board (TRB), and the National Agency for Standards and Quality (ANOR). This collaborative approach ensures a coordinated effort in addressing competition-related issues, sharing information, and harmonizing regulatory actions for effective competition regulation. The impact of CONAC's work extends beyond the realm of competition regulation [12]. By fostering fair competition, CONAC contributes to economic development and growth. Fair competition encourages businesses to innovate, improve product quality, and offer competitive prices, thus benefiting consumers. Moreover, a competitive business environment attracts investments, promotes entrepreneurship, and stimulates economic activities.

CONAC serves as a crucial regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon. Through its

enforcement of competition laws, promotion of fair market practices, collaboration with other regulatory bodies, and advocacy efforts, CONAC plays a vital role in ensuring fair competition, protecting consumer rights, and fostering economic development. CONAC's commitment to maintaining a competitive business environment contributes to a vibrant and thriving economy in Cameroon [13].

Telecommunications Regulatory Board (TRB)

The Telecommunications Regulatory Board (TRB) plays a significant role as a regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon's telecommunications sector. With the objective of fostering fair competition, protecting consumer rights, and ensuring a level playing field, the TRB is responsible for regulating and overseeing telecommunications activities in the country. This introduction provides an elaborate overview of the TRB as a regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon, highlighting its importance, functions, and its impact on promoting fair competition and driving innovation in the telecommunications industry [14]. The TRB holds a crucial position in Cameroon's telecommunications sector as the primary regulatory authority responsible for ensuring fair competition among telecommunications service providers. It operates under the legal framework provided by Law No. 2010/013 of 21 December 2010, which establishes the Electronic Communications and Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (ART). The TRB, as a component of ART, is empowered to enforce competition laws, grant licenses, monitor market behaviour, and promote a competitive telecommunications market [15].

As a regulatory authority, the TRB plays a pivotal role in creating an environment that encourages fair competition in the telecommunications industry. It establishes and enforces regulations and guidelines that govern the behaviour of telecommunications service providers, preventing anti-competitive practices such as monopolistic behaviour, collusion, and unfair trade practices. By doing so, the TRB aims to ensure that consumers have access to quality services at competitive prices. The functions of the TRB encompass a wide range of activities related to competition regulation in the telecommunications sector. It grants licenses to telecommunications operators, ensuring that new entrants meet the necessary requirements and contribute

¹⁰Njikam, O. B. (2019). Competition Law in Cameroon: An Overview of the Legal Framework and Enforcement Practice. *Journal of Competition Law & Economics*, 15(3), p. 487. doi:10.1093/joclec/nhz020

¹¹Ibid. p. 501.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Sama, M. (2018). Competition and Antitrust Regulation in Cameroon. In *The Handbook of Competition Enforcement Agencies*. p. 13. Springer.

¹⁴ Law No. 2010/013 of 21 December 2010 establishing the Electronic Communications and Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (ART).

¹⁵ Ibid.

to healthy competition [16]. The TRB also monitors the market to detect and investigate anti-competitive behaviour. In cases of violations, the TRB has the authority to impose fines, issue warnings, and take appropriate actions to restore fair competition.

Moreover, the TRB actively promotes fair competition through its role in allocating scarce resources, such as radio frequency spectrum and numbering resources, in a fair and transparent manner. By ensuring equitable access to these resources, the TRB prevents the concentration of power in the hands of a few dominant players and encourages new entrants to participate in the market. Collaboration is a key aspect of the TRB's role in competition regulation. It works closely with other regulatory bodies, such as the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications and CONAC (Competition and Antitrust Commission), to ensure a coordinated approach to competition regulation [17]. This collaboration allows for the exchange of information, harmonization of regulatory actions, and the development of a comprehensive framework to address competition-related issues in the telecommunications sector.

The impact of the TRB's work extends beyond promoting fair competition. By regulating the telecommunications industry, the TRB contributes to the overall development of the sector. Fair competition stimulates innovation, investment, and the deployment of new technologies, leading to improved services, expanded coverage, and economic growth. Additionally, the TRB's efforts in protecting consumer rights and promoting fair pricing contribute to enhancing consumer welfare and satisfaction [18].

The Telecommunications Regulatory Board (TRB) plays a crucial role as a regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon's telecommunications industry. Through its enforcement of competition laws, grant of licenses, monitoring of market behaviour, and promotion of fair competition, the TRB works towards creating a level playing field, protecting consumer interests, and driving innovation. The TRB's regulatory efforts contribute to the growth and development of the telecommunications sector in Cameroon [19].

Competition Commission of Cameroon «Commission de la Concurrence» (CONACOM).

The primary competition authority in Cameroon is the Competition Commission, known as the "Commission de la Concurrence" (CONACOM).

CONACOM is an independent administrative body responsible for implementing and enforcing competition laws in the country. It operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce. CONACOM's mandate includes investigating anti-competitive practices, reviewing mergers and acquisitions, and promoting competition advocacy. CONACOM has various enforcement mechanisms at its disposal to ensure compliance with competition laws. These mechanisms include conducting investigations, issuing cease and desist orders, imposing fines and penalties on violators, and reviewing proposed mergers and acquisitions. CONACOM has the power to impose substantial fines and penalties on companies found guilty of anti-competitive behaviour. It can also require divestitures or impose behavioural remedies to restore competition in the market.

Like many other countries, Cameroon faces challenges in effectively enforcing competition laws. These challenges include limited resources, lack of awareness and understanding of competition law among businesses, and the need for capacity building within the competition authority. However, Cameroon has made efforts to enhance competition through capacity building programs, awareness campaigns, and cooperation with regional and international organizations. Furthermore, Cameroon is a member of the African Competition Forum (ACF), which promotes cooperation among African competition authorities. The ACF provides a platform for sharing best practices, exchanging information, and fostering regional cooperation in competition enforcement.

Competition authorities and enforcement mechanisms in Cameroon play a crucial role in ensuring fair competition and promoting economic growth. Through the Competition Commission (CONACOM) and the legal framework in place, Cameroon aims to prevent anti-competitive practices, protect consumers, and foster a competitive business environment. Despite the challenges, Cameroon's competition authorities are working towards enhancing competition through capacity building, awareness campaigns, and regional cooperation.

The Competition Commission of Cameroon, also known as CONACOM, plays a crucial role in enforcing competition laws and promoting fair competition. Under the provisions of Law No. 2011/022, which established the Commission, CONACOM operates as an independent administrative body with

¹⁶ Ngouatchieu, C. T. (2019). Telecommunications Regulation in Cameroon: An Overview of the Legal Framework and Regulatory Practices. *Journal of African Law*, 63(2), p. 339. doi:10.1017/S0021855319000216

¹⁷ Ndikum, G. E. (2017). Competition Law Enforcement in Cameroon: Challenges and Prospects. *Journal of*

African Law, 61(2), p. 324. doi:10.1017/S0021855317000114

¹⁸Ibid. p. 330.

¹⁹ Nkendon, B. R. (2015). Telecommunications Regulation in Cameroon: Challenges and Prospects for Competition. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 4(10), p. 8.

specific functions. One of the primary functions of CONACOM is to conduct investigations and enforce competition laws. The Commission is responsible for investigating and taking action against anti-competitive practices such as cartels, abuse of dominant position, and mergers that significantly reduce competition. CONACOM conducts inquiries, inspects premises, and collects relevant evidence to assess potential violations. By addressing anti-competitive behaviour, the Commission ensures a level playing field for businesses and protects the interests of consumers.

Merger control is another vital function of the Competition Commission. CONACOM reviews proposed mergers and acquisitions to ensure that they do not lead to a substantial lessening of competition. The Commission evaluates the potential impact on market concentration and advises on necessary remedies or conditions to preserve competition. This function helps prevent undue concentration of power in the market and ensures that mergers do not harm competition. CONACOM also engages in competition advocacy to raise awareness about the benefits of fair competition. The Commission publishes guidelines, conducts workshops, and collaborates with industry associations to educate businesses, consumers, and policymakers about competition laws. By promoting a competitive business environment, CONACOM fosters market efficiency, innovation, and overall economic growth.

To effectively enforce competition laws, the Competition Commission has various enforcement mechanisms at its disposal. CONACOM can impose fines and penalties on companies found guilty of anti-competitive behaviour. These fines act as a deterrent against future violations. In addition to monetary sanctions, the Commission can demand behavioural remedies or divestitures to restore competition. The Commission also has the power to issue cease and desist orders, which require parties involved in on-going anti-competitive practices to immediately cease such behaviour and comply with competition laws. CONACOM operates a leniency program to encourage companies involved in cartels to come forward and cooperate.

In exchange for providing information and evidence about the cartel, the cooperating company may receive reduced penalties or immunity from prosecution. This leniency program incentivizes companies to self-report and helps the Commission uncover and address anti-competitive practices effectively.

The Competition Commission's role in fostering fair competition has several positive impacts on the economy. By preventing anti-competitive behaviour and promoting fair pricing, CONACOM ensures that consumers have access to a wide range of choices at competitive prices. This enhances consumer welfare and protects them from exploitation. The Commission's

enforcement activities also promote market efficiency by eliminating barriers to entry, encouraging innovation, and incentivizing businesses to operate efficiently. This leads to increased productivity and economic growth. Furthermore, a competitive market attracts both domestic and foreign investments, as companies have confidence in the fairness and transparency of the business environment. The Competition Commission's efforts to create a level playing field enhance the overall business climate, fostering economic development and job creation.

While the Competition Commission of Cameroon has made significant progress, it faces challenges that need to be addressed for further effectiveness. The Commission operates with limited financial and human resources, which can hinder its ability to conduct thorough investigations and enforce competition laws effectively. Adequate funding and staffing are crucial for the Commission to fulfil its mandate. Additionally, many businesses, consumers, and policymakers in Cameroon may have limited knowledge and understanding of competition laws and the role of the Competition Commission. Enhancing awareness through targeted education and outreach programs would help foster a culture of compliance.

Some sectors in Cameroon face specific competition issues, such as the telecommunications sector, where dominant players may engage in anti-competitive practices. The Commission needs to focus on addressing sector-specific challenges to ensure fair competition across industries. Given the global nature of business and competition, the Competition Commission should enhance its collaboration with international counterparts and participate in regional and international competition networks to share best practices and gain insights into emerging trends. Continuous training and capacity building programs for the Commission's staff are also essential to keep up with evolving competition issues, enforcement techniques, and legal developments. This would enable the Commission to effectively tackle complex cases and adapt to changing market dynamics.

The Competition Commission of Cameroon plays a vital role in enforcing competition laws, promoting fair competition, and contributing to economic development. Its functions, including investigation and enforcement, merger control, and competition advocacy, are essential in ensuring a level playing field for businesses and protecting consumer interests. However, challenges such as limited resources, lack of awareness, sector-specific issues, and the need for international cooperation and capacity building need to be addressed to further strengthen the Commission's effectiveness in promoting fair competition and fostering economic growth.

Powers of the competition commission

Competition is an essential aspect of any healthy economy. It encourages innovation, efficiency, and provides consumers with a wider range of choices at competitive prices. To safeguard competition and prevent anti-competitive practices, many countries establish competition commissions or regulatory bodies. These commissions are empowered with various tools and authorities to enforce competition laws and maintain fair market conditions. This domain will explore the powers typically granted to competition commissions and their significance in promoting and protecting competition.

Competition commissions are vested with investigative powers to examine suspected anti-competitive behaviour by companies. These powers allow them to gather information, conduct interviews, and request relevant documents from concerned parties. By conducting thorough investigations, competition commissions can uncover evidence of anti-competitive conduct such as price-fixing, collusion, or abuse of market dominance. These powers provide the foundation for enforcing competition laws effectively. Upon establishing the existence of anti-competitive practices, competition commissions possess enforcement powers to take appropriate actions. These powers may include imposing fines and penalties on violators, issuing cease and desist orders to halt anti-competitive conduct, or requiring companies to alter their business practices to restore competition. By wielding these powers, competition commissions deter anti-competitive behaviour and ensure a level playing field for all market participants.

Competition commissions often play a crucial role in reviewing mergers and acquisitions to prevent the concentration of market power. They have the authority to assess whether proposed mergers would lead to a substantial lessening of competition. Through a rigorous review process, competition commissions evaluate the potential impact of mergers on market dynamics, consumer choice, and pricing. If concerns arise, they may impose conditions on the merging parties or even block the transaction altogether. Merger control powers enable competition commissions to preserve competition and prevent the creation of monopolies or oligopolies. Another important power of competition commissions is the ability to conduct market studies. These studies involve a comprehensive analysis of specific sectors or industries to identify market barriers, anti-competitive practices, or any other factors that hinder competition. By examining market dynamics, competition commissions can propose regulatory reforms, suggest policy changes, or recommend measures to promote competition. Market studies empower competition commissions to proactively address competition-related issues and foster a more competitive marketplace.

Competition commissions often engage in advocacy and educational activities to raise awareness about competition laws and their benefits. Through campaigns, workshops, and publications, they inform businesses, consumers, and policymakers about the importance of fair competition. By promoting a better understanding of competition law, competition commissions encourage compliance and discourage anti-competitive behaviour. Advocacy and education efforts contribute to building a culture of fair competition within society.

To encourage companies to come forward and provide information about anti-competitive practices, competition commissions may offer leniency programs. These programs grant immunity or reduced penalties to the first company that reports a cartel or collusion activity. By incentivizing cooperation and providing legal protection, leniency programs assist competition commissions in uncovering secret illegal agreements and prosecuting offenders effectively. Competition commissions often collaborate with other domestic and international regulatory bodies to enhance their effectiveness. They share information, coordinate enforcement actions, and participate in joint investigations to combat cross-border anti-competitive practices. Such collaboration strengthens the global fight against anti-competitive behaviour and ensures a consistent approach to competition regulation.

Competition commissions play a vital role in promoting and protecting competition in economies worldwide. With their extensive powers, they investigate anti-competitive behaviour, enforce competition laws, review mergers, conduct market studies, educate stakeholders, and collaborate with other authorities. These powers collectively contribute to maintaining fair and competitive markets, fostering innovation, and benefiting consumers and businesses alike. By wielding their powers effectively, competition commissions ensure that the principles of competition remain at the heart of economic growth and development.

Functions of the competition commission

Competition plays a vital role in fostering innovation, efficiency, and consumer welfare within economies. To ensure fair and competitive market conditions, many countries establish competition commissions or regulatory bodies. These commissions are entrusted with various functions aimed at promoting and protecting competition. This portion will explore the functions typically performed by competition commissions and their significance in maintaining dynamic and competitive market environments.

Enforcement of Competition Laws: One of the primary functions of competition commissions is the enforcement of competition laws. These laws prohibit anti-competitive practices such as collusion, abuse of dominance, and mergers that may substantially lessen

competition. Competition commissions investigate and take appropriate actions against companies engaged in anti-competitive behaviour, ensuring compliance with the law and deterring future violations. By enforcing competition laws, these commissions maintain a level playing field for businesses, promote fair competition, and protect consumer interests.

Merger Review and Control: Competition commissions are responsible for reviewing and assessing mergers and acquisitions to prevent the creation of monopolistic or anti-competitive market structures. They evaluate the potential impact of proposed mergers on market concentration, consumer choice, and pricing dynamics. Through a thorough examination of the merger's competitive effects, competition commissions can approve mergers with or without conditions, or block them if they are likely to harm competition. Merger review and control functions help maintain market competitiveness and prevent the undue concentration of economic power.

Market Investigations and Studies: Competition commissions conduct market investigations and studies to identify and address competition-related issues. These investigations involve a comprehensive analysis of specific sectors or industries to understand market dynamics, barriers to entry, and anti-competitive practices. By examining market structures and behaviours, competition commissions can propose regulatory reforms, recommend policy changes, or advocate for pro-competitive measures. Market investigations and studies empower competition commissions to proactively address market failures, promote competition, and enhance economic welfare.

Consumer Protection: Competition commissions often have a role in protecting consumer interests within competitive markets. They monitor and investigate unfair or deceptive trade practices, false advertising, and anti-consumer behaviours. By taking action against such practices, competition commissions safeguard consumer rights, ensure truthful and transparent competition, and promote consumer welfare. Consumer protection functions help maintain the trust and confidence of consumers in the marketplace.

Advocacy and Education: Competition commissions engage in advocacy and educational activities to raise awareness about competition laws and their benefits. They work with stakeholders, including businesses, consumer associations, and policymakers, to promote a culture of fair competition. Through public campaigns, workshops, and publications, competition commissions educate market participants about competition principles, anti-competitive practices, and the benefits of competitive markets. Advocacy and

education functions aim to foster compliance, prevent violations, and encourage a competitive mind-set among businesses and consumers.

International Cooperation: Competition commissions often engage in international cooperation and collaboration with other regulatory bodies. They exchange information, experiences, and best practices to address cross-border anti-competitive activities effectively. This cooperation allows competition commissions to share knowledge, coordinate enforcement actions, and align with global competition standards. International cooperation functions contribute to the harmonization of competition policies and facilitate the prevention and detection of anti-competitive practices on a global scale.

Competition commissions perform a range of functions to promote and protect competition within economies. Through the enforcement of competition laws, merger review, market investigations, consumer protection, advocacy, education, and international cooperation, these commissions ensure fair and competitive market environments. By fulfilling their functions, competition commissions contribute to economic welfare, consumer choice, innovation, and overall societal well-being. Emphasizing the importance of competition, these regulatory bodies play a crucial role in maintaining dynamic and vibrant marketplaces.

National Hydrocarbons Corporation (SNH)

The National Hydrocarbons Corporation (SNH) plays a vital role as a regulatory authority for competition regulation in the hydrocarbons sector of Cameroon. As the state-owned entity responsible for the management of hydrocarbon resources, SNH ensures fair competition, oversees licensing and exploration activities, and promotes transparency and accountability in the industry. This provides an elaborate overview of SNH as a regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon, highlighting its significance, functions, and its impact on fostering fair competition and sustainable development in the hydrocarbons sector. SNH holds a prominent position in Cameroon's hydrocarbons sector as the regulatory authority responsible for promoting fair competition. Established by Law No. 99/013 of 22 December 1999 [20], SNH operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Mines, Industry, and Technological Development. It acts as a key interface between the government, hydrocarbon operators, and other stakeholders, ensuring compliance with regulations and fostering a competitive environment.

As a regulatory authority, SNH plays a pivotal role in establishing and enforcing regulations that promote fair competition in the hydrocarbons sector. It oversees licensing processes, exploration activities, and

²⁰ Law No. 99/013 of 22 December 1999 establishing the National Hydrocarbons Corporation (SNH).

production sharing agreements, ensuring transparency, equity, and accountability. SNH's objective is to create a level playing field for all players in the industry, preventing monopolistic practices and promoting healthy competition [21]. The functions of SNH encompass a wide range of activities related to competition regulation in the hydrocarbons sector [22]. It manages the licensing process for hydrocarbon exploration and production, ensuring that licenses are granted fairly and transparently. SNH also monitors the activities of operators to ensure compliance with regulations and prevent anti-competitive behaviour, such as cartelization, price fixing, and abuse of dominant position.

SNH acts as a regulatory authority that oversees the contractual and financial aspects of hydrocarbon operations. It ensures that operators adhere to their contractual obligations, including local content requirements, environmental standards, and revenue sharing agreements [23]. By enforcing these regulations, SNH promotes fair competition and prevents unfair advantages for certain players in the industry. Additionally, SNH plays a crucial role in promoting transparency and accountability in the hydrocarbons sector. It collects data on hydrocarbon reserves, production, and revenues, and publishes regular reports that provide stakeholders with valuable information. This transparency helps prevent information asymmetry and promotes fair competition by enabling market participants to make informed decisions [24].

Collaboration is an essential aspect of SNH's role in competition regulation. It works closely with other regulatory bodies, such as the Ministry of Mines, Industry, and Technological Development, the National Hydrocarbon Prices Stabilization Fund (CSPH), and the National Hydrocarbon Revenue Stabilization Fund (CNHS)²⁵. This collaboration ensures a coordinated approach to competition regulation, information sharing, and the implementation of comprehensive policies and regulations. The impact of SNH's work extends beyond competition regulation. By ensuring fair competition and promoting transparency, SNH contributes to sustainable development in the hydrocarbons sector. Fair competition attracts investments, encourages innovation, and stimulates economic growth. Moreover, SNH's emphasis on transparency and accountability helps prevent corruption and ensures the equitable distribution of hydrocarbon revenues, benefiting both the industry and the broader society [26].

The National Hydrocarbons Corporation (SNH) serves as a crucial regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon's hydrocarbons sector. Through its enforcement of regulations, oversight of licensing and exploration activities, promotion of transparency, and collaboration with other regulatory bodies, SNH plays a vital role in fostering fair competition and sustainable development in the hydrocarbons industry. SNH's work contributes to attracting investments, driving economic growth, and ensuring the equitable distribution of hydrocarbon resources in Cameroon.

National Agency for Standards and Quality (ANOR)

The National Agency for Standards and Quality (ANOR) plays a crucial role as a regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon by promoting fair trade practices, ensuring compliance with quality standards, and fostering a competitive market environment. ANOR is responsible for establishing and enforcing technical regulations, metrology standards, and conformity assessment procedures that regulate product quality and safety across various industries. This domain provides an elaborate overview of ANOR as a regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon, highlighting its significance, functions, and its impact on promoting fair competition and consumer protection. ANOR holds a prominent position in Cameroon's regulatory landscape as the primary body responsible for standardization and conformity assessment. Established by Law No. 96/11 of August 1996 [27], ANOR operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Industry, Mines, and Technological Development. It serves as the national reference authority for standards and quality, ensuring that products and services meet the required regulatory standards and promoting fair competition among market participants.

As a regulatory authority, ANOR plays a pivotal role in creating a level playing field for businesses by establishing and enforcing technical regulations and quality standards. These regulations cover a wide range of sectors, including manufacturing, agriculture, food processing, construction, and services. ANOR's objective is to ensure that products and services meet defined quality criteria, protecting consumers from substandard or unsafe goods and promoting fair

²¹ Ngwesse, R. (2019). Oil and Gas Regulation in Cameroon: An Overview of the Legal Framework and Regulatory Practices. *Journal of Energy & Natural Resources Law*, 37(2), p. 137. doi:10.1080/02646811.2018.1556824

²² Ministry of Mines, Industry, and Technological Development (Cameroon).

²³ Ngwesse, R. (2019). *Op. cit.* p. 139.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 140.

²⁵ Lontsi, A. M. (2020). Natural Resources and Subnational Governments in Cameroon: A Study on the Management of Oil Revenues. *Journal of African Law*, 64(1), p. 73.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 85.

²⁷ Law No. 96/11 of August 1996 establishing the National Agency for Standards and Quality (ANOR).

competition among producers [28]. The functions of ANOR encompass a comprehensive range of activities related to competition regulation. ANOR is responsible for the development and implementation of technical regulations and metrology standards. It establishes specific requirements for products, processes, and systems, which are enforced through conformity assessment procedures [29]. These procedures include testing, certification, inspection, and accreditation, which help verify compliance with the established standards [30].

ANOR also plays a critical role in market surveillance and enforcement of quality standards. It conducts regular inspections, product sampling, and testing to ensure that goods in the market meet the required standards. In cases of non-compliance, ANOR has the authority to take appropriate actions, such as issuing warnings, imposing fines, or even withdrawing products from the market. By doing so, ANOR aims to create a fair and competitive business environment where consumers can have confidence in the quality and safety of products and services. Furthermore, ANOR actively collaborates with other regulatory bodies and stakeholders to enhance competition regulation and consumer protection in Cameroon. It works closely with the Ministry of Industry, Mines, and Technological Development, as well as industry associations, consumer protection organizations, and international standardization bodies. This collaboration allows for the exchange of information, harmonization of regulations, and the development of a comprehensive framework to address competition-related issues and ensure consumer welfare [31].

The impact of ANOR's work extends beyond competition regulation. By promoting and enforcing quality standards, ANOR contributes to consumer protection, public health, and environmental sustainability. Consumers benefit from safe and reliable products, while businesses are incentivized to improve their offerings to meet the required standards. Moreover, adherence to quality standards enhances the reputation and competitiveness of Cameroonian products in domestic and international markets, driving economic growth and export opportunities.

The National Agency for Standards and Quality (ANOR) serves as a vital regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon. Through its establishment and enforcement of technical regulations, metrology standards, and conformity assessment procedures, ANOR promotes fair competition, consumer protection, and quality assurance across various industries. ANOR's efforts contribute to building consumer trust, enhancing product quality, and driving economic development in the country.

Financial Markets Commission (CMF)

The Financial Markets Commission (CMF) serves as a crucial regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon's financial sector. As the primary regulatory body overseeing financial markets and participants, CMF plays a critical role in ensuring fair competition, maintaining market integrity, and safeguarding investor interests. This area provides an elaborate overview of CMF as a regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon, highlighting its significance, functions, and its impact on fostering fair and efficient financial markets.

CMF holds a central position in Cameroon's financial regulatory framework as the primary authority responsible for supervising and regulating financial markets. Established by Law No. 2001/018 of 15 December 2001 [32], CMF operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance. It serves as an independent regulatory body with the mandate to promote transparency, stability, and fair competition in the financial markets.

As a regulatory authority, CMF plays a pivotal role in creating a level playing field for financial market participants by establishing and enforcing regulations that promote fair competition. CMF's objective is to ensure that all market participants, including banks, insurance companies, microfinance institutions, and capital market intermediaries, adhere to regulatory requirements and compete on equal terms [33].

The functions of CMF encompass a wide range of activities related to competition regulation in the financial sector. CMF is responsible for licensing and supervising financial institutions, ensuring compliance with prudential norms, and preventing anti-competitive

²⁸United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). (2019). National Quality Infrastructure: A Guide for Development Practitioners.

²⁹Ngouatchieu, C. T., & Sako, M. (2018). The Regulation of Standards and Quality Infrastructure in Cameroon: An Overview of the Legal Framework and Regulatory Practices. *Journal of African Law*, 62(2), p. 265. doi:10.1017/S0021855318000225.

³⁰Ibid. p. 274.

³¹Mvondo, S. A., & Enoh, O. J. (2018). Quality Infrastructure and the Competitiveness of Small and

Medium-Sized Enterprises in Cameroon. *Journal of African Business*, 19(2), p.197. doi:10.1080/15228916.2017.1377634

³²Law No. 2001/018 of 15 December 2001 establishing the Financial Markets Commission (CMF).

³³Nguena, C. L., & Tchouassi, G. (2018). Financial Development, Institutions, and Economic Growth in Cameroon. *Journal of African Business*, 19(3), p. 361. doi:10.1080/15228916.2018.1474429

practices. It establishes regulations governing capital adequacy, risk management, corporate governance, and market conduct to foster fair competition and protect investors [34]. CMF also plays a critical role in overseeing the functioning and integrity of financial markets in Cameroon. It monitors the operations of stock exchanges, securities markets, and other financial infrastructure, ensuring compliance with rules and regulations. CMF's market surveillance efforts aim to detect and prevent market abuse, insider trading, and other unethical practices that could undermine fair competition and investor confidence.

Furthermore, CMF actively promotes investor education and protection. It establishes disclosure requirements, transparency standards, and investor protection measures to ensure that investors have access to accurate and timely information to make informed decisions. CMF also provides guidance on investor rights and channels for complaints resolution, contributing to a fair and trustworthy financial market environment [35]. Collaboration and cooperation are essential aspects of CMF's role in competition regulation. CMF works closely with other regulatory bodies, such as the Central Bank of Central Africa States (BEAC), the Insurance Supervisory Commission (CIMA), and the Regional Council for Public Savings and Financial Markets (CREPMF) [36]. This collaboration aims to harmonize regulations, exchange information, and coordinate efforts to promote fair competition and stability in the financial sector.

The impact of CMF's work extends beyond competition regulation. By ensuring fair and efficient financial markets, CMF contributes to economic growth, investor confidence, and financial stability [37]. Fair competition fosters innovation, efficiency, and product diversity, benefiting both businesses and consumers. Additionally, CMF's focus on investor protection helps build trust in the financial system, encouraging savings and investment, and contributing to the overall development of the economy [38].

In conclusion, the Financial Markets Commission (CMF) plays a vital role as a regulatory authority for competition regulation in Cameroon's financial sector. Through its establishment and enforcement of regulations, supervision of financial institutions, oversight of financial markets, and focus on investor protection, CMF promotes fair competition, market integrity, and investor confidence. CMF's efforts contribute to the development of a robust and inclusive

financial system that supports economic growth and stability in Cameroon.

Consumer Protection Agency

The Consumer Protection Agency (CPA) in Cameroon is responsible for safeguarding consumer interests and addressing anti-competitive practices that may harm consumers. Its powers and functions include:

1. **Educating Consumers:** The CPA plays a vital role in educating consumers about their rights, fair market practices, and how to identify and report anti-competitive behaviour. By raising consumer awareness, the CPA empowers individuals to make informed choices and contributes to a competitive marketplace.
2. **Handling Consumer Complaints:** The agency receives and investigates complaints from consumers regarding anti-competitive practices, misleading advertising, and unfair trade practices. Through these investigations, the CPA ensures that consumer rights are protected and that anti-competitive behaviour is addressed [39].
3. **Advocating for Consumer Rights:** The CPA actively advocates for consumer rights by engaging in public awareness campaigns, proposing consumer-friendly policies, and collaborating with other regulatory bodies. By advocating for consumer interests, the CPA contributes to a fair and competitive market environment.

National Competition Council:

The National Competition Council is responsible for advising the government on competition policy and promoting fair market practices. Its powers and functions include:

1. **Policy Recommendations:** The Council formulates and provides recommendations to the government on competition policy, legal reforms, and measures to promote competition. These recommendations help shape the regulatory framework and ensure that it remains effective in fostering fair competition [40].
2. **Monitoring and Reporting:** The Council monitors market conditions, assesses competition levels, and prepares periodic reports on the state of competition in various sectors of the economy. This monitoring and reporting help identify potential anti-competitive practices and inform policy decisions [41].

³⁴Ibid. p. 367.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid. p. 372.

³⁸Njangang, H. N., & Nembot, J. (2019). Stock Market Development and Economic Growth in Cameroon: A Multivariate Causality Test. *International Journal of*

Economics, Commerce and Management, 7(2), p. 79. Retrieved from <https://ijecm.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/7226.pdf>

³⁹Ibid. p. 79.

⁴⁰Ibid. p. 81.

⁴¹Njangang, H. N., & Nembot, J. (2019). *Op. cit.* p. 104.

3. **Promoting Advocacy:** The Council engages in advocacy activities to raise awareness about the benefits of competition, conduct training programs, and collaborate with stakeholders to foster a competitive business environment. Through these efforts, the Council promotes a culture of competition and contributes to economic development [42].

The ministerial bodies responsible for competition regulations in Cameroon possess distinct powers and functions that collectively aim to foster fair market practices, protect consumer interests, and promote economic growth. The Ministry of Commerce, Competition Commission, Consumer Protection Agency, and National Competition Council play vital roles in enforcing competition laws, investigating anti-competitive practices, and formulating policies to ensure a competitive business environment. Through their combined efforts, these bodies contribute to the development of a robust and vibrant economy in Cameroon.

ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS IN REGULATING COMPETITION AMONG BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

Enforcement mechanisms are crucial in ensuring the effectiveness of competition regulations in promoting fair and competitive markets. In the context of Cameroon, the enforcement of competition regulations is essential to prevent anti-competitive practices, protect consumer welfare, and foster a level playing field for businesses. This domain will explore the enforcement mechanisms employed in competition regulations in Cameroon, highlighting the key institutions, legal framework, and notable initiatives. The discussion is supported by ten relevant references.

1. **Competition Law and Regulations in Cameroon:** Competition law in Cameroon is governed by Law No. 98/013 of July 14, 1998, relating to competition. This legislation aims to prevent anti-competitive conduct, regulate market concentration, and promote fair competition among businesses [43]. The law establishes the legal framework for enforcement mechanisms in competition regulations.
2. **Cameroon Competition Commission (CCC):** The Cameroon Competition Commission is the primary institution responsible for enforcing competition regulations in the country [44]. The CCC operates under the supervision of the

Ministry of Trade and oversees the implementation and enforcement of competition laws.

3. **Investigative Powers of the CCC:** The CCC is empowered to investigate anti-competitive practices, abuse of dominance, and mergers that may have adverse effects on competition [45]. It has the authority to gather information, conduct inquiries, and request documents from concerned parties to assess potential violations of competition regulations.
4. **Sanctions and Penalties:** In cases where the CCC finds violations of competition regulations, it has the power to impose sanctions and penalties [46]. These may include fines, divestitures, or other appropriate remedies to restore competition and deter future anti-competitive behaviour.
5. **Leniency Program:** To encourage self-reporting and cooperation, the CCC has implemented a leniency program. This program provides incentives for companies involved in anti-competitive conduct to come forward, disclose information, and cooperate in investigations [47]. In return, leniency applicants may receive reduced penalties or immunity from prosecution.
6. **Judicial Review:** Decisions and actions of the CCC are subject to judicial review. Companies affected by CCC decisions can seek recourse through the court system, ensuring that enforcement actions are fair and just [48].
7. **Collaboration with Other Institutions:** The CCC collaborates with other relevant institutions, such as the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), the Telecommunications Regulatory Board (TRB), and the National Agency for Information and Communication Technologies (ANTIC). This collaboration ensures a coordinated effort in enforcing competition regulations in specific sectors, such as telecommunications [49].
8. **Consumer Protection:** Enforcement mechanisms in competition regulations also seek to protect consumer welfare [50]. In Cameroon, the Ministry of Trade, in collaboration with the CCC, ensures that consumers are safeguarded from unfair practices, deceptive advertising, and anti-competitive behaviour.

⁴²Ibid. p. 104.

⁴³ Law No. 98/013 of July 14, 1998, relating to competition in Cameroon.

⁴⁴ Cameroon Competition Commission (CCC).

⁴⁵ Law No. 98/013 of July 14, 1998, relating to competition in Cameroon.

⁴⁶ Business Climate and Competition in Cameroon: OECD Investment Policy Reviews, OECD Publishing, 2019.

⁴⁷ Nguiffo, S. C. (2015). Op. cit. 103.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Sow, A. M., & Kammogne Fokam, Y. (2017). Competition policy in Africa: A review of existing frameworks and the way forward. *African Development Review*, 29(S1), p. 77.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 67.

9. **Compliance Programs:** The CCC encourages businesses to implement compliance programs to ensure adherence to competition regulations. These programs help companies understand and comply with the law, reducing the risk of engaging in anti-competitive practices.
10. **Capacity Building and Awareness:** Efforts are being made to enhance capacity building and raise awareness about competition regulations in Cameroon. The CCC, in collaboration with international organizations and stakeholders, conducts training programs, workshops, and awareness campaigns to educate businesses, consumers, and the public about the importance of fair competition and the consequences of anti-competitive behaviour [51].

Worthy of note is the fact that, competition plays a pivotal role in promoting economic growth, innovation, and consumer welfare. In Cameroon, as in many other countries, the regulation of competition is crucial to ensure a level playing field for businesses and protect consumers from anti-competitive practices. While various regulatory bodies are involved in enforcing competition laws, the courts in Cameroon play a significant role in interpreting and applying these laws. This area aims to explore the role of the courts in regulating competition in Cameroon, highlighting their powers, challenges, and impact on promoting fair competition.

CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

The legal framework for competition regulation in Cameroon plays a vital role in promoting fair competition, preventing anti-competitive practices, and protecting consumer welfare. Through the enactment of Law No. 98/013 of July 14, 1998, Cameroon has established a comprehensive legal framework that empowers the Cameroon Competition Commission (CCC) to effectively enforce competition regulations. The legal framework holds great importance as it provides clear rules and guidelines for businesses to operate within, ensuring fair competition and discouraging anti-competitive behaviour. By fostering

competition, the legal framework encourages innovation, efficiency, and economic growth in the market.

Law No. 98/013 serves as the cornerstone of competition regulation in Cameroon, establishing the legal basis for the CCC's authority. It outlines the fundamental principles, prohibitions, and enforcement mechanisms necessary for regulating competition effectively. This legislation grants the CCC the power to investigate potential violations, impose penalties, and take corrective measures to maintain a competitive market environment.

The CCC, under the legal framework, bears the responsibility of enforcing competition regulations and ensuring compliance. It possesses the authority to conduct thorough investigations, gather evidence, and take enforcement actions against anti-competitive practices. The CCC can impose fines, require divestitures, and implement other remedies to deter and rectify violations of competition laws. By exercising these powers, the CCC acts as a guardian of fair competition, safeguarding the interests of consumers and promoting market efficiency. Collaboration and cooperation are encouraged within the legal framework, promoting coordination between the CCC and other relevant stakeholders. This includes close collaboration with the Ministry of Trade, other government agencies, and international organizations. By working together, these entities enhance the effectiveness of competition regulation by pooling their expertise and resources. This collaborative approach ensures a holistic enforcement strategy and a concerted effort to combat anti-competitive practices.

Recognizing the ever-evolving nature of markets, the legal framework for competition regulation in Cameroon is designed to continuously develop and improve. As market dynamics shift, new challenges and emerging forms of anti-competitive behaviour must be addressed. Regular assessments, amendments, and updates to the legal framework are essential to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in addressing evolving competition issues. This adaptability allows the legal framework to stay abreast of changing market conditions and effectively regulate competition.

⁵¹ World Bank Group, (2018), *Doing Business 2019: Training for Reform*. The World Bank.