Call for Papers: Inaugural Annual Conference of the ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA)

By:

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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

Date: 15-17 September 2026

Venue: Banjul, Gambia

Regional economic integration is a key driver of economic transformation, industrialisation, and sustainable development in West Africa. In an increasingly globalized 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. ERCA will hold its Inaugural Annual Conference from 15 to 17 September 2026 in Banjul, The Gambia, under the theme “Competition Policy and Market Integration in ECOWAS: Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities.” The Conference will bring together competition authorities, policymakers, regulators, academics, legal practitioners, judges, development partners, and competition professionals from West Africa and beyond, marking the beginning of a sustained regional dialogue on competition policy in ECOWAS.

In support of the Conference, ERCA invites scholars, economists, regulators, legal practitioners, judges, policymakers, researchers, development partners, and competition professionals to submit abstracts and papers on the Conference theme. Selected contributions may be presented during plenary sessions, thematic panels, policy roundtables, and breakout sessions, and may be considered for publication in the Conference proceedings or in ERCA knowledge products.

Abstracts are due by 15 July 2026.

Themes inter alia:

• Institutional Strengthening and Governance

• Harmonization and Cooperation

• Strategic Sectors and Market Regulation

• Competition and Economic Transformation

• Digital Markets and Emerging Competition Issues

• Informal Markets and Market Dynamism

Full details on themes, timelines, and submission requirements are set out in the official Call for Papers, available for download at here.

Members of the public, professionals and partner organizations wishing to attend may register through the official online form at Click to Register.

Please submit any inquiries to the Conference Chair: Dr. Simeon KOFFI, by email at: **annualconf@erca-arcc.org**.

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