



COOPERATION FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

THE COMESA COMPETITION COMMISSION

AND

THE CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMISSION OF ZIMBABWE

REGARDING

**THE APPLICATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION LAWS
OCTOBER 2023**

[Handwritten signature]
ZM

**COOPERATION FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COMESA COMPETITION
COMMISSION AND THE CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMISSION OF ZIMBABWE
REGARDING THE APPLICATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION
LAWS**

This Cooperation Framework Agreement is made on this B. y of - . Y. 2023.

BETWEEN

- I **COMESA Competition Commission**, a Regional Competition and Consumer Protection Agency established by the COMESA Competition Regulations ("the Regulations") which were issued in the *COMESA Official Gazette Vol. 9 No. 2 as Decision No. 43 of Notice No 2 of 2004* and whose address of service is Kang'ombe House, 5th Floor, P.O Box 30742 Lilongwe 3, Malawi, on one hand; (hereinafter referred to as "the CCC")

AND

- II. **The Consumer Protection Commission**, an agency of the Republic of Zimbabwe established under the Consumer Protection Act [Chapter 14: 14] (herein referred to as "the Act" with a mandate of protecting consumers of goods and services by ensuring a fair, efficient, sustainable and transparent market place for consumers and business whose address of service is care of Ministry of Industry and Commerce, 13th Floor Mkwati Building, Cnr Simon V. Muzenda and Livingstone Avenue, Harare P.O. Box: CY 7708 Causeway Harare, Zimbabwe, (hereinafter referred to as "the CPC")

RECOGNISING THAT:

1. The Parties share the view that the sound and effective enforcement of consumer protection laws is a matter of importance to the enhancement of consumer welfare;
2. The Parties' commitment to enhancing the sound and effective enforcement of their consumer protection laws through cooperation and, in appropriate cases, coordination between them in the application of those laws;
3. Coordination of their enforcement activities may, in certain cases, result in a more effective resolution of the Parties' respective consumer rights' concerns which would otherwise have been attained through independent enforcement action by the Parties;
4. The Parties' commitment to giving careful consideration to each other's important interests in the application of their consumer protection laws and to using their best efforts to arrive at an accommodation of those interests;

HAVING REGARD TO:

5. The provisions of Article 55(3) of the Treaty establishing the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) under which the COMESA Competition

Handwritten signature and initials, possibly 'ZM', in black ink.

Regulations (the "Regulations"), and the accompanying COMESA Competition Rules (the "Rules") are promulgated;

6. The provisions of Article 5 of the COMESA Treaty as read with Article 5 of the Regulations providing the obligations of Member States; to take all appropriate measures, whether general or particular, to ensure fulfillment of the obligations arising out of the Regulations or resulting from action taken by the CCC under these Regulations, to facilitate the achievement of the objects of the Common Market and abstain from taking any measure which could jeopardize the attainment of the objectives of the Regulations;
7. The provisions of Article 2 of the Regulations dealing with the purpose of the Regulations which is enhancing the welfare of the consumers in the Common Market and to protect consumers against offensive conduct by market actors;
8. The provisions of Article 6 of the Regulations establishing the CCC as a body corporate and Article 7(1) of the Regulations which mandates the CCC to apply the provisions of the Regulations with regard to trade between Member States
9. The provisions of Article 7(2) of the Regulations which empowers the CCC to among others initiate cooperation with relevant competent authorities of Member States; help Member States promote national competition and consumer protection laws and institutions with the objective of harmonization of those laws with the Regulations and ensure uniform application of the same; assist Member States in the implementation of its decisions; provide support to Member States in promoting and protecting consumer welfare; and facilitate the exchange of relevant information and expertise;
10. The provisions of Rules 41 (1), 43(1) and 44 of the Rules which mandates the CCC to: obtain all necessary information from the Governments and other relevant authorities of the Member States and from undertakings and association of undertakings; to request authorities of Member States to undertake investigations which the CCC deems to be necessary; and to carry out investigations in Member States in consultation with the competent authorities of Member States in whose territory the investigation is to be made;
11. The Republic of Zimbabwe is one of the Member States of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa ("COMESA"), a regional economic block whose objective is to promote regional economic integration through trade and investment;
12. The Provision of Chapter 4 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which provides for the declaration of fundamental human rights and freedoms and the Provision of Section 6 (a) of the Act which sets out the consumer protection mandates of the CPC which, among other things, include the protection of consumers from unconscionable, unreasonable, unjust or otherwise improper trade practices as well as deceptive, misleading, unfair or fraudulent conduct.
13. The provision of Section 6(d), 87 (4) of the Act which empowers CPC to co-ordinate and network consumer activities and liaise with competent authorities and agencies outside Republic of Zimbabwe to protect consumer interests.

Handwritten signature and initials 'ZM' in black ink, located in the bottom right corner of the page.

ACKNOWLEDGING

14. The desirability of setting standards for procedures by which the CCC can act as a forum for the exchange of views, consultations, and conciliations on matters relating to unfair trade practices affecting COMESA regional and international trade;
15. The desirability of Member States to cooperate at the regional level in the implementation of their respective national consumer protection legislation in order to eliminate the harmful effects of unfair trade practices;
16. The importance of coordinating and cooperating with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) such as the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) and the need for Member States to comply with the obligations of enforcing regional competition consumer protection law including harmonization of national laws with the regional laws.
17. That it is imperative that COMESA Member States give effect to the principles of regional consumer Protection Regulations and Rules and to use moderation and self-restraint in the interest of co-operation in the area of consumer protection matters;
18. That closer cooperation between the CCC and consumer protection authorities of COMESA Member States in the form of notification, exchange of information, coordination of actions, and consultation among Member States should be encouraged.

CONSCIOUS OF

19. Article 7(2)(d) of the Regulations which empowers the CCC to cooperate with competition and consumer protection authorities of Member States and Section 6(d) of the Act which empowers CPC to liaise with competent authorities and agencies outside the Republic of Zimbabwe to protect consumer interests.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1 Definitions

In this Agreement:

1. **"Agreement"** means this Cooperation Framework Agreement.
2. **"COMESA Treaty"** means the Treaty establishing the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.
3. **"Common Market"** means the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa established by Article 1 of the COMESA Treaty.
4. **"Competition and consumer protection authorities"** means:

Handwritten signature and initials in black ink, appearing to be 'ZM' with a flourish above it.

- a. the CCC established under Article 6 of the COMESA Competition Regulations; and
 - b. CPC, a government agency established to perform consumer protection functions as per Section 6 of the Act.
5. **"Consumer Protection law(s)"** means:
- a. for the CCC, the COMESA Competition Regulations promulgated under Article 55 (3) of the Treaty establishing the Common Market, and the accompanying Rules;
 - b. for CPC, the Consumer Protection Act [Chapter 14:14] and any subsidiary legislations made thereunder; and
 - c. for both the CCC and CPC, any such other legislations relevant to consumer protection for the purpose of this Cooperation Framework Agreement.
6. **"Conduct having Regional Dimension"** means conduct or practice affecting two or more Member States or having an appreciable effect in the Common Market or any significant part of it.
7. **"Enforcement activities"** means any application of consumer protection laws by way of investigation or proceedings conducted by the consumer protection authorities of a Party.
8. **"Member State"** means a Member State of the Common Market.
9. **"Parties/Party"** Means the COMESA Competition Commission (CCC) and the Consumer Protection Commission (CPC) of the Republic of Zimbabwe, jointly or individually.
10. **"Territory"** means:
- a. For the CCC, the Common Market; and
 - b. For the CPC, the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Article 2 Purpose of this Cooperation Framework Agreement

The Purpose of this Agreement is to promote and facilitate cooperation and coordination between Parties in:

- a. implementation of consumer protection laws of the Parties in order to foster effective enforcement including the review of laws and designing of institutional arrangements;



Handwritten signature and initials, possibly 'ZM', located in the bottom right corner of the page.

- b. development of capacity building and technical assistance for competent authorities of the Republic of Zimbabwe to enhance effective enforcement of their laws;
- c. enforcement activities including, but not limited to, conducting joint investigations when the situation dictates so;
- d. discussion of emerging trends and sharing international best practices on consumer protection related matters;
- e. elimination of duplicity and lessening the possibilities of divergence through harmonization of consumer protection laws at national, regional and continental level; and
- f. sharing of information for the purposes of enhancing matters related to consumer right protection in the Common Market, and the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Article 3 Notification

1. Each Party shall notify the other Party in writing whenever it becomes aware that its enforcement activities may affect important interests of the other Party.
2. Enforcement activities as to which notification will generally be appropriate include those that:
 - a. involve unfair trade practices and offensive conducts affecting consumers carried out wholly or in part in the territory of the other Party;
 - b. involve conducts believed to have been required, encouraged or approved by the other Party; and
 - c. involve the imposition of sanctions, conditions, undertakings or commitments by a party in relation to a conduct in the territory of the other Party;
3. Each Party shall also notify the other Party whenever it intervenes or otherwise participates in a regulatory or judicial proceeding, if the issues addressed in the intervention or participation may affect the important interests of the other Party.
4. Notifications shall be made as soon as possible and shall be sufficiently detailed to enable the notified Party to make an initial evaluation of the effect of the enforcement activity on its own important interests. Notifications shall include the names and addresses of the natural and legal persons involved, the nature of the activities under investigation and the legal provisions concerned.



[Handwritten Signature]
ZMN

Article 4
Undertakings of the Parties

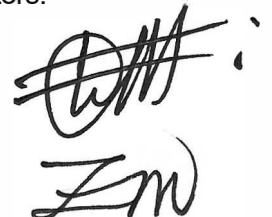
1. The Parties shall take all appropriate measures, whether general or particular, to ensure fulfillment of the obligations arising out of this Cooperation Framework Agreement or resulting from action taken by the Parties under this Agreement.
2. The Parties shall facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the COMESA Treaty, the COMESA Competition Regulations, the Act and the purpose of this Cooperation Framework Agreement and, in so doing, shall abstain from taking any measure which could jeopardize the attainment of the objectives of this Agreement.
3. The Parties may determine the appropriate method of implementing the provisions of this Agreement within their respective legal systems and practice, as long as such method of implementation enhances the efficient and effective attainment of the objectives of this Agreement.
4. The Parties will make timely submissions of information including information related to consumer protection matters.

Article 5
Exchange of Information

1. Each Party agrees to provide to the other Party, upon request and to the extent compatible with their respective consumer protection laws, such information within its possession as the requesting Party may describe that is relevant to an enforcement activity that is being contemplated or conducted by the requesting Party's consumer protection authority.
2. Each Party agrees to provide the other Party any information that comes to its attention regarding consumer rights violations and/or unfair trade practices that the Party believes is relevant to, or may warrant, enforcement activity by the other Party.
3. The information shared between the Parties shall be used solely for the purpose of implementing this Agreement.

Article 6
Coordination and Cooperation in Market Inquiries and Enforcement Activities

1. The Parties shall render assistance to each other in their enforcement activities, to the extent compatible with their respective consumer protection laws and their respective interests, and within the reasonably available resources.
2. The Parties shall cooperate in the enforcement of the consumer protection laws and share information which will facilitate effective implementation of the respective laws.
3. The Parties may make proposals or participate in the review of their consumers protection laws where necessary to facilitate cooperation and collaboration.
4. The Parties may coordinate in undertaking research and/or market inquiries in identified sectors and to ascertain any consumer concerns in those sectors.

Handwritten signatures in black ink, including a large stylized signature and the initials 'ZM' below it.

5. The Parties shall, in this regard, assist each other in the enforcement of the consumer laws through:
 - a. collecting, locating and securing evidence and enforce voluntary compliance with requests for information from undertakings or natural persons,
 - b. providing to the requesting Party with such information within the other Party's possession as the requesting Party may specify as relevant to the enforcement of the Regulations.
 - c. sharing of information that comes to the attention of the other Party concerning consumer rights violations that may be relevant to or may warrant enforcement activity of the beneficiary Party.
 - d. implementation and enforcement of sanctions and remedies issued to any undertaking by the requesting Party in the other Party's territory., and
 - e. Conducting joint investigations, where possible.
6. A Party may notify the other Party about, consumer rights violations in its territory and may request the other Party to initiate appropriate enforcement activities. The notification shall be as specific as possible about the nature of the conduct taking place in its territory and its likely effects and if enforcement has already taken place, it shall state the measures or remedies (if any) is imposed.
7. Upon receipt of a notification, the notified Party shall advise the notifying Party of its decision. If enforcement activities are initiated, the notified Party shall advise the notifying Party of their outcome and, to the extent possible, of interim developments.
8. The requested Party shall assist in the investigations which the requesting Party considers to be necessary. Such investigations shall be carried out with the assistance of officials of the requesting Party, upon request, in accordance with the respective Party's laws.
9. In cases where the Parties have an interest in pursuing enforcement activities with regard to related situations, they may agree that it is in their mutual interest to coordinate their enforcement activities. In considering whether particular enforcement activities should be coordinated, the Parties shall take account of the following factors, among others:
 - a. the opportunity to make more efficient use of their resources devoted to the enforcement activities;
 - b. the relative abilities of the Parties to obtain information necessary to conduct the enforcement activities;
 - c. the effect of such coordination on the ability of both Parties to achieve the objectives of their enforcement activities; and
 - d. the possibility of reducing costs incurred by persons subject to the enforcement activities.

Handwritten signature and initials in black ink, consisting of a stylized signature above the initials 'ZM'.

10. In any coordination arrangement, each Party shall conduct its enforcement activities expeditiously and, insofar as possible, consistently with the enforcement objectives of their respective consumer protection laws.
11. The Parties shall carry out the investigations expeditiously and consistent with their relevant laws and shall take into account the enforcement objectives of the respective laws and the deadlines stipulated in their respective laws.
12. Nothing in this Article limits the discretion of the notified Party under its laws and enforcement policies as to whether or not to undertake enforcement activities with respect to the notified violations or precludes the notifying Party from undertaking enforcement activities with respect to such violations.

Article 7 **Avoidance of Conflicts**

1. The Parties agree that it is in their common *interest* to minimize any potentially adverse effects of their enforcement activities in as far as the application of the respective consumer protection laws are concerned.
2. Each Party shall seek, at all stages in its enforcement activities, to take into account the important interests of the other Party in decisions as to whether or not to initiate an investigation or proceeding, the scope of an investigation or proceeding, the nature of the remedies or penalties sought, and in other ways, as appropriate.
3. Any divergent views arising out of the enforcement of the respective consumer protection laws will be addressed in a timely and practicable manner as circumstances may permit.

Article 8 **Consultation**

1. Either Party agrees to consult promptly with the other Party in response to a request by the other Party for consultations regarding any matter related to this Agreement and to attempt to conclude consultations expeditiously with a view to reaching mutually satisfactory conclusions.
2. Any request for consultations shall indicate the reasons thereof and shall state whether any procedural time limits or other constraints require that consultations be expedited. Such consultations shall take place at the appropriate level, which may include consultations between the heads of the Parties.
3. During consultations, each Party shall take into account the principles of cooperation set forth in this Agreement and shall be prepared to explain to the other Party the specific results of its application of those principles to the matter under discussion.
4. A Party shall as soon as it is practical, inform the other Party of any amendment made to its consumer protection laws as well as any change in the enforcement practice of its consumer protection authority that may affect the operation of this

Handwritten signatures in black ink, including a large stylized signature and a smaller signature below it.

Agreement. Upon request of either Party, the Parties shall hold consultations in order to assess the specific implications of such amendments or changes for this Agreement, and in particular to determine whether this Agreement should be amended.

Article 9 Meetings

1. The Parties will endeavour, in case of need or at the request of the either Party to, *inter alia*:
 - a. discuss current issues, experiences and new developments of mutual interest with respect to consumer policy development, legislation and enforcement or the operation of the present Agreement;
 - b. exchange non-confidential information on emerging consumer protection environment in economic sectors of common interest; and
 - c. discuss other matters of mutual interest relating to the application of the consumer protection laws of each Party.
2. The Parties may schedule meetings, as may be necessary, to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Article 10 Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

1. The Parties shall pursue technical assistance and capacity-building programmes through integrated strategies that incorporate economic, social, cultural, environmental and institutional elements that are unique to each Party. In this context and within the framework of development policies and reforms pursued by the Parties; the Parties' cooperation framework and orientation shall take into account the different levels of development as well as the economic needs of each Party and the difficulties faced in meeting their obligations under this Agreement.
2. The technical assistance and capacity-building programmes shall pay systematic attention to institutional aspects and in this context shall support the efforts of either Party to develop and strengthen structures, institutions and procedures that help to enhance the effective enforcement of the consumer protection laws and policies in their respective territories. In this context, the Parties shall:
 - a. jointly mobilise resources for capacity building aimed at assisting the Parties in the establishment and/or strengthening of the respective laws and enforcement agencies.
 - b. jointly facilitate and develop consumer protection advocacy programmes involving the sensitization of relevant institutions and policymakers, parliamentarians, the judiciary, the business community, and the general public about the role of consumer protection laws and policies;

Handwritten signature and initials, possibly 'ZM', in black ink.

- c. jointly facilitate the establishment of a mechanism to enable the Parties to take the necessary steps to adopt, strengthen and implement the necessary consumer protection laws in their respective territories; and
- d. training of staff of both institutions on consumer protection matters.

Article 11

Communication under this Cooperation Framework Agreement

1. Communications under this Agreement shall be made in writing and in English.
2. Communications under this Cooperation Framework Agreement shall be carried out in writing electronically to the relevant address of the other party as indicated below to

For the CCC: The Director and Chief Executive Officer
COMESA Competition Commission
P.O. Box 30742
Lilongwe 3
Malawi

For the CPC: The Chief Executive Officer
Consumer Protection Commission
13th Floor Mkwati Building, Cnr Simon V. Muzenda and Livingstone
Avenue, Harare
PO. Box: CY 7708 Causeway Harare, Zimbabwe.

3. Each Party shall designate a Desk Officer for the purpose of liaison with each other in the enforcement of the respective consumer protection laws

Article 12

Confidentiality and use of information

1. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, neither Party is required to disclose information to the other Party where such disclosure is prohibited by the laws of the Party possessing the information or would be incompatible with the important interests of the Party possessing the information.
2. Each Party agrees to maintain, to the fullest extent possible, the confidentiality of information provided to it in confidence by the other Party under this Agreement and to oppose, to the fullest extent possible, any application for disclosure of such information by a third party that is not authorized to obtain the confidential information by the Party that supplied the information.

Handwritten signature and initials in black ink, located in the bottom right corner of the page. The signature appears to be a stylized name, and below it are the initials 'ZM'.

Article 13
Existing Law

Nothing in this Agreement shall be interpreted in a manner inconsistent with the existing consumer protection laws of the Parties, or as requiring any change in the current consumer protection of the Parties.

Article 14
Dispute Resolution

Any disputes that may arise from this Cooperation Framework Agreement will be amicably resolved through consultations.

Article 15
Entry into Force, Duration and Implementation

1. This Agreement shall enter into force upon signature by the Parties.
2. This Agreement will remain in force for a period of five (5) years and will be renewable for another five (5) years subject to agreement by both the Parties, unless earlier terminated by either Party by giving ninety (90) days written notice.
3. The Parties will agree on the mechanism and mode of implementation of this Agreement.

Article 16
Review, Amendment and Termination

1. The Parties will, at any time, review this Agreement with a view to adopting such further arrangements as may be feasible and desirable to enhance cooperation in the enforcement of their respective consumer protection laws.
2. The Parties may, at any time, by consensus, amend this Agreement.
3. Either Party may terminate this Agreement by giving the other Party sixty (60) days written notice of intention to terminate this Agreement.
4. Notwithstanding Sub Article 1, review of this Agreement shall be after every two and half years from the date of commencement

Handwritten signature and initials in black ink, consisting of a large stylized signature above the initials 'ZM'.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized, have signed this Agreement.

DONE in two original texts on the 13th day of October 2023 at Lilongwe

The COMESA Competition Commission

Consumer Protection Commission of Zimbabwe

Dr Willard Mwemba

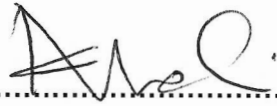
Professor Zororo Muranda



Director & Chief Executive Officer

Chief Executive Officer

Witnessed by:



MARY ANJUNE

K. MUSERERI