

The ICC Middle East Initiative

The ICC Middle East Initiative represents a long-term commitment on the part of the ICC to promote competition law in arguably the world's most important region. The Initiative is the first serious attempt seeking to support individual Middle Eastern nations in their efforts to develop and strengthen their competition law regimes and help them build strong local competition law communities and to achieve meaningful regional cooperation in the field of competition law, as well as spread a culture of competition throughout the Middle East. The Initiative will also extend to working with those interested in the field of competition law – whether practitioners, academics, economists, judges or students – directly.

The Initiative is the result of many years of careful planning, strategic thinking and continuous, daily hard-work over those years. Enormous efforts and resources were poured into the project in order to prepare the ground for the Initiative to be launched successfully. This includes, among other things, the publication of *Competition Law and Policy in the Middle East* (Cambridge, 2007); the first work of its kind dealing with the topic. The Initiative carries a positive vision, which seeks to create a better future for the Middle East. Marking the launch of the Initiative, the ICC's Director, Maher Dabbah commented:

'The Middle East reality poses enormous challenges to any attempt seeking to build or strengthen ties – whether in bilateral or in a wider regional manner. There is full awareness of this. But this is what has encouraged the design of the Initiative. The necessary work has been done and the situation has been studied extremely carefully and patiently to be in a good position to overcome these challenges and turn them – one-by-one – into real opportunities. When wanting to learn about history one always looks to the past. The Middle East does not have a glorious past of meaningful cooperation. However history is made in the future. And it is the future the Initiative is directed towards.'

The Initiative will operate solely for the benefit of Middle Eastern nations and their peoples. It will have a highly sophisticated web of operations which will see the ICC being used on the one hand as a platform for regional cooperation to be built and on the other as a partner working with different Middle Eastern countries in bilateral fashion.

A specific website – which will be dedicated to the Initiative – will be launched in 2009. The website is intended to serve many interested parties within and outside the Middle East as a comprehensive 'bank of information' on the A-Z of competition law and policy in the Middle East.