

QUESTIONNAIRE
ON ABUSE OF SUPERIOR BARGAINING POSITION
(SPECIAL PROJECT)

This questionnaire seeks information on the analysis and treatment of “abuse of superior bargaining position” in business to business relations in ICN member jurisdictions. In jurisdictions that regulate “abuse of superior bargaining position,” the concept typically includes, but is not limited to, a situation in which a party makes use of its superior bargaining position relative to another party with whom it maintains a continuous business relationship to take any act such as to unjustly, in light of normal business practices, cause the other party to provide money, service or other economic benefits. (For example, acts such as request for provision of supplier’s labor without compensation and coercive collection of contributions, exercising buying power, are considered abusive in Japan.) A party in the superior bargaining position does not necessarily have to be a dominant firm or firm with significant market power.

A. How, if at all, is “abuse of superior bargaining position” defined in business to business relations in your jurisdiction? Does the definition apply to (a) both supplier and buyer sides of the market or (b) to one of these sides only? If option (b) is chosen, to what side of the market does it apply in your jurisdiction and what are the reasons for applying the concept solely to it?

There is no concept such as “abuse of superior bargaining position” under Singapore’s Competition Act. A distinction must be made between the terms “abuse of superior bargaining position” and “abuse of a dominant position”. Section 47 of Singapore’s Competition Act prohibits any conduct on the part of one or more undertakings which amounts to an abuse of a dominant position in any market in Singapore. In addition, section 47 is concerned only with exclusionary abuses, and not exploitative abuses. Practices listed above, such as request for provision of supplier’s labour without compensation, coercive collection of contributions, exercise of buying power, are exploitative abuses and are not covered under section 47.

B.

1.

(1) Does your jurisdiction have:

- a. Competition laws and/or guidelines that apply to the prohibition of “abuse of superior bargaining position” in business to business relations? yes/no
- b. Other laws and regulations that apply to the prohibition of “abuse of superior bargaining position”? yes/no

If “no” for both a. and b., please proceed to question C.

(For those jurisdictions where such acts mentioned above are regulated, please respond to the following questions.)

(2) How are such acts regulated, including whether these rules are handled by the competition agency and/or handled under the rubric of competition policy?

(3) Why are such acts regulated?

(4) Please provide the text (in English if available) of your jurisdiction’s rules (including rules other than competition laws) on “abuse of superior bargaining position.”

(5) If there are different regimes to address this situation (competition law and other laws) how are competences defined/interventions coordinated?

2.

(1) Which of the following criteria do you use to assess superior bargaining position? Please mention for each criteria whether it is relevant under the competition law and/or different laws governing “abuse of superior bargaining position.”

- | | |
|--|--------|
| a. Degree of trade dependence on the firm by the other
(e.g., percentage of the firm’s total sales attributable to the allegedly abusive party) | yes/no |
| b. Probability of finding an alternative trade partner | yes/no |
| c. Supply and demand forces of the product or service | yes/no |
| d. Difference in scale of business between the parties | yes/no |
| e. Harm to consumer welfare | yes/no |
| f. Other – please explain | |

(2) Please specify examples of conduct that constitutes “abuse of superior bargaining position” (i.e., request for provision of supplier’s labor without compensation, coercive collection of contributions, etc.).

(3) Must effects on competition, including harm to consumer welfare, be demonstrated in order to prove “abuse of superior bargaining position”?

yes/no

If yes, how are competitive effects demonstrated?

(4) What sanctions are imposed on firms if they commit “abuse of superior bargaining position” in your jurisdiction? Please describe the type and nature of the

sanction imposed.

3. When assessing cases of abusive conduct, does your agency also take into account positive aspects of (countervailing) buyer (or seller) power which may lead to the conclusion that a superior bargaining position does not exist?

yes/no

If yes, please explain how.

4.

(1) To the extent possible, please provide the number of “abuse of superior bargaining position” cases your agency decided or reviewed (beyond a preliminary investigation) during the past 10 years.

(2) Please provide a short English summary of the leading “abuse of superior bargaining position” decisions/cases in your jurisdiction and, if possible, a link to the English translation/press release.

5. Does your jurisdiction allow private cases challenging “abuse of superior bargaining position”?

yes/no

If so:

a. Please explain whether elements of the private action differ from those required for a similar claim brought by a competition or other regulatory agency.

b. Please provide a description of representative examples of private claims, as available.

6. What is the relationship between “abuse of superior bargaining position” and “abuse of dominance/monopolization” in your jurisdiction?

C. If your answer to question B.1.a. and b. is “no” (meaning that your jurisdiction does not prohibit acts that would fall within the “abuse of superior bargaining position” concept in your jurisdiction), please explain why.

To the extent that an “abuse of superior bargaining position” is exclusionary in nature, (ie. the conduct serves to limit or exclude competitors from effectively competing in a market) it will come under section 47 of Singapore’s Competition Act, if it is proven that the party that is

engaging in this conduct holds a dominant position¹ in the relevant market, ie. the conduct will be prohibited as an “abuse of a dominant position”.

D. Please add any comments you may have on the subject.

Section 47 of Singapore’s Competition Act is only concerned with exclusionary abuses by a dominant party. As such, both dominance and exclusionary effect must be proven to find an infringement. “Abuses of superior bargaining position” that are exploitative in nature will not be covered under Singapore’s Competition Act, while “abuses of superior bargaining position” that are exclusionary in nature may be caught under our Act, if the abuse is carried out by a dominant player.

¹ Generally, as a starting point, the Competition Commission of Singapore considers a market share of 60% as an indicative threshold for dominance in a relevant market.