

**WCO CROSS-BORDER E-COMMERCE FRAMEWORK OF STANDARDS  
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY, ACTION PLAN AND CAPACITY BUILDING MECHANISM**

The effective implementation of the WCO Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce would require a comprehensive strategy and a clear roadmap determining the key milestones in the process to reach the ultimate objectives laid down in the Standards in a phased and harmonized manner. Besides the strong political will that is required to implement the Framework of Standards in accordance with each administration's priority, capacity, human and financial resources and internal procedures, WCO Members and E-Commerce Stakeholders (in particular MSMEs) should be supported by a robust capacity building mechanism. Some elements of the implementation approach, associated expectations from Members, and the capacity building requirements are depicted in the WCO Council Resolution<sup>1</sup> on the adoption of the Framework of Standards.

Nevertheless, establishing a comprehensive implementation strategy and notably the establishment of the action plan would require a certain level of maturity of the technical specifications that allows identifying the most relevant steps in complying with the standards. The implementation strategy and capacity building should encompass the following main elements:

**I. Implementation Strategy**

- Phased approach for implementation.
- Potential prioritization of Standards: following the order of the Framework of Standards, with flexibility for customization with national priorities and requirements, as long as it does not hamper the harmonized implementation of the Framework of Standards.
- Letter of intent to be sent to WCO to implement the Framework of Standards. Where a requesting Member is already benefiting under the Mercator tailor-made track, a letter requesting to add E-commerce to the agreed implementation plan.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation by the WCO and its Members (not only on the activities-outputs level, but also at results/outcomes level, with clearly identified and measurable indicators).
  - o Participation in evaluation meetings,
  - o Provide the WCO with a progress report on a regular basis,
  - o Periodic diagnostics and assessments.
- To that effect, it is proposed to use relevant WCO bodies, including the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC), the Enforcement Committee (EC) and the Capacity Building Committee (CBC), to exchange views on implementation experiences and challenges.
- Regular review of the Standards and technical specifications needed, due to the dynamic nature of E-Commerce.
- The implementation strategy would contain a detailed action plan/roadmap in an appendix.
  - o The action plan would define specific milestones/steps for each of the Standards that help evaluate the state of play of the implementation,
  - o General timeframes would apply (e.g., the implementation of a specific Standard takes 2 to 5 years): at this stage there is no need to set up a precise timetable, as the start of the timeline will depend on the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/about-us/legal-instruments/resolutions/resolution-framework-e-commerce.pdf?db=web>

- notification of the intention of WCO Members to implement the Framework of Standards,
- Setting up a governance strategy that supports WCO Members and E-Commerce stakeholders in achieving the Framework-compliant and interoperable implementation. One major focus of the governance strategy is to keep technical implementations aligned. It shall also organize the feedback from implementation experiences to the further development of the Framework of Standards, especially the data standards. The establishment of a permanent maintenance and support group for the data standards may also be considered,
- Timelines (timeframes) would be adapted in accordance with available resources of WCO Members.

## II. Capacity Building Mechanism

- WCO capacity building principles that include political will and delivery approach as outlined in the Capacity Building Strategy will apply. Linking it with the overall trade facilitation agenda and the WCOs Mercator Programme.
- Mapping of the regional/national economic context in terms of the importance/relevance of E-Commerce in the economy.
- The document would need to identify the required sustainable capacity building measures, such as:
  - Assessment of the existing national E-Commerce environment,
  - Gap analysis in relation to each of the Standards in the Framework of Standards,
  - Diagnosis (self-diagnosis or by the WCO) of the potential modifications to national legal and administrative rules and procedures, where appropriate (A diagnostic tool could be developed and made available),
  - Assessment of business needs, especially for MSMEs,
  - Pursue the comprehensive implementation of the provisions of the Framework of Standards.
- Capacity building and technical assistance to be provided by WCO and willing Members.
- Benchmarking, where appropriate, could be used for the evaluation of the implementation.
- Targets
  - Members that show commitment to the implementation of the Framework of Standards,
  - MSMEs, for example through the WCO Academy,
  - Others.
- Global Conferences will be used to share experiences and expertise, and reflect on the implementation perspective of the Framework. The outcomes of these Conferences will be fed into the Working Group for consideration and eventual updates/amendments to the Framework;
- Regional workshops would be used mostly to sensitize Members about the Framework of Standards and the steps to follow to implement it, and to promote regional champions;
- Organization of study visits, seminars, training.
- For willing Members, tailor-made support could be made available based on the results of a self-diagnostic or a diagnostic mission. The scope and modalities (e.g., training, technical assistance, and advisory support) of the support will be determined based on the needs of the Members and resource availabilities.

- Coordination with all relevant E-Commerce stakeholders should be encouraged in the delivery of capacity building.
- The capacity building support will:
  - o be results-oriented and measurable, with clearly identified performance indicators,
  - o be aligned with the WCO Capacity Building Strategy, and focus on building sustainable capacity and ownership of the modernization and reform process,
  - o ensure that training activities are aligned with the WCO Training Strategy and are delivered by adopting a multi-pronged, layered approach (e-learning, on-site training of experts, on-site training of trainers), and
  - o follow the unique WCO Expert Mobilization model (WCO-accredited experts from Member countries).

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