



PERMANENT TECHNICAL
COMMITTEE

-
219th/220th Sessions

-
16 - 20 April 2018

Brussels, 5 April 2018.

UPDATED TRS GUIDE

(Item VIII (a) on the Agenda)

Background

1. The World Customs Organization (WCO) Time Release Study (TRS) is known as an internationally accepted strategic tool to measure the actual time taken for the release and/or clearance of goods, from the time of arrival until the physical release of cargo. It allows objectively identifying bottlenecks in border-related procedures and addressing them in an efficient and effective manner.
2. The WCO has been updating the TRS tool from time to time, in order to reflect new dynamics in the international trade arena and to better respond to emerging realities. In October 2016, the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) at its joint session with the WCO Working Group on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFAWG) accepted the proposal made by the WCO Secretariat to update the TRS.
3. In October 2017, at the joint Session of the PTC and the TFAWG, the WCO Secretariat presented the draft updated version of Guide, and invited the delegates to examine holistically the content and structure of the draft Guide with a possibility that further enrichment could be done, such as adding WCO Members experiences in this area.
4. The October 2017 joint session of the PTC and the TFAWG took note of the draft version of the TRS Guide, and encouraged WCO Members to share their related working experiences and good practices to the Secretariat.
5. Going forward, the Policy Commission, at its December 2017 meeting, noted the importance of data-based performance measurement and related initiatives and encouraged the use of the WCO TRS as the global tool for performance measurement, taking into account national and regional differences.

Updated TRS Guide

6. Based on the additional inputs and suggestions provided by Members and stakeholders, the TRS Guide has been further updated. Key updates include, inter alia, the following new features:
 - a) Detailed information on the use of TRS in the implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the TFA; it elaborates a concrete approach to the use of TRS within the context of TFA implementation, including its use in the strategic planning to foster the implementation of TFA measures by the National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF),
 - b) Explanation on a simplified approach to the study as a first step; it provides a possibility to conduct a simplified TRS to map out only the part of the clearance process that is directly related to Customs, and take appropriate measures to quickly address them,
 - c) Illustrations on different approaches to conducting TRS, including for example consecutive or simultaneous TRS at all identified border points,
 - d) Detailed information on the use of modern technologies in data collection, collation, and analysis for improving the TRS process. This approach endeavors to exploit the growing use of ICT by Customs, other government agencies and private sector stakeholders (e.g., electronic processing systems, Single Window, smart-phones, RFID seals, GPS-enabled track and trace),
 - e) Guidance on business process planning and performance measurement of entry/exit points and related trade lanes; this includes developing a model business process with associated flows,
 - f) Future oriented approach on how to conduct joint TRS in a bilateral and multilateral context, and practical guidance on carrying out TRS for performance management of regional trade corridors;
 - g) An additional Phase (Phase-IV) in the TRS methodology, known as ‘monitoring and evaluation phase’, which allows a country to conclude one TRS cycle and evaluate it before preparing for the next one, when adopting TRS as strategic and periodic tool to enhance Trade facilitation at national, regional and multilateral level.
 - h) Key principles and processes on conducting TRS in the context of international transit, especially its use in specific trade corridors in respect of the movement/transit of consignments; also suggestions and examples are provided for carrying out joint TRS at common border points involving neighboring countries.
 - i) Members’ experiences and good practices have been added to provide practical perspectives, lesson learned and innovative solutions employed in carrying out TRS.
7. The finalised draft updated version of the TRS Guide (version-3) is appended as an Annex to this document.

Action required

8. Delegates to the PTC are invited to :
- discuss and, if appropriate, approve, the draft updated TRS Guide; and
 - provide guidance on the enhanced use of TRS for performance measurement, in particular with regards to the monitoring and evaluation the progress of the TFA implementation.
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