



WCO WORKING GROUP
ON THE WTO
TRADE FACILITATION
AGREEMENT

-
10th Meeting

-
22-23 October 2018

Brussels, 28 November 2018.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**THE 10TH MEETING OF THE WCO WORKING GROUP ON
THE WTO TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT**

Item I – Opening and adoption of the Agenda

a) Opening of the Meeting by Ms. Ana Hinojosa, Director Compliance and Facilitation;

1. Ms. Ana Hinojosa welcomed all delegates representing Customs, other government agencies, Permanent Representations in Brussels and Geneva, trade ministries, International Organizations, private sector and academia. The Director expressed her appreciation for the cooperation with International Organizations in this context, especially with the World Trade Organization (WTO). Ms. Sheri Rosenow's valuable contributions in the past have enriched the debate in the World Customs Organization (WCO) Working Group on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFAWG).
2. She expressed confidence that the cooperation and collaboration between the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee (TFC) and the TFAWG is growing stronger. Since the last meeting, the WCO had, along with other Annex D organizations, been invited to the three meetings of the TFC and had taken part in the dedicated technical assistance and capacity building session.
3. The Director reminded the delegates that in July 2018, the Policy Commission suggested to promote the use of Time Release Studies as a tool to monitor progress of TFA implementation.
4. Ms. Hinojosa then briefly touched upon the several topics that were on the Agenda and the relationship between them.

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5. The list of participants is set out at Annex I hereto.

6. In conclusion, the TFAWG:

- took note of the opening remarks made by Ms. Hinojosa, Director, Compliance and Facilitation.

b) Election of Chairperson/Vice Chairperson;

7. Since former Chairperson Ms. Ulrika Lyckman from Sweden was unable to continue as Chairperson, Ms. Hinojosa invited the delegates to nominate a Chairperson. The nomination of Mr.L.Satya Srinivas was widely supported by the delegates. The TFAWG unanimously confirmed Mr. L. Satya Srinivas, previous Vice Chairperson as the Chairperson of the TFAWG for two years.

8. He accepted the proposal and confirmed his willingness to serve as Chairperson of the TFAWG.

9. The Chairperson, in his opening remarks, drew the attention of delegates to a decreasing number of participants to the TFAWG over the years, which is a cause of concern. He mentioned that the overlap of mandate amongst different working groups in the WCO as one of the possible reasons behind this diminishing interest of Members. He also underlined that there are many International Organizations working on the trade facilitation issues. The Chairperson emphasized the need to deliberate on what is distinctive and unique aspect of this group vis-à-vis other groups and suggested to revise the key deliverables of the TFAWG under the Agenda item on the Terms of Reference (ToR) to stay relevant. He also stressed the need for inter-sessional activities, active support from Secretariat, better collaboration between Members and greater partnership with trade and industry to infuse greater ambition and improve productivity of this group. He enquired whether this group can work up on (a) WCO tools and instruments that are effective and adopted by Members and which are not? And (b) What are implementation challenges and how improvements can be made to make them more attractive? He concluded by requesting Members to raise the level of ambition.

10. Then, the Chairperson invited the TFAWG to nominate a Vice Chairperson. The nomination of Mr. Jonathan Page from Canada was widely supported by the TFAWG delegates and he was elected unanimously as the Vice Chairperson. He accepted the proposal and confirmed his willingness to assume the role of Vice Chairperson of the TFAWG.

11. The delegates expressed full appreciation for all the work and contributions of the outgoing Chairperson Ms. Ulrika Lyckman.

12. In conclusion, the TFAWG:

- confirmed Mr. L.Satya Srinivas (India) as the Chairperson of the TFAWG; and
- elected Mr. Jonathan Page (Canada) as the Vice Chairperson.

c) Adoption of the Draft Agenda and the Summary Document;

13. The Chairperson moved to the adoption of the Draft Agenda and Summary Document. He announced which countries and International Organizations would be presenting their experiences under various Agenda items during this meeting. He invited the TFAWG delegates to share their comments and suggestions on the Draft Agenda and Summary Document.

14. The delegate of Mexico suggested to discuss the reporting policy from the TFAWG under the AOB Agenda item. Another delegate asked the Secretariat to reorganize the webpage of the WCO TFAWG meetings and regroup the meetings under 3 titles; past, current and future.

15. In conclusion, the TFAWG:

- adopted the draft Agenda (PT0081E1c), with amendments, and Summary Document (PT0082).

Item II – Keynote speech by H.E. Ambassador Dalia Kadišienė, Lithuanian Ambassador to the WTO and Chairperson of the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee (TFC)

16. H.E. Ambassador Dalia Kadišienė, in her capacity as the Chairperson of the WTO TFC, shared the two broad key areas of the TFC's current activities – notifications and experience sharing. By that time, the TFC had reached a stage where over 60 per cent of all relevant TFA provisions were already committed for current implementation. Moreover, it was expected that this rate will go up further. Despite the positive trends in the submission of these notifications, there was space for improvement.

17. At the same time, the Ambassador shared that in the course of the preparation for TFC meetings, it became clear that Members were especially interested in experience sharing sessions; many of them expressed their wish to make a concrete contribution in the form of extensive presentations or even fully developed papers. She also mentioned that Members shared not only success stories, but also alluded to concrete, specific problems and challenges encountered along the way, as lessons learned. In the previous meetings Members shared their experiences for example on advance rulings, authorized economic operators (AEOs), single window, transit and regional approach to trade facilitation. For the upcoming meeting there were suggestions to share the experiences on temporary admission, AEOs and inter agency cooperation.

18. When concluding her speech the Ambassador underlined the importance of the complementary and mutually beneficiary working relationship between the WCO and WTO and also thanked the WCO for its valuable contribution to the WTO's work in the implementation of the TFA.

19. Welcoming the Ambassador, the Secretary General of the WCO Mr. Kunio Mikuriya, mentioned that the WCO had developed different instruments and tools that support Members in implementing the TFA. He emphasized that, similar to the trend in the WTO, the new focus of the WCO was on the implementation of these instruments and tools. The Secretary General stressed that it was a critical moment for all of us to show partnership, transparency and predictability. He also highlighted the importance of monitoring the progress of implementation through Time Release Studies (TRS).
20. A few delegates, referring to speech of the Secretary General, highlighted the focus on the implementation and importance of monitoring the TFA implementation process.
21. In conclusion, the TFAWG:
 - took note of the Ambassador's keynote speech and of the comments and feedback by the Secretary General and delegates.

Item III- WTO Developments

a) WTO Secretariat – state of play TFA;

22. The WTO Secretariat, Ms. Sheri Rosenow, presented the WTO TFA state of play including the latest data on ratifications and notifications. She informed the meeting that 139 WTO members (84,8 %) had ratified the TFA to date. As far as categorization of commitments was concerned, the WTO had received 114 notifications for category A, 71 for category B and 60 for category C commitments; 11 members had not yet notified any designation. She added that the current overall implementation rate of the TFA was 60.8%.
23. Ms. Rosenow pointed out the number of Members which had presented transparency notifications, as well as the number of Members which had presented notifications on assistance for capacity building. She gave insight into what type of technical assistance was requested the most. Especially human resources and training were in high demand. Finally, Ms. Sheri Rosenow shared appreciation for the donors on supporting the grant programmes which help the WTO to continue its work on the TFA implementation process.
24. In conclusion, the TFAWG:
 - took note of the WTO's presentation on the state of play regarding the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

b) WCO Secretariat - feedback from the June 2018 WCO Policy Commission and Council Sessions;

25. Ms. Ana Hinojosa, gave the delegates feedback on the trade facilitation related discussions held at the June 2018 Policy Commission (PC). She had informed the PC of all the work that the TFAWG had been doing in the context of the TFA.
26. She shared the conclusions of the June 2018 PC, namely that:
 - the delegates recognized that the TFAWG had a pivotal role to play in TFA implementation from both a political and a technical perspective, and that this

required effective and efficient coordination, especially with the WTO, as well as the ability to monitor the progress of implementation - through Time Release Studies, for example. It was therefore suggested that the TFAWG review its current Terms of Reference and submit a revised version to the Policy Commission in December 2018;

- PC took note of the technical assistance provided under the Mercator Programme.

27. Furthermore, Ms. Hinojosa briefly shared outcomes of the June 2018 Council session held in Brussels, right after the Policy Commission, and concluded by indicating that the Council:

- took note of the work carried out in the TFAWG, as well as of the support and suggestions expressed by delegates; and
- took note of the technical assistance and capacity building support provided to the Members.

28. In conclusion, the TFAWG:

- took note of the WCO Secretariat's report on the trade facilitation related discussions at the June 2018 Policy Commission and Council, and of the conclusions reached on those occasions.

c) Members – opportunity for Members to share their national experiences regarding ratification, categorization, preparation for implementation;

29. The delegate from China took the floor to indicate his national state and experience concerning the latest outcomes of the TFA implementation in China including the decreasing number of documents required for Customs clearance, conducting joint inspections with other border agencies, reduction of the times for the release of goods, cutting costs and many others.

30. In conclusion, the TFAWG:

- took note of the national experience shared by China in relation to TFA implementation.

Item IV- Capacity Building

A. The Mercator Programme;

- a) Update of achievements;**
- b) Tailor made track;**
- c) Opportunity for donors to report progress**

31. The Secretariat introduced the working document PT0083E1a on the Mercator Programme. Since its launch in June 2014, the Mercator Programme has been WCO's strategic initiative aimed at assisting governments worldwide in implementing the TFA in a uniform manner by applying WCO instruments and tools, as the TFA provisions relate to a large extent to Customs procedures.

32. One of the two tracks of the Mercator Programme, the “overall track”, is designed to deal with broader interests, including awareness-raising at global, regional and national levels, as well as updating and developing trade facilitation standards and tools. The Secretariat provided information on the activities under the “overall track” during the financial year 2017/2018, including participation in the WTO TFC meetings and annex D meetings. During the same reporting period two regional workshops were held. There were also a number of existing tools that were updated, such as: the SAFE Framework of Standards 2018, Guide for the Time Release Study, IT Guide for Executives, , Integrated Supply Chain Management Guidelines, Coordinated Border Management Compendium, and Immediate Release Guidelines. A number of new tools were also developed: Guidance on Data Analytics, Framework of Standards on Cross-Border e-Commerce, Guidelines on Customs Brokers, Recommendation and Guidelines for the Trader Identification Number, and, Frequently Asked Questions document on the linkages between the SAFE Authorized Economic Operators and Article 7.7 of the TFA.
33. The Secretariat also gave a presentation on the “tailor-made track” of the Mercator Programme, focused on meeting the specific needs of individual Members, which usually included needs assessments, strategic planning and implementation followed by monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, the support included establishing National Committees on Trade Facilitation (NCTFs), action planning, technical assistance in specific areas, etc.
34. The Mercator Programme has two Implementation Support Modalities: Multi-Year and Training & Support. Under the Multi-Year Modality 47 Members had benefited by then. Main areas requested under Training & Support were usually: AEOs, Risk Management, Post-Clearance Audit and Time Release Study.
35. The WCO Secretariat updated the TFAWG on the WCO Customs TFA Maturity Model. The Maturity Model for “tailor-made track” allows the Member (or if so requested, the Secretariat) to analyse the implementation status of specific TFA Articles. It provides the WCO and the Customs administration with a methodology to review practices and processes against known standards and serves as a reference to assess the impact of capacity building support provided.
36. A delegate from the European Union (EU) underlined the crucial role of capacity building for the implementation of the TFA. He also pointed out that the WCO is playing a pivotal role in the implementation of the TFA. He provided information about a recently signed EU/WCO contract to support African countries mainly on the implementation of the WCO Harmonized System.
37. A number of delegates expressed their expectations regarding the capacity building missions. They underlined the importance of the results/outcomes of the missions and how these could be useful to the other Members. They hoped to see more detailed information on the outcomes of conducted missions in the future, with specific examples,.
38. A delegate from Japan reminded that his government has continuously been supporting WCO capacity building activities, including human resources development. Japan expressed its willingness to continue its efforts to increase the number and quality of experts.
39. Furthermore, a number of delegates suggested that donor organizations should ensure better coordination among each other, with the objective of avoiding duplication.

40. In conclusion, the TFAWG:

- took note of the progress made under the WCO Mercator Programme and by other donors.

B. Implementing challenges faced by developing and least developed countries – panel discussion;

41. H.E. Ambassador of Nepal Lok Bahadur Thapa, in his keynote speech, emphasized the role of the TFA as the most crucial tool for economic growth in developing and least developed countries. The Ambassador shared appreciation for the cooperation between the WTO and the WCO, in this regard. He informed the TFAWG on the initiatives that the Nepal was taking to facilitate trade.

42. Welcoming the Ambassador, Mr. Kunio Mikuriya congratulated Nepal for its efforts in trade facilitation, especially for acceding to the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and to the WTO TFA, both in 2017. He also underlined the important role of the RKC to support implementation of the TFA. Being a landlocked country and an LDC, the importance of especially two WCO tools for Nepal was stressed by the Secretary General: the Transit Guidelines and the Resolution on the Role of Customs in Natural Disasters Relief.

43. The panel session on the implementation challenges of countries was moderated by Ms. Brenda Mundia, Deputy Director of the Capacity Building Directorate. Before introducing the panelists, she explained that the aim of the panel was to highlight the implementation challenges identified under the various TFA-related support programmes and most importantly to share the solutions that have been applied to mitigate these challenges, taking into account the experiences and perspectives of the three speakers: an accredited WCO expert, a representative of a large multilateral donor and a private sector-led donor facility.

44. The panelists were invited to share their experiences and views from different perspectives on a number of questions addressed to them.

45. The representative of the World Bank Group (WBG), Mr. William Gain, started his presentation with a brief introduction of the WB Trade Facilitation Support Program (TFSP). Launched in 2014, the TFSP assists developing countries in reforming and aligning their trade facilitation laws, procedures, processes, and systems to enable implementation of the WTO TFA requirements. TFSP is designed to provide practical and demand-driven assistance, focusing on supporting the full and effective implementation of the WTO TFA and related trade facilitation reforms, helping client countries identify constraints, plan reforms implementation, and align procedures with international standards covering import, export, and transit activities. The Program comprises of two main components:

- Provision of technical assistance in developing countries where the WBG helps reform trade facilitation laws, procedures, processes, systems, and consultative mechanisms within the context of the provisions of the WTO TFA, and;
- Facilitation of knowledge sharing, peer-to-peer learning, and the measurement of progress and results.

46. Mr. William Gain further discussed lessons learnt, namely common challenges to achieve TFA implementation, which could be clustered under: Capacity Building, Sharing and Coordination, Prioritization and Sequencing, Legal and Planning, and Reforms and Implementation. He also pointed out critical success factors to overcome the challenges mentioned, including the need for sustained political will, horizontal and vertical coordination, and effective sequencing.
47. The representative of the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF), Ms. Valerie Picard, highlighted GATF's mission to enhance trade facilitation implementation, by bringing together the public and private sectors, as equal partners, to identify and deliver commercially meaningful reforms in developing and least developed countries. Ms. Picard discussed how a shared responsibility between the public and private sectors can create an environment where the private sector can propose constructive and meaningful solutions, rather than simply complain about the public sector's lack of responsiveness. Leveraging private sector expertise and resources makes delivering reform more efficient and cost-effective. Finally, cooperation allows to strengthen local capacity to engage in meaningful public-private dialogue. Wrapping up her presentation, Ms. Picard mentioned the countries where GATF already has projects in place: Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, with a rapidly expanding pipeline covering up to 20 additional countries.
48. Mr. Matome Mathole, Brussels-based Customs Attaché of South Africa and WCO Mercator Programme Advisor, started his intervention by highlighting the importance of structure, when it comes to TFA implementation. Mr. Mathole suggested that the most effective means to commit front-line officers was to engage with them in their operational environments, allowing for the active intersecting of new competencies with day-to-day operational imperatives. Mr. Mathole described his experiences, where WCO training was conducted for the direct benefit of front-line officers, and departed from a traditional classroom approach, to engage in a dialogue related to the actual work at the border posts, which he argued produced better learning and practical outcomes.
49. After the presentations, Ms. Brenda Mundia, thanked the panelists for their contributions and concluded the discussion, stressing the need for sustained coordination, private sector engagement and political will.
50. In conclusion, the TFAWG:
- took note of the Ambassador's keynote speech; and
 - took note of the panelists' views and experience regarding implementation challenges faced by Members, as well as potential solutions to overcome them.

Item V. TFAWG Terms of Reference

51. The Chairperson introduced the item by stressing that at the 79th Session of the Policy Commission in June 2018 suggested that the TFAWG review its current Terms of Reference (ToR) and submit a revised version to the next Policy Commission session, in December 2018.

52. Referring to working document PT0084E1b, the Secretariat presented the background of the discussions. At its 8th Meeting in October 2017 the TFAWG decided to agree on a set of conclusions and recommendations. Two of them were as follows:
- The Working Group could support the WTO TFC by continuing to focus on the implementation of the TFA by Members and by monitoring the progress thereof, concretely by:
 - sharing results of TFAWG meetings, preferably by coordinating agendas;
 - sharing results of technical assistance and capacity building results under the Mercator programme;
 - being readily available to address any technical question regarding the implementation and use of international standards;
 - conducting further technical assistance and capacity building efforts in the areas of CBM and TRS;
 - The Working Group would need to amend its Terms of Reference to include the monitoring function of the TFAWG.
53. At its 9th Meeting in February 2018, the TFAWG held discussions on the monitoring function, and as a conclusion of these discussions, the TFAWG decided to discuss the monitoring function at the next meeting, including clarifying that function.
54. The outcomes of the TFAWG were reported to the Policy Commission in June 2018. The Policy Commission delegates recognized that the TFAWG had a pivotal role to play in TFA implementation from both a political and a technical perspective, and that this required effective and efficient coordination, especially with the WTO, as well as the ability to monitor the progress of implementation - through Time Release Studies (TRS), for example. The Policy Commission suggested that the TFAWG review its current ToR and submit a revised version to the Policy Commission in December 2018.
55. The TFAWG held an extensive discussion on the ToR based on an amended proposed version by the Secretariat attached to the working document PT0084E1b, which addressed the question of monitoring the progress of implementation of the WCO instruments and tools that support Members in applying the TFA through, for example, the use of the WCO Time Release Study. The changes proposed were reflected under “3. Purpose and Scope” and “4. Key Deliverables”.
56. There was general agreement that monitoring (or tracking, as suggested in the TFAWG document PT0084) of progress, should not refer to the implementation of the TFA itself; monitoring should refer specifically to the relevant WCO instruments and tools that support Members in applying the TFA. This was clearly indicated under “4. Key Deliverables”, where monitoring progress was included as a new key deliverable. The TFAWG also felt that the changes regarding the monitoring function under “3. Purpose and Scope” were not required, as the current text, with its wide scope, may cater for the monitoring function.
57. Based on the reservations expressed in the previous TFAWG meeting around the use of the term “monitoring”, it was suggested to use the term “track” in the working document PT0084E1b. Since it was agreed that it is referred to the monitoring of implementation of WCO instruments and tools that support TFA implementation’ the TFAWG was of the view that either word ‘monitor’ or ‘track’ was acceptable. Following the exchange of views, the TFAWG decided to use the term “monitoring” instead of “tracking”.

58. A Member suggested to exclude “WTO Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation and the subsequent” under “3. Purpose and Scope” as it has already completed its function.
59. Furthermore, a number of Members, were of the opinion that the reference to the WCO Time Release Study (TRS) needed to be excluded from the text of the ToR in order not to give relevance to one particular WCO tool (or instrument) over another. Instead, a reference to the monitoring through comprehensive reporting of WCO Mercator Programme missions, was suggested.
60. Concerning the use of the TRS in the ToR, the Secretariat underlined that the TRS is more than just a tool to determine the average release times; it also enables Members to measure the implementation of TFA provisions by Customs administrations, but also by other Cross Border Regulatory Agencies.
61. One Member suggested to include another minor change in the last paragraph under “4. Key Deliverables” to better reflect the current structure of the Annual Work Plan.
62. Following the suggestion of a Member, the TFAWG discussed the election of the Chairperson process under “5.Means of Operation” and decided to exclude the reference to the Vice-Chairperson succeeding the Chairperson.
63. With regard discussion related to ToR for the TFAWG one of the participants said that all 182 members of the WCO should be involved in the revision of the ToR. One of the members, having in mind that certain accession and membership is not resolved, as it is well known, and that council adopted decision to form WG to deal with this issue, kindly asked all participants to refrain from discussing about political issues. He also said that the number of the members of the WCO is disputable and this issue should be discussed within the Working Group and afterwards at the Policy Commission and Council.
64. In conclusion, the TFAWG:
- discussed and approved the updated version of the TFAWG ToR, attached in Annex II to this document, with the changes suggested thereby.

Item VI. TFAWG Programme and Annual Work Plan

65. The Chairperson introduced the Agenda item noting that, according to the TFAWG’s ToR, the Working Group needs to establish and maintain an Annual Work Plan, including timelines, for TFA-related activities. In the past, the TFAWG decided to incorporate the Annual Work Plan in an overarching Work Programme.
66. The Customs Attaché of Bangladesh, Mr. Masudul Kabir, shared his country’s national experience in TFA implementation. As a member of WTO and signatory of WTO TFA, it became obligatory for Bangladesh to implement TFA provisions. Bangladesh had initiated a Strategic Action Plan 2014-2017 for proper and timely implementation of the said provisions. During 2014-2017 WBG, Asian Development Bank (ADB), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Activity (BTFA) have provided technical support to implement the TFA provisions. Mr. Kabir underlined the remarkable achievement in TFA implementation, mentioning that Bangladesh had still had substantial work ahead. Modernization activities, taken by the Bangladesh Customs touched on the following important TFA technical measures: AEOs,

risk management, national single window, advance rulings, publication of information, national enquiry point, post clearance audit, release time of goods, pre-arrival processing, API/PNR and expedited shipment. Mr. Kabir explained the current situation on each of the topics mentioned, as well as the importance of them in the case of Bangladesh. By the end of his presentation, Mr. Kabir underlined the main reasons behind the decision to amend the current Action Plan. First of all, he said that alignment to the RKC, TFA and SAFE Framework of Standards would require Bangladesh to ramp up its modernization initiatives. Furthermore, increased volume of trade with limited resources demands modern policies, procedures, infrastructure and logistics to facilitate trade. Finally, he concluded that sustainability of modernization initiatives has become a key concern in his administration.

67. The Secretariat presented the working document PT0085E1b and its Annex containing the Work Programme. The latter is divided in two parts. The first part seeks to provide policy orientation for the work of the TFAWG over an extended period of time, including a concrete indication of how it aligns with the WCO's Strategic Plan 2016/2017-2018/2019. The second provides an Annual Work Plan with concrete actions to implement (parts of) the Work Programme in the Financial Year 2018/2019.
68. The Secretariat also mentioned that, the development of an Annual Work Plan for each Financial Year allows Members to prioritize actions to be implemented during such period. Every action is categorized within one of the Working Group's Key Deliverables. Indicators have been developed for each action. Some of the actions are continuous activities to be carried out on an ongoing basis and others have concrete deliverables with a pre-established deadline. This format will identify the responsible actor(s) for each activity, thus enhancing more effective monitoring of the activities.
69. The proposal put forward by the Secretariat to the Annex of working document PT0085 was amended during the meeting to reflect the changes in the updated version of the ToR and the inclusion of a new Key Deliverable 3 on monitoring progress.
70. The TFAWG also agreed to carry out a more comprehensive review of the Work Programme and Annual Work Plan 2019/2020, which will better address the expectations from the TFAWG deliverables. The work is expected to be carried out both intersessionally and at the 11th TFAWG meeting.
71. The Meeting also agreed to have the Annual Work Plan in the future discussed and endorsed prior to the start of a Financial Year, therefore in the spring sessions of the TFAWG.
72. In conclusion, the TFAWG:
 - took note of the presentation by Bangladesh;
 - took note of the progress under the Work Programme and Annual Work Plan for Financial Year 2017/2018;
 - discussed and approved the updated version of the TFAWG Work Programme and Annual Work Plan 2018/2019, attached in Annex III to this document.

Item VII. National Committees on Trade Facilitation (NCTF) and Coordinated Border Management – Challenges and Solutions

73. The Secretariat presented document PT0086E1a and provided background information on NCTFs, emphasizing that establishing an NCTF is mandatory under the TFA and does not fall under the Special and Differential provisions of the Agreement. The Secretariat further provided more information on some of the challenges identified, as well as the WCO tools that support establishment and operation of NCTFs.

74. In a panel focusing on NCTFs and Coordinated Border Management, including challenges and solutions, Ms. Lazzat Daniyarova, representing the Customs Administration of Kazakhstan, outlined the current state of TFA implementation in her country. Kazakhstan ratified the TFA in October 2015. Since the Ministry of National Economy is responsible for the Customs Policy in Kazakhstan, therefore it is also the Coordinating State body for the TFA implementation. Category A notification of the TFA measures was sent to the WTO Secretariat in March 2016. So far 44.1% of TFA Measures are declared under Category A, 23.5% measures are declared under Category B and 32.4% is the rate of implementation commitments under Category C. Kazakhstan has requested assistance and support for capacity building for a total number of 7 measures, namely: enquiry points, average release times, expedited shipments, use of international standards, single window, transit (partly notified as a category C commitment) and Customs cooperation. The functions of the NCTF are vested in the Interdepartmental Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan on foreign trade policy and participation in international economic organizations, the working body of the Ministry of National Economy. On June 7, the first meeting of the NCTF was held, where a draft Plan for TFA implementation of category B and C commitments was developed; it is currently under consideration by relevant State bodies.

75. Mr. Melvin Spreij from the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) stressed that performance of trade logistics is improving, but that, according to the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index, Sanitary and Phytosanitary agencies are sometimes seen as "the weak link in the chain". Mr. Spreij referred to the WTO SPS Agreement which recognizes the right of WTO Members to protect human, animal, plant life or health, while avoiding discrimination and unnecessary barriers to trade. When bringing up synergies with the WTO TFA, he pointed out to the following provisions under the Control, Inspection & Approval Procedures (Art. 8 and Annex C of the SPS Agreement):

- No undue delays
- Information limited to what is necessary
- Non-discriminatory fees
- Non-discrimination in siting of facilities, selection of samples
- Procedure to review complaints, take corrective action, etc.

Mr. Spreij highlighted several SPS procedural obstacles, which lead to ineffective and inefficient SPS controls, disrupt trade more than necessary, and sometimes result in poor health protection.

In terms of the way forward. Mr Spreij stressed the need to use international (Codex/OIE/IPPC) standards, improve transparency, simplify and streamline SPS processes, use risk-based approaches (including inspections), move towards SPS e-cert (referring to STDF-funded projects on e-phyto and e-vet), and to further connect customs and SPS authorities. In conclusion, he introduced a short STDF film which provides

concrete examples of how in Chile, Peru and Colombia customs and SPS authorities are working together to cut SPS-related trade costs and protect health.¹

76. Mr. Bryce Blegen, representing the International Network of Customs Universities (INCU), delivered information on NCTFs from the private sector perspective, based on the results of two recent research papers. He briefly touched upon the APEC study results conducted in 2016, under the title “Best Practices on Critical Issues in the Asia-Pacific Region for the Implementation of the WTO TFA”. A survey and workshop were focused on identifying progress to date, implementation challenges, prioritization of focus areas, and sharing best practices. Survey responses indicated frequent examples of divergent responses from public and private sector participants in the same member economies (public sector respondents sometimes evaluated the level of implementation of particular measures as higher than did the private sector respondents). There were sometimes divergent views on the likely impact of particular measures on trade facilitation, as well.
77. He shared the results of a study conducted by the Centre for Customs & Excise Studies (CCES) in 2017 to identify ways to enhance the Australia’s NCTF’s ability to influence a meaningful trade facilitation agenda reflecting the needs and aspirations of Australia’s international trading community. The study combined research on international best practice and trends in NCTFs with outreach (a survey, workshops, and targeted interviews) to Australian private sector stakeholders in international trade.
78. Mr. Blegen concluded that private sector input in both studies indicated the need for more publicity about the TFA, its purpose, its mandates, and its long-term goals; while heads of trade associations were generally aware, the broader trading community was not. Stakeholders are generally ready and willing to be active participants in NCTFs and in implementation of TFA-based projects. Finally, the challenge of compliance with TFA mandates appears to be universal—applicable to developing and developed countries alike.
79. UNCTAD represented by Mr. Poul Hansen introduced an updated study on NTFs. Focusing on WTO TFA related Committees, this UNCTAD study contains information from 59 country cases collected from January 2014 to May 2017 via a standardized questionnaire. This Study highlights three main positive developments:
- Involvement of the private sector
 - Commitment of key stakeholders
 - Financial resources.
- New obstacles comparing to the previous study were also detected:
- Lack of financial resources is still the number one obstacle
 - Lack of knowledge / awareness
 - Frequent replacement of members or incorrect representation
 - New obstacles include lack of regularity of meetings, lack of permanent secretariat and legal issues.
80. Mr. Hansen concluded his presentation by sharing information on the UNCTAD Empowerment Program for NCTFs, which is an intensive national professional training program for the Secretariat and the members of NCTFs. Main objective of this Program is

¹ More information on STDF's work on Facilitating Safe Trade, including reports, briefing notes and the film is available here: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/facilitating-safe-trade>

to assist NCTFs to implement, in a coordinated manner, trade facilitation reforms, including the WTO TFA.

81. The panel raised a lot of interest from the floor. In the discussion that followed, a private sector representative shared his concern about how Members were involving only one entity to represent the business in the NCTF. He felt that it was necessary to take a whole-of-the-supply-chain approach in involving the private sector, as only representatives of all the relevant stakeholders could protect the interests of the affected business sectors in an appropriate manner. It was also suggested that there is a need to enhance trust amongst border agencies, and share information for the purpose of developing a joint border agencies' risk management capability.
82. A number of Members shared their experiences and accomplishments in implementing the TFA and the role of the respective NCTFs, in that regard. A Member informed about developing an NCTF web portal, which would allow inserting the advances in TFA implementation in an easy manner.
83. In conclusion, the TFAWG:
- took note of the panel discussion on National Committees on Trade Facilitation, their role in progressing the Coordinated Border Management agenda and identified challenges and solutions.

VIIIa. Break-out session – Pre Arrival Processing (art. 7.1 TFA) and Expedited Shipments (art. 7.8 TFA)

- a) **Presentation of national experience regarding pre arrival processing (Mr. Georges Cantone, Customs Administration of France) in break-out session 1;**
- b) **Presentation of national experience regarding expedited shipments (Mr. Carlos Grau Tanner, GEA) in break-out session 2;**

VIIIb. Plenary session (report from the break-out groups) – Pre Arrival Processing (art. 7.1 TFA) and Expedited Shipments (art. 7.8 TFA)

84. The WCO Secretariat introduced the document PT0087E, explaining WTO Members' obligations under Articles 7.1 (Pre-Arrival Processing) and 7.8 (Expedited Shipments) of the TFA, associated requirements, and relevant WCO instruments and tools that could support their harmonized and efficient implementation. The significance of these provisions was noted, especially in the context of E-Commerce for which the WCO had recently developed the Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce.
85. The Secretariat also presented a preliminary mapping of the Cross-Border E-Commerce Framework of Standards with the TFA, indicating that the Framework supplemented and complemented a number of the key trade facilitation measures of the TFA and expanded them to better support the increasing trade via E-Commerce channel.
86. Delegates were then invited to discuss the following questions (but limited to) in two breakout sessions :
- What are the key enablers and critical success factors for an effective implementation of Articles 7.1 and 7.8 of the TFA?

- How could the WCO Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce and other associated tools assist a harmonized and expeditious implementation of these TFA measures in general, and Articles 7.1 and 7.8 in particular?
- Noting that Articles 7.1 and 7.8 are neither the ten most notified measures nor the ten least notified measures under categories 'A', 'B' and 'C', what kind of capacity building assistance Members would need to implement these measures?

87. Initiating the discussion at breakout session 1, the Delegate of France shared its national experience with regard to the implementation of Article 7.1. The Delegate of GEA provided its perspective on the global scenario with respect to the implementation of Article 7.8 at breakout session 2.

88. Following the breakout discussions, the rapporteurs from the two breakout groups reported back to the plenary session.

89. The Delegate of Burkina Faso presented the outcomes of the discussions held by Group 1 which had been chaired by France. To the first question, his Group listed out the following key enablers: appropriate legal framework; robust risk management; use of technology and tools; Customs-Business Partnership (including AEO and MRAs) and coordinated border management.

90. Turning to the second question, he said that there were difficulties in obtaining sufficient quality data, given the complexities in the E-Commerce logistics chain. A harmonized implementation of the Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce would assist strengthening cooperation and exchange of data between Customs, on the one hand, and postal operators and express service providers, on the other.

91. With regard to the third question, the Group considered the following areas for a focussed capacity building: risk management, automation, and awareness raising / training of other agencies involved in Customs clearance.

92. Next, the Delegate of GEA who had chaired Group 2 reported on the conclusions of his Group. Responding to the first question, he noted that expedited shipments / immediate release was predicated on the ability to capture and process advance / pre-arrival information. His Group identified the following key enablers and success factors for an effective implementation of Articles 7.1 and 7.8 of the TFA :

- Clear processes and IT and risk management systems.
- Capability to effectively process advance electronic information.
- Establishment of a Single Window environment, noting that expedited Release had been granted in some countries even prior to Single Window implementation.

93. Moving on to the second question, he said that there was a general consensus among group members that E-Commerce presented a different set of challenges; some delegates even suggesting that Article 7.8 should not be linked to E-Commerce, or at least not be seen through the lens of e-commerce exclusively. The availability and quality of data provided by E-Commerce actors (not good enough to carry out risk assessment) was noted as a major challenge. This should be addressed specifically through Customs cooperation e.g. with the UPU, to make sure the awareness was there along with the necessary capacity to capture data and transmit it. The Framework of Standards supported such initiatives.

94. He added that E-Commerce also presented some specific capacity issues with regard to the ability to handle and store voluminous information, as well as the physical capacity to deal with growing volumes. In their view, expedited treatment could be granted if traders and shippers met the requirements of Article 7.8, and provided that necessary IT and processes (or Single Window) were in place.
95. With respect to the third question, his group felt that the key areas that were identified as enablers for the implementation would require capacity building support, based on national situations.
96. In conclusion, the TFAWG:
- examined linkages and synergies between the WTO TFA and the WCO Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce, based on the preliminary mapping set out in the working document,
 - discussed the challenges and opportunities for harmonized implementation of Articles 7.1 and 7.8 of the TFA through the use of WCO instruments and tools and provided several suggestions outlined in the forgoing paras,
 - took note of the national and regional practices and initiatives as presented by the delegates of France and GEA, and
 - examined the regulatory and capacity building requirements for the implementation of Articles 7.1 and 7.8 and suggested associated measures.

Item IX. Connecting the Trade Facilitation Dots – Wrap up of the 10th TFAWG by H.E. Ambassador Mirjam Blaak Sow, Ambassador of Uganda

97. H.E. Mirjam Blaak Sow provided the closing remarks of the Meeting by presenting the latest developments in Uganda in the implementation of the TFA. She shared the accomplishments with the AEO programme, the development of a Single Window environment, the creation of One Stop Border Posts, the introduction of a Regional Electronic Cargo Tracking System and the Single Customs Territory, currently with Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi.
98. In conclusion, the TFAWG:
- took note of the Ambassador's closing remarks.

Item X. Any Other Business

99. The delegate of Mexico suggested at the beginning of the meeting to discuss, under this agenda item, the TFAWG reporting policy. He provided the background for this proposal indicating that during the 3rd TFAWG Meeting in February 2015, the Secretariat presented under AOB Agenda item, a proposal to shift towards drafting an Executive Summary and refraining from writing a full report, and the proposal was agreed by the TFAWG. He further indicated that in their view, the experience from this method of reporting did not presented the expected results, particularly because in some cases the Executive Summary consisted basically on the Summary Document produced prior to the meeting, with the addition of a few conclusions. Also, in some cases it gave more attention to issues such as the welcoming remarks or introductory administrative remarks, whilst

missing the details of discussions where important decisions were being made. He explained that considering that it was crucial to keep a historic record of discussions where key decisions of the Working Group were made, including the identification of the positions expressed from delegations, so that participants take responsibility for what they say, it was now being suggested to go back to a more detailed report, where discussions involving decisions from the TFAWG are being captured.

100. The Secretariat underlined that the previous decision of the TFAWG on the reporting format was also approved by the PTC and Council. Moreover, there is a Council decision on the meeting reports suggesting they should be as short as possible. The Secretariat also indicated that, since this issue was brought to attention of the Secretary General in a letter from a number of Members, it became a horizontal issue to be discussed on a different level.
101. A number of delegates concurred with the views expressed by Mexico and agreed to the proposal to go back to more detailed reports.
102. The Chairperson then asked Members to make suggestions for the next meeting of the TFAWG. A suggestion was made to carry out a comprehensive review of the TFAWG Work Programme and Annual Work Plan. Another suggestion was made relating to the WCO Mercator Programme agenda item where Members said they would also like to hear from beneficiary countries about the progress they are making vis-à-vis TFA implementation.
103. A third suggestion was associated to the decision by the TFAWG to amend the Terms of Reference of the Group to include in its mandate the monitoring of the use of the WCO tools and instruments that support TFA implementation, particularly with regard to the comprehensive reporting of WCO Mercator Programme Missions. The delegate of Mexico suggested that the TFAWG should discuss at the next meeting, how to better address the new key deliverable related to such comprehensive delivery report on specific WCO Mercator Programme mission activity, so that it focuses more on the technical perspective rather than from the capacity building perspective. To this end it was further suggested that a related background document was produced by the Secretariat, providing the context of the discussions that led to this new key deliverable and outlining the methodology and elements that the Secretariat normally collects from when conducting this monitoring activity, so that the TFAWG can take a better-informed decision. The TFAWG agreed to the proposal and said it was important to clearly define, well in advance of the next meeting, how Members are expecting this report to be presented.
104. In conclusion, the TFAWG:
 - bearing in mind that the TFAWG is bound by the decision of the PTC and Council regarding the reporting format, decided to make the report as detailed as possible within the existing framework,
 - decided to send the report of this meeting to PTC including the request for writing more detailed reports of TFAWG meetings in the future,
 - took note of the Members suggestions to discuss in the following meetings a comprehensive review of the Work Programme and the Annual Work Plan, as well as to enhance the approach in reporting on the implementation of the WCO Mercator Programme.

Item XI. Closing

105. In his closing remarks, the Deputy Director Mr. Luc De Blicck thanked all participants and speakers, including the three Ambassadors whose speeches signified enthusiasm in the TFA implementation process around the globe.
106. The Chairperson informed the TFAWG that the 11th meeting of the TFAWG will take place on 4 and 5 March 2019 and that the second day will be a joint session with the PTC.
107. The Chairperson thanked all the delegates for their active contribution to the meeting. He also thanked the interpreters, the technician and all other WCO staff who contributed to the meeting.

Please note that the presentations given in the context of some of the agenda items and that were accompanied by Powerpoint slides or other supporting material can be found on the WCO Members' Website at the following link: <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/meetings/procedures-and-facilitation/wto-atf-working-group/10.aspx>

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TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE WCO WORKING GROUP ON THE WTO AGREEMENT ON TRADE FACILITATION

Confirmed by the Council - June 2014

Chairperson : Representative of a WCO Member administration

Established : March 2014

Duration : Until superseded or revoked

1. Mandate

The WCO Working Group on the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFAWG), acting under authority of paragraph 19 of the June 2014 Report of the Policy Commission (Doc. SP0487E1b), and as referenced in paragraph 99 of the Minutes of the 2014 Customs Co-operation Council (Doc. SC0140E1a), is formed for the purpose of taking up the practical aspects of meeting expectations arising out of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (WTO TFA). The Working Group will operate at two levels : a level dealing with policy matters concerning which it shall be guided by and report to the Policy Commission; and a second level dealing with technical matters regarding which it will be guided by and report to the Permanent Technical Committee and the Capacity Building Committee in matters of their respective competence. It advises these bodies, as well as the Secretary General, on progress and issues relating to categorization according to the TFA, tailor-made technical assistance, and future implementation of the TFA by WCO Members.

2. Membership

The TFAWG will be open to all interested Members of the WCO, parties with recognized WCO observer status, partner organizations such as the WTO, and other entities, including those representing the private sector, where deemed appropriate.

3. Purpose and Scope

Based on the Dublin Resolution adopted at the Policy Commission's 70th Session in December 2013, the purpose and scope of the TFAWG is to advise, as appropriate, the Policy Commission, the Permanent Technical Committee, the Capacity Building Committee and the Secretary General on the full range of issues concerning the WTO TFA. Such issues may include : matters relating to preparation of deliberations in the WTO Committee on Trade Facilitation; relationship between the WCO and the WTO Committee on Trade Facilitation; representation of the WCO in that Committee; matters relating to special and differential treatment; matters relating to the direction of the implementation of the WTO TFA by WCO Members; the short, medium and long term goals of implementation and the identification of priorities in each term; matters relating to the relationship between existing WCO instruments and tailor-made technical assistance to implement WTO TFA provisions; matters relating to the preparation of implementation and administration of the WTO TFA. In relation to these matters, specific work will be carried out by the TFAWG and brought forward to the appropriate body for endorsement or further direction. Required tasks will be carried out in periodic meetings convened by the Secretariat and presided over by the Chairperson elected by the TFAWG.

4. Key Deliverables

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The key deliverables of the TFAWG are to:

- analyse, prepare and evaluate relevant actions and measures in relation to practical aspects of meeting expectations arising from the WTO TFA; and
- submit timely reports to the Policy Commission, Permanent Technical Committee and Capacity Building Committee as appropriate, that shall :
 - a. provide recommendations of the TFAWG based on an analysis of the needs assessments which includes technical assistance
 - b. describe the WCO's activities for the technical assistance and capacity building effort to support implementation of the WTO TFA;
- monitor the progress of implementation of WCO instruments and tools that support Members in applying the TFA including through comprehensive reporting of WCO Mercator Programme Missions
- establish and maintain an annual work plan, including timelines and key deliverables, for TFA-related activities.

5. Means of Operation

The TFAWG will meet under the leadership of its Chairperson, with membership being determined as specified above.

The Customs members of the TFAWG will elect the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson for a two-year term from among its Customs members. The outgoing Customs Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will be eligible for re-election, though rotation of the chairpersonship is desirable.

The TFAWG will conduct its work in English and French.

If necessary, the TFAWG may decide to set up dedicated (virtual) groups.

6. Resources Required

The TFAWG will hold its sessions as and when required, and subject to approval by the appropriate bodies. It will normally meet twice a year. The time to be allocated for the meeting will be determined by the scope of issues to be discussed. However, the Secretary General may determine whether circumstances dictate the need for scheduling meetings more frequently. The length of each session will depend on the number and complexity of items on the Agenda.

The participants in the TFAWG should have decision-taking authority in their respective Customs administrations.

The general administrative arrangements and provision of support services shall be the responsibility of the WCO Secretariat.

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Part 1: WCO Work Programme for the Implementation of the TFA

INTRODUCTION

Part 1 of the WCO Work Programme for the Implementation of the TFA contains per key deliverable of the TFAWG's Terms of Reference, the tasks and sub tasks that need to be carried out in the context of the implementation of the TFA. The description of the tasks and sub-tasks are at a general level, the concrete actions that need to be taken to fulfil the tasks and sub-tasks are laid down in the second part of the Work Programme, the Annual Work Plan (see part 2).

Part 1 will be subject to a yearly review by the TFAWG in order to keep it up to date. In the course of time, certain tasks or sub-tasks may have been completed or are in need of refinement. It may also be possible that in due course there will be a need for additional tasks or sub-tasks which need to be reflected in part 1 of the Work Programme.

The TFAWG shall review the Work Programme with a view to endorse the Annual Work Plan in its spring session for the Policy Commission and Council in June of any given year to give its approval for the next Financial Year. For Financial Year 2018/2019, due to timing issues, the process can only be started in the TFAWG's autumn session in 2018 with the aim to have the December 2018 Policy Commission approve the Work Programme and Annual Work Plan for 2018/2019.

ALIGNMENT WITH WCO STRATEGIC PLAN 2016/2017-2018/2019 AND C21



- **Strategic Goal 1** - Promote the security and facilitation of international trade, including simplification and harmonization of Customs procedures
- **Strategic Goal 2** - Promote fair, efficient and effective Revenue collection
- **Strategic Goal 3** - Protect society, public health and safety, and contribute to combating crime and terrorism
- **Strategic Goal 4** - Strengthen Capacity Building
- **Strategic Goal 5** - Promote Digital Customs to support, in particular, Coordinated Border Management and information exchange between all stakeholders
- **Strategic Goal 6** - Raise the performance and profile of Customs

- **Building Block a** - Globally networked Customs
- **Building Block b** - Better coordinated border management
- **Building Block c** - Intelligence-driven risk management
- **Building Block d** - Customs-Trade partnership
- **Building Block e** - Implementation of modern working methods, procedures and techniques
- **Building Block f** - Enabling technology and tools
- **Building Block g** – Enabling powers
- **Building Block h** – A professional, knowledge-based service culture
- **Building Block i** - Capacity building
- **Building Block j** - Integrity

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The work conducted by the TFAWG is firstly categorized within the three Key Deliverables of the TFAWG.

For each Key Deliverable of the TFAWG, specific Tasks and Sub-Tasks have been defined, according to the following example:

- Key Deliverable 1
 - Task 1.1
 - Sub-Task 1.1.1
 - Action (in the Annual Work Plan) 1.1.1.1

It is important to note that for each Financial Year, the Working Group will define at the level of Sub-Task, the priorities to be incorporated within the Annual Work Plan in order to submit it for the Policy Commission for its approval. The Annual Work Plan for each Financial Year shall identify concrete actions to be taken for each Sub-Task. Each action shall identify the responsible actor, an indicator and the timeframe.

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MONITORING AND EVALUATION

For each Financial Year, the WCO Secretariat shall develop a Progress Report based on the corresponding Annual Work Plan and present it for approval to the Working Group. Based on such Progress Report, the TFAWG will report to the competent WCO bodies in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

TFAWG Key Deliverable 1: Analyse, prepare and evaluate relevant actions and measures in relation to practical aspects of meeting expectations arising from the WTO TFA								
Task 1: Strategic positioning of WCO and its Members with regard to the implementation of the WTO TFA								
No	Sub-Task	WCO Strategic Goal	C21 Building Block	Objective	Start	Deadline	Status	Comments
1.1.1	Conduct high-level meetings	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Ensure influence and impact, including in WTO Trade Facilitation (TF) Committee	12/2013	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	Mostly at SG/DSG level, including with Trade Ministers.
1.1.2	Encourage Members (Customs) in playing an active role in National Committees on Trade Facilitation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Ensure impact of WCO/Customs tools and experience and share national practices	As soon as these Committees are set up	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	Crucial Members' responsibility. Letter sent by SG to Members in 2/2014. Research carried out by UNCTAD on TF Committees will be helpful. 12/2014, the WCO Secretariat sent out an NCTF survey. The Secretariat also developed an NCTF Guidance.

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Task 2: Internal and External Communication and Outreach								
No	Sub-Task	WCO Strategic Goal	C21 Building Block	Objective	Start	Deadline	Status	Comments
1.2.1	Develop a communication and outreach strategy	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Ensure constant and timely communication between the WCO/ Customs and the WTO and external partners	12/2013	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	Strategy has been developed. Communication is ongoing.
1.2.2	Keep information on the WCO Website up to date	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Make relevant information easily accessible to all stakeholders	12/2013	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	Updates have been performed as necessary and this will continue.
1.2.3	Raise awareness and launch debate at the Regional DG meetings (SG)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Raise awareness, encourage Members to attend National Committees on Trade Facilitation and work on positioning Customs well	01/2014	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	Subject has been raised prominently by the Secretary General at all six regional meetings in the first part of 2014. Supplemented by Attachés' and Ambassadors' briefings in Brussels with detailed explanations on intent of the WTO TFA provisions/negotiators. Preparation for implementation of TFA also raised by SG at the 2015 Regional DGs Meetings

1.2.4	Outreach to regional structures RILO/RTC/ROCB	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Identify and disseminate knowledge and raise awareness of getting involved in National Committees on Trade Facilitation	12/2013	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	
Task 3: Coordination with Members and Private Sector/Institutional Partners								
No	Sub-Task	WCO Strategic Goal	C21 Building Block	Objective	Start	Deadline	Status	Comments
1.3.1	Conduct TFAWG meetings	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Prepare for discussions at WTO; Coordinate donors and implementation	12/2013	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	7 meetings held
1.3.2	Coordinate with other stakeholders	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Seek continuous cooperation and enhance coordination	10/2017	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	
Task 4: Liaison with the WTO Preparatory TF Committee (PrepCom) and after TFA entry into force with WTO TFC								
No	Sub-Task	WCO Strategic Goal	C21 Building Block	Objective	Start	Deadline	Status	Comments
1.4.1	Interact with the PrepCom	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Represent the Customs position	02/2014	Ongoing activity until TF Committee is established under the TFA	Ongoing	PrepCom tasks are legal review of TFA, receiving of Category A notifications and drawing up Protocol of Amendment to insert TFA into WTO Agreement. It is open whether Annex D Organizations such as the WCO will obtain Observer status at

Annex III

							<p>PrepCom. The WCO will be invited if and when requested by WTO Members. Donor Coordination Meetings to be held back to back to PrepCom, in Geneva, organized by WTO Secretariat. The Ambassador of the Philippines to the WTO, Mr. Esteban Conejos, in his capacity as Chair of the WTO Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation, spoke at the WCO TFAWG meeting in Brussels on 12 February 2015.</p>
1.4.2	Interact with the TFC	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Represent the Customs position	22/02/2017	Ongoing activity	<p>The Ambassador of the Sweden to the WTO, Mr. Daniel Blockert, in his capacity as Chair of the WTO Committee on Trade Facilitation, spoke at the WCO TFAWG meeting in Brussels on 16 October 2017</p>

Task 5: Technical Assistance/Capacity Building								
No	Sub-Task	WCO Strategic Goal	C21 Building Block	Objective	Start	Deadline	Status	Comments
1.5.1	Develop Performance Indicators for quick assessment of compliance	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Provide tailor-made assistance as agreed in Dublin and assist in categorization	12/2013	01/2014	Done	Sent with request for needs assessments 1/2014. Identify snapshot of Members' current situation and develop tailor-made technical assistance programme.
1.5.2	Refining TFA Implementation Guidance Performance Indicators	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Help WCO Members self-assess their national situation regarding the TFA implementation more accurately	09/2014	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	Part of a broader Performance Measurement exercise.
1.5.3	Develop and provide TF specific assistance based on Diagnostic Missions and follow-up missions to enable beneficiaries to	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Assess needs and provide tailor-made assistance as agreed in Dublin and assist in categorization.	12/2013	Ongoing activity, depending on Members' requests	Ongoing on annual basis	Capacity Building Directorate sends out requests for needs assessment. Needs to be coordinated as a great deal of technical assistance is already provided, under RKC/SW/AEO, etc.

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	implement trade facilitation (Mercator Programme)							At the June 2014 Council Sessions, the Mercator Programme to Support Trade Facilitation was endorsed.
1.5.4	Match needs with resources/donor coordination whilst making use of existing tools such as the Project Map Database (PMD) to ensure results and maximize resources	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Provide necessary assistance whilst ensuring donor and project coordination	12/2013	Ongoing activity, depending on needs and donors' offers	Ongoing	Coordination with CBC and other activities needed. Includes regional and national donor meetings and meetings with ROCBs. Sweden, UK, Germany, Korea, Japan and China have committed to supporting the Mercator Programme. More and more donors ask to avoid duplication of efforts. PMD to expand beyond Americas region.
1.5.5	Screen accredited experts list to determine the need for accreditation of additional	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Ensure availability of a sufficient number of experts to respond to Members' requests	12/2013	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	Refresher courses for RKC experts, CMAs, TOAs to be planned during suitable events. WCO to plan TFA expert accreditation and refresher

	experts, including in additional areas							workshops with the help of donors
1.5.6	Training of experts jointly organized by WCO/WTO	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Ensure experts are aware of WCO instruments	04/2014, but depends on funding	Ongoing activity until completed	Done	Information session, not accreditation. Immediately after the 1 st TFAWG, on 13 March 2014, the WCO and WTO held an information session on the WTO TFA Needs Assessment Guide. The WCO also organised a mini seminar for Secretariat personnel about the TFA on 21 February 2014. Workshops on the TFA were also held at the WCO Knowledge Academy for Customs and Trade in July 2014 and June 2015.
Task 6: Analysis of WTO TFA and assessment of impact on WCO instruments								
No	Sub-Task	WCO Strategic Goal	C21 Building Block	Objective	Start	Deadline	Status	Comments
1.6.1	Analyse the TFA and assess impact	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Identify which WCO instruments and tools are of relevance, need to be updated or developed	12/2013	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	Analysis discussed in March 2014 at TFAWG and PTC. Update based on comments received. The Analysis of

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								Section I was reviewed and updated in November 2014. Also, the Implementation Guidance was developed and is being maintained. It is available in English, French and Spanish
1.6.2	Identify challenges faced by Members in meeting the TFA requirements	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Prioritize the TFAWG work on those areas where Members face greater challenges to implement the TFA	12/2013	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	Based on Members' needs, the Annual Work Plan shall remain objective and action driven, identifying concrete areas of work to help Members meet such challenges. Sharing experiences and outcomes resulting from TFA implementation is encouraged for other Members to learn from such experiences.

TFAWG Key Deliverable 2: Submit timely reports to the Policy Commission, Permanent Technical Committee and Capacity Building Committee as appropriate, that shall: a. provide recommendations of the TFAWG based on an analysis of the needs assessments which includes technical assistance, and b. describe the WCO's activities for the technical assistance and capacity building effort to support implementation of the WTO TFA								
Task 1:								
No	Sub-Task	WCO Strategic Goal	C21 Building Block	Objective	Start	Deadline	Status	Comments
2.1.1	Report to the appropriate working bodies (PTC, CBC as well as PC) for guidance and advice	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Ensure proper coordination and also working on instructions	03/2014	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	Reports to appropriate WCO working bodies have taken place according to the TFAWG TORs.

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TFAWG Key Deliverable 3: Monitor the progress of the implementation of WCO instruments and tools that support Members in applying the TFA including through comprehensive reporting of WCO Mercator Programme missions								
Task 1:								
No	Sub-Task	WCO Strategic Goal	C21 Building Block	Objective	Start	Deadline	Status	Comments
3.1.1	Encourage Members to monitor the implementation of WCO instruments and tools that support them in applying the TFA and share their experiences in the TFAWG	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Ensure effective implementation of WCO tools and instruments	10/2018	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	
3.1.2	Encourage Members to share their experiences in using TRS	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Ensure effective implementation of TRS	03/2014	Ongoing activity	Ongoing	
3.1.3	Comprehensive reporting of WCO Mercator Programme missions to the TFAWG	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Monitor the progress of implementation	01/2019	Ongoing activity	To commence	

TFAWG Key Deliverable 4: Establish and maintain an Annual Work Plan, including timelines and key deliverables, for TFA-related activities								
Task 1:								
No	Sub-Task	WCO Strategic Goal	C21 Building Block	Objective	Start	Deadline	Status	Comments
4.1.1	Produce Annual Work Plan	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j	Set the objectives for the TFAWG and Members	12/2013	Ongoing activity for each Financial Year	Ongoing	

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Part 2: ANNUAL WORK PLAN FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2018/2019

Part 2 of the WCO Work Programme for the Implementation of the TFA, the Annual Work Plan, contains per sub-task the concrete actions that need to be taken to fulfil the tasks and sub-tasks that are laid down in the first part of the Work Programme.

The Annual Work Plan will be subject to an annual endorsement by the TFAWG in order to clarify which concrete actions need to be taken by which responsible party and the related timeframe or deadline. It also contains an indicator to see if the action has been met.

Based on the outcomes of the concrete actions listed in the Annual Work Plan, a report will be drafted to inform the Policy Commission, Permanent Technical Committee and Capacity Building Committee.

Sub-Tasks for Key Deliverable 1

Sub-Task 1.1.1 Conduct high-level meetings				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
1.1.1.1	Customs administrations should coordinate with permanent missions to the WTO to address any technical issue related to implementation and encourage WCO participation in the TFC	Members	Number of contacts between Customs administration and permanent missions to the WTO	FY2018/2019

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Sub-Task 1.1.2 Encourage Members (Customs) in playing an active role in National Committees on Trade Facilitation				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
1.1.2.1	Customs administrations shall work in the context of their NCTFs to promote the importance of CBM, Public-Private Sector dialogue and provide information on relevant WCO tools in that respect	Members	Number of NCTF meetings where the promotion took place	FY2018/2019

Sub-Task 1.1.2 Encourage Members (Customs) in playing an active role in National Committees on Trade Facilitation				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
1.1.2.2	Customs administrations shall offer assistance in the context of their NCTFs to other government agencies to establish CBM and Public-Private Sector Dialogue where feasible when requested	Members	Number of requests	FY2018/2019
Sub-Task 1.1.2 Encourage Members (Customs) in playing an active role in National Committees on Trade Facilitation				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
1.1.2.3	At the request of Members, the WCO Secretariat will offer technical	Members and WCO Secretariat	Number of requests received	FY2018/2019

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	assistance to Members in the area of CBM where possible			
Sub-Task 1.2.1 Develop a communication and outreach strategy				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
1.2.1.1	Members of the TFAWG will coordinate with the Secretariat to present proposals for improving the communication strategy of the WCO and making it more effective	Members	Number of proposals submitted	FY2018/2019
Sub-Task 1.3.1 Conduct TFAWG meetings				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
1.3.1.1	Continue conducting break-out sessions	WCO Secretariat	At least one break out session in the 10th and in the 11th TFAWG	FY2018/2019

Sub-Task 1.3.1 Conduct TFAWG meetings				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
1.3.1.2	TRS to be included in the 11 th TFAWG	Secretariat	Agenda	FY2018/2019
Sub-Task 1.3.1 Conduct TFAWG meetings				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
1.3.1.3	Members to submit national experiences to the TFAWG for inclusion in the TFA Implementation Guidance	Members	Number of submissions	FY2018/2019
Sub-Task 1.3.2 Coordinate with other stakeholders				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
1.3.2.1	Seek for continuous participation of other international organizations such as sanitary in the	WCO Secretariat	Number of invitations sent to other International Organizations	FY2018/2019

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	TFAWG			
Sub-Task 1.3.2 Coordinate with other stakeholders				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
1.3.2.2	Members shall seek for enhanced coordination with other governmental agencies such as sanitary authorities for the purpose of implementation of the TFA and coordinating for prioritizing TA/CB	Members	Number of coordination activities	FY2018/2019
Sub-Task 1.3.2 Coordinate with other stakeholders				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
1.3.2.3	Continue with WCO high-level political engagement and transmitting the importance	Members and WCO Secretariat	Number of instances of high level political engagement	FY2018/2019

	of coordination with other border agencies			
Sub-Task 1.3.2 Coordinate with other stakeholders				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
1.3.2.4	Promote TRS as a TFA implementation measurement tool	Members Secretariat	Number of events	FY2018/2019

Sub-Tasks for Key Deliverable 2

Sub-Task 2.1.1				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
2.1.1.1	Provide report to PTC, CBC and PC in FY 2018/2019	Chair TFAWG	Number of reports provided	FY 2018/2019

Sub-Tasks for Key Deliverable 3

Sub-Task 3.1.1 Encourage Members to monitor the implementation of WCO instruments and tools that support them in applying the TFA and share their experiences in the TFAWG				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
3.1.1.1	Members shall indicate during the TFAWG meetings which WCO instruments and tools they implement in order to apply the TFA	Members	Number of Members submitting the information	2018/2019
Sub-Task 3.1.2 Encourage Members to share their experiences in using TRS				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
3.1.2.1	Sharing national/regional TRS practices in TFAWG meetings	Members	Number of Members/Regional Organizations sharing the information	2018/2018

Sub-Task 3.1.3 Comprehensive reporting of WCO Mercator Programme missions to the TFAWG				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
3.1.3.1	Sharing national/regional achievements and experiences in receiving Mercator Programme assistance in TFAWG meetings	Beneficiaries	Number of experiences shared	2018/2019

Sub-Tasks for Key Deliverable 4

Sub-Task 4.1.1 Produce Annual Work Plan				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
4.1.1.1	Review and approve TFAWG Annual Work Plan for FY 2018/2019	TFAWG	Approved TFAWG Annual Work Plan	10 th TFAWG

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Sub-Task 4.1.1 Produce Annual Work Plan				
No	Action	Responsible body	Indicator	Timeframe/deadline
4.1.1.2	Comprehensive review and approve TFAWG Annual Work Plan for FY 2019/2020	TFAWG	Approved TFAWG Annual Work Plan	11 th TFAWG
