

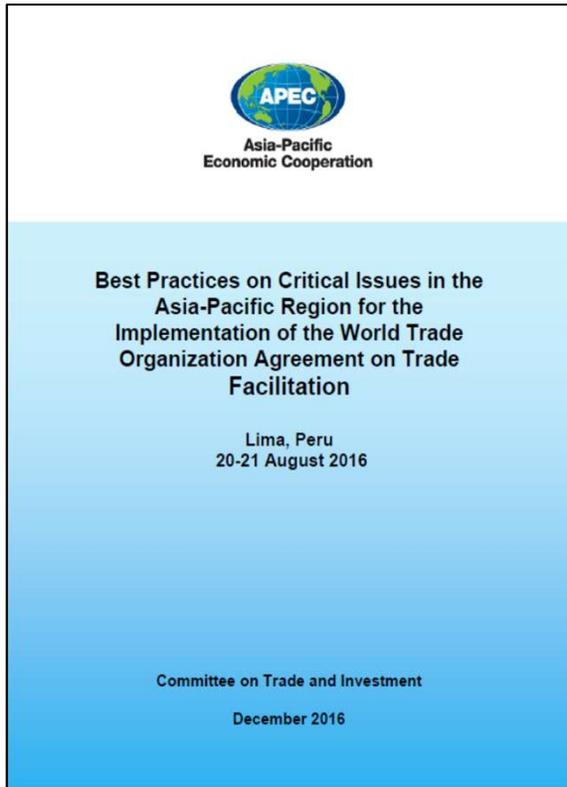


# **National Committees on Trade Facilitation: Insights on Private Sector Priorities**

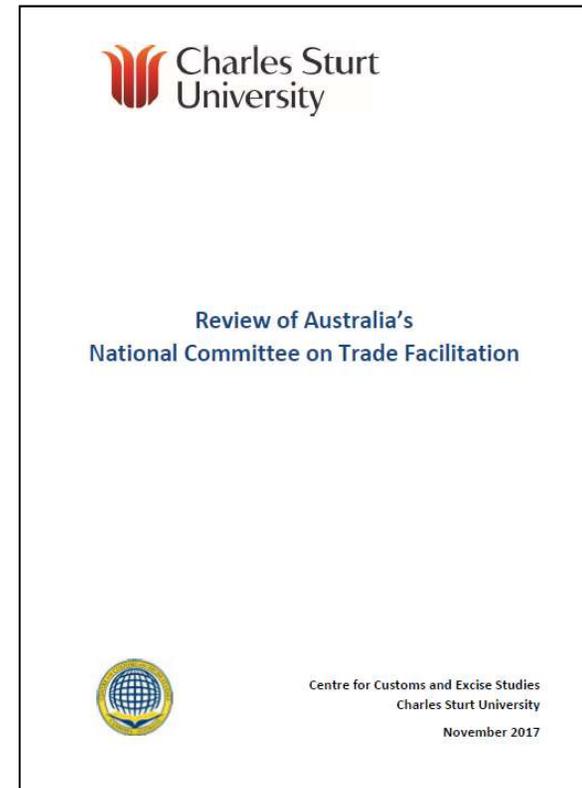
**Bryce Blegen  
Senior Lecturer & Principal  
Researcher CCES  
Presentation for WCO TFA Working  
Group  
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# A Tale of Two Studies



Study Conducted 2016;  
Results Published 2017  
Government & Private Sector Input  
Developing & Developed Economies



Study Conducted 2017;  
Results Published 2018  
Input Primarily from Private Sector  
Developed Economy

# APEC Study: Background

- Entitled “Best Practices on Critical Issues in the Asia-Pacific Region for the Implementation of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation”, the study consisted of an extensive (200+ questions on 38 TFA topic areas) survey and a follow-on in-person workshop to assess APEC Member Economies’ progress in implementing key trade facilitation-related issues in anticipation of the TFA’s entry into force.
- Survey & workshop were focused on identifying progress to date, challenges in implementation, prioritization of focus areas, and to exchange information on best practices.
- Surveys were addressed to APEC Member Economy administrations, with the option of including private sector stakeholder organizations invited by them. 14 (out of 21) APEC members provided completed survey responses (20 participated in the workshops), often from more than one agency, with 14 private sector associations providing responses, and 20 APEC member government representatives participated in all or part of the workshops.
- Survey responses indicated frequent examples of divergent responses from public and private sector participants in the same member economy (public sector respondents sometimes evaluated the level of implementation of particular measures as higher than did the private sector respondents); divergent views were sometimes seen from public and private sector respondents on the likely impact of particular measures on trade facilitation as well.
- The full survey report as well as details of the survey and workshop outcomes can be found at: <https://www.apec.org/Publications/2017/05/Best-Practices-on-Critical-Issues-in-the-AsiaPacific-Region-for-the-Implementation-of-the-World-Trad>

# APEC Study Results: Key TFA Success Factors (Private-Sector Focus)

- Collaboration/communication between border agencies must be improved in order to achieve TFA implementation goals—political will/coordination required from top of government.
- Risk management/targeting/inspections need to be better coordinated and harmonized among border agencies to minimize/eliminate delays, and procedures need to be harmonized.
- IT systems and technology will require upgrades and harmonization among agencies with border responsibilities (Single Window).
- Legislative changes may be required in order to align agency activities and enforce constructive collaboration at whole-of-government level on TFA prescribed measures.
- Close and ongoing consultation with private sector stakeholders on TFA-related measures essential for prioritization and implementation (i.e. NCTF).
- Article 10(1) presents an opportunity (and a challenge) for a new balance between government & business priorities.

# Australia NCTF Project Sponsor

*Australian International Trade and Transport Industry Development Fund Limited*



*“The Australian International Trade and Transport Industry Development Fund is a not for profit organisation whose objective is to provide grants to Australian international trade and transport industry participants to promote, support, advance or enhance, among others, projects in Australia to assist Australian industry to facilitate international trade with its trading partners.”*

# Australia NCTF Study: Background

- Australia instituted a National Committee on Trade Facilitation (the “ANCTF”) in 2015, prior to entry into force of the TFA, with members from relevant government agencies and private sector stakeholders (mainly national trade associations focused on cross-border trading activity).
- After several initial meetings of the ANCTF, anticipating the entry into force, the AITTIDF commissioned a study to identify ways to enhance the ANCTF’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.
- The November 2017 report (<http://www.aittidf.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ANCTF-Final-Report.pdf> ) contains the full results of the research along with 13 recommendations closely tailored to the Australian national environment, which were subsequently endorsed by the ANCTF private sector members and put forward as consensus recommendations to government.
- The research on international best practice was incorporated into a recent World Customs Journal article, along with a distillation of private-sector input on the topic of NCTF which were considered likely to apply in the broader international context (see [http://worldcustomsjournal.org/Archives/Volume%2012%2C%20Number%201%20\(Mar%202018\)/1846%2001%20WCJ%20v12n1%20Widdowson%20et%20al.pdf](http://worldcustomsjournal.org/Archives/Volume%2012%2C%20Number%201%20(Mar%202018)/1846%2001%20WCJ%20v12n1%20Widdowson%20et%20al.pdf) ).



# Australia NCTF Study: Recommendations (1)

- The establishment of an NCTF provides an ideal opportunity for a country to reconsider its approach to facilitating international trade, including domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of the TFA (and beyond).
- The work of international organizations such as the WTO, UN units, the WCO and the ITC, among others, on the design, implementation and operation of national trade facilitation bodies can and should be applied in the development and operation of each country's NCTF.
- A starting point for NCTF work should be a summary of the country's compliance status with each of the articles of the TFA, including those provisions that are mandatory, 'best endeavors' and 'alternative approaches', providing a baseline for domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of the TFA and identification of areas which require further effort.
- The NCTF should tailor its mandate to maximize its contribution to trade facilitation in the medium-to-long-term, incorporating priority determination and generation of an effective work plan that defines resources and deadlines for completion.
- An outcome-driven focus will help ensure the sustainability of the NCTF, with outcomes being communicated upon delivery to the wider public and private sector audiences involved in international trade.



## Australia NCTF Study: Recommendations (2)

- The NCTF should have a formal basis for its existence, and Terms of Reference, but a legislative basis is not considered necessary.
- Arrangements for committee governance should not generate the perception that it is just a “customs” committee; while many of the articles of the TFA fall squarely within the area of customs management, many others cut across the responsibility of other agencies.
- The NCTF (and its governance) should accordingly bring a broad perspective to bear to the deliberations of the NCTF, including consideration of issues that may outside the remit of the various border management agencies, such as infrastructure, which is regarded by the trading community to be an essential element of trade facilitation.
- It is essential that the accountabilities, responsibilities and decision-making capacity of the NCTF and its members be clearly identified, and for the lines of reporting within and across agencies and the private sector to be transparent and properly observed.
- The private sector strongly suggests that an NCTF consider the benefits of direct collaboration with its NCTF counterparts in other trading partner countries to facilitate trade.



# Final Remarks

- 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 community of trade stakeholders was not.
- Private sector stakeholders are generally ready and willing to be active participants in NCTFs and in implementation of TFA-based projects.
- Private-sector stakeholders were often able to identify cross-cutting border issues (e.g. inefficiencies in multi-agency coordination) quickly (and provide practical suggestions for improvements).
- Private-sector priorities exhibited a high degree of consistency in both studies, both in developed as well as developing economies.
- The challenge of compliance with TFA mandates (in particular in relation to inter-agency cooperation and to Art. 10 (1)) appear to be universal—applicable to developing and developed countries alike.



**Thank You!**

**Questions?**

**[bblegen@csu.edu.au](mailto:bblegen@csu.edu.au)**

