



Case Study

National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Israel

Article 23.2 of the WTO TFA: “Each Member shall establish and/or maintain a national committee on trade facilitation or designate an existing mechanism to facilitate both domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of this Agreement.”

1. Introduction

For Israel, the introduction and ratification of the TFA did not give rise to any change in, or addition, to the relevant working procedures as, in terms of implementation, Israel already adhered to the provisions of the TFA (allowing it to be rated ‘category A’). Israel only needed to update its written regulations, guidelines and working procedures in line with the prescribed practices. As previously explained in the Questionnaire completed on January 2015, Israel Customs is still introducing a new foreign trade system, which is a highly advanced and completely paperless computerized system. Since the new working mechanism had not yet been integrated into the written regulations, the TFA promoted the completion of the update which was vital for both sides.

2. Structure of the Committee

The Committee consists of 6 members:
2 from the international department of Israel Customs
1 Customs expert on clearance
1 legal advisor
2 representatives from the foreign trade administration of the Ministry of Economy

3. Role of Customs and Level of Participants

Customs is the lead participant in the Committee, but works jointly with colleagues from the Ministry of Economy. In Israel, the Ministry of Economy promotes Customs-related policy and is responsible for links with the WTO, while Israel Customs implements this policy, and hence leads the Committee.

While aware that, in some countries, stakeholders from the business community are part of the NCTF, in Israel this is not so relevant as continuous and ongoing contact with the business sector is maintained through the "Customs Agents and International Forwarders Association", free conferences and seminars held for the business sector and, of course, by electronic means. Israel Customs maintains a close relation with the business sector, as it did prior to the establishment of this Committee.

4. Challenges and Solutions

The challenges faced, given the introduction of the new foreign trade system, revolved around the short time Israel Customs had to complete updating the regulations so as to comply completely with the idea and spirit of the TFA as detailed above. This was rather difficult as, in addition to the relevant Customs experts



drafting the amendments, these had to be checked and approved by the legal department before they could be published. The drafting and legal approval took a considerable period of time. Not only did this process have to be carried out on top of the everyday workload, it also had to be done twice: once to cover the temporary procedure until the new system was fully implemented, and a second time to cover when the new system became operational. The solution was to prioritize this task to meet the timetable for ratification of the Agreement.

5. Relevant Documentation such as Terms of References

N/A

6. Contact person for the NCTF

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