



Case Study

National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF) Canada

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

Canada kept its pre-existing inter-governmental avenues of communication and mechanisms for consulting with private sector stakeholders, including the Border Commercial Consultative Committee (BCCC). These processes serve as the national coordinating committee in accordance with Article 23.2, so it is not a newly established committee. These pre-existing networks enable Canada to coordinate trade facilitation domestically, liaise with industry, and implement the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The first meeting of the BCCC took place in October 2005 and the committee has evolved through the years.

2. Structure of the Committee

The BCCC is composed of 25 national, private sector associations representing diverse sectors, and senior Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) executives. Canadian government departments and agencies, and international counterparts, also attend BCCC meetings as guests. There are several BCCC technical sub-committees and working groups, and a Steering Committee. The various pre-existing networks Canada uses to coordinate TFA implementation meet on an ad hoc basis, with the BCCC meeting twice a year, though it can meet more frequently at the discretion of the Chair. The BCCC reports to the CBSA’s Associate Vice-President, Programs Branch. The BCCC is supported by a Secretariat that resides in the Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach Unit, Commercial Program Directorate.

The existing networks report on consultations that take place, and reports are circulated as needed in an informal way. The BCCC agenda and associated material are sent to each member (and guest), preferably a minimum of one week prior to the meeting. A Draft Record of Meeting is circulated for input, ideally within ten days following each meeting, and is monitored until resolution and decisions are communicated to all affected parties. The Secretariat serves as a liaison between the various sub-committees, the Steering Committee and the BCCC membership.

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the CBSA use inter-governmental avenues of communication between the departments and agencies responsible for the application of import, export and transit requirements at the border, as well as existing mechanisms for consulting with private sector stakeholders, including the BCCC.

These processes serve as the national coordinating committee as required of World Trade Organization (WTO) Members under the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation.



3. Role of Customs and Level of Participants

The CBSA, in collaboration with GAC, coordinates the NCTF via existing networks. The level of participants is high level government officials (director level and up) and a mix of high and mid level officials from the private sector.

4. Challenges and Solutions

One of the challenges faced by the BCCC is finding the right size for the Committee. While it is important to ensure all affected parties are represented, too large a group makes the consultation process difficult to manage, and too small yields input that is not fully comprehensive. So far, the CBSA has found that a committee with no more than 25 members works best, though the governance and membership are subjects that are often discussed and these are currently under review.

Another challenge for the CBSA has been the long tradition of using BCCC for information sharing and awareness. Transforming the CBSA's approach to be more collaborative, strategic and focused continues to be a goal and requires strong senior management leadership. Generating a fulsome dialogue can be difficult when dealing with a large, diversified group of individuals with varying and often competing interests. Creating opportunities for members to be active participants by involving them in work planning, developing presentations, and setting agendas has proven effective, and is now one of the CBSA's best practices.

Ensuring equal accountability can be challenging. Means of overcoming this challenge include introducing more rigour to the consultation process, properly mapping expected and measurable outcomes for deliverables, establishing realistic timelines, and assigning deliverables to industry members. However, for these to work, discipline and commitment are essential.

For the BCCC, one of Canada's existing networks to coordinate TFA implementation, the development of a "shared agenda" whereby stakeholders and government agree on a set of priorities that they will jointly advance is a good practice for ensuring tangible results. Also creating small, focused, technical sub-committees or working groups helps to discuss specific issues and find workable solutions. This in turn frees up the BCCC to discuss more forward looking, strategic issues. Creating a space where all committee documents can be accessed by all members would be very helpful.

Setting a regular meeting schedule well in advance helps ensure maximum participation. Another best practice to ensure continuity and engagement is having the same people attend BCCC meetings.

Canada has a longstanding relationship and culture of engaging with the private sector. Canada will continue to take advantage of pre-existing well-functioning networks to coordinate trade facilitation domestically, including with private sector stakeholders, and to implement the TFA. As such, Canada has fulfilled the TFA requirement to establish its NCTF.



5. Relevant Documentation such as Terms of References

- [BCC Terms of Reference, Members and Sub-Committees](#)
- [Latest newsletter for commercial stakeholders](#)

6. Contact person for the NCTF

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