

## **National Committee on Trade Facilitation**

### **Case study: Nigeria**

In an attempt to monitor and evaluate performance of its national trade policy, Nigeria established an inter-ministerial committee on domestic trade and multilateral trade matters in 2002, named the Enlarged National Focal Point (ENFP). Within the ENFP, a Sub-committee on Trade Facilitation was formed to coordinate activities for the WTO Trade Facilitation Negotiations and issues of encumbrances in domestic trade.

In 2009, during the meetings of the WTO Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation (NGTF), a proposal for the legal text for what is today Article 23.2 of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) called for the establishment of a National Committee on Trade Facilitation to be established by Members. In consideration of this provision, the ENFP Sub-Committee on Trade Facilitation sought for approval of the Minister of Trade to form such a committee. Hence the formation of the National Task Force Committee on Trade Facilitation (TF) whose objective was to facilitate both domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of the WTO TFA, once adopted by the WTO Members.

The National Task Force Committee on TF was established in 2010. It is chaired by the Ministry of Trade, while the Nigeria Customs Service is the Vice-chair. The Ministry of Trade serves as the Secretariat and the Committee reports to the Minister of Trade through the Permanent Secretary.

In March 2014, after the conclusion of the TFA at the end of 2013, the Minister of Trade decided to re-inaugurate the Task Force Committee on Trade Facilitation and gave it a 100 days mandate to look into its activities, vis-à-vis the TFA, evaluate achievements, harvest the low hanging fruits and plan further implementation of the TFA.

The Committee's membership (see below) was reviewed down from 26 to 21 by removing agencies whose functions were similar to others on the Committee. After the 100 days ultimatum for feedback to the Minister, the Committee was able to determine the Category A commitments under the TFA to be notified to the WTO.

The Task Force's Terms of Reference include tasks and responsibilities, such as: developing Nigeria's national position during the WTO Trade Facilitation Negotiations; facilitating the process of implementing the TFA; ensuring free movement of goods and people at highways, airports and seaports; streamlining import, export and transit procedures; encouraging provision of trade facilitation infrastructure by responsible agencies, public sensitization on trade facilitation measures, practices and standards, making recommendations to the Government on strategic trade facilitation goals and operations; reducing administrative bottlenecks, institutional rigidities and bureaucracies, etc.

The Task Force has two working groups: one responsible for addressing regulatory and infrastructural issues, while the other deals with reduction of costs and time on movements in trade in goods and services. Nigeria Customs Service takes part in both working groups.

Under the Task Force, a number of important activities have been carried out, including: national WTO self-assessments; review of the results of the self-assessments; completion of the work on Category A commitments for notifying the WTO Secretariat; developing actions plans etc.

The Task Force Committee on Trade Facilitation has made significant impact, mainly in terms of raising awareness of the TFA and its objectives, enhancing cooperation among government agencies, motivating agencies to develop their own ICT systems for interaction with the Nigeria Trade Hub Portal and others.

The Task Force is currently in the process of changing its name to National Committee on Trade Facilitation.

### **Membership of the Task Force Committee on Trade Facilitation:**

#### Government agencies:

1. Ministry of Trade (Chair)
2. Nigeria Customs Service (Vice-Chair)
3. Ministry of Finance
4. Ministry of Transport
5. Central Bank of Nigeria
6. Nigerian Ports Authority
7. Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria
8. Nigeria Shippers Council
9. Nigeria Maritime Administration & Safety Agency
10. National Agency for Food & Drugs
11. Standards Organization of Nigeria
12. Nigeria Export Promotion Council
13. Nigeria Export Import Bank
14. Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service
15. Nigeria Immigration Service
16. Nigeria Police Force
17. Federal Roads Safety Commission

#### Private sector:

18. Manufacturers Association of Nigeria
19. Association of Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines & Agriculture
20. National Association of Nigerian Traders
21. National Association of Clearing & Forwarding Agents