

What trade facilitation means to the WCO Private Sector Consultative Group

Presentation to the 239th/240th sessions of the
WCO Permanent Technical Committee

Agenda

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Context

What is trade facilitation?

“A set of measures for the continuous improvement of the time, cost and predictability of the processes required to comply with the regulations associated with moving goods cross border.”

→ Applicable to ALL economic operators, being all those that provide products or services within an international supply chain covered by customs legislation

→ How can we ensure that trade facilitation measures most effectively improve **time**, **cost** and **predictability**?



Context

Purpose and objectives

- Trade facilitation measures and the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO-TFA) are a key component of many international instruments
- The PSCG comprises a rich representation of economic operators across different industries and parts of the supply chain worldwide.
- The PSCG welcomes the great efforts made by many WCO members to implement trade facilitation measures
- The purpose of this work is to provide harmonised and coherent recommendations and aligned understanding on **the top tangible trade facilitation actions that would have the greatest impact on the flow of goods cross-border**
- **Project status:** this is work in progress and will be concluded following final review from the PSCG members



What trade facilitation means in practice to economic operators

Transparency

- Publicly available regulations and customs procedures
- Formal and accessible voluntary procedures

Performance

- Electronic exchange of information

Partnership

- National Trade Facilitation Committees
- Effective implementation of AEO programmes

Engagement

- Effective cross-border communication and cooperation between customs authorities

Consistency

- Predictability and transparency in the rules and their application

Maximising impact: Practical recommendations based on industry experience

1. Transparency

Publicly available regulations and customs procedures

- Publicly available regulatory process and timeframes
- Consultation and capacity building among interested parties
- Provision of simplifications in the manifest and customs clearance process

Formal and accessible voluntary procedures

- Designated points of contact within customs
- Development of a Code of Practice applicable to all government departments, which could include the types of information that should be published voluntarily
- Multi-stakeholder work groups to facilitate input e.g. on digitalisation projects



Maximising impact: Practical recommendations based on industry experience

2. Performance

Electronic exchange of information

- Elimination of duplicate paper processes where electronic exchange of data is used
- Acceptance of electronic release of cargo
- Removal of consularisation requirements or manual stamps
- Robust and appropriate data security
- Adoption of a digital mindset across all levels of customs administrations
- Adoption of the WCO Data Model and implementation of global standards and best practices



Maximising impact: Practical recommendations based on industry experience

3. Partnership

National trade facilitation committees

- Permanent and consistent exchange between customs and business to identify bottlenecks and find joint solutions
- Co-leadership between private sector and government authorities, at least in relation to working groups
- Effective communication link with government officials who are responsible for trade facilitation and customs

Effective implementation of AEO programmes

- Compatibility and joint implementation with other countries under MRAs
- Development of substantial benefits package in close consultation with trading community
- Cooperation between customs and trade
- Development of ambitious pilot projects to test the removal of controls at the border for trusted traders who provide trusted, advance data.



Maximising impact: Practical recommendations based on industry experience

4. Engagement

Effective cross-border communication and cooperation between customs authorities

- Mutual recognition
- Consistency in negotiation of trade agreements and their requirements
- Cooperation between government agencies to offer efficient and simplified procedures



Maximising impact: Practical recommendations based on industry experience

5. Consistency

Predictability and transparency in the rules and their application

- Establishment of green lanes for goods coming with advance cargo information
- Reduction of physical checks and controls at borders
- Consistent training at all levels of customs administrations on the key challenges commonly faced, and to better understand the needs of the private sector.
- Establishment of a mutually accessible monitoring and evaluation tool, that ensures accountability and reliability



Case study - Zambia

- In early 2023, core agencies operating at borders like Kasumbalesa and Kazungula were streamlined to quicken the clearance processes at borders and achieve reduced truck dwell time.
- Tremendous improvements have been reported at Kasumbalesa including: increased hours of operation, increased number of driver facilities, and planned increased parking areas with the help of private sector.
- Achievements in customs to business engagements are reported, including:
 - Technical committee meetings, joint border committees, and cross-border management committees with the involvement of private sector
 - Active participation of private sector through National Trade Facilitation Committee meetings chaired by senior government officials, and coordinated border management meetings
 - **This helps to seek solutions that are favourable to all parties, in a safe and secure trading business environment.**



Conclusions

- Sustainable and universal concepts – these are not new, but the aim is to provide a deeper understanding of what they mean to the PSCG
- What matters most – achieving maximum impact on the flow of goods cross-border!
- The PSCG, with its diverse and rich representation, remains ready as a key partner to assist customs authorities in developing and optimising tangible trade facilitation measures

Thank you!

