



Permanent Technical Committee

PC0736Eb

-
241st/242nd Sessions
-
24 – 26 October 2023

Brussels, 30 August 2023

Strengthening Customs-Industry Resilience

(Item XI. on the Agenda)

SUMMARY

Purpose of document

The purpose of this document is to introduce the draft Concept Note: Strengthening Customs-Industry Resilience (the Concept Note), prepared by the World Customs Organization (WCO) Asia/Pacific (A/P) region and A/P Regional Private Sector Group (RPSG). At the 24th WCO A/P Regional Heads of Customs Administrations (RHCA) Conference in Perth, Australia, in May 2023, the WCO A/P Regional Vice-Chair (APVC) presented the Concept Note for WCO A/P Members' awareness and support to take forward to the WCO. This product was then brought forward to the Dialogue session between the Policy Commission (PC) and the Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG) in June 2023.

Action required of the Permanent Technical Committee

The Permanent Technical Committee is invited to:

- discuss the draft Concept Note;
- endorse a standard definition of '*resilience*' for inclusion in the WCO Glossary of Customs terms, and,
- provide guidance on the way forward.

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I. Introduction

1. The WCO APVC presented the draft Concept Note for WCO A/P Members' awareness at the 24th WCO A/P RHCA Conference in Perth, Australia, in May 2023. The paper was supported by RHCA and supported by the WCO Secretary General.
2. Later on, the draft Concept Note was also introduced and discussed at the Dialogue session between the Policy Commission (PC) and the PSCG, as well as at the PC session in June 2023.

II. Scope of the draft Concept Note

3. The draft Concept Note comprises of Project Vision, Scope, Proposed targets and outcomes, Format, Background and context, and three annexes.
4. The draft Concept Note recognizes that Customs was a critical first responder during COVID-19, with uncertainty caused by the rapid closure of borders and the suspension of travel. During this time, Customs resources were redirected to continue the facilitation of cross-border trade, while ensuring supply chains remained resilient to new and targeted modus operandi being used by threat actors.
5. The Concept Note suggests endorsing a standard definition for resilience and including it in the WCO Glossary of Customs terms. The definition aims to be applicable to Customs, industry and the operators within a connected border environment.
6. The role of Authorized Economic Operators (AEOs) is highlighted within the Concept Note, emphasizing their contribution to risk assessment. In addition, the Concept Note proposes principles of what AEO 2.0 could comprise of in the future.
7. Furthermore, the document elaborates on the symbiotic relationship between Customs and industry. Both entities aim to streamline the movement of goods, with the industry focusing on compliance with relevant processes and regulations and efficient engagement with Customs. The document suggests leveraging existing tools and guidelines set by the WCO, such as the principles of the Revised Kyoto Convention and the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement.
8. The draft Concept Note also references two papers presented by the PSCG at the Dialogue session between the PC and the PSCG in June 2023. These two papers titled "*Ensuring Business Continuity in the Face of Trade Disruptions*" and "*What does facilitation mean to the PSCG?*" have been also added as annexes to the draft Concept Note, noting that these respective efforts from the WCO Members and the PSCG will progress in parallel, highlighting how each group can contribute to formulating strategies aimed at enhancing supply chain resilience.

III. Action required

9. The PTC is invited to :
 - discuss the draft Concept Note;
 - endorse a standard definition of '*resilience*' for inclusion in the WCO Glossary of Customs terms; and,
 - provide guidance on the way forward.

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