



WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION

# National Committees on Trade Facilitation

## A WCO GUIDANCE

Article 23.2 of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement



Stakeholder  
Engagement

Border Agencies  
Cooperation

Trade Facilitation  
Agreement  
Implementation  
Roadmap

National  
Coordination

Customs  
to Business  
Partnership

Harmonized  
Implementation

MARCH 2016



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## **ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS**

CBM	Coordinated Border Management
LDC	Least Developed Country
NCTF	National Committee on Trade Facilitation
RKC	Revised Kyoto Convention
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
TFAWG	Working Group on the Trade Facilitation Agreement
TRS	Time Release Study
WCO	World Customs Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to share relevant information on WCO Members' experience and their roles in the National Committees on Trade Facilitation (NCTFs) for the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The TFA creates a significant opportunity to improve the speed and efficiency of border procedures, thereby reducing trade costs and enhancing participation in the global value chains that characterize international trade today.

Article 23.2 of the TFA requires each WTO Member to establish and/or maintain a NCTF or designate an existing mechanism to facilitate both domestic coordination and implementation of TFA provisions.

The WCO Policy Commission took a decision in December 2014 to look into gathering further information on the NCTF situation and on the role of Customs in these Committees. The WCO Secretariat carried out a survey to collect information on Members' national situations and experience in relation to the establishment of NCTFs.<sup>1</sup>

This document includes an overview of the findings of the survey, based on responses received from Members. In addition, it gives examples of more detailed practices in relation to six Members (Cape Verde, Nigeria, Oman, Sri Lanka, Swaziland and Sudan). These all reported that Customs was playing an active role in their respective NCTFs, including by holding the Chair or Vice-Chair position.

The TFA, and the related political will to implement its measures and to carry forward the trade facilitation agenda, will boost cooperation between all relevant border agencies and their connectivity through Coordinated Border Management (CBM). CBM has been a long-standing key topic for the WCO and Customs worldwide (as well as being the WCO flagship theme for 2015). The ability of Customs administrations to successfully implement TFA provisions will depend largely on their direct engagement, agility and cooperation with other border regulatory agencies.

This Guidance on the establishment and maintenance of NCTFs supplements many WCO tools that already support the implementation of the TFA and related cooperation of all stakeholders – including (but not limited to) the TFA Implementation Guidance, including its new Introduction around organizational approaches; chapters on stakeholder engagement in the WCO Capacity Building Development Compendium; the CBM and Single Window Compendiums; the WCO Data Model (offering standardized data for Customs, border agencies and the private sector); and the Time Release Study approach (as a means of identifying bottlenecks in cooperation between Customs, other border agencies and the private sector in border procedures).

The WCO Mercator Programme ('A Strategic Initiative to Support Trade Facilitation'), is specifically designed to assist Members to implement trade facilitation measures expeditiously and in a harmonized manner. Its tailor-made assistance supports, among many other areas, the establishment and maintenance of NCTFs should Members identify this as a Capacity Building need in their country or region.

This NCTF Guidance aims to advise Members on the requirements of Article 23.2, and to provide basic guidance on an efficient structure for a NCTF, based on Members' best practice and experience.

<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire can be found in [Annex I](#). An overview of the 33 NCTFs reported is in [Annex II](#).

## 2. BACKGROUND

WTO Members successfully concluded negotiations on the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in December 2013 at the Bali Ministerial Conference. In line with the decision adopted in Bali, WTO Members adopted a Protocol of Amendment on 27 November 2014 to insert the new Agreement into Annex 1A of the WTO Agreement. This is a necessary step towards making the TFA an integral part of the WTO legal texts.

The TFA will enter into force once two thirds of its Members have completed their domestic ratification process and informed the WTO of their acceptance of the Protocol of Amendment.

### 2.1 Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)

The WTO TFA consists of the following three sections:

<b>Section I</b>	<b>Articles 1 - 12</b> Provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit
<b>Section II</b>	<b>Articles 13 - 22</b> Special and differential treatment (SDT) provisions that allow developing and least-developed countries (LDCs) to determine when they will implement individual provisions of the Agreement and to identify provisions that they will be able to implement upon the receipt of technical assistance and support for capacity building
<b>Section III</b>	<b>Articles 23 - 24</b> Provisions that will establish a permanent committee on trade facilitation at the WTO and require Members to have a national committee to facilitate domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of the Agreement

### 2.2 Article 23.2

Article 23.2 is part of Section III and is reproduced here for ease of reference:

#### **National Committee on Trade Facilitation**

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.

## 3. NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON TRADE FACILITATION (NCTF)

Effective implementation of the TFA requires a well-functioning National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF), involving all relevant government agencies, including the full and active participation of Customs administrations, given the key role that Customs plays at borders in facilitating and securing global trade.

### 3.1 The need for Customs to be involved and take a prominent role in NCTFs

Customs is responsible for ensuring compliance with international trade agreements, and national legislation and policies that directly relate to multilateral trading rules, acting as a catalyst for enhancing the economic competitiveness of a country and its business community.

The technical provisions of the TFA – in particular, Section I (Articles 1 to 12) – are substantially Customs-related, with 98% of the provisions to be implemented fully or partially by Customs, placing them at the centre of national implementation efforts.

The following table shows the involvement of Customs in the implementation of TFA Articles and measures (see explanatory footnote).

TFA Articles and Measures		Involvement of Customs Administrations <sup>2</sup>
Article 1	1. Publication	X
	2. Information Available Through Internet	X
	3. Enquiry Points	X
	4. Notification	---
Article 2	1. Opportunity to Comment and Information before Entry into Force	X
	2. Consultations	X
Article 3	ADVANCE RULINGS	XXX
Article 4	PROCEDURES FOR APPEAL OR REVIEW (para 1)	XX
Article 5	1. Notifications for enhanced controls or inspections	X
	2. Detention	XX
	3. Test Procedures	XX
Article 6	1. General Disciplines on Fees and Charges Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation	XX
	2. Specific Disciplines on Fees and Charges for Customs Processing Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation	XXX
	3. Penalty Disciplines	XXX
Article 7	1. Pre-arrival Processing	XX
	2. Electronic Payment	XX
	3. Separation of Release from Final Determination of Customs Duties, Taxes, Fees and Charges	XXX
	4. Risk Management	XXX
	5. Post-clearance Audit	XXX
	6. Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times	XX
	7. Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators	XXX

<sup>2</sup> X: All border agencies (11) / XX: Customs as a main agency (16) / XXX: Customs only (12) / --- Not for Customs (1)



	8. Expedited Shipments	XX
	9. Perishable Goods	XX
Article 8	BORDER AGENCY COOPERATION	X
Article 9	MOVEMENT OF GOODS INTENDED FOR IMPORT UNDER CUSTOMS CONTROL	XXX
Article 10	1. Formalities and Documentation Requirements	X
	2. Acceptance of Copies	X
	3. Use of International Standards	X
	4. Single Window	X
	5. Pre-shipment Inspection	XX
	6. Use of Customs Brokers	XXX
	7. Common Border Procedures and Uniform Documentation Requirements	XXX
	8. Rejected Goods	XX
	9. Temporary Admission of Goods and Inward and Outward Processing	XX
Article 11	FREEDOM OF TRANSIT (paras 1-3)	XX
	FREEDOM OF TRANSIT (para 4)	XX
	FREEDOM OF TRANSIT (paras 5-10)	XX
	FREEDOM OF TRANSIT (paras 11-15)	XXX
	FREEDOM OF TRANSIT (paras 16-17)	XX
Article 12	CUSTOMS COOPERATION	XXX

With the above scenario in mind, not only will implementation of the TFA require close cooperation between Customs and other relevant border agencies, it will also require the involvement of Customs at the start of national implementation efforts, in order to ensure a successful outcome.

Customs has a prominent role to play in the NCTF, given its vast experience in interacting with multiple government and business stakeholders in its daily work, including its commitment to coordinated border management (CBM), inter-agency cooperation, and Customs-business partnerships – concepts widely promoted by the World Customs Organization (WCO).

### 3.2 WCO instruments and tools supporting TFA implementation by Customs in NCTFs

The TFA sets out the high-level principles that underpin trade facilitation measures, such as predictability, transparency, partnerships, and the use of modern techniques and technologies, while the WCO's instruments, tools and guidelines complement the TFA by providing more detailed guidance on how to implement the principles at a practical level.

The engagement of Customs in the WTO negotiating process ensured that the TFA is consistent with, and largely based on, the WCO's instruments, tools and guidelines on trade facilitation and compliance, which have been developed and implemented over the years. They include the internationally recognized Revised Kyoto Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (RKC), and more than 40 additional WCO instruments and tools that support TFA implementation.

In fact, the WCO Time Release Study (TRS) is explicitly mentioned in Article 7.6 of the TFA, supporting both governments and Customs in identifying and unpacking all border management regulatory requirements using a measurement exercise, with a view to speeding up the release of goods and thereby facilitating cross-border trade.

The TRS will greatly assist the NCTF to fully understand the situation at national borders, and enable TFA implementation progress to be measured and monitored, as it covers the movement of international trade and inter-agency cooperation following an evidence-based approach, making it an essential measuring tool for all border regulatory agencies and the private sector (see Figure 2).

Further examples of WCO tools that can assist the work of the NCTF include the CBM Compendium, the WCO Data Model, the Single Window Compendium, the SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade, and many more.

When it comes to ensuring the appropriate participation of Customs in NCTFs, several positive signals have already been sent to the WCO in response to a NCTF-related survey among its Members.

#### **Results from the survey: Role of Customs in NCTFs**

*Out of 78 replies received from Members in total (as of January 2016), 33 state that they already have a NCTF in place. 19 of these 33 NCTFs have Customs in the role of Chair or Vice-Chair of the Committee. 13 out of the remaining 14 NCTFs foresee another lead role for Customs – such as coordinator, Secretariat, member of the Board of Directors, or member with specific tasks.*

Examples provided by Members of the role Customs is playing in NCTFs:

#### **Nigeria**

The Nigerian NCTF was initially established by the Ministry of Trade in 2010 for the purpose of negotiating the TFA. It was chaired by the Ministry of Trade, with Nigeria Customs serving as the Vice-Chair. The NCTF was re-inaugurated in March 2014, but with more focus on implementation of the TFA. Based on the NCTF's previous experience, Customs continues to play the prominent role that it had right from the beginning of the TFA negotiations.

#### **Sri Lanka**

The nine Heads of agencies who form the NCTF in Sri Lanka unanimously elected the Director General of Customs as the Chair of the Committee. Within Customs, a Customs Working Group has been established to coordinate issues relating to the implementation of the TFA within the NCTF.

#### **Philippines**

At the WCO TFA Working Group meeting in February 2015, Ambassador E.B. Conejos from the Philippines Mission to the WTO, and Chairperson of the WTO Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation, said that a NCTF was essential for TFA implementation, and advised delegates to set up such a committee as soon as possible. He also stressed that the WCO had all the instruments and tools required for implementing the TFA, and strongly suggested that WCO Members use them to implement the TFA. Regarding the Philippines' experience related to NCTFs, he mentioned that Customs was playing an indispensable role in the NCTF, especially in view of the fact that the focus was now on implementation of the TFA.

**Annex III** contains a **draft business case for a prominent role for Customs in the NCTF**. Members who are still working towards the establishment of a NCTF, and especially Customs administrations which want to engage with other ministries and government agencies as well as other stakeholders, are invited to use/adapt the draft business case according to their national needs and individual circumstances.

### **3.3 Key objectives of NCTFs and the question of an existing or a new Committee**

The NCTF is responsible for domestic coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the TFA. Thus, all stakeholders that will be affected by the implementation of the TFA should essentially be part of it. It could potentially play a pivotal role in developing priorities and a roadmap or strategic plan (possibly also followed by action plans) with clear timelines for the

implementation of TFA provisions in close collaboration with all relevant government agencies and other stakeholders, thus incorporating and synergizing wider trade facilitation perspectives, challenges and solutions.<sup>3</sup>

Whilst some NCTFs were already established during the TFA negotiations, for the purpose of identifying negotiating positions and coordinating WTO needs assessments, other NCTFs were or will be established to coordinate the implementation of the TFA. In other countries, even before the TFA negotiations were launched, there were already Trade Facilitation-related committees aimed at harmonizing border procedures.

Obviously, before establishing a new committee and potentially duplicating functions and efforts, it is worth examining the possibility of utilizing an existing mechanism as the NCTF, under Article 23.2 of the TFA.

#### **Results from the survey: Existing versus new Committees**

*The 33 NCTFs that were reported reflect both options: 19 Members used existing committees or working groups as NCTFs under Article 23.2 – while 14 Members established new NCTFs more recently.*

### **3.4 Preconditions**

The TFA provisions may look Customs-centred, but a number of measures also need to be implemented by other government agencies in conjunction with Customs. For example, Article 1 (Publication and Availability of Information) obliges all government agencies related to international trade to publish, among others, procedures for importation, exportation, and transit (including port, airport, and other entry point procedures), and required forms and documents. The cross-sectorial nature of trade facilitation calls for close coordination between trade operators and service providers on the one hand, and Customs and various ministries and regulatory agencies on the other hand.

Key preconditions for a successful and effective NCTF and the cooperation of all these stakeholders include:

- political will;
- senior management's commitment;
- mutual trust;
- transparent and open communication;
- engagement with diverse businesses, including SMEs;
- clearly defined goals and objectives supported by time and resource commitments.

The "3 P" approach of the WCO when it comes to reform and modernization can also be drawn upon for the establishment and maintenance of a NCTF – success depends on Political Will, People and Partnerships.

#### **3.4.1 Political Will**

It is felt that the TFA, of itself, draws political attention to its implementation. However, securing the ongoing commitment of policy-makers over the entire time period that will be necessary for implementation is one of the tasks of the NCTF. More specifically, from a Customs perspective, there is a need to ensure that the role of Customs, its value and contribution to the development and protection of the country's interests – here in the Trade Facilitation context – is clear to policy-makers. Demonstrating tangible progress and results is an integral part to obtaining and maintaining governmental support, and will be key for NCTFs.

For the NCTF to secure and maintain political will, it must be in a position to negotiate effectively with policy-makers in order to reform national legislation so that it is in line with the TFA.

<sup>3</sup> For further details on the establishment by the NCTF of a roadmap or strategic plan, broken down by individual government agencies, please refer to the Introduction of the WCO Implementation Guidance.

#### **Example from Swaziland:**

*The Swaziland NCTF has brought together all key national trade facilitation initiatives, including the Investor Roadmap Implementation initiative, which reports to a Cabinet Sub-Committee every fortnight. The report of the Sub-Committee forms part of the Agenda of the main Cabinet meeting. This has now enabled the agenda of the TFA to get political attention through the same process.*

#### **3.4.2 People**

NCTFs rely on the capacities of their members. Government agencies and any relevant stakeholders involved in the NCTF need to ensure that their representatives have a sound knowledge of responsibilities and developments within their respective organizations – and are able and entitled to actively engage within the NCTF. The “People” element includes the prerequisites mentioned above, such as senior management’s commitment; development of mutual trust; and transparent and open communication.

#### **Example from Sri Lanka:**

*The NCTF of Sri Lanka is composed of nine permanent members who are heads of agencies which play a significant role in border procedures. In addition, a Technical Committee consisting of representatives nominated by the nine members of the NCTF has been formed to discuss and advise on technical matters. Furthermore, on a Customs administration level, a Customs Working Group has been appointed by the Director General of Customs to coordinate with the NCTF and the Technical Committee on matters related to Customs in the TFA context.*

#### **3.4.3 Partnerships**

Working closely with stakeholders from the private and public sector is essential to achieve any sustainable reform and modernization. It is therefore also key to successful cooperation in the NCTF and ultimately to successful TFA implementation overall. The same is true of cooperation with development partners if and where countries cannot identify financial resources in their own national budget. As mentioned for the “People” element, this “Partnerships” element benefits from the prerequisites of senior management’s commitment; development of mutual trust; and transparent and open communication. However, it also benefits from engagement with diverse businesses, including SMEs.

Relevant WCO support in these areas consists of many guidance tools, such as the Stakeholder Engagement chapter in the Capacity Building Development Compendium, the Customs-Business Partnership Guidance, the Orientation Package for Decision Makers, the Donor Engagement chapter in the Capacity Building Development Compendium (including advice on the development of a business case and project proposal development), as well as related tailor-made Capacity Building support in the form of support missions and projects in countries.

#### **Results from the survey: Involvement of the private sector in NCTFs:**

*As an example of successful stakeholder engagement in NCTFs, all 33 NCTFs that were notified to the WCO have included private sector representatives as members of the Committee.*

## 3.5 Duties and functions of NCTFs

The duties and functions of NCTFs are ultimately to coordinate and monitor implementation of the TFA provisions. This work can be supported by a step-by-step approach as follows.

### 3.5.1 Establishment of a focal point/focal group or a desk to start the set-up work

In countries where there is already a mechanism in place that intends to assume the role of the NCTF under Article 23.2 of the TFA, that mechanism will most probably also assume responsibility for the set-up work.

In countries where a new Committee needs to be created, it is recommended to first establish a focal point/focal group or a desk which could comprise a few key partners which have so far been involved in the WTO TFA context – for example, Customs, the Ministry of Trade (or equivalent Ministry) and the Foreign Ministry. This small group could start the preparations for setting up the NCTF, including the process of drafting the NCTF Terms of Reference.

### 3.5.2 Establishment of Terms of Reference (ToR) for the NCTF

The duties and functions of the NCTF can – together with other details – best be summarized in Terms of Reference (ToR). As mentioned above, clearly defined goals and objectives, supported by time and resource commitments, are essential for a well-functioning NCTF. Clear ToR will support these endeavours.

The ToR usually describe the purpose, structure and responsibilities of the NCTF. They show how the scope will be defined, developed, and verified. They should also provide a documented basis for making future decisions and for confirming or developing a common understanding of the scope among all stakeholders involved.

Elements to consider in the ToR include:

- Objectives, scope and deliverables (i.e. what has to be achieved);
- Membership – stakeholders, roles and responsibilities (i.e. who will take part in it and be responsible for what);
- Resources/means (i.e. how it will be achieved);
- Working methods (i.e. meeting in person or virtually, Secretariat function, communication policy, sharing of any costs, etc.).

**A draft of such ToR**, based on the NCTF ToR from Cape Verde, can be found in **Annex VI**. It should obviously be adapted/amended based on individual national circumstances and decisions by the respective NCTF.

#### **Results from the survey – for further consideration when establishing Terms of Reference for the NCTF:**

- 1) *The number of members of the NCTF varied between 5 and 43.*
- 2) *The level of participation in terms of hierarchy varied between ministerial level, high level, director's level and technical level.<sup>4</sup>*
- 3) *Many NCTFs stated that they had a Secretariat (usually handled by the Ministry of Trade, in several cases supported by Customs, especially where Customs had the role of Chair or Vice-Chair of the NCTF).*
- 4) *The frequency of NCTF meetings was generally reported as being more than two, but less than five, times a year.*

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that no definition was provided in the survey for these levels of participation. For example, a technical officer in the Ministry of Trade may be referred to as a ministerial level participant in the NCTF.

### 3.5.3 Launch of the NCTF

When preparing for the launch of the NCTF, consideration could/should be given to, for example:

- The proper identification of all relevant stakeholders to be invited to become potential members of the NCTF. This process might require a certain amount of work, and several meetings, before the actual launch of the NCTF. One recommendation, based on the positive experience of Members, is to identify “competent champion(s)” in their stakeholder engagement strategies overall, i.e. to identify government agencies/officials already competent in specific areas, who can drive related processes forward;

#### **Example from Sri Lanka:**

*(Future) members of the NCTF specifically analysed import and export procedures, and thus identified the main stakeholders involved in the processes, with a view to also involving them in the work of the NCTF.*

- The external communication and promotion of the launch of the NCTF (for example, whether it should involve a joint communication/press release by all stakeholders, and/or a press conference); and
- Preparing a meaningful agenda for the first meeting, in close consultation with the envisaged future members of the NCTF. There should already be draft documents, such as draft ToR, as part of the preparations, and these could then form the basis of discussions at the NCTF meeting. It may also be worth organizing one or more prior meetings for and with stakeholders to raise awareness of the TFA overall, and of the need to establish a NCTF.

**One draft agenda**, which is based on the agenda of the first NCTF meeting in Cape Verde, can be found in **Annex VII**. It is obviously not intended as a “one size fits all” model, but may support the preparatory process. Cape Verde held several stakeholder consultations and national TFA awareness-raising events prior to their first NCTF meeting.

### 3.5.4 Establishment of a national roadmap to TFA implementation and the associated three-phased approach

The Introduction to the WCO TFA<sup>5</sup> Implementation Guidance already contains detailed information on the establishment of a national roadmap or strategic plan related to TFA implementation, and the associated three-phased approach: I – diagnostic phase, II – strategic planning and implementation, and III – monitoring and evaluation.

In line with the (self-) assessments/gap analyses and validations carried out as part of the diagnostic phase, Members will develop an implementation plan – sometimes called a “roadmap” – for complying with the TFA. It will also be in line with the priorities that emerge from the results of a country’s A, B or C categorization. The roadmap should also set out concrete responsibilities and timelines.

Usually, this implementation roadmap is developed and monitored by the NCTF. It is essential to have a breakdown of the individual government authorities’ responsibilities, and the establishment and/or adjustment of the strategic plans of all the authorities involved in TFA implementation.

As the establishment of a national implementation roadmap will require the comprehensive cooperation of many stakeholders and NCTF members, it is advisable that work on it commence with a detailed action plan which specifies who is contributing to the drafting of the roadmap, as well as how and when.

An example of **an action plan template** to establish a national roadmap for TFA implementation can be found in **Annex VIII**.

### 3.5.5 Monitoring of the implementation of the national roadmap

The roadmap, its performance indicators, and related progress reports by the NCTF members responsible, will enable the NCTF to monitor TFA implementation progress – and take corrective measures wherever and whenever necessary. The monitoring of the implementation of the roadmap can be supported by regular Time Release Studies, in which the NCTF should necessarily be involved.

<sup>5</sup> For details of the Introduction to the Implementation Guidance, please see TFAWG Doc. PT0030. The Introduction will in future also be available on the WCO webpage.

## 4. SOME REPORTED ACHIEVEMENTS BY NCTF'S SO FAR

One of the key achievements that several NCTFs have reported so far consists in bringing together all relevant stakeholders to the same table, and starting to enhance cooperation in this area, sometimes for the first time ever. Further achievements vary from country to country and include the following:

### **Example from Sudan:**

*The Sudan NCTF has reported their achievements so far, among others, as:*

- many separate and joint meetings were held periodically, with the NCTF holding two meetings per month;
- mission and vision statements with strategic objectives were put within the framework of a 5-year strategic plan (2012-2016), with annual action plans;
- NCTF representatives participated in many regional and international workshops and meetings, such as the WCO Regional workshop for the MENA region in Bahrain (1-4 June 2015), and
- several field visits to Customs border posts were conducted to analyse business processes on the ground.

### **Example from Nigeria:**

*The Nigerian NCTF reported, among others, the following activities having been carried out so far:*

- 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; and
- developing several actions plans on individual next steps.

### **Example from Oman (extract from the case study provided by Oman):**

*"The private sector also plays an important role in the formation and negotiations of the technical committee. Represented by the Omani Chamber of Commerce, private sector stakeholders have had the opportunity to discuss various trade related issues of the TFA with their government counterparts at the quarterly meetings of the committee. In addition to the scheduled quarterly meetings, Ad-Hoc meetings are arranged if and when required. The committee's terms of reference include tasks and responsibilities towards ensuring the facilitation of free movement of goods and people, streamlining import and export procedures, procurement of infrastructure commensurate with full implementation of the TFA, reducing institutional red tape and a public awareness campaign on the benefits of the FTA."*

## 5. SINGLE WINDOW AND DATA HARMONIZATION

### 5.1. Why should Single Window and Data Harmonization be discussed at the NCTF?

The WTO TFA states that Members shall endeavour to establish or maintain a Single Window, enabling traders to submit documentation and/or data requirements for importation, exportation or transit of goods through a single entry point. Similarly, the RKC guidelines on Chapter 3 of the General Annex cover the operation of Single Window.

UN/CEFACT Recommendation 33, "Recommendation & Guidelines on establishing a Single Window", highlights the importance of political will as a key factor in establishing a successful Single Window system:

*The existence of strong political will on the part of both government and business to implement a Single Window is one of the most critical factors for its successful introduction. Achieving this political will requires proper dissemination of clear and impartial information on objectives, implications, benefits and possible obstacles in the establishment of the Single Window. The availability of resources to establish a Single Window is often directly related to the level of political will and commitment to the project. Establishing the necessary political will is the foundation stone upon which all the other success factors have to rest.*

The project to build Single Window and undertake National Data Harmonization requires high-level leadership and has to be brought to the attention of high-level decision-makers at the policy level that fits the role of the NCTF.

### 5.2. WCO tools related to Single Window and Data Harmonization

The WCO has developed guidelines to help Single Window Environment developers with tools that can be used for the development of Single Windows.

- **Single Window Compendium**

To support its Members in building national Single Window programmes, the WCO has developed a Compendium on "How to Build a Single Window Environment". The Compendium comes in two volumes. Volume 1, the 'Executive Guide', deals with aspects of Single Window that are of concern to senior management. Volume 2, the 'Professional Practice Guide', is a collection of tools and techniques to support technical experts working on projects to establish a Single Window. The Compendium provides information and guidance at all stages of development of a Single Window Environment.

**Volume 1** (download)

[http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/activities-and-programmes/single-window/~//media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Activities%20and%20Programmes/Single%20Window/Compendium/PC\\_SWC\\_Vol\\_1\\_E.ashx](http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/activities-and-programmes/single-window/~//media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Activities%20and%20Programmes/Single%20Window/Compendium/PC_SWC_Vol_1_E.ashx)

**Volume 2** (download)

[http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/activities-and-programmes/single-window/~//media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Activities%20and%20Programmes/Single%20Window/Compendium/PC\\_SWC\\_Vol\\_2\\_E.ashx](http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/activities-and-programmes/single-window/~//media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Activities%20and%20Programmes/Single%20Window/Compendium/PC_SWC_Vol_2_E.ashx)



- **WCO Data Model**

The WCO Data Model is a set of carefully combined data requirements that are mutually supportive and which will be updated on a regular basis to meet the procedural and legal needs of cross-border regulatory agencies, such as Customs, controlling export, import and transit transactions.

**Data Model Flyer** (download)

[http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/tools/~media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Instruments%20and%20Tools/Tools/Data%20Model/DM\\_flyer\\_EN.ashx](http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/tools/~media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Instruments%20and%20Tools/Tools/Data%20Model/DM_flyer_EN.ashx)

**Data Model general brochure** (download)

[http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/tools/~media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Instruments%20and%20Tools/Tools/Data%20Model/DM\\_Brochure\\_EN.ashx](http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/tools/~media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Instruments%20and%20Tools/Tools/Data%20Model/DM_Brochure_EN.ashx)

**Data Model technical brochure** (download)

[http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/tools/~media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Instruments%20and%20Tools/Tools/Data%20Model/DM\\_technicalBrochure\\_EN.ashx](http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/tools/~media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Instruments%20and%20Tools/Tools/Data%20Model/DM_technicalBrochure_EN.ashx)

**WCO Data Model, Single Window Data Harmonization** (download)

<http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/tools/~media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Activities%20and%20Programmes/Single%20Window/Single%20Window%20Data%20Harmonisation%20V2.ashx>

- **IT Guide for Executives**

**IT Guide for Executives** (download)

[http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/~media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Instruments%20and%20Tools/IT%20Guide%20for%20Executives/IT%20Guide%20Executives\\_EN.ashx](http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/~media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Facilitation/Instruments%20and%20Tools/IT%20Guide%20for%20Executives/IT%20Guide%20Executives_EN.ashx)

### 5.3. Action plan template to build a Single Window Environment and conduct Data Harmonization in the context of a NCTF

Annex IX of the current Guidance provides an example of an action plan which could be discussed at the NCTF.

## 6. SUMMARY

In summary, based on best practice and experience shared by Members, five fundamental steps could be identified on how to set up and maintain a NCTF to facilitate domestic coordination and monitoring of TFA implementation.

### ***Five fundamental steps in setting up and maintaining a NCTF:***

- Step 1***      ***Use of an existing mechanism versus establishment of a new Committee***
- Step 2***      ***Use the existing mechanism or establish a focal point/focal group or desk to start the set-up work***
- Step 3***      ***Identification of relevant stakeholders, including the potential identification of one or more “competent champion(s)” as future Members of the NCTF; and establishment of Terms of Reference for the NCTF***
- Step 4***      ***Maintain/secure continued political support; and the development of a national roadmap to implement the TFA***
- Step 5***      ***Monitor/evaluate progress***

In the 33 NCTFs reported, Customs has played, and continues to play, a vital role in contributing to all these five steps.

# ANNEX I: WCO survey questionnaire

## Questionnaire

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."

### I. General questions

**1. Name of country or Customs Union**

**2. Did your Government establish or does it maintain a National Committee on Trade Facilitation in accordance with Article 23.2 of the TFA?**

Yes (Please provide the name of the committee:.....)  
Please provide details of contact person: Name/ Email .....

No (If no: Please provide reasons and/or indicate areas you might want to seek support in: .....)

**3. When did/will your Government establish the National Committee on Trade Facilitation according to Article 23.2 of the TFA?**

### II. Structure of the Committee

**4. Is it/Will it be a completely newly established Committee?**

Yes

No (If no: What topics has it dealt with before: .....)

**5. How many members are there/will there be in the Committee?**

## 6. Who are/will be the members and/or observers of the Committee?

	Member	Observer
<input type="checkbox"/> Customs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Trade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Governmental Agencies (Please specify:.....)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector (Please specify:.....)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify:.....)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 7. Level of participants.

- Ministerial-level
- High-level government officials (Director-General, Deputy DG-level)
- Director-level
- Technical-level
- Other  
(Please specify:.....)

## 8. Role of Customs in the National Committee of Trade Facilitation.

- Chair
- Vice-chair
- Other leading role (Please specify:.....)
- No leading role (Please specify reasons:.....)
- Rotating leading role period:  Months  Years (Please specify:.....)
- Rotating leading role handed over to:  Other Agency  Private Sector (Please provide details:.....)

### 9. Does/Will the Committee have a Secretariat of its own?

- Yes (If yes: please indicate who / which agency serves/will serve as the Secretariat:  
.....)
- No (If no: please indicate how organisational support is/will be organised otherwise for the Committee:  
.....)

### 10. (Envisaged) frequency of meetings per year.

- Once or twice
- More than twice but less than five times
- More than five times
- No particular rule / as required

### 11. Please specify whom the Committee reports/will report to and how information reaches/will reach all members / observers of the Committee.

**III. Implications**

**12. Did the establishment of the Committee change any policies in your administration? Please describe the changes.**

**13. What have been the biggest challenges dealt with by the Committee so far and what was the solution to these challenges?**

**14. Are there any procedures or governance put in place that you consider a good practice? Please describe.**

**15. Are there any further observations/information that you would like to share?**

**16. Please attach any relevant materials such as terms of reference of the Committee or templates for reports etc.**

**17. What would you recommend and agree to in terms of use of your information contained in this survey by the WCO? (more than one answer is possible)**

- Production of an analysis for discussion at the next meeting of the WCO TFA Working Group on 12-13 February 2015 and potentially the WCO Permanent Technical Committee.
- Use of the results and practices shared to update existing WCO tools and guidelines (please specify how/which tools/guidelines:..... )
- Creation of a living depository of the replies on the public WCO webpage (visible for Customs and the public including other governmental agencies, the private sector, other international organizations and other stakeholders)
- Creation of a living depository of the replies on the Members' webpage (visible only for Customs administrations)
- Other (please specify:..... )

**18. Are there any further observations/information that you would like to share?**



## ANNEX II: Information on the 33 NCTFs established

Country	New /Existing committee	Customs Role	No. of Members	Level of Participation	Secretariat	Frequency of Meetings per year
<b>SOUTH, NORTH &amp; CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (AMS)</b>						
Colombia	Existing	Chair	Not Confirmed	Technical	Yes	Once or twice
Cuba	Existing	Vice Chair	17 Members	Director and Technical	Yes	More than two less than five
Jamaica	Existing	Vice Chair	29 Members	Technical	Yes	No particular rule
Mexico	Existing	Co Chair	19 Members	Ministerial High Director and Technical	Yes	More than two less than five
Uruguay	Newly Established	Not Defined	5 Members	Ministerial High Director and Technical	Yes	No particular rule
United States	Existing	Member	20 Agencies	High Director and Technical	Yes	No particular rule
<b>EUROPE</b>						
Croatia	Existing	Coordinator	16 Members	Technical	No	No particular rule
Greece	Existing	Vice Chair	16 Members	High Director and Technical	Yes	Five times
Israel	Newly Established	Chair	6 Members	Director and Technical	No	Once or twice
Italy	Existing	Not Defined	43 Members	High Director and Technical	Yes	Once or twice
Lithuania	Existing	Chair	30 Members	Director and Technical	No	More than two less than five
Switzerland	Existing	Vice Chair	5 Permanent Members	Director and Technical	No	More than two less than five
<b>EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (ESA)</b>						
Botswana	Existing	Vice Chair	30 Organizations	Director and Technical	Yes	More than two less than five
Malawi	Existing	Chair	15 Members	Ministerial High Director and Technical	Yes	More than two less than five
Mauritius	Newly Established	Chair	22 Members	Director and Technical	Yes	More than two less than five
Kenya	Existing	Chair	32 Members	Director	Yes	More than two less than five

Namibia	Existing	Other Leading Role	7 Members	Director and Technical	Yes	More than two less than five
Swaziland	Newly Established	Chair	35 Members	Director and Technical	Yes	More than five
<b>NORTH OF AFRICA, NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST (MENA)</b>						
Sudan	Existing	Other Leading Role	20 Members	Ministerial High Director and Technical	Yes	More than two less than five
Morocco	Existing	Secretariat	Not defined	Technical	Yes	No particular rule
Oman	Newly Established	Chair NCTF WG	16 Members	Ministerial High Director and Technical	Yes	More than two less than five
United Arab Emirates	Newly Established	Member	22 Members	High Director and Technical	Yes	More than two less than five
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Newly Established	Other Leading Role	11 Members	High Director and Technical	Yes	No particular rule
Arab Rep. of Egypt	Newly Established	Chair	Not defined	High	Yes	No particular rule
<b>WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA (WCA)</b>						
Nigeria	Existing	Vice Chair	21 Members	Technical	No	No particular rule
Cape Verde	Newly Established	Coordinator	Not Confirmed	Not Defined	Yes	No particular rule
<b>FAR EAST, SOUTH &amp; SOUTH EAST ASIA, AUSTRALIA AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (AP)</b>						
Bhutan	Newly Established	Other Leading Role	7 Members	Director	Yes	More than two less than five
Lao	Newly Established	Other Leading Role	14 Members	Ministerial High Director and Technical	Yes	More than two less than five
Malaysia	Newly Established	Vice Chair	9 Members	Director	Yes	Once or twice
Pakistan	Existing	Member	38 Members	Director	Yes	More than two less than five
Papua New Guinea	Newly Established	Not Defined	11 Members	High	No	More than two less than five
Singapore	Existing	Other Leading Role	7 Agencies	Depends on issue at hand	No	No particular rule
Sri Lanka	Newly Established	Chair	9 Members	High level and Heads of Private Sector	No	No particular rule

# ANNEX III: A business case for a prominent role of Customs in the NCTF

## DRAFT BUSINESS CASE A Prominent Role for Customs in the National Committee on Trade Facilitation

The implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) concluded by Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) has many benefits for countries across the globe, the most significant of which is its recognized contribution to economic growth and competitiveness, both at the national and international level.

Effective implementation of the TFA requires a well-functioning National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF), involving all relevant government agencies, including the full and active participation of Customs administrations, given the key role that Customs plays at borders in facilitating and securing global trade.

### Customs' prominent role in the NCTF

Customs is responsible for ensuring compliance with international trade agreements, and national legislation and policies that directly relate to multilateral trading rules, acting as a catalyst for enhancing the economic competitiveness of a country and its business community.

The technical provisions of the TFA – in particular, Section I (Articles 1 to 12) – are substantially Customs-related, with 98% of the provisions to be implemented fully or partially by Customs as illustrated in Figure 1, placing them at the centre of national implementation efforts.<sup>6</sup>

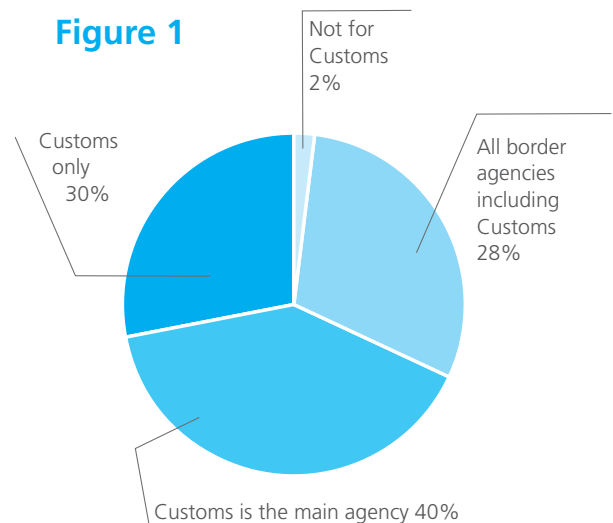
With the above scenario in mind, not only will implementation of the TFA require close cooperation between Customs and other relevant border agencies, it will also require the involvement of Customs at the start of national implementation efforts, in order to ensure a successful outcome.

Customs has a prominent role to play in the NCTF, given its vast experience in interacting with multiple government and business stakeholders in its daily work, including its commitment to coordinated border management (CBM), inter-agency cooperation, and Customs-business partnerships – concepts widely promoted by the World Customs Organization (WCO).

**The nature of the TFA puts Customs at the centre of national implementation efforts.**

**98% of the contents of Section I of the TFA are Customs-related.**

Figure 1



<sup>6</sup> Only 2% of the provisions of Section 1 do not fall under the direct responsibility of Customs, i.e. one provision, namely Article 1.4 on 'Notification'.

## WCO instruments and tools supporting TFA implementation by Customs in the NCTF

The TFA sets out the high-level principles that underpin trade facilitation measures, such as predictability, transparency, partnerships, and the use of modern techniques and technologies, while the WCO's instruments, tools and guidelines complement the TFA by providing more detailed guidance on how to implement the principles at a practical level.

**The Revised Kyoto Convention and other WCO tools are complementary to the TFA and support the NCTF and government authorities in TFA implementation at a practical level.**

The engagement of Customs in the WTO negotiating process ensured that the TFA is consistent with, and largely based on, the WCO's instruments, tools and guidelines on trade facilitation and compliance, which have been developed and implemented over the years.

They include the internationally recognized Revised Kyoto Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (RKC), and more than 40 additional WCO instruments and tools that support TFA implementation.

In fact, the WCO Time Release Study (TRS) is explicitly mentioned in Article 7.6 of the TFA, supporting both governments and Customs in identifying and unpacking all border management regulatory requirements using a measurement exercise, with a view to speeding up the release of goods and thereby facilitating cross-border trade.

The TRS will greatly assist the NCTF to fully understand the situation at national borders, and enable TFA implementation progress to be measured and monitored, as it covers the movement of international trade and inter-agency cooperation following an evidence-based approach, making it an essential measuring tool for all border regulatory agencies and the private sector (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: TRS example**



Further examples of WCO tools that can assist the work of the NCTF include the:

- CBM Compendium;
- WCO Data Model;
- Single Window Compendium;
- SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade.

### More information

facilitation@wcoomd.org

## ANNEX IV: Involvement of Customs in the implementation of TFA Articles and measures

The following table shows the involvement of Customs in the implementation of TFA articles (see explanatory footnote).

TFA Articles and Measures		Involvement of Customs Administrations <sup>7</sup>
Article 1	1. Publication	X
	2. Information Available Through Internet	X
	3. Enquiry Points	X
	4. Notification	---
Article 2	1. Opportunity to Comment and Information before Entry into Force	X
	2. Consultations	X
Article 3	ADVANCE RULINGS	XXX
Article 4	1. Right to Appeal or Review	XX
Article 5	1. Notification for enhanced controls or inspections	X
	2. Detention	XX
	3. Test Procedures	XX
Article 6	1. General Disciplines on Fees and Charges Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation	XX
	2. Specific Disciplines on Fees and Charges Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation	XXX
	3. Penalty Disciplines	XXX
Article 7	1. Pre-arrival Processing	XX
	2. Electronic Payment	XX
	3. Separation of Release from Final Determination of Customs Duties, Taxes, Fees and Charges	XXX
	4. Risk Management	XXX
	5. Post-clearance Audit	XXX
	6. Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times	XX
	7. Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators	XXX
	8. Expedited Shipments	XX
	9. Perishable goods	XX
Article 8	BORDER AGENCY COOPERATION	X
Article 9	MOVEMENT OF GOODS UNDER CUSTOMS CONTROL INTENDED FOR IMPORT	XXX
Article 10	1. Formalities and Documentation Requirements	X
	2. Acceptance of Copies	X
	3. Use of International Standards	X
	4. Single Window	X
	5. Pre-shipment Inspection	XX
	6. Use of Customs Brokers	XXX
	7. Common Border Procedures and Uniform Documentation Requirements	XXX
	8. Rejected Goods	XX
	9. Temporary Admission of Goods/Inward and Outward Processing	XX
Article 11	FREEDOM OF TRANSIT (para 1 - 3)	XX
	FREEDOM OF TRANSIT (para 4)	XX
	FREEDOM OF TRANSIT (para 5 - 10)	XX
	FREEDOM OF TRANSIT (para 11.11 - 15)	XXX
	FREEDOM OF TRANSIT (para 16 - 17)	XX
Article 12	CUSTOMS COOPERATION	XXX

<sup>7</sup> X: All border agencies (11) / XX: Customs as a main agency (16) / XXX: Customs only (12) / --- Not for Customs (1)

## ANNEX V: Examples of the role Customs is playing in NCTFs

### ***Nigeria***

The Nigerian NCTF was initially established by the Ministry of Trade in 2010 for the purpose of negotiating the TFA. It was chaired by the Ministry of Trade, with Nigeria Customs serving as the Vice-Chair. The NCTF was re-inaugurated in March 2014, but with more focus on implementation of the TFA. Based on the NCTF's previous experience, Customs continues to play the prominent role that it had right from the beginning of the TFA negotiations.

### ***Sri Lanka***

The nine Heads of agencies who form the NCTF in Sri Lanka unanimously elected the Director General of Customs as the Chair of the Committee. Within Customs, a Customs Working Group has been established to coordinate issues relating to the implementation of the TFA within the NCTF.

### ***Philippines***

At the WCO TFA Working Group meeting in February 2015, Ambassador E.B. Conejos from the Philippines Mission to the WTO, and Chairperson of the WTO Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation, said that a NCTF was essential for TFA implementation, and advised delegates to set up such a committee as soon as possible. He also stressed that the WCO had all the instruments and tools required for implementing the TFA, and strongly suggested that WCO Members use them to implement the TFA. Regarding the Philippines' experience related to NCTFs, he mentioned that Customs was playing an indispensable role in the NCTF, especially in view of the fact that the focus was now on implementation of the TFA.

# ANNEX VI: Draft ToR of a NCTF (based on the ToR of the NCTF in Cape Verde)

## Terms of Reference

### 1. Introduction

(This could include some historical development, background on the WTO TFA and/or national governmental decisions, etc.)

### 2. Responsibilities of the Committee

(Possible suggestions:

- Contributing to national legislative procedures related to the acceptance of the WTO Protocol of Amendment
- A, B and C categorization and respective WTO notification
- Facilitating and coordinating the implementation of the Articles of the TFA
- Developing a joint national roadmap for TFA implementation
- Building a permanent mechanism for all stakeholders and external partners to discuss TF-related matters ( e.g. procedural questions, use of documents), propose new ideas, administrative and operational steps and strategies, etc.
- Conceptualizing programmes and strategies on resource mobilization
- Defining and scheduling awareness-raising and information campaigns
- Coordinating government communication regarding TFA implementation
- Monitoring progress of TFA implementation and proposing corrective measures wherever necessary
- Serving as point of contact for [...]
- ...)

### 3. Membership/Composition of the Committee

The Committee is composed of representatives of the following institutions:

...

(Here, one would list the specific members of the NCTF, their respective governmental agencies, and other relevant stakeholders, such as members of the private sector.) Thought should be given to finding the appropriate number of Members (neither too low, nor too high) to enable the NCTF to move forward.

Members could be listed in very specific terms which include the functions of individual representatives, and the units/divisions within government agencies. Alternatively, they could be listed in less specific terms which include just the agencies. This depends on the national decision taken. Thought might also be given on a national level to distinguishing between permanent NCTF members, and experts who will need to advise the NCTF on specific technical questions. If considered appropriate, one could also mention here the length of membership or possibilities for renewal.)

#### **4. Functioning of the Committee**

(Possible suggestions:

- The Committee meets regularly in person every ... upon invitation by...
- In exceptional circumstances, meetings can also be held virtually/by videoconference/...
- The agenda and other supporting documents of the meeting will be circulated by the Secretariat at least 5 days before the meeting.
- The Committee can establish specialized working groups to work on specific topics and report back to the Committee...
- Each member of the Committee will nominate one person as its NCTF representative and one person as his/her replacement.
- ...)

#### **5. Costs related to the functioning of the NCTF**

(Possible suggestions:

- Costs for attending meetings of the NCTF and printing meeting documents will be born individually by all members of the Committee.
- Costs for activities that will be coordinated/decided by the NCTF in terms of TFA implementation are not part of these ToR.
- ...)

#### **6. Chair (and Vice-Chair) of the Committee**

(Possible suggestions:

- The Chairmanship of the Committee is assigned to the Customs Administration, and the Vice-Chairmanship to the Ministry of Trade.
- The Chair of the Committee will issue invitations to Committee meetings every ..., as indicated above, or at the request of (a) Member(s) of the Committee.
- The Chair can delegate chairing all or parts of a meeting to any other Member of the Committee when felt appropriate.
- ...)

#### **7. Secretariat of the Committee**

(Possible suggestion:

- The Secretariat of the Committee is assigned to...)

#### **8. ...**



## ANNEX VII: Possible draft agenda of the first NCTF meeting (based on the agenda of the first NCTF meeting in Cape Verde, with additional comments in italics by the WCO Secretariat)

**First meeting of the National Trade Facilitation Committee of Country X**  
**Place, time**  
**Draft agenda**

1	Opening - Adoption of the Agenda
2	Discussions on the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) and on the functioning of the Committee  Decision to be envisaged: Acceptance of the ToR and agreement on the functioning of the Committee
3	Discussions on how to develop a national roadmap to TFA implementation  Discussions can include and lead to clarity/decisions on, for example: - why there should be such a roadmap - model of such a roadmap - an action plan on how to develop the roadmap, who will do so, and by when - identifying responsibilities to monitor deadlines for the development of the action plan
4	Discussion on steps to follow for category A classification and notification  Potential decision: Approval of an action plan on how to move forward with category A classification
5	Closing  - Summary of conclusions of the meeting - Time and place of the next meeting

## ANNEX VIII: Action plan template to establish a national roadmap to TFA implementation

(Please note that the contents of the template are indicative only. The template is by no means a “one size fits all” solution and does not represent a comprehensive action plan. That will need to be developed by NCTFs at the national level, depending on individual circumstances.)

Objective	Activity	Result	Timelines	Responsible (Ministry/authority/unit/group/...)
<b>1. Establish Working Group composed of all NCTF members to draft the roadmap</b>	1.1. Send out invitation for nominations to all NCTF members, asking them to nominate their representative and his/her replacement for the Working Group (WG)	Nominations received	Invitations sent by...  Replies received by...	NCTF Secretariat,  NCTF Members
	1.2. First meeting of the Working Group	Meeting held and clarity on next steps in drafting the roadmap.	(Date of the first meeting)	NCTF Secretariat and all WG Members
<b>2. Understanding of the current situation regarding TFA implementation</b>	2.1. Review of the results of the WTO self assessment	Updated assessment.	Updated assessment by...	(e.g.) Ministry of Trade, in cooperation with all who were involved in the self-assessment
	2.2. Review of other diagnostic missions already conducted, e.g. WCO diagnostic report from..., World Bank report from...	Updated assessments that will contribute to contents of the roadmap	Updated assessments by...	For the WCO diagnostic report: Customs  For other reports: respective authority which was the key partner in the report
	2.3. Review of national A, B, C categorization	Contributions to potential prioritization within the roadmap.	By...	Lead (tbd), and all who were involved in the categorization process
	2.4. Conduct interviews with representatives from the private sector (or other stakeholders, depending on national circumstances)	Latest views from the private sector on priorities and needs from their side that should be taken into consideration for the roadmap	By...	e.g. Customs or Trade Ministry or...
	2.5 Summarize findings of 2.1-2.4	Report on the current situation regarding TFA implementation as basis for the development of the roadmap.	Report to be presented to NCTF by...	Lead (tbd), and all listed as responsible under 2.1-2.4, as well as NCTF Secretariat

<b>3. Finalize text of the draft roadmap</b>	3.1. Decide on format of the roadmap	Decision on format/template to be used	(date of NCTF meeting)	NCTF, WG
	3.2. Decide on responsibilities and timelines for contributions (e.g. who is “translating” the findings of 2.5 into contents for the draft roadmap; what are the individual Group members in addition bringing to the draft from their respective government authorities)	Decision on responsibilities and timelines	(date of NCTF meeting)	NCTF, WG
	3.3 “Translate” the findings of 2.5 into contents for the draft roadmap, and Working Group to agree on the outcomes	Agreed skeleton roadmap	Skeleton roadmap to be shared with Working Group by...  Agreement of Working Group by...	For the “translation” work of drafting the skeleton: e.g. Ministry of Trade Working Group to agree  (It might also be useful to insert an additional line for activity relating to an interim report to the NCTF.)
	3.4 Further contributions by Working Group Members from their respective government authorities, and Working Group to agree on final draft	Finalized agreed draft roadmap of the Working Group	By...	Coordinator: tbd, all Working Group Members
	3.5 WG to present draft roadmap to NCTF	Finalized draft presented to the NCTF	By...	WG, NCTF Secretariat
<b>4. Finalized roadmap to be agreed by the NCTF and communicated internally to (whatever the reporting line of the NCTF entails), as well as externally</b>	4.1. NCTF to review/discuss/ agree on the draft roadmap as elaborated by the WG	Finalized roadmap agreed by the NCTF	By...	NCTF
	4.2. Communication of the roadmap internally and externally (details depend on national circumstances, e.g. reporting lines, press releases, contacts with development partners and others – one can think of additional activity lines in the action plan too).	Roadmap is known by the relevant Ministries, partners and stakeholders	By...	NCTF (potentially define a lead within the NCTF)

## ANNEX IX: Action plan template to build a Single Window Environment and conduct Data Harmonization in the context of a NCTF

(Please note that the contents of the template are indicative only. The template is by no means a “one size fits all” solution and does not represent a comprehensive action plan. That will need to be developed by NCTFs at the national level, depending on individual circumstances.)

Objective	Activity	Result	Timelines	Responsible
<b>1. Setting and sharing of vision</b>	1.1. Set the vision on building a “Single Window Environment” and National Harmonized Data requirement and share it with all NCTF members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine relevant provisions of the WTO TFA and RKC which can be enabled/supported by Single Window Environment</li> <li>Setting a vision</li> </ul>	Vision is established  Vision is shared	NCTF meetings on Single Window development and Data Harmonization	NCTF
	1.2. Establishing Working Group (WG) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terms of reference of the Working Group</li> </ul>	WG is created	NCTF meetings on the establishment of WG	NCTF, NCTF WG
<b>2. Checking current situation and creating a roadmap</b>	2.1. Checking a current situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying three streams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the problem stream</li> <li>(ii) the policy stream</li> <li>(iii) the political stream</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>* please refer to the WCO Single Window Compendium Volume 1, Chapter 4. 3.</p>	Understanding of the gap between current situation and the vision  Challenges and opportunities for reaching the vision are identified	WG meetings (in 3 months after establishing WG)	NCTF WG, Relevant Governmental Agency (RGAs)
	2.2. Creating a draft roadmap, including phased goals (e.g. short-term and long-term goals) and time schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roadmap should essentially cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) legal basis</li> <li>(ii) financial support</li> <li>(iii) governance structure</li> <li>(iv) summary of sub-roadmaps for operational level work</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Draft roadmap for reaching the vision created.	WG meetings (6 months after establishing WG)	NCTF WG, RGAs
	2.3. Creating final roadmap, and approval at the national level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WG reports the current situation and draft roadmap to NCTF, and NCTF reviews and adopts the roadmap</li> </ul>	Understanding of current situation and creating a roadmap  High-level political support	NCTF meetings (final roadmap 9 months after establishing WG)	NCTF, NCTF WG

### 3. Implementing the roadmap and checking the progress

<p>3.1. Implementing the roadmap at the strategic level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Legal basis) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>preparing relevant laws and regulations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• (Financial support) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>securing budget for the vision</li> </ul> </li> <li>• (governance structure) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- establish new working body or using existing working body</li> <li>- mandate for the task</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Implementation of the roadmap at the strategic level</p>	<p>According to the time schedule set up in the roadmap</p>	<p>NCTF, NCTF WG, RGAs</p>
<p>3.2. Implementation of the roadmap at the operational level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating sub-roadmap for operational-level tasks by designated working bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sub-roadmap should be reported to NCTF WG and adopted by NCTF</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Designing Single Window service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business Process Analysis;</li> <li>- Establishing connection system to exchange electronic documents for RGAs and other stakeholders based on harmonized data requirements (paperless data transactions)</li> <li>- Establishing e-payment system</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Undertake Data Harmonization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on the WCO Data Model</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Implementation of the roadmap at the operational level</p> <p>Harmonized and Streamlined Regulatory Business Processes</p> <p>Integrated paperless environment</p> <p>Integrated payment system</p> <p>Harmonized national dataset based on the WCO Data Model</p>	<p>According to the time schedule set up in the roadmap and the sub-roadmap</p>	<p>NCTF, NCTF WG, RGAs</p>
<p>3.3. Checking the progress of implementation of the roadmap</p>	<p>Feedback from the implementation of the roadmap</p>	<p>Every 3 months after creating final roadmap</p>	<p>NCTF, NCTF WG, RGAs</p>
<p>3.4. Evaluate implementation of the roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine any challenges in implementing the roadmap</li> <li>• Amend the roadmap as appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>Revision of the roadmap</p>	<p>Every 6 months after creating final roadmap</p>	<p>NCTF, NCTF WG, RGAs</p>



**Members' participation is welcome.**

For more information, contact the WCO Procedures and Facilitation Team by email at [facilitation@wcoomd.org](mailto:facilitation@wcoomd.org)  
or visit the WCO website  
<http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/wco-implementing-the-wto-atf.aspx>.

Members are invited to continue to take part in the WCO NCTF Survey  
by submitting their completed questionnaires to [nctf@wcoomd.org](mailto:nctf@wcoomd.org).

The questionnaire can be found at Annex I and is also available at the following link:

[http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/wco-implementing-the-wto-atf/  
~/media/279C3BBB7C9447A0860420F87ED0F827.ashx](http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/wco-implementing-the-wto-atf/~media/279C3BBB7C9447A0860420F87ED0F827.ashx)

**Acknowledgement:** this publication was printed with the financial support of the Ministry of Strategy and Finance of Korea

**Publisher:** World Customs Organization - Rue du Marché 30 - B-1210 Brussels - Belgium  
Tel.: +32 (0)2 209 92 11 - Fax: +32 (0)2 209 92 62 - [www.wcoomd.org](http://www.wcoomd.org)

**Date of publication:** 2016

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D/2016/0448/8



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