

## **Note on the Follow-up to the Inter-Agency Meeting on Trade Facilitation (Geneva, 5 April 2002)**

### **Background**

1. The Inter-Agency Meeting on Trade Facilitation was convened by UNCTAD, following the request from HLCP, with a view to identifying trade facilitation issues to be addressed in a coordinated manner within the United Nations system (paragraph 42 of the report of HLCP's second session - Geneva, 25-26 September 2001).
2. During the meeting, UNCTAD suggested that a reasonable cooperation scheme should be based on some key assumptions, including:
  - ◆ the scheme should not overstrain the work of the partner organizations;
  - ◆ it should provide value-added for inside and outside users; and
  - ◆ it should be a sufficiently flexible scheme so that each organization - fully responsible of its own information - can provide whatever it wants in the format that best fits it.
3. The proposed cooperation scheme would be developed around a web site which should be considered as a real core tool - owned, shared as well as populated by all partner agencies. Its guiding principles would be **interactivity**, **decentralization**, and **participative and progressive approach**. As a starting point, the same basic web site skeleton and structure have been built for all agencies. According to their needs, requirements and respective policy, each agency will be able to fine-tune and easily enhance this evolving canvas in terms of content (format, presentation, periodicity of update) and structure.
4. By construction, this site does not attempt to standardize or propagate a single common approach on trade facilitation, but rather intends to be the platform for trade facilitation, and the doorway to investigate further the work carried out by one or another agency. Of course, trade-related information can be found in any agency web site, and referred to, through links, from the proposed site. However, in order to really contribute to the creation of a common and dedicated platform and to the building of a shared perception on trade-facilitation issues, it is encouraged to upload, as it is deemed appropriate by the participating agencies, any useful information to this web site. In this regard, powerful and user-friendly push-and-pull tools have been developed to facilitate and increase global web exposure of the related information, particularly with the envisaged creation of a network of "specialists" dealing with trade facilitation. Each agency is encouraged to nominate participants – at least a “Manager<sup>1</sup>” and “Author(s)<sup>1</sup>” - for whom relevant information should be provided<sup>1</sup>.
5. With a view to minimizing each agency implied investment (manpower, technology), the cooperation scheme is proposed as a self-service web-tool, requiring minimum IT support; with user-friendly features to create, manage and customize agency's informative contents. The service is activity-oriented and intuitive, and does not require any particular training. The main features include: participant's notification, chat feature, E-meetings, shared calendar, focused search feature, remote-user management.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to para. 7 for details

## The proposed web site

6. This UN system web-site dedicated to trade facilitation: [www.un-tradefacilitation.net](http://www.un-tradefacilitation.net) is presently operating on a restricted trial basis, with those agencies who were willing to participate. The collective experience of all concerned agencies will be used to fine-tune the web-site.

## Next steps

7. To initiate the collective work, interested agencies are invited to take the following actions:

- ◆ Nominate a Manager responsible for the contents/inputs of his agency and the assignment of rights for designated authors. He/she will act as a focal point (counterpart) for the agency.
- ◆ The designated Manager should nominate one or several Authors (alternates) responsible for the provision of inputs from their agency. Managers and Authors data (lastname, firstname, email address, Phone number, title, etc) should be communicated to [info@un-tradefacilitation.net](mailto:info@un-tradefacilitation.net). Upon receipt of this information, passwords will be communicated to them.

8. The persons designated will be given privileged access to their respective agency room on the web site.

9. Once provided with their password, they will be able to **sign in** (in the dialogue box **Tools**). They will be then recognized as Manager/Authors with capacity to read AND write in the agency's own room, read the contents of the other rooms, and benefit from advanced features such as automatic e-notification and advanced search.

10. A standard navigation structure has been pre-built for each agency, flexible enough to allow each agency to make it evolving according to its needs, policy, and the expected web-exposure. This facility is delegated to each room's manager. Capacity to populate is delegated to each room's author.

11. It will be left up to the Manager and the Authors to start populating, as deemed appropriate, the individual agency room with relevant information such as documents, links and agendas of events together with supporting documents.

12. It is hoped that this preliminary information on how to become an active contributor to this collective web site is sufficiently clear.

13. The Manager and Authors should be nominated as soon as possible and their relevant information (names and e-mail addresses) should be sent by e-mail to **info@un-tradefacilitation.net**. Any further question should be raised in a message to the same address.