

Template for Case Studies on Setting up and sustaining a multi-agency working group on Trade Facilitation or similar body, organization, committee dealing with TF issues

Trade facilitation as a public policy involves a wide and diverse range of public agencies performing functions related to cross-border trade. Furthermore decisions may impact or are impacted by a large variety of private sector entities or associations, such as transport service providers, Customs brokers, Importers and exporters. In such an environment institutional coordinating and consultation between private and public sector is essential for the planning and implementation of successful trade facilitation reforms.

In many countries national trade and transport facilitation bodies have been set up, often with the support of international donor organisations, and technical assistance projects. In the framework of the WTO negotiations on trade facilitation, the issue of agency coordination and consultation has come back to the forefront of country's preoccupations. Sectoral working groups, task forces or committees can provide the required expertise and technical backstopping during the negotiations and provide a platform for dialogue with private sector.

UNCTAD and UNECE are developing a repository on national experiences with setting up and sustaining an institutional coordinating mechanism. The objective is to share experiences and identify common challenges and solutions to these challenges. The template of questions has been developed to structure the information provided in the repository

Whilst filling out the template please keep in mind that there are many different models and structures of working groups or committees. Some of the questions therefore may not be pertinent for the particular coordinating mechanism established in your country.

Please return the questionnaire to the UNCTAD trade facilitation section by email: maria.misovicova@unctad.org or fax: +41 22 9170050. Thank you for taking your time in filling out the template.

Background

1. Do you have or had an inter-agency working group on trade facilitation? If yes, what is the official title of this working group?
2. Do you have other national bodies dealing with WTO issues and/or with Trade Facilitation?
3. What is the current status of the working group (study, pilot phase, running, not operational??)
4. What motivated the establishment of the working group on trade facilitation?
5. Was the working group based on a previously existing multi-agency group/ committee for example, trade and transport facilitation committee/organization)?

Institutional framework

1. Has the working group been set up as an ad hoc group, or as a legal entity/organization?
2. What specific documents were necessary to institutionalise the group and which body and at which level made the decision?
3. What is the scope/mandate of the working group?
4. Does the working group have terms of reference? If yes, would you like to share them with others through the website (please attach the document)?
5. Which is the coordinating agency?

6. What is the structure of the group (Chair/co-chair, sub-groups etc.)?
7. Do you have a permanent technical Secretariat?

Funding

1. Who carries the costs of the operations of the working group? (one institution, co-sharing with other institutions, or external funding)
2. What are the principal costing items of the operations of the working group?
3. Do you have a formal budget for the operations of the working group?
4. If yes, what major items are covered by it?

Objectives/Focus

1. What are the objectives of the working group?
2. Does the working group have a working plan?
3. How do you monitor progress in implementing the work plan?
4. How often; in which form and to whom the working group is reporting?

Membership / Composition

1. What public or quasi-public agencies participate in the working group?
2. What private associations or entities participate?
3. What is the level of seniority of the participants?

Participation

1. Does the working group meet regularly?
2. What is the level of participation in each of the meetings? (Active, passive, etc)
3. Do you use different meeting formats (such as focus groups, brainstorming, citizen jury's, etc.)?

Promotion/Communication

1. How do you keep all stakeholders informed of the working groups' meetings and new documents, upcoming events etc.?
2. How does the group interface with other working groups/committees on similar issues?
3. Do you undertake special information session for the general public or particular stakeholders?

Benefits

1. What was the impact of the work of the group?
2. How does it benefit your countries' responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process?
3. Have there been concrete operational outcomes?

Lessons learned

1. What are the crucial success factors?
2. What were the greatest obstacles?
3. What are the main lessons learned?

Future plans

1. What are the plans for further development of the working group?

Contact details of the coordinator of the working group