

## Country: Antigua and Barbuda

### Background:

**Official name:** National Trade Facilitation Committee. A sub-committee endorsed by a decision of Cabinet as part of National Trade Committee (NTC).

**Year of establishment:** 2008

**Motivation for its establishment:** To provide policy guidance on Trade Facilitation Reform and support the implementation of the Agreement.

**Other national bodies dealing with WTO issues and/or with Trade Facilitation:** Yes

**Former multi-agency group/committee:** No

**Current status of the working group (running, pilot phase, not functioning, etc):** Pilot phase however currently inactive.

### Institutional Framework:

**Degree of institutionalisation:** Cabinet decision

**Type of organisation (ad hoc group, legal entity/organisation, etc):** Legal

**Coordinating agency:** Ministry of Trade

**Scope/mandate:** The National working group shall function as the coordinating and consultative body. To advise on domestic, regional and international policy matters related to TF. The National Committee has taken actions to facilitate cross-border e-commerce, such as the Adaptation of the Regional CARICOM Strategy on Trade Facilitation, CARICOM Members States - Tariff data.

**Terms of reference:** Yes

**Working structure of the group:** Chair/co-chair and sub-groups

**Permanent technical secretariat:** No. It is because of lacking of financial resources.

### Funding:

**Budget:** No formal budget however if expenses arise these will be borne by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda from funds that have been allocated to the Ministry's Annual Budget. There is no budget for the NTFC because of lacking of domestic resources. Budget will be needed for the reproduction and publications services, meeting venues and catering, and training sessions.

**Sources of funding:** Ministry of Trade Annual Budget

**Items covered by the budget:** Stationary, Venue Rental (Subsidised as in most cases these are Government Properties)

### Objectives / Focus:

**Objectives:** To make recommendations on strategic trade facilitation goals and operational solution.

To provide a forum for stakeholder consultation and increase awareness of trade facilitation measure, develop operational procedures.

**Working plan:** Yes. The time frame for it is twice per year.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** To the extent of 70% that the National Trade Facilitation Committee fulfills its role of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. Monitoring tools include monitoring plan with indicators and consultations with stakeholders. There is no specific evaluation tool. Familiar with the following tools: UN Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation, World Bank Doing Business Trading Across Borders.

**Reporting form and supervisory authority:** Ad hoc. Not formalised.

## **Membership / Composition:**

**Public or quasi-public agencies:** Ministry of Agriculture (plant protection, food safety, and animal health, analytical services), Ministry of Health (food safety, pharmaceuticals), Customs and Excise Division, Ministry of Finance (trade flows and budgeting), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Legal, Ministry of Information, Antigua and Barbuda Bureau of Standards, Antigua Port Authority, Ministry of Tourism

**Private associations or entities:** Brokers Association, Antigua & Barbuda Investment Authority, Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Shipping Association

**Level of seniority of participants:** Senior-60% Middle-25% Junior-15%

## **Participation:**

**Frequency of meetings:** Ad hoc

**Level of participation:** Good

**Meetings format:** Yes, one on one consultation sub groups meetings

## **Gender:**

**Percentage of female in the committee:** 80%

**Chairman / President / Vice-president is female:** Yes

**Committee did decide on gender mainstreaming TF in the past:** No

**If no, why not. (Example: It not considered a priority, not considered relevant at this stage, lack of awareness, etc):** There is no gender disparity in relation to Trade Facilitation

**If no, explain future plan in this area.:** None presently

## **Promotion / Communication:**

**Communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of TF meetings:** E-mails,



administrative letters, verbal communication via telephone, radio.

**Interface with other working groups/committees on similar issues:** Meetings and consultation

**Undertake information sessions to stakeholders or general public:** Yes Meetings, TV and radio (ads), TV and radio (interviews, participation in talk shows, etc)

## **Benefits:**

**Impact:** Utilization of Asycuda world, New Customs Management Act 2013.

**Benefits for the country's responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process:** Increase awareness of the benefits of operationalization of the Trade Facilitation Agreement to the business community.

**Concrete operational outcomes:** Improve the ease of doing business for the commercial sector. Negotiation of trade or trade facilitation agreements; Implementation of concrete trade facilitation measures; Developed an implementation plan for the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement; Improved coordination; Ratification / notifications of the Trade Facilitation Agreement sent to the WTO; Improve business environment for traders; Reduction of time and / or improvement of procedures at the border; Raise awareness on the importance of trade facilitation.

## **Lessons learned:**

**Success factors:** It is thought, to the extent of 90%, that the Committee will be sustainable in time. The crucial factors to the sustainability of the Committee are: Cooperation among members / Common understanding and goals, Clear responsibility of participants, Commitment from members, Political commitment / high level support, Close monitoring of results.

**Greatest obstacles:** Lack of technical and financial support, Inadequate infrastructure, Limited and lack of trained human resource, Lack of awareness of importance of NTFC / understanding of trade facilitation, Lack of regularity of meetings.

## **Lessons learned from your experience:**

Need for deeper collaboration and co-ordination among border agencies. e.g MOU'S.

Limited knowledge of TFA by some stakeholders.

## **Future plans:**

**Plans for further development:** Formalized committee. Established dates for regular meetings. Also, the regional integration has been considered a lot within the work of the NTFC, and it is in contact with other National Trade Facilitation Committees in the region.

## **Contact information:**

**Contact Information:** Permanent Secretary



# UN REPOSITORY ON NATIONAL TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEES

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**UNCTAD EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME**  
*for National Trade Facilitation Committees*