

Country: Norway

Background:

Official name: Handelsfasiliteringskomitéen (NCTF – National Committee on Trade Facilitation)

Year of establishment: 2018

Motivation for its establishment: The implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement, governmental request, as well as a need for a forum for discussing matters on trade facilitation between public entities and private associations.

Other national bodies dealing with WTO issues and/or with Trade Facilitation: The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Former multi-agency group/committee: No. However, the Committee replaces former informal fora.

Current status of the working group (running, pilot phase, not functioning, etc): Running

Institutional Framework:

Degree of institutionalisation: • The parliamentary proposition 155 S (2014-2015) Consent for approval of protocol from 27 November regarding the changes in the Marrakesh-agreement regarding the establishment of the World Trade Organization (insertion on the Trade Facilitation Agreement). (In Norwegian: Prop. 155 S (2014-2015) Samtykke til godkjenning av protokoll av 27. november 2014 om endring av Marrakesh-avtalen om opprettelse av Verdens handelsorganisasjon (innsetting av avtalen om handelsfasilitering).)

• Parliamentary level: Addition of a new Section 12-16 in the Customs Act, by Act 12 December 2015 No. 117.

• The mandate was settled on ministerial level.

• Article 23.2 of the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

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

Coordinating agency: The Directorate of Norwegian Customs

Scope/mandate: • Surveillance of the coordination and implementation of TFA in Norway:

“Shall” obligations, as well as

“Endeavour” obligations etc.

• Removal of unnecessary obstacles to the flow of goods by importation, exportation or transit

• Assessment of Norwegian Exporters’ offensive interests

• Support cooperation and development in international fora:

WTO, WCO, OECD, ICAO, IMO, UNECE

Regional FTAs

• Identify needs in developing countries for technical assistance to implement TF measures

Terms of reference: Yes

Working structure of the group: The Directorate of Norwegian Customs chairs and acts as the permanent secretariat of the Norwegian NCTF. The Norwegian NCTF meets two times per year, preferably a short time before the WTO meetings. The NCTF acts as the general coordinating body for the work with TF issues. Also, there are working groups as a continuation of existing, separately operated groups within topics such as development of new customs procedures and IT communication as well as new groups formed to take care of specific issues, e.g. revision of the customs legislation, rules of origin (regional FTAs and GSP issues).

Permanent technical secretariat: Yes, the Directorate of Norwegian Customs has been allocated as the permanent secretariat for the NCTF.

Funding:

Budget: Yes

Sources of funding: Public funding

Items covered by the budget: Costs related to planning and execution of the committee meetings.

Objectives / Focus:

Objectives: To fulfil the tasks according to the mandate, (see mandate for more information)

Working plan: Topics are discussed from meeting to meeting.

Monitoring and evaluation: -

Reporting form and supervisory authority: To its members after the meetings, generally as a report.

Membership / Composition:

Public or quasi-public agencies: • Directorate of Norwegian Customs

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Ministry of Justice and Public Security
- Ministry of Transport
- Ministry of Culture
- Ministry of Health and Care Services

and their agencies, e.g.:

- Statistics Norway

- Innovation Norway
 - Norwegian Agriculture Agency
 - Norwegian Food Safety Authority
 - Norwegian Medicines Agency
 - Police
 - Norwegian National Security Authority
- Private associations or entities:**
- The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise and affiliated organizations
 - The Enterprise Federation of Norway (Virke)
 - Logistics and Transport Companies Association
 - Norwegian Industry Association
 - Norwegian Seafood Federation
 - Norwegian Truckowners Association
 - Norwegian Shipowners Association
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Norstella – Network for trade, industry, transport and service

Companies with special challenges, e.g.

- Norwegian Postal Service
- Large importers/exporters with their own customs department

Level of seniority of participants: Mixed representation

Participation:

Frequency of meetings: Twice a year

Level of participation: 30-40 persons

Meetings format: No

Gender:

Percentage of female in the committee: Approximately 50%

Chairman / President / Vice-president is female: No

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): We already have a good gender balance in trade facilitation, and further measures are therefore not crucial.

Promotion / Communication:



Communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of TF meetings: Via letters and e-mails.

Interface with other working groups/committees on similar issues: Informally, through consultation with members of the trade facilitation committee.

Undertake information sessions to stakeholders or general public: Yes, Tolldagen is a yearly conference where the Norwegian Customs inform the participants about the latest news in custom matters, including trade facilitation. Also, seminars/conferences are held to inform the public about new/changing customs procedures.

Benefits:

Impact: Awareness of challenges that major stakeholders within import and export face.

Benefits for the country's responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process: Awareness of interests.

Lessons learned:

Success factors: To gather all involved and relevant public entities and private associations and large key stakeholders from the private sector in one place, discussing matters related to the topic of trade facilitation.

Greatest obstacles: • Acceptance of the NCTF as the major player for the dialogue on international trade in goods between business and government

E.g. adaptation to already existing ministerial structures etc.

• Defining and structuring issues in a way that they can be addressed in the right fora and formats

• Balancing the different grades of interest in TF matters from the potential players

Some agencies and business structures have specific or limited interests, which nevertheless may be important

• Engaging the most relevant business representatives to address a huge variation of needs and interests

• Including agencies and business structures with specific or limited interests, which nevertheless may be important

• E.g. SMEs, postal or rail services, traders in medicines etc.

Future plans:

Plans for further development: To create more sub-committees for relevant topics.

Contact information:

Contact Information: Chair and secretariat:



UN REPOSITORY ON NATIONAL TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEES

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Directorate of Norwegian Customs, Department for Legal Affairs and Procedures, Tariff and Origin Section.

Tollbugata 1, Postboks 2103 Vika, 0125 Oslo, NORWAY
post@toll.no

President: Pål Hellesylt,

Director, Department for Legal Affairs and Procedures, Directorate of Norwegian Customs.
Tollbugata 1, Postboks 2103 Vika, 0125 Oslo, NORWAY
post@toll.no