

## Country: Serbia

### Background:

**Official name:** National Coordination Body for Trade Facilitation(NCBTF)

**Year of establishment:** 2017

**Motivation for its establishment:** NCBTF was established with the purpose of more comprehensive and effective facilitation of the foreign trade and coordination of the work of the competent authorities, organizations, business community and other participants in the foreign trade system.

**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):** Running

### Institutional Framework:

#### Degree of institutionalisation:

Government decision on the establishment of the NCBTF No. 02-10409/2017 as of November 2, 2017;

Rules of Procedure of the NCBTF as of December 12, 2017.

**Type of organisation (ad hoc group, legal entity/organisation, etc):** NCBTF has been set up as a Government coordination body

**Coordinating agency:** Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications

**Scope/mandate:** Consider, direct and coordinate the implementation of obligations related to trade facilitation resulting from the process of accession to the World Trade Organization, the implementation of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation of the World Trade Organization and other international trade agreements;

Participates in the preparation and proposing of measures and activities aimed at improving and facilitating foreign trade, considering and participating in the preparation of proposals for plans for facilitating foreign trade and removing barriers in trade, submitted by expert working groups of the National Coordinating Body, relevant ministries, as well as representatives of the business community;

Directs the cooperation of ministries and other competent authorities and organizations with regard to the policy of facilitating foreign trade and coordinates the exchange of data related to the export, import and transit of goods;

Informs the public, and especially the business community, about plans and initiatives for facilitating foreign trade, provides information on the competencies and contact with the data of state administration bodies that pass regulations and carry out controls during the export, import and

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transit of goods;

Directs and coordinates other activities in order to facilitate foreign trade, in accordance with good international practice and the needs of the business community.

**Terms of reference:** Yes

**Working structure of the group:** Chair by the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, Deputy Chair - Customs Office, subworking groups

**Permanent technical secretariat:** Yes.

The permanent secretariat is hosted by Customs and is composed by 3 people.

## Funding:

**Budget:** No, because it is not considered necessary

**Sources of funding:** Staff of the Secretariat are employees of the Ministry of Trade and Customs office, other activities are sponsored on the ad hoc basis by different donors (USAID, WB, IFC, GTZ, SECO)

**Items covered by the budget:** Not applicable

## Objectives / Focus:

**Objectives:** Facilitation of foreign trade,

Elimination of barriers to trade,

Acceleration and modernization of customs procedures,

Simplification and reduction of procedure and formalities.

**Working plan:** Yes, one per year

**Monitoring and evaluation:** It is thought that to the extent of 57% the Committee fulfils its role of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

- Monitoring tools: Monitoring plan with indicators, Consultations with stakeholders.

- Evaluation tools: Surveys distributed by the Committee among trade facilitation stakeholders, Independent third-party assessments.

- Familiar with the following tools: UNCTAD statistics (country and maritime profiles), UN Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation, World Bank Doing Business Trading Across Borders, World Bank Logistics Performance Index (LPI), OECD Trade Facilitation Indicators, World Economic Forum Global Enabling Trade Report.

**Reporting form and supervisory authority:** NCBTF submits regular annual report to the Government no later than March 31 of the current year for the previous year and, if necessary, extraordinary reports.

## Membership / Composition:



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

## **Public or quasi-public agencies:**

Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication,  
Ministry of Finance,  
Ministry of Economy,  
Ministry of Interior,  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water management,  
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure,  
Ministry of Environment Protection, Customs administration,  
Plant protection administration,  
Veterinary administration,  
Border police administration,  
Agency for medicines and medical equipment.

## **Private associations or entities:**

Chamber of Commerce of Serbia,  
Amcham, Serbia  
Foreign Investors Council, Serbia

**Level of seniority of participants:** Senior-70%, Middle-20%, Junior-10%

## **Participation:**

**Frequency of meetings:** The Committee meets once per year, however working groups (4) of the Committee meets quarterly

**Level of participation:** Satisfactory

**Meetings format:** Working groups

## **Gender:**

**Percentage of female in the committee:** 60% (out of 14 members of the Committee, there are 8 women)

**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):** It was not considered relevant at this stage. Women participating in all activities of working groups of the Committee are already at the high level. 3 out of 4 chairpersons of working groups are women.

## **Promotion / Communication:**

**Communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of TF meetings:** Through direct

communication with the business community representatives.

Also through Email, Meetings, Website, Telephone

**Interface with other working groups/committees on similar issues:** There will be cooperation between different working groups if needed.

**Undertake information sessions to stakeholders or general public:**

A kick-off event (Conference/ public private dialog on trade facilitation) was organized in cooperation with the business community and the NCTF was introduced to the general public.

Information will be regularly shared with the interested parties through publication of articles in the press, meetings, website of the Committee, and website of the organisations that are members of the Committee.

## **Benefits:**

**Impact:** This newly established body was already engaged in solving several non-tariff barriers in trade with Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Benefits for the country's responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process:** The readiness of Serbia to accept the TFA and the creation of the NTFC will be beneficial to the WTO accession process and later on to the WTO negotiation process in the area of trade facilitation.

**Concrete operational outcomes:** Several non-tariff barriers in trade with Bosnia and Herzegovina were resolved through this mechanism, also different information has been provided to the business community regarding exports to EU and Turkey.

Outcomes also include: Negotiation of trade or trade facilitation agreements, Implementation of concrete trade facilitation measures, Improve transparency / dialogue, Developed an implementation plan for the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, Improved coordination, Improve business environment for traders, Reduction of time and / or improvement of procedures at the border, Reduction of costs of import, export and / or transit, Raise awareness on the importance of trade facilitation, Mainstreaming trade facilitation into other national policies

## **Lessons learned:**

**Success factors:** It is thought that to the extent of 56% the Committee is sustainable in time. Crucial factors to the sustainability of the NTFC are as follows: Commitment from members, Financial assistance / adequate resources, Capacity building, Political commitment / high level support, Strong leadership

**Greatest obstacles:** Lack of coordination and cooperation, Maintain engagement / motivation of participants / absenteeism, Lack of funding / resources, High level support / political buy-in, Resistance to change

**Lessons learned from your experience:** Good and proper communication and coordination with all

relevant stakeholders are of crucial importance

## **Future plans:**

**Plans for further development:** Creation of working groups on different topics to be as responsive to the needs of the business community as possible.

Also, the regional integration has been considered a lot within the work of the NCBTF, and it is in contact with other National Trade Facilitation Committees in the region.

## **Contact information:**

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