

Country: South Africa

Background:

Type of body: National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Official name: National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Year of establishment: 2016

Motivation for its establishment: It was established as per article 23 of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation of the World Trade Organization

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): Operating committee

Institutional Framework:

Degree of institutionalisation: A Cabinet Memorandum was prepared seeking approval for the establishment and launch of the National Committee. Both Houses of Parliament also approved it.

Type of organisation (ad hoc group, legal entity/organisation, etc): It is a formalised committee composed of government departments and agencies.

Coordinating agency: Jointly co-ordinated by the Department of Trade and Industry and the South Africa Revenue Service.

Scope/mandate:

Ensure ratification of the Protocol of Amendment introducing the Agreement on Trade Facilitation into the World Trade Organization Agreement;

Finalise categorization and notification of category A, B and C commitments;

Ensure implementation of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation;

Seek technical assistance and or capacity building support if and where necessary; and

Monitor implementation of trade facilitation measures.

Terms of reference: Yes

Working structure of the group: It is co-chaired by the Department of Trade and Industry and the South Africa Revenue Service and composed of a number of government departments and agencies.

Permanent technical secretariat: Yes

Funding:

Budget: No

Sources of funding: Government

Objectives / Focus:

Objectives:

To be a national monitoring and consultative mechanism for overseeing the implementation of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation;

To be a national focal point and platform to promote trade facilitation;

To facilitate inter-departmental and inter-agency coordination;

To address the Agreement on Trade Facilitation and related trade facilitation issues in the interest of enhancing efficiencies at the border;

To coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Agreement;

To facilitate the implementation of provisions of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation; and

To interact on trade issues.

Working plan: Yes

Monitoring and evaluation: There are set time frames, meetings and consultations, updates provided to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee for Trade and Industry.

Reporting form and supervisory authority: As and when required, the Committee reports to the Minister of Trade and has a dotted line to the Minister of Finance and Minister of Agriculture.

Membership / Composition:

Public or quasi-public agencies: Several government departments and agencies:

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);

South African Revenue Services (SARS);

International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC);

Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF);

National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS);

Department of Health (DOH);

Department of Transport (DOT);

Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DOJ&CD);

Home Affairs; Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA); and

South African Police Services (SAPS)

Private associations or entities: The National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) – vehicle by which government comes together with organised labour, business and community groupings on a national level. The Committee has information sharing sessions with them about twice a year.

Level of seniority of participants: Technical management - representatives from the above departments have the technical and institutional expertise to meaningfully engage in discussions and

formulation of recommendations or action items. They are nominated by their respective DG's.

Participation:

Frequency of meetings: Yes, quarterly.

Level of participation: The level of participation high.

Meetings format: Yes - there are formal meetings and workshops.

Promotion / Communication:

Communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of TF meetings: Electronic communication, meetings, briefings and updates written to the nominees and copied to their principals.

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

Undertake information sessions to stakeholders or general public: Yes

Benefits:

Impact:

To enhance understanding and cooperation between relevant government departments and agencies with regards to trade facilitation; and

To raise awareness of and understand trade facilitation challenges that may exist for respective departments and agencies.

Benefits for the country's responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process: With a more holistic picture of trade facilitation and better understanding of possible implication and challenges, the country is then better informed and prepared for engaging in the negotiation process

Concrete operational outcomes: Agreement on the notifications of the categories.

Lessons learned:

Success factors:

Workshopping relevant stakeholders on the Agreement on Trade Facilitation;

Getting relevant trade facilitation stakeholders on-board; and

Ensuring that we have the same understanding of trade facilitation and what it entails; and

Reaching agreement on the categorisations.

Greatest obstacles:

Lack of alignment of enabling legislation to facilitate trade;

Lack of alignment among departments or agencies in discharging their mandates in trade facilitation; and

Insufficient capacity



UN REPOSITORY ON NATIONAL TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEES

Last Update: 7 May 2017

Lessons learned from your experience: Trade facilitation does not have the same meaning to every stakeholder. Trade facilitation is a very involved process that can be quite costly, if it is to be efficient.

Future plans:

Plans for further development: Ensure implementation and compliance with obligations.

Contact information:

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