

Country: United States of America

Background:

Official name: The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (U.S. Trade Representative) with the advice of the Trade Policy Staff Committee (Trade Policy Staff Committee).

Motivation for its establishment: U.S. Trade Representative has primary responsibility, with the advice of the Trade Policy Staff Committee, for developing and coordinating the implementation of U.S. trade policy, including policies addressing trade facilitation.

Year of establishment: 1962

Other national bodies dealing with WTO issues and/or with Trade Facilitation: No.

Former multi-agency group/committee: The Trade Policy Staff Committee is a previously existing body.

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

Institutional Framework:

Degree of institutionalisation: The U.S. Congress established the Trade Policy Staff Committee and called for the President to appoint a Special Representative for Trade Negotiations (the predecessor of the U.S. Trade Representative) through the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. The original authorities have been, complemented over the years through additional legislation and Executive Orders. See <http://www.ustr.gov/about-us/history>

Type of organisation (ad hoc group, legal entity/organisation, etc): The Trade Policy Staff Committee is an ongoing interagency mechanism established by an act of Congress. For a history of U.S. Trade Representative, see <http://www.ustr.gov/about-us/history>

Scope/mandate: U.S. Trade Representative is responsible for convening the twenty agencies that make up the Trade Policy Staff Committee to review policy papers and negotiating documents concerning all trade policy issues, including trade facilitation. U.S. Trade Representative resolves policy differences among the agencies. On average, the Trade Policy Staff Committee processes approximately 285 policy papers and negotiating documents annually. Through the Trade Policy Staff Committee, the U.S. Trade Representative also invites input from the public on certain matters through written submissions and public hearings. Notices of such invitations are published in the Federal Register.

Terms of reference: Yes. See Title 15, U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2003 – Regulations of the Trade Policy Staff Committee

Coordinating agency: The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (U.S. Trade Representative)

Working structure of the group: U.S. Trade Representative consults with other government agencies on trade policy matters through the Trade Policy Review Group (TPRG), the Trade Policy

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Staff Committee (Trade Policy Staff Committee), and subcommittees under the Trade Policy Staff Committee. The Trade Policy Staff Committee is the primary operating group, with representation at the senior civil service level. Supporting the Trade Policy Staff Committee are more than 90 subcommittees responsible for specialized areas and several task forces that work on particular issues. If agreement is not reached in the Trade Policy Staff Committee, or if significant policy questions are being considered, then issues are taken up by the Deputy U.S. Trade Representative / Under Secretary level (TPRG).

Permanent technical secretariat: The Office of Trade Policy and Economics within the U.S. Trade Representative serves as the coordinating entity and Secretary.

Funding:

Budget: The Office of Trade Policy and Economics, the office within the U.S. Trade Representative which coordinates the Trade Policy Staff Committee process, is funded through the operating budget for U.S. Trade Representative. Participation by other agencies in the Trade Policy Staff Committee process is funded by the agencies.

Objectives / Focus:

Objectives: Developing and coordinating the implementation of U.S. trade policy, including trade facilitation.

Working plan: U.S. Trade Representative produces a "Trade Policy Agenda and Annual Report" that addresses trade facilitation, among other trade policy issues. The report can be accessed at <http://www.ustr.gov/about-us/press-office/reports-and-publications>

Monitoring and evaluation: Progress is monitored through annual reporting on pending and concluded trade facilitation negotiations, and on an ad hoc basis as trade policy issues related to trade facilitation arise.

Reporting form and supervisory authority: The "Trade Policy Agenda and Annual Report" is updated annually, released on March 1 each year, and is accessible to the public on the U.S. Trade Representative website.

Membership / Composition:

Public or quasi-public agencies: The Trade Policy Staff Committee solicits input from the public through public hearings and Federal Register notices.

Private associations or entities: Private associations or entities do not participate in the work of the Trade Policy Staff Committee. However, the Trade Policy Staff Committee solicits input from the public through public hearings and Federal Register notices. Additionally, the U.S. Congress established the private sector advisory committee system in 1974 to ensure that U.S. trade policy



and trade negotiation objectives adequately reflect U.S. commercial and economic interests. Congress expanded and enhanced the role of this system in subsequent trade acts, most recently the Trade Act of 2002. The advisory committees provide information and advice with respect to U.S. trade policy. The trade policy advisory committee system consists of 26 advisory committees, with a total membership of up approximately 700 advisors.

Level of seniority of participants: Agency representation in the Trade Policy Staff Committee is at the senior civil service level.

Participation:

Frequency of meetings: The Trade Policy Staff Committee meets on an as needed basis. On average, it meets approximately 2-3 times a month. Additional meetings are held at the sub-committee level.

Level of participation: Senior civil service representatives from the U.S. Trade Representative and 20 Federal agencies and offices participate in Trade Policy Staff Committee meetings.

Meetings format: Yes. Different levels of government officials participate in meetings depending on whether the meeting is at the Trade Policy Staff Committee Subcommittee, Trade Policy Staff Committee or Trade Representative / Under Secretary level. Additionally, the Trade Policy Staff Committee convenes public hearings to elicit input from stakeholders and private citizens.

Promotion / Communication:

Communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of TF meetings: The Secretary of the Trade Policy Staff Committee and Trade Policy Staff Committee Subcommittee leads remain in regular electronic contact with the representatives of the 20 federal agencies and offices of the Trade Policy Staff Committee.

Interface with other working groups/committees on similar issues: The representatives of the Trade Policy Staff Committee participate in the advisory committee process and international trade negotiations, allowing for information sharing on trade facilitation related issues.

Undertake information sessions to stakeholders or general public: The Trade Policy Staff Committee convenes public hearings to elicit input from stakeholders and private citizens on selected trade policy matters.

Benefits:

Impact: Coordination by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative allows the U.S. Government to quickly and effectively develop and coordinate the implementation of U.S. trade policy concerning trade facilitation.

Benefits for the country's responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process: The Office of the

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U.S. Trade Representative worked with the Trade Policy Staff Committee to effectively develop, coordinate and implement negotiating guidance concerning the WTO trade facilitation negotiations, allowing for quick and consensus-based formulation of negotiating instructions.

Concrete operational outcomes: The U.S. Government was able to quickly respond to new negotiating proposals in the lead up to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement reached in December 2013, and continues to effectively coordinate negotiating guidance on trade facilitation issues.

Lessons learned:

Success factors: Maintaining an open and frequent dialogue with all agencies and offices engaged in trade policy is critical for successful development of trade policies and negotiating guidance concerning trade facilitation matters.

Greatest obstacles: Ensuring the correct level of participation from customs and other border agencies and entities involved in trade facilitation.

Lessons learned from your experience: Be as inclusive as possible.

Future plans:

Plans for further development: Continued expansion of electronic communication among Trade Policy Staff Committee participants, to include use of new web-based platforms.

Contact information:

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