

Country: Togo

Background:

Official name: National Committee for Trade Facilitation

Year of establishment: Created in 2009 through the National Committee for International Trade Negotiations, it became official on the signing of the decree held in October 2016.

Motivation for its establishment:

Article 23.2 of the Trade Facilitation Agreement,
Monitoring and coordination of the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement,
Strengthening Public-private partnership in the area of trade.

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

The Directorate of Foreign Trade,
The National Committee of International Trade Negotiations,
The Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, and
Customs as a member of the Working Group on the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Former multi-agency group/committee: No

Current status of the working group (running, pilot phase, not functioning, etc): The NTFC is operational

Institutional Framework:

Degree of institutionalisation:

The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement;
The decision that was taken at the Government level, see the Decree of creation and the act of application

Type of organisation (ad hoc group, legal entity/organisation, etc): Established as a separate structure with a legal status (by decree).

Coordinating agency: The Ministry of Commerce

Scope/mandate: Permanent Structure

Terms of reference: Yes, there are Terms of reference and a plan of action

Working structure of the group:

President: Ministry of Commerce,
Vice-president: Customs
Rapporteur: Chamber of Commerce

Permanent technical secretariat: Yes, a permanent secretariat is functional. It is led by the Ministry of Trade, and it is composed by 4 people.

Funding:

Budget: No, the working group does not yet have an operating budget. However, it receives an annual grant from the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA)

Sources of funding: Eventually the State budget and the contribution from private and international organizations.

Items covered by the budget: The main activities that this budget could have financed are: Committee meetings, training of members, the activities of the technical working groups and the information and awareness-raising meetings of the public and stakeholders.

Objectives / Focus:

Objectives: Coordinate implementation, and make recommendations and assessments of the implementation of these recommendations.

Working plan: Yes the committee has a work plan and an annual action plan.

Monitoring and evaluation: It is thought that to the extent of 100% the NTFC fulfils its role of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Monitoring channels: Consultations with stakeholders and Reports.

Evaluation channels: Focus groups and Reports of work.

Familiar with the following tools: World Bank Doing Business Trading Across Borders, World Bank Logistics Performance Index (LPI), World Economic Forum Global Enabling Trade Report.

Familiar with the following tools to some extent: UNCTAD statistics (country and maritime profiles), UN Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation, OECD Trade Facilitation Indicators.

Reporting form and supervisory authority: The group makes periodic and annual reports to the Minister for Trade and the Prime Minister.

Membership / Composition:

Public or quasi-public agencies:

The Presidency of the Republic;

The Prime Minister;

The Ministry of Commerce;

The Ministry of Economy and Finance;

The Togolese Revenue Authority (Commissioner of Customs and Excise);

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport;

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

The Ministry of Justice;

The Ministry of Security and Civil Protection;



The Ministry of Defense and Veterans Affairs;
The Ministry of Health;
The Ministry of Agriculture;
The Ministry of the Environment;
The Faculty of Economics and management of the University of Lomé;
The Port of Lomé;
The Airports Company of Lomé -Tokoin.

Private associations or entities:

The Professional Union of Customs Officers;
Consignees;
Occupations of handlers;
The National Shippers' Council of Togo;
The Society of Single Window Operations for Foreign Trade;
The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Togo;
The National Employers' Council of Togo;
The National Union of Carriers of Togo.

Level of seniority of participants: Senior-35%, Middle-50%, Junior-15%

Participation:

Frequency of meetings: Quarterly and extraordinary meetings when necessary.

Level of participation: Over 80% of members attend the meetings of the committee.

Meetings format: Three (3) technical working groups are created within the committee:

Working Group on Procedures

Working Group on the implementation of the TFA and the monitoring of commitments

Working Group on Institutional Aspects

Gender:

Percentage of female in the committee: 15%

Chairman / President / Vice-president is female: Yes

Committee did decide on gender mainstreaming TF in the past: Yes

If yes, explain briefly (example: recommendations on gender, special trade procedures for women, etc): The composition of the office. This is why the position of first vice president is entrusted to a woman (customs).

Promotion / Communication:

Communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of TF meetings: The communication

is done by email or letters addressed to members for working sessions, information workshops, awareness and dissemination of reports.

The committee has a whatsapp platform on which the information is shared.

Interface with other working groups/committees on similar issues: The committee organizes extended meetings for these groups National Committee for Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, National Committee for International Trade Negotiations, National Committee for Transport Facilitation.

Undertake information sessions to stakeholders or general public: Yes, information and awareness workshops are organized for the public and interested parties. Also through TV and radio.

Benefits:

Impact: Strengthening public-private partnership in the monitoring and implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement. This helps to identify concerns and facilitate collaboration between the agencies involved in international trade.

Benefits for the country's responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process: By reflections and presentations of the positions of the country on subjects under negotiation in the WTO in relation to the Permanent Mission of Togo in Geneva and also to the effective implementation of the agreements.

Concrete operational outcomes: 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,
Raise awareness on the importance of trade facilitation.

Lessons learned:

Success factors: It is thought that to the extent of 99% the Committee is sustainable in time. Crucial factors to the sustainability are as follows: Cooperation among members / Common understanding and goals, Financial assistance / adequate resources, Capacity building, Political commitment / high level support, and Involvement of the private sector.

Greatest obstacles: Lack of funding / resources, Lack of awareness of importance of NTFC / understanding of trade facilitation, and Resistance to change.

Lessons learned from your experience: Synergy between public administrations and private organizations.

Future plans:

Plans for further development: Formation of the group on the evaluation of the implementation of the agreement.

Development and validation of a multi-year trade facilitation roadmap.

Also, the regional integration has been considered a lot within the work of the Committee.

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