

Country: Sweden

Background:

Type of body: PRO-committee

Official name: Swedish Trade Procedures Council (SWEPRO)

Motivation for its establishment: The discovery in the 1950's of how the use of new printing/copy machines could be used for the standardisation of trade documents led to the initiation of a National Enquiry into the matter. That work was later taken to the Nordic Council and the UNECE (1961) and is the basis of UN/LAYOUT KEY. The National Enquiry was later transformed into SWEPRO (1955).

Year of establishment: It was set up in 1955 as a consultative body. In 1975, it was officially called SWEPRO.

Other national bodies dealing with WTO issues and/or with Trade Facilitation: Swedish Customs holds a strategic level group called Alfred, with subcommittees on development and operational issues.

Former multi-agency group/committee: Since 1955 SWEPRO has had a number of organisational forms.

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

Institutional Framework:

Degree of institutionalisation: The Forum was mentioned in the Board's instruction, a document decided by the parliament until 2012.

Type of organisation (ad hoc group, legal entity/organisation, etc): SWEPRO was a legal entity until 2009. It is currently an informal forum at the National Board of Trade.

Scope/mandate: To discuss and analyse trade facilitation issues at a strategic and tactical level.

Terms of reference: SWEPRO has a running one-year programme.

Coordinating agency: The National Board of Trade

Working structure of the group: The group is Chaired by the National Board of Trade and has nine other members from the private and public sectors. Special task forces and working groups have been instituted ad hoc to look at specific issues.

Permanent technical secretariat: The National Board of Trade is responsible for the Secretariat. There are three officers working in trade facilitation issues within the National Board.

Funding:

Budget: No

Sources of funding: The Secretariat is funded by the regular budget for the National Board of Trade as part of its commitments for Trade Facilitation.

Objectives / Focus:

Objectives:

- To highlight trade procedures that constitutes hindrances to Swedish industry; and
- To discuss possible solution at national, regional and international level.

Working plan: Yes

Monitoring and evaluation: This information is not available.

Reporting form and supervisory authority: Informally to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Membership / Composition:

Public or quasi-public agencies: SWEPRO is composed of:

- National Board of Trade;
- Swedish Customs;
- Business Sweden;
- Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions; and
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Private associations or entities: SWEPRO is composed of:

- Swedish Trade Association;
- Swedish Bankers' Association;
- Swedish International Chamber of Commerce (ICC);
- Swedish International Freight Association;
- and Network for Electronic Business.

Level of seniority of participants: Heads of Division/Experts

Participation:

Frequency of meetings: SWEPRO meet at least four time per year.

Level of participation: High level of participation (80%)

Meetings format: Special focus meetings were conducted during 2012. In 2013, the format has been more regular meetings.

Promotion / Communication:

Communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of TF meetings: Through the following means:

- SWEPRO's website;
- meeting minutes; and
- information on special issues.

Interface with other working groups/committees on similar issues: The Customs groups are informed through Swedish Customs.

Undertake information sessions to stakeholders or general public: Wider stakeholder groups are invited to discuss particular themes.

Benefits:

Impact: Historically it has meant a lot for simplification of trade procedures in Sweden. Today the role is more marginal, but it can still be an important source of information for the participants, especially for authorities in knowing what legislation at the European Union (EU) level will constitute problems for Business and showing how business works with various issues.

Benefits for the country's responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process: There are regular information sessions on the negotiations progress in the WTO and the group has worked as a sound board at some instances.

Concrete operational outcomes: The groups initiated work on Supply Chain security issues that have had a large impact both as information to companies and as a source for Swedish positions on Security issues in the EU. Also other coordination issues have been ironed out. Dialogue is seen as an outcome that has its own worth.

Lessons learned:

Success factors: Flexibility in organization; Concrete work items, and Dedicated membership.

Greatest obstacles: Difficulty to solve issues at the regional (EU) level, conformity with a situation that seems largely satisfactory.

Lessons learned from your experience: That it is important to keep continuity and have a stable framework, at the same time as over time there need to be flexibility in the organizational set up. Concrete issues to work on are crucial in the start-up phase.

Future plans:

Plans for further development: To enhance the continued dialogue.

Contact information:

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Last Update: Older than 2013

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