

## Country: Jamaica

### Background:

**Official name:** Trade Facilitation Task Force (TF2)

**Motivation for its establishment:**

The need to drive economic growth by creating a trade friendly environment,

The high cost of cross border trade transactions and the need to improve the overall trading environment in Jamaica,

The development and promotion of Jamaica as the fourth global logistics connecting point in world trade,

The requirement to create a National Committee on Trade Facilitation under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

**Year of establishment:** 2015

**Other national bodies dealing with WTO issues and/or with Trade Facilitation:** The Jamaica Trade and Adjustment Team (JTAT) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, also deals with WTO implementation issues, more broadly.

**Former multi-agency group/committee:** There have been previous bodies that were created to address Trade Facilitation and Competitiveness issues more broadly. However, the current Trade Facilitation Task Force was not based on any pre-existing body.

**Current status of the working group (running, pilot phase, not functioning, etc):** The Trade Facilitation Task Force is currently active.

### Institutional Framework:

**Degree of institutionalisation:** A Cabinet Note informed the Cabinet of the creation of the Task Force. Subsequently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), involving all the relevant trade related Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government (MDAs), was signed to formalise support and foster collaboration. No legislation was passed.

The Permanent Secretaries and Ministers of all the relevant trade related Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government signed the Memorandum of Understanding.

**Type of organisation (ad hoc group, legal entity/organisation, etc):** The Task Force was set up by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, under the aegis of the National Competitiveness Council. It is, however, ad hoc in nature as it currently pulls its membership from existing Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government and the Private sector.

**Scope/mandate:** The mandate of the Task Force is to map and drive the implementation of the trade facilitation measures which are deemed critical to support economic growth and promote competitiveness. This includes, but is not limited to the coordination and implementation of the

provisions under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The Task Force's mandate is also to ensure a coordinated approach across Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in the development of a single electronic window for trade.

**Terms of reference:** Yes, it does.

**Coordinating agency:**

The Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries (MICAF), is primarily responsible to Cabinet for the successful implementation of the Trade Facilitation Programme.

The National Competitiveness Council (NCC) reports to Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries and is responsible for implementing measures to improve the country's business environment and the facilitation of business environment reforms.

The Task Force reports to National Competitiveness Council and is responsible for implementing and coordinating trade facilitation measures.

**Working structure of the group:** The Task Force is headed by a Chairman, who is assisted by a Deputy Chairman, as well as a Trade Facilitation Secretariat. There are Project Steering Committees with lead agencies which report to the Task Force on the six broad objectives of the national Trade Facilitation reform agenda.

**Permanent technical secretariat:** Yes, and it is supported by members drawn from other existing Government agencies.

**Funding:**

**Budget:** There is no budget for the operations of the Trade Facilitation Task Force.

**Sources of funding:** N/A

**Items covered by the budget:** N/A

**Objectives / Focus:**

**Objectives:** The overall objective is to stimulate growth and enhance Jamaica's trade competitiveness by reducing the time and cost of cross-border operations through improved governance of border regulatory agencies, enhanced transparency and efficiency of cross-border formalities, along with the strengthened capacity of businesses to comply with procedural requirements.

**Working plan:** Yes. Under the national Trade Facilitation Project Plan, there are six major outcomes to be achieved from the relevant Trade Facilitation reforms. These are:

- A reformed institutional and governance framework for international trade;
- Improved efficiency of border regulatory agencies and simplification of cross-border formalities;
- Establishment of an electronic Single Window for trade related transactions across all border regulatory agencies;

More transparent and predictable trading environment and better access to trade related information;

Enhanced efficiency of the country's trade support services to support Jamaica's logistics and transshipment hub;

Enhanced capacity of border regulatory officials to facilitate trade and of businesses to manage cross-border requirements.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** It is intended that the lead agencies of the six major outcomes to be achieved will provide monthly reports to the Task Force which will then report to the National Competitiveness Council.

**Reporting form and supervisory authority:** The Trade Facilitation Task Force is required to report to the National Competitiveness Council (NCC), which reports to the Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries.

## **Membership / Composition:**

**Public or quasi-public agencies:** Owing to the recent restructuring of Government Ministries, the public bodies that were originally represented on the Task Force have been changed. However, the relevant Ministries with portfolio responsibility for Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, Fisheries, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Transport, National Security, Health, Science, Technology and the Cabinet Office, are represented on the Trade Facilitation Task Force.

**Private associations or entities:** Representatives from the Exporters, Importers, Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders, Manufacturers and the Chambers of Commerce, Business Associations and Shippers are represented.

**Level of seniority of participants:** Participants are generally senior public servants (Directors and above) and senior representatives (Directors and above) from the private sector.

## **Participation:**

**Frequency of meetings:** The Task Force meets approximately once per month.

**Level of participation:** There is generally full participation from all invited representatives.

**Meetings format:** Yes. There have been various brainstorming and strategy sessions, as well as formal and technical meetings.

## **Promotion / Communication:**

**Communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of TF meetings:** An update is usually provided by the Task Force Secretariat to the relevant members. This is done through emails and/or at meetings.

**Interface with other working groups/committees on similar issues:** Members of the Task Force



who are also representatives of other groups, usually provide relevant updates to those bodies, upon request.

**Undertake information sessions to stakeholders or general public:** There have been a number of meetings and a validation workshop involving the private sector, but no official public dissemination of information has taken place as yet.

## **Benefits:**

**Impact:** The impact has been positive, particularly in relation to the wide-scale acceptance of the need for reform of the business and trading environment in Jamaica.

**Benefits for the country's responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process:** It has contributed to the early ratification of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, as well as the timely preparation of our Category B and C commitments and timeframes.

**Concrete operational outcomes:** There is now a defined Road Map and Project Plan for the execution of the country's broad Trade Facilitation reform agenda.

## **Lessons learned:**

**Success factors:** Having a clear and well defined scope and mandate, as well as transparently defined roles and responsibilities, ensure the more seamless and effective functioning of the Task Force.

**Greatest obstacles:** The main obstacles tend to be potential resistance to change, lack of financing for a stand-alone Secretariat, and the high demands faced by public servants in fulfilling their existing functional roles alongside those related to the work of the Task Force.

**Lessons learned from your experience:** There is need for a properly funded Task Force and Secretariat, which is supported by a project manager to oversee the implementation of the various reform projects.

## **Future plans:**

**Plans for further development:** Ideally, it would be useful to have a stand-alone Trade Facilitation Task Force and Secretariat, which can play a monitoring role in relation to the implementation of the relevant Trade Facilitation reforms, on an ongoing basis.

## **Contact information:**

**Contact Information:** The Task Force is currently without a Chairman. In the interim, the Deputy Chairman has responsibility for overseeing the work of the Task Force. Contact may, however, be made via the Trade Facilitation Secretariat:



# UN REPOSITORY ON NATIONAL TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEES

Last Update: 11 July 2016

## **Ms. Kanika Y. Tomlinson**

10th Floor Air Jamaica Building

72 Harbour Street Kingston

Jamaica

Tel: (876) 967-0507/967-0674

Fax: (876) 948-7486

Email: [ktomlinson@tradeboard.gov.jm](mailto:ktomlinson@tradeboard.gov.jm)