

Country: India

Background:

Official name: National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Year of establishment: 2016

Motivation for its establishment: WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation

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

Former multi-agency group/committee: No

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

Institutional Framework:

Degree of institutionalisation: As per cabinet decision

Type of organisation (ad hoc group, legal entity/organisation, etc): Legal entity

Coordinating agency: Customs, Department of Revenue

Scope/mandate: Facilitate co-ordination and implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement provisions.

Actions related to cross-border e-commerce: simplified procedures and automation

Terms of reference: Yes:

Terms of Reference - English

Working structure of the group: The committee has a three tier- structure consisting of the National Committee, the Steering Committee (which will be headed by Member Customs, Central Board of Excise and Customs - CBEC) and an ad hoc working groups on specific issues.

Permanent technical secretariat: Yes, the Secretariat is housed within the Central Board of Excise and Customs i.e. with Customs. There are 3 people who comprise the permanent secretariat.

Funding:

Budget: No. It is not considered necessary

Objectives / Focus:

Objectives:

Finalisation and approval of the national trade facilitation plan and outreach programme

Monitoring progress of Trade Facilitation

Contributing to the legislative changes required for Trade Facilitation Agreement implementation

Dissemination and compilation of international best practices

Co-ordination and integration of the Trade Facilitation plan with the states' consultative mechanism

Monitoring the work of the steering committee and the working groups

Working plan: Yes. Three year action plan

Monitoring and evaluation: It is thought that to the extent of 92% the NTFC fulfils its role of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Monitoring tools: Monitoring plan with indicators, Baselines and Targets, Consultations with stakeholders.

Evaluation tools: Independent third-party assessments.

Familiar with the following tools: UNCTAD statistics (country and maritime profiles), UN Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation, World Bank Doing Business Trading Across Borders, World Bank Logistics Performance Index (LPI), World Economic Forum Global Enabling Trade Report.

Reporting form and supervisory authority: Twice a year to the Government of India

Membership / Composition:

Public or quasi-public agencies: MINISTRY OF FINANCE, COMMERCE, AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, CONSUMER AFFAIRS, HOME AFFAIRS, SHIPPING, CIVIL AVIATION, RAILWAYS, ROADWAYS

Private associations or entities: CII, FICCI, FFFAI, ASSOCHAM, PHD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Level of seniority of participants: Senior-75%, Middle-25%

Participation:

Frequency of meetings: Twice a year

Level of participation: High and inclusive participation

Meetings format: Yes, the committee uses different meetings formats.

Gender:

Percentage of female in the committee: 25%

Chairman / President / Vice-president is female: No

Comittee did decide on gender mainstreaming TF in the past: No

If no, why not. (Example: It not considered a priority, not considered relevant at this stage, lack of awareness, etc): It was not considered relevant at this stage. No specific gender related issues have been raised by members of the Committee.

Promotion / Communication:

Communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of TF meetings: E-mail and



Administrative letters

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

Undertake information sessions to stakeholders or general public: Publication of articles in the Press, Website of the organisations that are members of the NTFC, Social media

Benefits:

Benefits for the country's responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process: Under-process

Concrete operational outcomes: Implementation of concrete trade facilitation measures Improve transparency / dialogue, Developed an implementation plan for the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, Improved coordination, Improve business environment for traders, Reduction of time and / or improvement of procedures at the border, Reduction of costs of import, export and / or transit, Raise awareness on the importance of trade facilitation.

Lessons learned:

Success factors: It is thought that to the extent of 85% the NTFC is sustainable in time.

Crucial factors to the sustainability of the NTFC are as follows: Cooperation among members / Common understanding and goals, Political commitment / high level support, Involvement of the private sector, Close monitoring of results, Development of work plans and proposals.

Greatest obstacles: Maintain engagement / motivation of participants / absenteeism, Lack of awareness of importance of NTFC / understanding of trade facilitation, Resistance to change.

Lessons learned from your experience: Structure and Terms of Reference need to be well defined.

Future plans:

Plans for further development: Further plans will evolve in due course.

Contact information:

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