

Country: Guatemala

Background:

Type of body: Trade Facilitation Committee

Official name: Trade Facilitation Committee

Year of establishment: 01.09.2016 00:00:00

Motivation for its establishment: The completion of the negotiation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) entails formal commitments by the State of Guatemala. In order to comply with the provisions of Article 22 of the TFA, a National Committee was formed to ensure compliance with Guatemala's multilateral and regional commitments regarding trade facilitation.

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

Former multi-agency group/committee: Yes, taking into account the structure of the public-private inter-institutional group that supported the negotiation by Guatemala of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

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

Institutional Framework:

Type of organisation (ad hoc group, legal entity/organisation, etc): Ad hoc group. It was formed through Acuerdo Ministerial número 355-2016 of the Ministry of Economy of Guatemala

Coordinating agency: Ministry of Economy

Scope/mandate: Everything related to the topic of Trade Facilitation with national application in the territory of the Republic of Guatemala, including the commitments acquired at the multilateral, regional and bi-national level in relation to it.

Terms of reference: Yes. Please refer to the link: <https://www.mineco.gob.gt/comit%C3%A9-nacional-de-facilitaci%C3%B3n-del-comercio>

Working structure of the group: The Committee is made up of representatives of the following 7 public institutions with a direct relationship in foreign trade operations, with voice and vote. It also has 5 representatives of the private sector, with voice and vote, belonging to the International Business Negotiations Business Commission (CENCIT). The presidency is exercised by the Ministry of Economy, through the Vice Minister of Integration and Foreign Trade. The Committee has 3 working groups at the technical level: • Customs Issues Group • Group of sanitary and phytosanitary issues • Group of other non-tariff measures

Permanent technical secretariat: Yes, it is exercised by the Ministry of Economy

Funding:

Budget: No. The calls, headquarters and materials for holding Committee meetings are provided by

the Ministry of Economy without having a specific budget.

Sources of funding: N/A

Objectives / Focus:

Objectives: Coordinate the efforts of governmental and other institutions, in order to ensure and manage the implementation and compliance of all those actions that promote the Trade Facilitation.

Working plan: Yes, the Committee has an annual Work Plan

Monitoring and evaluation: At each Committee meeting, the progress of the different technical working groups is monitored

Reporting form and supervisory authority: Through specific high-level meetings, the Committee presented the progress of the work plan to the authorities of each agency.

Membership / Composition:

Public or quasi-public agencies: Full members:• Ministry of Economy• Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food• Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance• Ministry of Interior• Ministry of Foreign Affairs• Ministry of Communications, Infrastructure and Housing• Superintendence of Tax Administration, Customs Administration.Support in thematic working groups:• Ministry of Energy and Mines• Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

Private associations or entities: Full members:• International Business Negotiations Business Commission (CENCIT).Support in thematic working groups:• Guatemalan Chamber of Food and Beverage• Carrier unions• Association of freight agencies• Customs agents corporation.

Level of seniority of participants: Experts in the areas of their competence, with in-depth knowledge of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

Participation:

Frequency of meetings: The Committee meets every 3 months, ordinarily and sometimes extraordinarily. The Working Groups meet once a month.

Level of participation: Tall

Meetings format: Yes, for example, thematic groups, activities for exchanging ideas or gathering information, evaluations, workshops.

Gender:

Percentage of female in the committee: 42%

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 has not been considered a priority at this stage

If no, explain future plan in this area.: There are no plans yet

Promotion / Communication:

Communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of TF meetings: There are regular dissemination activities (seminars, conferences), as well as through social networks.

Interface with other working groups/committees on similar issues: Through the thematic Working Groups, actions are coordinated with other entities, committees or working groups at the national level.

Undertake information sessions to stakeholders or general public: The dissemination activities are convened in advance, by email or publicly, depending on the type of activity.

Benefits:

Impact: Progress has been made in complying with the commitments made in the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, mainly in the measures that Guatemala notified in categories B and C. Measures that will facilitate foreign trade in a sensitive manner at national level are being implemented, with emphasis on the use of information technologies and transparency in processes.

Benefits for the country's responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process: As the negotiation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement has been completed and what it is important now is the implementation of the Agreement. The experience acquired by members of the Committee (many of them belonging to the Interinstitutional Commission that supported the negotiation process) allows to have an adequate response capacity to the challenges of the implementation.

Concrete operational outcomes: The Committee has obtained as a result of its deliberations and technical work, among others:• Notifications of measures in Categories A, B and C• Notification of provisional and final dates for measures in categories B and C• First mapping of implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement at the national level• First workshop for determining gaps for compliance with measures in categories B and C of the TFA• Development of the website on advertising of foreign trade information and establishment of the single foreign trade information service• Development of the first study of customs clearance and customs clearance nationwide

Lessons learned:

Success factors: • Participation of the public and private sector, with voice and vote• Knowledge of the commitments made in terms of trade facilitation• Nation's vision

Greatest obstacles: • Lack of economic resources for implementation• Lack of cooperation of WTO members or international organizations for the acquisition of capacity to implement measures in category C.

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Lessons learned from your experience: • Inter-agency coordination • Ability to respond • National commitment to trade facilitation • Division of topics into thematic working groups, with experts in the field

Future plans:

Plans for further development: • Expand the topics for discussion within the Committee • Verify compliance with trade facilitation commitments • Improve coordination mechanisms with public and private entities

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