

Country: Cuba

Background:

Type of body: WTO Negotiations on trade facilitation support group

Official name: National Sub-group on Trade Facilitation

Year of establishment: In operation since September 2002

Motivation for its establishment: By Decisión No.3505 del 08.07.1999 of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and its Executive Committee, the National Group of Attention to the World Trade Organization (WTO) was established, headed by the Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment Foreign (MINCEX) and is also composed of the Vice Ministers or equivalent officials of the Central State Administration Organizations and other institutions such as: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINREX); Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA); Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP); Ministry of Finance and Prices (MFP); Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG); Central Bank of Cuba (BCC); Advisor to the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers (CECM); Cuban Office of Industrial Property (OCPI); National Bureau of Standardization (ONN); Research Center of the International Economy of the University of Havana (CIEI); World Economy Research Center (ICES), among others. The National WTO Attention Group was created to establish the strategic lines for Cuba's participation in the WTO and in multilateral negotiations. The National Attention Group to the WTO was subordinated 12 National Subgroups that were created to, in the sphere of its competence, prepare and submit to the higher instance the proposals that correspond to the obligations and interests of the country, according to the work program. The National Subgroups that were created are: 1) Agriculture and SPS Subgroup; 2) Sub-Group on Anti-Dumping, Subsidies and Safeguards; 3) Subgroup of Commerce and Environment; 4) Subgroup of Technical Barriers to Trade; 5) Subgroup of Services; 6) Technology Transfer Subgroup; 7) TRIPS subgroup; 8) Public Procurement Subgroup; 9) Competition Policy Subgroup; 10) Investment Subgroup; 11) Electronic Commerce Subgroup, and 12) National Trade Facilitation Subgroup.

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

Former multi-agency group/committee: Yes. The National Sub-group on Trade Facilitation and other sub-groups were established under the National Group on WTO issues.

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

Institutional Framework:

Degree of institutionalisation: Its antecedent is Decision No.3505 of 8.07.1999 of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and its Executive Committee.

Type of organisation (ad hoc group, legal entity/organisation, etc): As an ad hoc Group

Coordinating agency: The Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment (MINCEX)

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Scope/mandate: Fundamentally, it deals with the implementation of the provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement, preparing notifications to be submitted to the Trade Facilitation Committee, among other issues.

Terms of reference: No

Working structure of the group: The National Sub-group is co-chaired by the Republic General Customs and the Directorate of the International Economic Organisations of the Ministry of Foreign trade and Foreign Investment. In addition, the Sub-group is also composed of 14 members.

Permanent technical secretariat: The Directorate of International Economic Organizations (DOEI) of MINCEX also acts as the Secretariat.

Funding:

Budget: No

Objectives / Focus:

Objectives: Fundamentally, work on the implementation of the provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement, comply with transparency obligations, among other issues.

Working plan: Yes, there is an annual work plan of the National Trade Facilitation Subgroup and the Organisms that comprise it also have their plans for implementing the provisions of the Agreement.

Monitoring and evaluation: At each meeting, compliance with the Subgroup Work Plan has been checked since its last meeting and we analyze the executive status of the implementation plans of the provisions of the Agreement.

Reporting form and supervisory authority: The National Trade Facilitation Subgroup meets 2 or 3 times a year, but may hold extraordinary meetings if necessary. The Subgroup reports its work to the National WTO Attention Group, which meets twice a year.

Membership / Composition:

Public or quasi-public agencies: A total of 13 government agencies and institutions participate in the National Trade Facilitation Subgroup: 1) Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment (MINCEX, different areas of the Ministry); 2) General Customs of the Republic (AGR); 3) Ministry of Finance and Prices (MFP); 4) Ministry of Transportation (MITRANS: participates in the Directorate of Maritime and River Transportation; as well as the Institute of Civil Aeronautics of Cuba (IACC); and the Cuban Aviation Corporation, (CACSA)); 5) Ministry of Interior (MININT); 6) Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA, participates in the National Office for Standardization (ONN) and the INNOMAX Group); 7) Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP: the National Department of Food Hygiene and the National Institute of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Microbiology (INHEM)); 8) Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG: participates in the Animal Health and Plant Health Directorate); 9) Central

Bank of Cuba (BCC); 10) Ministry of Communications (MINCOM); 11) Chamber of Commerce of Cuba, 12) Empresa CUBACONTROL S.A. and 13) Empresa Consignataria Mambisa S.A.

Private associations or entities: The Chamber of Commerce of Cuba, a self-funded entity (Represents all its public and private sector partners) and also Empresas CUBACONTROL S.A. and Consignee Mambisa, who provide specialized services for supervision and inspection of goods and support for maritime transport, respectively.

Level of seniority of participants: Directors and specialists with more than 5 years working experiences in their entity are present, appointed by the Heads of Organizations and Institutions.

Participation:

Frequency of meetings: Two or three times a year, but we can hold extraordinary meetings if necessary.

Level of participation: Generally, more than 80% of Members participate in meetings.

Meetings format: Progress in the implementation of the provisions of the TFA is checked, participation in some technical assistance activity is reported (reports of these events are circulated) and ideas are exchanged on various topics related to the Agreement, etc.

Gender:

Percentage of female in the committee: 50%

Chairman / President / Vice-president is female: No

Committee did decide on gender mainstreaming TF in the past: N.A.

If no, why not. (Example: It not considered a priority, not considered relevant at this stage, lack of awareness, etc): It has not been necessary, in Cuba there is equal opportunity for men and women.

Promotion / Communication:

Communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of TF meetings: All members of the Subgroup are kept informed via email. In addition, the addresses of the Mechanism Web sites for the Agreement on the Trade Facilitation Agreement (<http://www.tfafacility.org/>) and the Trade Facilitation Agreement Database (<https://www.tfadatabase.org/>), both of the WTO. Reports of the participation of a Member in an international training event are circulated.

Interface with other working groups/committees on similar issues: One way is through the meetings of the National Attention Group to the WTO, where a permanent item on the agenda are the reports of activities of the National Subgroups.

Undertake information sessions to stakeholders or general public: Through lectures in the curriculums for the leaders and managers of the MINCEX Master's Center, as well as lectures for the

associates of the Chamber of Commerce.

Benefits:

Impact: The Subgroup always works in close coordination with all parties involved, so that no instruction for the negotiator in Geneva was issued without first consulting all interested parties at the national level.

Benefits for the country's responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process: The Subgroup has always provided agile responses during the negotiation process, thanks to the established national coordination.

Concrete operational outcomes: Cuba's positions have been included in the negotiating text, although not all of them were included in the final Agreement.

Lessons learned:

Success factors: Prior national coordination is essential to react in an agile manner and for our positions to be taken into consideration.

Greatest obstacles: To raise awareness among all the actors linked to the topic at the beginning of the negotiations. Also, the moment we had to provide a response during the negotiations and that the negotiator could react at the Negotiating Group meetings.

Lessons learned from your experience: Prior national coordination is essential to react in an agile manner and for our positions to be taken into consideration.

Future plans:

Plans for further development: Continue working on the implementation of the Agreement and go further when necessary and beneficial for the country.

Contact information:

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