



UNECE
UN/CEFACT

Engaging private sector in
National Trade Facilitation Bodies
What works and what does not work?



Tuesday, 6 October 2020
13.00-15.00 Geneva time
Virtual

<https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=55082>

Background

Governments worldwide have set up National Trade Facilitation Bodies (NTFB) to coordinate, oversee and plan trade facilitation reforms. These bodies pursue agreement, cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders from the private and public sectors. Private sector participants include importers and exporters from all industry sectors and all types/sizes of business as well as intermediaries such as freight forwarders, carriers, customs agents, banks, and insurance companies.

A successful engagement of the private sector in a NTFB is essential to its sustainability and ultimately to the successful implementation of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and other trade facilitation reforms. UNECE Recommendation n° 4 on National Trade Facilitation Bodies stresses that impediments to trade facilitation can only be meaningfully analyzed and comprehensive solutions devised, with the active involvement of private sector participants.

Surveys of existing NTFBs by the WTO Secretariat and at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) show that the private sector is frequently represented in NTFBs through associations and sometimes on the Body's board level. At the same time, both private sector actors and NTFB staff, report challenges in engaging the private sector at the right level in a continuous manner. Private sector representatives also frequently raise questions with regards to benefits of participation and the contributions they can make?

This webinar shall provide an opportunity to discuss the challenges of engaging the private sector in the activities of an NTFB. It aims to look into some of the barriers and challenges in participation and to present possible solutions and approaches towards an effective engagement. With this webinar UN/CEFACT aims to provide guidance on the effective implementation of UNECE Recommendations No. 4 and No. 40 and WTO TFA Article 23.2. The findings of the webinar will inform the future work of UN/CEFACT in this area.

Objective

This webinar aims to contribute to strengthening the organizational framework and performance of National Trade Facilitation Bodies—Committees or working groups—by sharing experiences and current practices. Speakers from the public and private sector familiar with the work and challenges of NTFBs will address the following questions:

- How best to engage representatives from the private sector in the activities of a NTFB?
- How to ensure an equal voice of the different private sector interests, in particular SMEs?
- How to leverage private sector competence and contributions?
- How to deliver on reform expectations of the private sector?

Agenda

13:00 – 13:10 – Opening Address and overview

- Ms. Maria Ceccarelli, Chief, Trade Facilitation Section, UNECE
- Ms. Estelle Igwe, UN/CEFACT Vice-Chair

Session 1: Current practices and challenges

Moderator: Mr. Jake Schostag, UN/CEFACT Domain Coordinator

13:10 – 13:20 – Private sector participation in NTFB: Facts and anecdotes?

- Mr. Pierre Bonthonneau, International Trade Centre

13:20 – 13:30 – Challenges, barriers, and benefits for private sector

- Ms. Katie Weiner, Director, Global Customs Regulatory Affairs, Cargill

13:30 – 13:40 – Viewpoint of small and medium enterprises

- Ms. Lisa McAuley, CEO, Global Trade Professionals Alliance (GTPA)

13:40 – 13:50 – Examples of challenges encountered?

- Mr. Vincent Safari, Coordinator Rwanda NTFC

13:50 – 14:10 – Questions and Answers

Session 2: Good practices and solutions

Moderator: Ms. Birgit Viohl, UN/CEFACT Domain Coordinator

14:10 – 14:40 – Experiences and solutions from NTFBs

- Turkey: Mr. Hakki Gurkan, Secretariat, Coordination Committee on Trade Facilitation
- Norway: Mr. Helge Lindrup, Specialist Director and Mr. Robin Gaarder Reese, Advisor, Norwegian customs
- Central Asia: Ms. Larissa Kyslyakova, Transport and Logistics Partnership (TLP)

14:40 – 15:00 – Observations from a donor organizations

- Ms. Benedicte Meille, TFWA Project, World Bank
- Mr. Poul Hansen, Head, Trade Facilitation Section, UNCTAD

15:00 – 15:20 – Questions and answers

Concluding session

Moderator: Mr. Lance Thompson, Secretary UN/CEFACT

15:20 – 15:30 – Summary and recommendations for UN/CEFACT

What is UN/CEFACT?

UN/CEFACT, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, supports activities dedicated to improving the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transition economies, to **exchange products and relevant services effectively**. Its principal focus is on facilitating national and international transactions, through **the simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and information flows**, and so contributing to the growth of global commerce.

UN/CEFACT has a global mandate. Participation in the UN/CEFACT Forum is open to all. There are some 300 experts representing every region in the world.

Within the framework of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) serves as the focal point for **trade facilitation recommendations and electronic business standards**, covering both commercial and government business processes that can foster growth in international trade and related services. In this context UN/CEFACT was established, as a subsidiary, intergovernmental body of the UNECE.

For more information:
<http://www.unece.org/cefact>
See also: <http://tfig.unece.org/>

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This conference takes place during the 35th UN/CEFACT Virtual Forum.

Participation is free of charge, but all participants will be asked to register before joining the webinar.

Detailed agendas and link to the webinar available at:
<https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=54794>