

Experience with the WTO Self Assessment Tool

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Outline

- Introduction
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- Preparations
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Objective of the Needs assessment

- Take stock of the reforms already implemented
- Assess capacity gaps in relation to the trade facilitation reforms already implemented
- Identify measures not implemented
- Assess measures that need technical and financial capacity.

Preparations

- Request for TA submitted to WTO in September 2007
- The needs assessment exercise was carried out in 3-7 December 2007.
- The Exercise was funded by WTO with technical assistance from USAID under the Trade Facilitation and Capacity Building Project (FASTrade).

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- Participants came from Uganda Revenue Authority, govt departments, transporters, Chamber of commerce, private sector associations, import and exporters, clearing and forwarding, insurance, standards organizations, etc.
- The role of experts was to facilitate and guide discussions
- 60 participants attended the 5 day workshop
- Participants were divided into 5 groups
- A total of 51 proposals out of 76 were analyzed



Needs Assessment Steps

- Current situation relative to the basic standard
- Barriers to meet the basic standard and requirement
- Action needed to meet the basic standard
- Local action needed
- Technical assistance required
- Lead agency/other stakeholders involved
- Priority of the identified TA/CB
- Stakeholders consulted
- Comments



Overview of the findings

Out of the 51 proposals analyzed:

- Already compliant with 14 (27%)
- Partially compliant with 31 (61%)
- Not compliant with 4 (8%)
- Not applicable with 2 (4%)



Compliant Measures

These included:

- System of penalties
- Test procedures
- International standards
- Prohibition of consular transaction requirement
- Promotion of regional transit arrangements
- Automation



Partially Compliant

These included:

- Computerized system to reduce/eliminate discretion
- Phasing out mandatory use of customs brokers
- Pre-arrival clearance
- Notification of trade regulations
- Coordination of activities and requirements of all border agencies



Partially compliant

- Internet publications
- Interval between publications and entering into force
- Prior consultations
- Commenting on new and amended rules



Non-compliant

These include:

- Authorized traders
- Import/rapid alerts
- Single window
- Appeal mechanism in the Customs Union
- Establishment of average release and clearance times

Summary of recommended local action

- There is a need to increase awareness of the private sector of the benefits that accrue from trade facilitation and their increased involvement
- Further consultations should occur to determine how best to strengthen the functioning of trade facilitation agencies
- Enhanced interagency coordination to be facilitated by MTTI and URA

Pre-requisites for addressing trade facilitation

- The issue of improvement of infrastructures was identified as a high priority and therefore the need to include it in the negotiations
- There is a need to link Aid for Trade discussions with Trade facilitation negotiations for the improvement of infrastructures i.e. Uganda embarked on modernization strategy of URA in an effort to improve the business environment, however not all border posts have been upgraded because of infrastructural problems

Technical assistance and capacity building priorities identified

- Single window
- Harmonisation of boarder procedures
- Risk management
- Improved information communication
- Authorized traders
- Pre-arrival clearance
- Establishment of clearance and release times

Some of the negotiation priorities for Uganda

- Clarification of the treatment of alternatives for pre-shipment inspection mentioned in the WTO text
- Removal of duplication of fees and charges
- Free transparent transit regime
- Exchange of information among members
- Interval between publication and entry into force.
- Abolition of consular fee/charges
- TA/CB

Conclusion

- Success of the needs assessment will depend on the preparation process, selection of participants, their experience and how well informed they are.
- The private sector is particularly interested in TFN as seen from their response
- The process of reforms i.e. in customs management is continuous and therefore the process of identifying needs and priorities should continue even after signing the agreement.

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- Need to prioritise TF into various initiatives i.e. national development plans, trade policy, poverty eradication strategies, DTIS and IF
- Coordinate and share information of the results of the needs assessment at the regional level since some of the TA/CB will be at the regional level
- Intensify exchange of information between capital based officials and Geneva missions.

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- The needs assessment report has been useful tool in the current negotiations, and will be used to schedule our commitments for those provisions that are to be implemented after the Agreements entry into force (category A).
- The needs assessment did not help us determine the time frames or the cost of implementing some measures which need TF/CB because of inadequate information available at the time of the needs assessment.
- Uganda will need assistance to develop implementation capacity building plan for the provisions which need TF/CB.



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Thank You