



SASEC Workshop on Performance Measurement for Trade Facilitation

19 September 2019

New Delhi, India

Background

Cross-border trade is complex—with myriad Cross Border Regulatory Agencies (CBRAs) playing various roles. They collect revenue, help facilitate trade, enforce regulations, provide security, and assess conformance, among others. Together, they are designed to balance how trade is controlled—applying global standards and conventions on one hand, while using country-specific regulations or restrictions based on an economy’s needs on the other. CBRA’s performance is constantly assessed by stakeholders—governments, the private sector, and research organizations, among others.

Of the various roles CBRAs play, trade facilitation is perhaps the most measured—and certainly the most discussed. Trade facilitation directly impacts transaction costs, and consequently, economic competitiveness. For example, the time taken to clear cargo at borders directly affects trade competitiveness, as delays can significantly increase capital costs.

There are several ways of measuring the performance of border clearance processes in terms of time taken, costs involved, and documentary requirements. Measurements include the World Bank’s Doing Business surveys and Logistics Performance Index; Time Release Studies (TRS) of the World Customs Organization (WCO), and UNESCAP’s Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism, for example.

Given big data availability and improved analytical capabilities, it is critical to harness and analyze data from multiple sources that both quantitatively and qualitatively assess trade facilitation parameters, customs competencies, and the efficacy of global standards on a particular economy. The need to minimise perception elements in such measurements and place reliance on actual data from customs and other systems for evaluation has also been articulated. Robust tools are being designed to allow administrations to self-evaluate their performance. These tools are expected to be comprehensive and utilize data-driven methodologies to measure performance, provide self-assessment, and peer-to-peer evaluation.

These tools should improve the performance of CBRAs and provide better inputs for policy makers. External validation and quality assurance will enhance a tool’s credibility.

The SASEC Workshop on Performance Measurement for Trade Facilitation will discuss the various performance measurement tools for trade facilitation, their utility, emerging approaches that promote data-driven decision-making, and stakeholder engagement.



| 19 September 2019 (Thursday) | |
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| 08:50–09:00 | Registration |
| 09:00–09:10 | Opening remarks: Mr. Yann Duval , Chief, Trade Policy and Facilitation Section United Nations ESCAP Moderator: Mr. Satish Reddy Trade Facilitation Expert |
| 09:10–10:00 | Session 1: Performance Measurement: Overview <i>The session offers an overview of performance measurement for trade facilitation, focusing on prevalent approaches, their basis, and methodology.</i> Presenter: Mr. Vijay Singh Chauhan Commissioner of Customs (General) Mumbai Customs Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs <i>Open discussion.</i> |
| 10:00–11:00 | Session 2: Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism <i>The session covers UNESCAP's experience in conducting trade and transport monitoring studies in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal, among others. Experiences of conducting similar studies in Central Asia are also shared in this session</i> Presenter: Mr. Tengfei Wang Economic Affairs Officer Trade, Investment and Innovation Division United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Discussant: Yelena Vassilevskaya Kazakhstan Freight Forwarders Association <i>Open discussion.</i> |
| 11:00–11:10 | Coffee break |
| 11:10–12:10 | Session 3: India's Experience with Performance Evaluation <i>The session will discuss India's experience in evaluating performance, particularly time release studies, benchmarking, and monitoring implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement.</i> Presenter: Mr. L. Satya Srinivas Joint Secretary (Customs), Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs Ministry of Finance, India <i>Open discussion.</i> |