

Press Note

National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Consequent to India's ratification of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation(TFA) in April 2016,the National Committee on Trade Facilitation(NCTF) has been constituted vide order dated 11th August 2016. The establishment of the Committee is part of the mandatory, institutional arrangement of the TFA. This prime, inter - ministerial body on trade facilitation will be chaired by the Cabinet Secretary. Its Secretariat will be housed within the Central Board of Excise and Customs, in the Directorate General of Export Promotion, New Delhi.

The defined objective behind setting up the NCTF is to have a national level body that will facilitate domestic co-ordination and implementation of TFA provisions. It will play the lead role in developing the pan-India road map for trade facilitation. It will be instrumental in synergizing the various trade facilitation perspectives across the country and will also focus on an outreach programme for sensitization of all stakeholders about TFA.

In consonance with its significant mandate, its composition and structure is holistic. It has a three tier structure with the main national committee that will be the pivot for monitoring the implementation of the TFA. There will be a steering committee below it that will be chaired by Member, Customs, CBEC and which will be responsible for identifying the nature of required legislative changes as well as for spearheading the diagnostic tools needed for assessing our level of compliance to the TFA. It will have the responsibility to form and monitor the working of adhoc working groups of experts that will deal with specific trade facilitation issues. Detailed Terms of Reference for each level of the Committee are contained in the order itself.

The composition of the NCTF is inclusive at the national committee level which will comprise of Secretaries of all key Departments involved in trade issues like Revenue, Commerce, Agriculture, Home, Shipping, Health etc. It will also have Chairman CBEC, Chairman Railway Board, and Director General Foreign Trade as Members. Major trade associations like CII, FICCI, and FIEO etc are also its Members. Joint Secretary, Customs, CBEC will be its Member Secretary. The total membership stands at 24 and the Committee can co-opt any representatives from the State Governments on relevant issues. The steering committee will be a core group having 15 members from various Ministries and trade bodies.

The first meeting of the NCTF with the Cabinet Secretary as the Chair is likely to be convened shortly.