

# CONSULTATION APPROACHES PROJECT MEETING

GENEVA FORUM MEETING

18 APRIL 2013

## Attendance

### Present:

Kevin ATKINSON, Crown Agents (GB)  
Hamit BOZTEPE, Ministry of Customs & Trade (TR)  
Hong SEUNG CHON, Korean Customs (KR)  
Jina CHOI, Korean Customs (KR)  
Julien HUE, Soget (FR)  
Mitsuru ISHIGAKI, Jastpro (JP)  
Young Mi KIM, Korean Customs (KR)  
Mahmet Zafer KOKSAL, Ministry of Customs & Trade (TR)  
Johan PONTÉN, National Board of Trade (SE)  
Arantzazu SÁNCHEZ BELASTEGUI, UNCTAD  
Bismark SITORUS, UNCTAD  
Paloma Bernal TURNES, Georgetown Univ (US)  
Evren YENI, Ministry of Customs & Trade (TR)

### Absent interested parties:

Josephine BAIAMONTE, CBP (US)  
Gordon Cragge, TFAS (UK)

## Summary of the Project meeting held in the 21 UN/CEFACT Forum Meeting

Johan Pontén, project leader for the project set up in the old Open Development Process (ODP) of UN/CEFACT, summarized the process that had led up to a new project proposal. The introduction of the project into a new format was motivated by the introduction of a new and simplified ODP and the delay in the project due to resources restraints. Also the Project should change title since partners in both UNECE and UNCTAD had pointed out that the word “Models” may be misleading, indicating fixed organisations and structures, rather than various methods and ways to approach consultations, which is what is intended. The title is thus suggested to be Consultation Approaches.

The meeting approved the changes. Arantzazu Sánchez Belastegui suggested that the timelines for a possible repository of case studies were very ambitious. The comment was noted and Johan Pontén stated that the case study repository would be a deliverable that can grow after the establishment of the recommendation and the initial contributions.

The special situation of consultation in a regional setting was highlighted. Kevin Atkinson directed the group’s attention to the Borderless Alliance initiative in West Africa (ECOWAS) supported by USAID aiming at a higher degree of consultation. There is more information on a conference held in Ghana by this regional network at the following link:

<http://www.borderlesswa.com/sites/default/files/resources/mar13/Borderless%202013%20Agenda%20Final-EMAIL.pdf>

## Presentation by Arantzazu Sánchez Belastegui, UNCTAD

Explaining the work initiated by UNCTAD on collecting information on all presently active consultation bodies, be it in the form of PRO-organisations, Trade Facilitation Advisory Committees or other, Arantzazu Sánchez Belastegui made a presentation stressing the following points:

- The Background and past of UNCTADs work in the Field
  - UNCTAD long-standing support to the establishment of the national TF committees (NGTF) in developing countries: from a recommendation to a possible legal obligation in WTO
  - UNCTAD approach: Analyze best practices for setting up and operating a NTFC

- UNCTAD TF Handbook Part I
- UNCTAD Technical Note 18
- UNCTAD online repository of national cases throughout the world
- 2013: Initiation of an in-depth study of the NTFC together with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ongoing)
- UNCTAD is gathering insights on
  1. number and type of TF committees in the world
  2. How are they organised/structured?
  3. Which kind of mandate do they have?
  4. Who participates in the committees?
  5. What are their main outcomes and challenges?
  6. What are positive results they achieved?
- On the basis of this information, UNCTAD will be able to draft useful recommendations for those countries wishing to create or strengthen their own committee.
- Over 30 cases in UNCTAD online repository + information on countries without a committee
- BUT: challenges to get information

Johan Pontén, project leader, Presentation on Swedish Customs Consultation Approaches

Explaining that the forms of Consultation are continuously reviewed in Sweden, both in SWEPRO and the Swedish Customs consultation groups, Johan Pontén made a presentation based on Swedish Customs material underlining the following points:

- The objective of consultation is to improve Business and Customs Partnership to facilitate trade and reduce costs for both customs and businesses
- The benefits are:
  - Facilitation, quality improvement and development of Customs procedures in an efficient manner.
  - Improved efficiency and effectiveness of service.
  - Improved customs routines.
  - Reduced costs for businesses.
- Consultation should be held at the appropriate level: Strategic, Tactical or Operational
- The tools apart from consultative committees can encompass web pages, trade fairs, conferences, customer panels and target group analysis,
- Especially important at the operational level is to work with many different channels
- Lessons learned by Swedish Customs are:
  - Be clear on the purpose and what to expect
  - Stay steady with the agenda
  - It's better to not know than to guess wrong
  - Every get-together is a possibility to earn trust, and trust is essential for successful collaboration.
  - Things need both a start and a clear end. Temporary committees should be ruled with a target.

Discussion on the preliminary draft and guidelines

The first draft produced under the previous project team was discussed. Johan Pontén showed first the recommendation part and later also the scope and background. Paloma Bernal Turnes and Arantzazu Sánchez Belastegui pointed out that there is no equivalent to the recommendation to business to try to coordinate their positions before coming to consultations in the recommendations aimed at governments. Johan Pontén expressed doubt if it was possible to recommend to governments to coordinate, since that is the very core of governments' task – to coordinate policy.

Johan Pontén also presented the work done to model the information flows by BPA. Arantzazu Sánchez Belastegui asked if it would at all be possible to formulate a generic model for the information flow. Johan Pontén stated that he believed that transparency can be modeled in a generic way that would be of guidance to governments and professionals to better grasp the concept of transparency and the necessary information flows. Arantzazu Sánchez Belastegui also pointed out that the formulation on PRO-organisations in the draft recommendation is not fully coordinated with the wording of Recommendation 4.

#### Conclusion

The group concluded that more work needs to be done on the draft as well as on the guidelines that only exists in bullet points, but that it would be better to do so in a setting where all participants have had a fair chance to study the draft.

As the project proposal is agreed by the UN/CEFACT Bureau, Johan Pontén will convene a new project meeting in a web based conference in order to continue the work done.