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Summary and Evaluation

Joint Consultative Session on the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Assessment Framework

July 21-22, 2008 in Halong Bay, Viet Nam



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SUBMITTED BY
Timothy Buehrer
Chief of Party
Nathan Associates Inc

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UNCTAD has estimated that trade transaction costs account for 7-10% of total value of world trade. On average 27-30 different parties are involved in a single international trade transaction, which require an estimated 40 documents and 200 data elements (30 of which are repeated many times). ASEAN has undertaken various measures to reduce international trade transaction costs. The ASEAN Customs Agreement of 1997, the ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Goods in Transit, ASEAN Framework Agreement on Multimodal Transport and the implementation of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Mutual Recognition Agreement, and the agreement to form an ASEAN Single Window are examples of these efforts. However, prior to July 2008 ASEAN lacked a comprehensive regional trade facilitation program.

The ASEAN Secretariat requested assistance from the ASEAN-US Technical Assistance and Training Facility (“the Facility”) to draft a comprehensive trade facilitation framework. On July 21-22, 2008, the Facility, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), organized a joint consultative session to discuss the draft ASEAN Trade Facilitation Framework. The session was attended by 37 ASEAN Member State and ASEAN Secretariat officials responsible for the administration of trade, customs, standards procedures and officials responsible for administering sanitary and phyto-sanitary regulations.

Facility Deputy Chief of Party Noordin Azhari presented the draft Trade Facilitation Framework which will serve as a guide for ASEAN Member States to undertake trade facilitation reforms in their respective countries. Participants also benefited from presentations of regional experiences regarding trade facilitation. Malaysia and the Philippines shared their experience in trade facilitation reforms. The ADB presented its sub-regional trade facilitation initiatives in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) and CAREC (Central Asia). The ASEAN Secretariat provided a briefing on the status ASEAN Trade Facilitation Work Program.

The Framework will be used to assess and improve the situation as regards trade in each member state. Providing a step by step approach to undertaking trade facilitation reforms, the Framework focuses on simplification, rationalization and harmonization of regulatory procedures and documentation requirement in international trade transactions based on internationally accepted standards. These include procedures and documentation required by all government controlling agencies for trade, customs, standards, sanitary and phyto-sanitary regulations. Problems relating to speedy issuance of certificates of origin are also covered.

As a first step before undertaking any trade facilitation reforms, the Framework recommended conducting a survey of existing trade facilitation system. The survey will identify current procedures, documentation requirements, time taken and cost incurred. It will also capture the perception of the private sector on the efficiency of existing trade facilitation regime. The information will serve as the baseline to measure the impact subsequent trade facilitation reforms. For this purpose two sets of questionnaires were developed and prepared by the Facility for review at the Joint Consultative Session.

The Framework represents the first step in the implementation of the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Work Programme which is expected to be approved by the ASEAN Economic Ministers in August 2008. Recognizing the importance of trade facilitation reforms, participants agreed that the Framework should be annexed to the comprehensive ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement which will be signed by the ASEAN Economic Ministers in August 2008. Although not a binding document, the document will serve as a common guide for all ASEAN Member States to systematically undertake trade facilitation reforms.

Based on inputs and views expressed during the session, the Facility revised and finalized the Framework and the questionnaires. The document will be renamed as ASEAN Trade Facilitation Framework. The Facility will work with the ASEAN Secretariat to implement the questionnaire in pilot countries and follow up activities as regards the Framework.



JOINT CONSULTATIVE SESSION ON THE ASEAN TRADE FACILITATION ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Day 1 (21 July 2008)

08.30 – 09.00	:	Registration
09.00 – 09.15	:	Introduction and Welcoming Remark (Viet Nam)
09.15 – 09.45	:	Presentation on the Work Programme on ASEAN Trade Facilitation (Tran Dong Phuong, the ASEAN Secretariat)
09.45 – 10.30	:	Presentation on Experience Sharing on Trade Facilitation in GMS and Central Asia Countries (Nguyen Minh Cuong, ADB)
10.30 – 10.45	:	Coffee Break
10.45 – 12.00	:	Presentation and Discussion: Draft ASEAN Trade Facilitation Assessment Framework (Noordin Azhari, ASEAN-US TATF)
12.00 – 14.00	:	Lunch break
14.00 – 15.15	:	Presentation and Discussion: Experience Sharing on Trade Facilitation in the Philippines (Atty. Reynaldo S. Nicolas, Bureau of Customs)
15.15 – 15.30	:	Coffee Break
15.30 – 17.00	:	Presentation and Discussion: Experience Sharing on Trade Facilitation Measures in Malaysia (Daniel Musa, MITI)

Day 2 (22 July 2008)

09.00 – 10.30	:	Presentation and Discussion: Application of ASEAN Trade Facilitation Assessment Framework (Noordin Azhari, ASEAN-US TATF)
10.30 – 10.45	:	Coffee Break
10.45 – 12.00	:	Presentation and Discussion: Questionnaire on Assessment Framework (Noordin Azhari, ASEAN-US TATF)
12.00 – 14.00	:	Lunch break
14.00 – 15.15	:	Presentation and Discussion: Indicators to be collected in Assessment Framework (Noordin Azhari, ASEAN-US TATF)
15.15 – 15.30	:	Coffee Break
15.30 – 17.00	:	Wrap up session: Conclusion and Discussion on Recommendations to CCCA

Evaluation

Joint Consultative Session on the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Framework

Co-sponsored by the ASEAN-US Technical Assistance & Training Facility and the Asia Development Bank

21-22 July, 2008 in Halong Bay, Viet Nam

Your answers to this questionnaire will help us to improve our training programs. Thank you for taking the time to fill it out.

Personal data

Country of representation:

Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam

Select one

Male ___ Female___

Presentations

On a scale of 1 to 6, please rate how informative each session was for you. A rating of 6 indicates that you found the session highly informative; a rating of 1 that you did not find it informative.

Session	Presentation	Average Rating
1	Presentation on the Work Programme on ASEAN Trade Facilitation, <i>ASEAN Secretariat</i>	4.7
2	Presentation on Experience Sharing on Trade Facilitation in GMS and Central Asian Countries, <i>ADB</i>	4.5
3	Draft ASEAN Trade Facilitation Assessment Framework, <i>ASEAN-US Facility</i>	4.6
4	Experience Sharing on Trade Facilitation in the Philippines	4.6
5	Experience Sharing on Trade Facilitation in Malaysia	4.8
6	Application of ASEAN Trade Facilitation Assessment Framework, <i>ASEAN-US Facility</i>	4.8
7	Questionnaire on the Assessment Framework, <i>ASEAN-US Facility</i>	4.4
8	Indicators to be collected in the Assessment Framework, <i>ASEAN-US Facility</i>	4.5

Subject Matter

Would you like to see more, the same, or less time devoted to the following negotiation topics:

Subject	More	Same	Less
Overview of the framework	11	13	0
Experience sharing from other countries	16	7	1
Applications of the framework	21	3	0
Questionnaire	8	14	2
Indicators	10	13	1
Wrap up	5	18	1

General

1. What part of this course did you like the most?

- Application of ASEAN Trade Facilitation Assessment Framework (**5 similar comments**)
- Draft ASEAN Trade Facilitation Framework (**3 similar comments**)
- Experience sharing (**2 similar comments**)
- Experience sharing from other countries
- The part that present by USAID representative on step to step approach.
- Experience of the country
- Experience of development and implementation of trade facilitation in ASEAN countries
- On experience sharing on Trade Facilitation on GMS and Central Asia Countries
- Session 3
- All are equally important.
- Q+A's after every presentation
- The sharing of experience and the assessment of different performance
- Results of studies done across countries presented. Info can provide insights on how to improve systems and procedures

2. What part of this course did you like the least?

- None (**6 comments**)
- Every part is ok.
- Q+A where no questions are forthcoming

3. What other topics would you like to see included?

- Other regional trade facilitation experience
- More experience from other region.
- More detail regarding customs related to Trade Facilitation
- Regional trade facilitation cooperation mechanism
- More knowledge sharing/among countries (on trade facilitation) experiences
- ASEAN Trade Facilitation Work Programme (2007 - 2015)
- Experience sharing on Trade Facilitation Measures

- Capacity building
- Aid for technical assistance and capacity building
- Illustrations of processes and procedures relating to trade facilitation (comparison of how countries actually undertake it)
- Technical Assistance and capacity building for CLMV

4. Did this course use a good mix of lecture and interactive discussion?

Yes (14 comments)

- Topic no. 1.
- Lecture should be more in-depth before embarking on interactive discussion
- To email to all participants the conclusion/updates regarding this meeting.
- This course used good lecture and interactive discussion
- Yes, enough time more provided for Q&A

5. What sorts of follow-up activities for this course would you find useful?

- Outcome of the assessment
- Questionnaire on Assessment Framework !
 1. workshop on the application of the trade facilitation assessment framework
 2. presentation of the results of the pilot projects to other members for discussion and sharing of experiences among ASEAN Member Countries.
- Updating information about the progress of ASEAN Trade Facilitation Assessment Framework.
- Private Sectors
- Conduct hands-on training for capacity building for CLMV countries
- Follow-up activities for experience sharing on Trade Facilitation Measures
- Workshop
- Presentation of the processed replies to questionnaires (future plan of action)
- Continue the assessment process
- Workshop with great and selected industry association representatives to share experience (like problems with coordination and implementation)

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire. Additional comments on any aspect of this course are welcome.