



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

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APEC Capacity Building Workshop on WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

Ho Chi Minh, Viet Nam | 13-14 June 2019

APEC Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group

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Produced by
Ms Pham Quynh Mai
Ministry of Industry and Trade
Viet Nam

For
Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat
35 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Singapore 119616
Tel: (65) 68919 600
Fax: (65) 68919 690
Email: info@apec.org
Website: www.apec.org

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**APEC CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON WTO TRADE FACILITATION
AGREEMENT FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES**

13 – 14 June 2019

Ho Chi Minh, Viet Nam

Small and Medium Enterprise Working Group (SMEWG)

August 2019

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APEC CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON WTO TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

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Summary Report

I. Introduction

On 13 and 14 June 2019, the APEC Capacity Building Workshop on World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), initiated by Viet Nam and co-sponsored by Chile; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Malaysia; Mexico; Philippines; Russia; Singapore; Chinese Taipei was held in Ho Chi Minh, Viet Nam. Speakers and participants came from private sector, business associations; international organizations and research institutions and APEC member economies' relevant Ministries and government's agencies.

The Workshop aims at the following objectives:

- To increase knowledge of MSMEs and experts from MSME associations and supporting organizations on the TFA (the Agreement, ratifications of WTO members, implementations of WTO members, opportunities and challenges, how the TFA benefits SMEs etc.);
- To share experience from speakers and among participants, and discuss on how to integrate the TFA in SME development policies;
- Network MSMEs and experts from MSME associations and supporting organizations.

II. Background

A major milestone for the global trading system was reached on 22 February 2017 when the first multilateral deal concluded in the 21-year history of the World Trade Organization (WTO) – the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) - entered into force. The TFA seeks to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods across borders. Therefore, it is believed that the TFA's entry into force launches a new phase for trade facilitation reforms all over the world and creates a significant boost for commerce and the multilateral trading system as a whole. According to the WTO, the TFA is also likely to reduce the time needed to import goods by over a day and a half and to export goods by almost two days, representing a reduction of 47 per cent and 91 per cent respectively over the current average¹.

Implementing the TFA is also expected to help new firms export for the first time by easing the time and costs burdens². Moreover, according to the WTO study, once the TFA is fully implemented, developing economies are predicted to increase the number of new products exports by 20-35 per cent.

TFA means a lot to developing economies since it includes provisions on special and differential treatment for least developed and developing members of WTO, including

¹ https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news17_e/fac_31jan17_e.htm

² https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tradfa_e/tradfa_introduction_e.htm

technical assistances for these WTO members to implement the Agreement. TFA also contributes to reducing technical and non-tariff barriers (which are popular in developed economies) so as goods from developing economies will be exported easier.

APEC continues to pledge its support to the Multilateral Trading System through the implementation of the TFA. APEC is contributing towards the implementation of the TFA which will push the momentum for Trade Facilitation and reducing trade costs across for both developed and developing economies.

SMEs play an important role in economic activities in all APEC developing economies. They account for approximately 99% of all APEC developing economies' businesses and employ between 50 and 97 per cent of employment in many economies. In addition, SMEs contribute significantly to economic growth, with their share of GDP ranging from 20 per cent to 50 per cent in most APEC economies³. They are also the largest source of domestic employment across all economic sectors. The SME sector also provides opportunities for women and youth to participate in the economic development.

Since this project is expected to equip MSMEs with information on WTO TFA (the Agreement, ratifications of WTO members, implementations of WTO members, opportunities and challenges, how the TFA benefits SMEs etc.), it will help to foster capacity of SMEs in developing economies as well as their internationalization.

In the 2015 APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration, it is said "We recognize the significance of enabling the full participation of all sectors and segments of our society, especially...micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), to achieving inclusive growth. We underscore the importance of empowering them with the ability to contribute to and benefit from future growth." In addition, APEC Leaders also reiterated "the significance of the participation of MSMEs in global commerce to inclusive growth and will take action to facilitate such participation. We recognize that internationally-oriented MSMEs can make substantial contributions to poverty reduction through employment creation, productivity improvements, and economies of scale."

In 2016 APEC Economic Leaders emphasized that "Strengthening of MSMEs will imply concrete progress in increasing their innovation capacities and competitiveness, including intellectual property rights commercialization, work towards guaranteeing access to financial means and capacity building, enhancing their participation in the internet and digital economy and through electronic commerce, reducing the technological gap, strengthening ethical business practices to support MSMEs' growth and cross border trade, progressively inducing a shift into a more sustainable, eco-friendly and green production, and supporting their internationalization including through the means of ICT⁴."

Trade facilitation has been a longstanding item on the agenda of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). APEC defines trade facilitation in terms of reducing trade transaction costs, as stated in the Trade Facilitation Action Plan (TFAP) Initiative. APEC members have also fully supported the implementation of WTO TFA – with an implementation rate of 92.6 per cent based on notifications to the WTO. In addition, as single window is one of the key initiatives under APEC, member economies have started to explore the issue of its International Interoperability.

This project will help to implement Leaders' instructions as it will contribute to the long-term enhancement of capacities of to reap benefits from the TFA.

³ <https://www.apec.org/Groups/SOM-Steering-Committee-on-Economic-and-Technical-Cooperation/Working-Groups/Small-and-Medium-Enterprises>

⁴ ICT: Information and Communication Technology

This project is in line with the 2017-2020 SMEWG Strategic Plan as in the Plan, one of four priority areas is “market access for SMEs” with the objectives to promote integration of SMEs into global value chains and strengthen SMEs’ export capabilities and capacity for internationalization. It is apparent that building capacity on the TFA for MSMEs will contribute to above-mentioned objectives.

III. Opening remarks

In the opening remarks, **Mr Nguyen Van Trinh (Vice President, Ho Chi Minh City’s Institute for Development Studies)** stressed that the TFA covers issues including advanced rulings, transparency, goods in transit, specific issues responding to the concerns of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and simplifying customs formalities. According to a study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the TFA could reduce the costs of trade between 12.5 and 17.5 amongst both developed and developing economies, while developing economies open to trade are most likely to benefit. In addition to that, once the TFA was fully implemented, developing economies were predicted to increase the number of new products exported by as much as 20 per cent⁵. Implementing the TFA would also boost global trade by up to 1 trillion USD each year; the impact will be bigger than the elimination of all existing tariffs around the world.

Mr Nguyen hoped that the participants would be fully equipped with information about the TFA so as to understand about the rights and benefits of the Agreement to their economies and organizations as well as take full advantages of the TFA.

IV. Key issues

1. Overview on the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization

Dr Rajan Sudesh Ratna (Economic Affairs Officer, South and South-West Asia Office, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) talked about some definitions of trade facilitation which includes the definition of WTO, OECD and Wikipedia. The TFA entered into force on 22 February 2017 following its ratification by two-thirds of the WTO membership. After that, he introduced briefly about the structure of the agreement that have 3 main Sections. Section I contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. Section II contains special and differential treatment (SDT) provisions that allow developing and least-developed members to determine when they will implement individual provisions of the Agreement and to identify provisions that they will only be able to implement upon the receipt of technical assistance and support for capacity building. Section III contains provisions that establish a permanent committee on trade facilitation at the WTO, require members to have a national committee to facilitate domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of the Agreement.

⁵ https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news17_e/fac_31jan17_e.htm

2. Provisions under the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization

Mrs Özlem Soysanli (Technical Officer, the World Customs Organization - WCO) introduced briefly about WCO which provides leadership, guidance and support to Customs Administrations to secure and facilitate legitimate trade, realize revenues, protect society and build capacity. The first strategic goal of WCO is to promote the security and facilitation of international trade, including simplification and harmonization of customs procedures. It has 6 priority areas: Trade facilitation; E-commerce; security; customs-tax cooperation; illicit financial flows; performance measurement. The speaker also shared that the WCO has developed over 50 instruments and tools that respond to Members' needs as regards TFA implementation. Mrs Soysanli introduced about WCO Mercator Programme Overall Track – Implementation Guidance - Awareness Raising and Communication with its main outputs and support activities. Mrs Soysanli also introduced Section 3 of the Agreement which includes Committee on Trade Facilitation (TFC) and National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF). She shared the connection between WCO and the TFC and the reason why it is needed to establish trade facilitation bodies. In the presentation, the speaker also introduced the document of WCO Guidance on NCTFs and Customs Role in NCTF. To set up an NCTF, each economy needs to use of an existing mechanism vs. establishment of a new committee, establish a Focal Point or work desk for the start of the set-up work, identify relevant stakeholders, maintain/ secure continues political support, develop a domestic roadmap to implement the TFA including vision, objectives, scope and deliverables; stakeholders, roles and responsibilities; resource, financial and quality plans; work breakdown structure and schedule; success factors, risks, and challenges.

Dr Dinh Khuong Duy (Researcher, Bocconi University, Italy) briefed about the history of TFA and then he shared the reason why it is needed to have TF in the WTO. In WTO terms, trade facilitation can be understood as the simplification, harmonization, automation of the procedures applied to international trade, particularly the requirements and formalities related to importation and exportation with a view to further expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. Dr Duy presented about the objectives and structure of the TFA in connection with General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) provisions on trade facilitation measures. He indicated that provisions in the TFTA are drafted based on an issue – solution approach, which address the obstacles that traders may encounter before and at the border. He underlined some most important measures for SMEs such as publication and availability of information/enquiry point; advance ruling; single window; risk management; publication of release times; use of customs brokers; expedited shipments. Dr Duy also discussed the level of legal commitment and language flexibility, which implies that governments have room for interpretation and compliance.

Dr Duy went on to introduce about Section II and III of the Agreement. He listed out the differences of Categorization A, B and C provisions, also the notification timeline for developing economies, notification timeline for least-developed economies, as well as some additional flexibilities and technical assistance. He mentioned the WTO's Trade Facilitation database, where all commitments submitted by each Member could be found along with important statistics. For instance, the database lists top 5 measurements with highest implementation rate including movement of goods, pre-shipment inspection; use of custom

broker; detention and temporary admission; whereas bottom 5 measurements with lowest implementation rate are advance rulings, average release time, testing procedures, authorize operators and single window. In Section III, Dr Duy highlighted Institutional Provision and Final Provision. He emphasized the role of a National Committee on Trade Facilitation, and explained the difference between a National Committee and the Committee at the WTO.

3. Benefits of the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

Mr Conway Beddie (Principal Assistant Director, Multilateral Trade Policy and Negotiation Division, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia) divided his presentation into 5 main parts: Definition of MSMEs; Contributions of MSMEs; Challenges faced by MSMEs; Benefit of the TFA to MSMEs; and Enhancing engagements with MSMEs. In the first part, he provided some definition of the European Union, the United States and Malaysia on SME. According to his figures, SME account for 88.8% - 99.9% of total establishments in ASEAN Member States (AMS), employ 51.7% - 97.2% of total employment, contribute 30% -53% to each AMS' Gross Domestic Products, contribution of 10% - 29.9% to SMEs to exports. Some challenges for SMEs in doing business are: finance, infrastructure, market, technology, innovation, research and development, labor, red tapes, regulatory burdens etc. Benefits of the TFA could bring to the MSMEs are Reducing trade cost, Access to information and Opportunity to participate in policy making process. At the end of the presentation, to enhance the engagement of SME in the global market, the speaker suggested regular engagement with the industry players, participation of private sector in the National Committee on Trade Facilitation and good regulatory practice.

Mr Mohammad Saeed (Senior Advisor, Trade Facilitation and Policy for Business, International Trade Center) pointed out five main of trade cost for SMEs. Inefficiency-related trade costs are a particularly stringent problem and inefficiencies account for a large percent of all trade costs. The speaker said that regulatory burdens hit small firms twice as hard as large firms. Transactional efficiency is a key determinant of economies' international competitiveness. He shared that most studies estimate that implementation of the TFA will lead to export and GDP growth. TFA implementation leads to diversification of exported products and export destinations. In the second part of the presentation about Making trade facilitation reforms work for SMEs, Mr Saeed said that benefits of trade facilitation reforms largely depend on their implementation modalities. Policy makers should implement trade facilitation reforms in a manner that benefit MSMEs, tailoring trade facilitation reforms to meet MSMEs specific needs: selected examples. To conclude the presentation, the speaker came up with some recommendation such as: Public-private dialogue must be at the core of the design and implementation of trade facilitation reforms; Businesses of all size must be given the opportunity to express their specific needs, including MSMEs; NTFC is the natural platform to facilitate public-private dialogue; trade facilitation is about continuous improvement: it's never too late to make your reforms work for MSMEs.

4. Case Studies in some APEC Member Economies

Ms Angelia Chew (Founder & Managing Partner, AC Trade Advisory Pte Ltd, Singapore) talked about some challenges that limit MSMEs to conduct cross border trade which are limited resources, staying with comfort zone and lack of awareness and knowhow. MSMEs require a different type of capacity building from a practical business-centric approach to conduct cross-border trade. She compare the TFA of WTO is likely the high way that facilitate cross border trade, however MSMEs are mostly not ready for the new TFA highway. The reason is that there are “Compliance Rules” to be met on TFA Highway and TFA does not mean there are no trade & customs compliance rules. In the second part, Mr Chew introduced the Tariff Finder which is the online tool for business to look up tariff information. At the end of the presentation, she recommended that it needs to have public –private partnership to unlock WTO TFA’s potential. The involving parties could include: private enterprises, international bodies, domestic authorities, academia, trade associations and chambers.

Mrs Nguyen Pham Nhu Ha (Vice Head of C/O and IRP Division⁶, Customs Control and Supervision Department, the General Department of Viet Nam Customs) emphasized MSMEs’ role as one of key factors of the economy which account for more than 97% total enterprises, contribute to 31% of GDP, 33% domestic revenue, generate about 62 % jobs for employees. About the current status of MSMEs development in Viet Nam, the speaker shared that MSMEs in Viet Nam are small scale, less capital, lack of financial and marketing support, the technology level of MSMEs is low, limited linkage between enterprises, lack of ability to connect the international market. Mrs Ha shared the target of development plan at Government level with some specific custom measures for MSMEs with focus on simplification and modernization customs procedure, advance ruling, decrease customs clearance time, domestic single window and ASEAN single window, development of e-Port, e-manifest, cross border E-commerce, customs bond project, Viet Nam Trade Information Portal. At the end of the presentation, Mrs Ha provided some information on the custom declaration channeling including number of declaration and responses from private sector on automation system.

5. Discussions

- Regarding a comment on low TFA enforcement rates, a speaker reiterated that the TFA is the first multilateral pact of WTO members had agreed since it was founded in 1995 and represents a significant milestone for the global trading system. The average rate of implementation commitments was calculated at 61.3 per cent and there is special and differential treatment allowing developing and least-developed WTO members to self-determine the time and the means required to implement each of the substantive provisions, classifying and notifying them. In particular: (i) Category A (Provisions that the developing WTO members should have implemented by 22 February 2017, the date of entry into force; least-developed members needed to implement them by 22 February 2018); (ii) Category B (Provisions that a developing or least-developed WTO members should have designated for implementation after a

⁶ C/O: Certificate of Origin; IRP: Inward Relief Processing

transitional period of time counting from 22 February 2017); (iii) Category C (Provisions that a developing or least-developed WTO members should have appointed for implementation after a transitional period and the provisions of assistance and support for capacity).

- On e-commerce, a speaker introduced that this July the WCO would publish the Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce with a view to providing pragmatic, fair and innovative solutions⁷. On the website of the WCO, there is a specific section on cross-border e-commerce that interested parties can refer to.
- An advice from a speaker is MSMEs should not act individually as they do not have power. Due to its low revenue, MSMEs will not work on customs procedures regularly and therefore, risks in non-compliance with customs procedures will be higher. A group of MSMEs with standardized papers will make their businesses easier and save resources. In Singapore, there are free tools to assist SMEs as well as mobile phone applications for domestic and international enterprises to access to information.
- A speaker introduced Mercator Programme, a WCO initiative to support WTO TFA implementation, using the WCO instruments and tools as most of the TFA provisions relate to customs. This Programme provided tailor-made support that takes into account local conditions and environment for implementing trade facilitation measures. This Programme assists customs authorities to implement the Agreement through domestic, regional and international workshops and other activities (sometimes companies and associations are invited, depending on topics of discussions).
- A speaker highlighted that “each (WTO) Member shall establish and/or maintain a national committee on trade facilitation or designate an existing mechanism to facilitate both domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of this Agreement.” The Committee is an important platform for institutional coordination and stakeholders’ consultation with private and public sector participation.
- Regarding market access information and data, there is a portal (<http://www.macmap.org>) by the International Trade Centre (ITC) providing information on market access conditions (customs tariffs, tariff rate quotas, trade remedies, regulatory requirements and preferential regimes applicable to products). ITC is also developing portals for some economies, including Viet Nam, with comprehensive and useful information on market access. In addition to that, OECD and APEC also publicize valuable data.
- On the ATA⁸ system⁹, a speaker explained that the system allows the free movement of goods across frontiers and their temporary admission into a Customs territory with relief from duties and taxes. The goods are covered by a single document known as the ATA carnet that is secured by an international guarantee system. Since the Istanbul

⁷ <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2018/july/wco-publishes-global-standards-on-ecommerce.aspx>

⁸ The term “ATA” is a combination of the initial letters of the French words “Admission Temporaire” and the English words “Temporary Admission”

⁹ http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/facilitation/instruments-and-tools/conventions/ata/pf_ata_brochure.pdf?la=en

Convention enters into force in July 2019 for Viet Nam, Viet Nam's Chamber of Commerce and Industry will issue ATA carnets, starting from July 2019 in accordance with a decree drafted by the General Department of Customs.

- Finally, it is crucial that MSMEs should understand about product classification. For example, electric scooter in your economy is classified as skate scooter but in another economy it is classified as motor scooter, so the customs tariff is differed.

V. Recommendations and Conclusions

During the final Session, participants were divided into 2 groups to discuss the way forward for this project. They recommended APEC to consider following activities/ initiatives:

- a. Develop handbook on information/ best practices relating to the TFA for MSMEs;
- b. Provide TFA-related trainings for different groups of stakeholders;
- c. Share challenges in implementing the TFA and how to overcome them;
- d. Develop an APEC portal on the TFA;
- e. Share experiences on monitoring the enforcement of the TFA;
- f. Conduct case studies on TFA implementations in various APEC economies;
- g. Training for MSMEs about international trade rules;
- h. Share experiences on forming associations for SMEs;
- i. Share best practices on institutional set-up for National Committee on Trade Facilitation;
- j. Field trip to an SME or customs authority./.

VI. Annex 1: Results of pre-event survey

Total survey received: 60

Information	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Correct choice
1. The background to the TFA of the WTO						
Is there a special body to assist with the implementation of the TFA?	5 (8%)	6 (10%)	4 (7%)	14 (23%)	31 (52%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Can WTO Members submit categories A, B and C notifications prior to having deposited their ratification instrument?	11 (18%)	12 (20%)	12 (20%)	25 (42%)	0	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Do WTO Members need to have a Committee on Trade Facilitation?	0	0	6 (10%)	20 (33%)	34 (57%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Category A:						
Provisions that the WTO Member will implement by the time the Agreement enters into force (or in the case of a least-developed Member within one year after entry into force)	0	0	11 (18%)	34 (57%)	15 (25%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Category B:						
Provisions that the WTO Member will implement after a transitional period following the entry into force of the Agreement	0	0	5 (8%)	35 (58%)	20 (33%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Category C:						
Provisions that the WTO Member will implement on a date after a transitional period following the entry into force of the Agreement and requiring the acquisition of assistance and support for capacity building	0	0	5 (8%)	29 (48%)	26 (43%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
2. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and the TFA						
Among the SME bottlenecks for internationalization that are specifically addressed by the TFA are (1) the lack of access to specialized information and knowledge on trade issues; (2) the lack of institutional infrastructure for public-private sector consultations with SMEs; and	0	0	13 (22%)	15 (25%)	32 (54%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree

(3) non-conformity to international standards.						
Governments can create special authorized economic operators (AEO) Programmes for SMEs that require less stringent criteria for SMEs to qualify for AEO status, or access to at least some AEO capabilities, such as providing SMEs wishing to enter the validation process with information and capacity-building	0	5 (8%)	6 (10%)	25 (42%)	24 (41%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Special attention needs to be taken to making the single windows accessible by SMEs, for example, by providing technical consultation and training services to SMEs on registering and using the facility	0	0	0	29 (49%)	31 (53%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
3. Challenges for TFA implementation						
3.1. Technical challenges						
A general lack of awareness of processes and procedures exists among traders	0	9 (15%)	10 (17%)	30 (51%)	11 (19%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Mandatory documents and official fees and charges are often not published or made easily accessible	0	19 (32%)	10 (17%)	31 (53%)	0	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Excessive manual processes and outdated legislation	0	18 (31%)	0	35 (59%)	7 (12%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Lack of an integrated information and communication technology (ICT) environment and inefficient logistics	0	20 (34%)	5 (8%)	24 (41%)	11 (19%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Lack of an integrated approach to risk management for border clearance across border agencies	0	10 (17%)	0	45 (76%)	5 (8%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Multiple checking of documents and duplication in data entry and recording	0	10 (17%)	5 (8%)	35 (59%)	10 (17%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
3.2. Institutional challenges						

Inadequate administrative structure and processes; creation of a clear and common vision for trade facilitation among public and private sectors is needed	0	0	21 (36%)	34 (58%)	5 (8%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Varying degrees of understanding of possible TFA implications on institutional culture, change management and operational practices	0	0	5 (8%)	29 (49%)	26 (44%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Low level of proactive dialogue as a basis for consultation with the business community prior to the design of laws or development of procedures	0	0	18 (31%)	26 (44%)	16 (27%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree
Creation of or enhancement of a Trade Facilitation Committee to champion trade facilitation reforms and convene public and private sector around a sustainable reform agenda is needed	0	0	10 (8%)	32 (54%)	18 (31%)	Somewhat / Strongly agree

4. Recommendations

Is there any specific area that you expect to be covered by this Workshop?

- The kind of information that a negotiator need to take into consideration in trade provisions for trade facilitation directed to improve the productivity competitiveness of SME's
- Best practices to enhance coordination among different agencies with different mandate (i.e. development agencies, financial providers, regulators) to eliminate 'silos', red-tapes and conflicting measures with a view to create a seamless trade facilitation experience for SMEs
- Sharing best practices from other Economies about the way to internationalizing SMEs through the TFA and how the SMEs does not left behind to get the benefit of TFA
- Sharing knowledge and experience by MSMEs, opportunities and challenges, to utilize trade facilitation reform in Viet Nam, perhaps it can be a lesson learned by other economies to implement continuous improvement trade facilitation in their owned economies
- Status quo of the proposed WTO reforms and its impact on the WTO TFA (if any)
- It would be useful to acquire ideas to improve the dialogue with SME so that bottle-necks for internationalization of SME in Mexico could be reduced

Other recommendations (if any)?

- A possibility of unified TFA manual of operations for general trading processes among APEC
- A policy similar to the Madrid Protocol for single approval of licenses among member economies in trading with specific markets

VII. Annex 2: Final agenda of the Workshop

Time	Content
Day 1: 13 June 2019	
08.30 – 09.00	Registration
09.00 – 09.20	<p>Opening Speech</p> <p>- <i>Mr Nguyen Van Trinh, Vice President, Ho Chi Minh Institute for Development Studies.</i></p>
09.20 – 09.30	Group photo
09.30 – 10.00	<p>Session 1: Overview on the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization</p> <p>During this Session, the speaker(s) will provide an overview on the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), including but not limited to, definition of trade facilitation, structure of the Agreement, Trade Facilitation Committee, ratifications and implementations of WTO members etc.</p> <p>Moderator: - <i>Dr Mohammad Saeed, Senior Advisor, Trade Facilitation and Policy for Business, International Trade Center (ITC).</i></p> <p>Speaker: - <i>Dr Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Economic Affairs Officer, South and South-West Asia Office, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, New Delhi.</i></p>
10.00 – 10.30	Discussion (Questions and Answers)
10.30 – 10.45	Tea Break
10.45 – 12.00	<p>Session 2: Provisions under the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization</p> <p>This Session will equip participants with in-depth information and analysis on 12 articles in Section I of the Agreement. These 12 articles, which are further subdivided into approximately 35 separate technical measures, are new rules, processes and procedures that WTO member governments are required to implement.</p> <p>Moderator: - <i>Ms Angelia Chew, Founder & Managing Partner, AC Trade Advisory Pte Ltd, Singapore;</i></p> <p>Speakers: - <i>Mrs Özlem Soysanli, Technical Officer, the World Customs Organization (WCO);</i> - <i>Dr Dinh Khuong Duy, Researcher, Bocconi University, Italy.</i></p>
12.00 – 12.30	Discussion (Questions and Answers)
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.00	<p>Session 3: Provisions under the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization (continued)</p> <p>During this Session, speakers will present on Section II and Section III of the Agreement. Section II contains the provisions and conditions concerning the flexibility in implementing arrangements for developing and</p>

	<p>least developed WTO members. Section III establishes a WTO Committee on Trade Facilitation to oversee the operation and implementation of the Agreement.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>- <i>Mr Conway Beddie, Principal Assistant Director, Multilateral Trade Policy and Negotiation Division, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia.</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>- <i>Mrs Özlem Soysanli, Technical Officer, the World Customs Organization (WCO);</i></p> <p>- <i>Dr Dinh Khuong Duy, Researcher, Bocconi University, Italy.</i></p>
15.00 – 15.30	Discussion (Questions and Answers)
15.30 – 16.00	Tea Break
16.00 – 16.45	<p>Session 4: Benefits of the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises</p> <p>During this Session, presentations will focus on the benefits of the Agreement for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Speakers may also suggest recommendations on enhancing engagement of MSMEs in order to ensure their needs and interests are taken into account in the implementation of the Agreement in domestic laws and regulations.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>- <i>Dr Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Economic Affairs Officer, South and South-West Asia Office, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, New Delhi.</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>- <i>Mr Conway Beddie, Principal Assistant Director, Multilateral Trade Policy and Negotiation Division, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia;</i></p> <p>- <i>Dr Mohammad Saeed, Senior Advisor, Trade Facilitation and Policy for Business, International Trade Center (ITC).</i></p>
16.45 – 17.15	Discussion (Questions and Answers)
End of Day 1	

Day 2: 14 June 2019	
09.00 – 10.00	<p>Session 5: Case Studies in some APEC Member Economies</p> <p>During this Session, speakers will share information on ratifications and implementations of the Agreement in several APEC economies and attached opportunities and challenges. Presentations may also include how to integrate the Agreement in MSME development policies domestically.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>- <i>Dr Dinh Khuong Duy, Researcher, Bocconi University, Italy.</i></p>

	<p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Ms Angelia Chew, Founder & Managing Partner, AC Trade Advisory Pte Ltd, Singapore;</i> - <i>Mrs Nguyen Pham Nhu Ha, Vice Head of C/O and IRP Division, Customs Control and Supervision Department, the General Department of Viet Nam Customs.</i>
10.00 – 10.30	Discussion
10.30 – 10.45	Tea Break
10.45 – 11.50	<p>Session 6: Recommendations and the Way Forward</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Ms Nguyen Huong Tra, SME Development Expert, Viet Nam</i></p>
11.50 – 12.00	<p>Closing Remarks:</p> <p><i>By Ms Pham Quynh Mai, Viet Nam's Senior Official to APEC and Deputy Director General, Multilateral Trade Policy Department, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam.</i></p>
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch
THE END.	