



Douane
Belastingdienst

Organization and protocol of the National Committee on Trade Facilitation of The Netherlands



Introduction

This protocol defines the Framework for the cooperation and collaboration between the business sector, The Customs Administration of The Netherlands and other government stakeholders in the management of Cross Border traffic of goods.

Objective

In the National Committee on Trade Facilitation of The Netherlands (NCTF) the Customs Administration of the Netherlands, other inspection authorities and business sector representatives discuss issues with respect to EU external cross-border movements of goods in the broadest sense of the word. The Trade department of The Ministry of Foreign affairs monitors these activities. Equality and mutual transparency form the basis of the dialogue. The parties are receptive to each other's responsibilities, interests and wishes, and coordinate them where possible. In doing so, they always search for the best possible balance between enforcement and trade facilitation together.

The Customs Administration leads this Committee, as it is the managing authority on the Coordination of Border Management in cross border goods movements.

Subjects of discussion

The NCTF agenda includes subjects affecting customs logistics and customs handling. These can be subjects of an operational nature, but also themes with a more strategic content. Moreover, matters are discussed such as adjustments to IT systems and dates of introduction of laws and regulations.

Government representation

The Customs Administration of The Netherlands chairs the NCTF on the basis of its coordinating role (as defined by law) within the supervision of EU cross-border movements of goods.

The Directorate-General for Fiscal Affairs, the party responsible for policy and legislation, participates as observer. The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) and the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate (IL&T) participate on the basis of their role as supervisory authorities, insofar as it concurs with the role of The Customs Administration of The Netherlands.

Business sector representation

Relevant chain partners to Customs from the business sector may join the NCTF: umbrella organizations with national coverage fulfilling a role in cross-border customs logistics, as far as their processes and procedures are affected by the topics that are discussed at the NCTF. On the basis of these criteria, the following parties are members of the NCTF:

ACN:	Air Cargo Netherlands
Evofenedex:	Business Organization for Logistics and Transport - Netherlands Association for Export
TLN/FENEX:	Netherlands Association for Forwarding and Logistics & Transport and Logistics Netherlands
VNC:	Association of Dutch Shipbrokers and Agents
VNO-NCW/MKB Nederland:	Business and employers' organization
VNTO:	Netherlands Terminal Operators Association

Structure

At the General NCTF, in Dutch Overleg Douane Bedrijfsleven (ODB), the parties discuss the strategic vision of The Customs Administration of The Netherlands with respect to implementation policy on supervision and enforcement of EU cross-border movements of goods. This body also acts as a steering group for various subjects.

Three working groups fall under the General NCTF for the purpose of, among other things, implementing laws and regulations, handling implementation issues, providing subject matter information and answering general questions:

- **NCTF for Current Issues**
Discusses implementation and other issues that are relevant to the primary process of Customs and those that must be dealt with in the short term.
- **NCTF for Medium-Term Issues**
Discusses implementation and other issues that must be dealt with in the medium term. Special attention is paid to the Union Customs Code, and to broad developments in cooperation with other enforcement agencies in cross-border customs logistics.
- **NCTF for Information Technology**
Discusses specific IT-related issues. The consultation between facilitating IT organizations of Customs and software developers (OSWO) falls under the control of this working group.

Frameworks of the General NCTF

- The General Director of The Customs Administration of The Netherlands is the chairman.
- No more than two representatives of each umbrella organization join the General NCTF.
- If subjects are discussed which affect the interests of sector organizations other than umbrella organizations representing a link in the logistics chain (forms of cooperation between businesses representing a certain group of products, e.g. in the area of excise duty, safety, health, economy or the environment), these organizations are represented by VNO-NCW and MKB-Nederland (in consultation with their membership).
- For Customs, the General NCTF is the main strategic communication channel for coordination with the business sector.
- The Directorate General for Fiscal Affairs joins the General NCTF for information about legislation, internal regulations and general customs policy, as well as the related non-fiscal policy with respect to import, export and transit. The Directorate General for Fiscal Affairs holds legislative consultations about this with VNO-NCW.
- All consultations between Customs and business sector umbrella organizations at an international or national level or at a level that transcends the competency of customs regions are held under the umbrella of the NCTF.
- Other national consultations between Customs and the business sector outside the General NCTF (insofar as it concerns issues at a strategic level, publicity and/or politically sensitive issues and complaints about the general functioning of Customs which are more than incidental in nature) are initially held with a designated Customs official. This official coordinates all forms of consultation with the business sector umbrella organizations.

Frameworks for the business sector

- The NCTF is a platform for general communications.
- Specific individual files are never discussed at the NCTF.
- The National Customs Office / NCTF secretariat coordinates the NCTF.
- Customs has primary authority to assess agenda points that are submitted.
- Regional consultations with national umbrella organizations about cross-regional issues fall under the structure of the NCTF.
- Customs issues about national tasks that are carried out within a region for the entire country are by definition a national affair.
- General correspondence from Customs to the business sector – these are all subject matter correspondences that are sent outside the individual customer relationship- are submitted to the NCTF secretariat in draft form, for the purpose of coordination with the ODB members. This also applies to comparable regional correspondence.

Frameworks for the NCTF working groups

- Working groups discuss general questions from the business sector and provide subject matter information.
- Through the working groups, Customs intensively involves the business sector in the implementation of new legislation and development of regulations.
- If an organization participating in a working group is represented by persons other than direct staff members, this will be discussed with Customs in advance.
- The chairman of an NCTF working group may set up a project group for the execution of a well-defined assignment, which is formulated by the working group. The project group has a clearly and well-defined mandate. Outside this mandate, the project group has no decision-making powers. Issues involving policy of Customs are always submitted for approval to the NCTF working group that gave the assignment.
- The chairman of an NCTF working group may set up a focus group, which is to give advice on the implementation of automation and/or laws and regulations, insofar as they affect the business sector. The focus group has a clearly and well-defined mandate for giving advice and has no decision-making powers. Any issues that go beyond the advice are submitted to the NCTF working group that gave the assignment.
- The permanent technical consultation on software specifications, the OSWO, falls under the IT NCTF. Within the OSWO, there is only communication about technical specifications of software for the filing of customs declarations.
- All activities and communication with customers of Customs, which are related to IT systems and software specifications fall under the frameworks of this NCTF protocol.
- Given the specific issues, a representation of the software suppliers joins the IT NCTF working group. This representation does not participate in the other bodies of the NCTF.
- No national forms of consultation with the business sector are initiated concerning cross border movement of goods outside the structure of the NCTF.



