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IN THIS ISSUE:

**PAGE. 1
EDITORIAL**

**PAGE. 2
NATIONAL TRADE
FACILITATION STRATEGY
AND ROADMAP 2012-
2015**

**PAGES.2-3
OPERATIONAL STEERING
COMMITTEE AND
WORKING GROUPS**

**PAGES. 4 -5
REMARKABLE RESULTS
OF THE NATIONAL
STRATEGY:
REDUCTION OF TIME
AND RED-TAPE IN
CUSTOMS OFFICES**

EDITORIAL

Less than one year ago the National Trade Facilitation Strategy (NTFS) and Roadmap 2012-2015 was officially presented (1 November 2012). Since then the environment around international business activity has transformed significantly.

A detailed 25-action plan is in force and being implemented covering both pre-customs and customs procedures as well as the legal framework of trade across borders, with main objective of “reducing time and cost of exports, increasing GDP and creating jobs”.

This newsletter, under the Operational Steering Committee (OSC) for the Facilitation of External Trade, will serve not only as a reference point for the monitoring and communication of the progress made in the implementation of the National Strategy but will also be the focal point of all stakeholders such as exporters, traders, suppliers, financial institutions, collective organizations and public-sector structures such as Customs offices, relevant Ministries and export-promotion support agencies and organisations.

In this respect, both the members of the OSC and the Working Groups (WGs) actively participate in the dialogue among companies, organisations and the public administration in order to highlight all proposals made towards a more efficient implementation of the NTFS as well as to record the impact of the reforms in economy.

Let’s communicate.

The Operational Steering Committee

The Newsletter of OSC is also available at the following websites:

- Ministry of Development & Competitiveness (www.mindev.gov.gr/?p=6807)
- Ministry of Rural Development and Food (www.minagric.gr)
- Customs Administration – ICISNet (<http://portal.gsis.gr/portal/page/portal/ICISnet>)
- HEPO-Hellenic Foreign Trade Board (www.hepo.gr/)
- PEA-Panhellenic Exporters Association (www.pse.gr/)
- SEVE-Greek International Business Association (www.seve.gr/)
- Exporter’s Association of Crete (<http://crete-exporters.com/>)
- SEV Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (www.sev.org.gr/online/index.aspx)
- EXPORTGATE.GR (www.exportgate.gr)



NATIONAL TRADE FACILITATION STRATEGY AND ROADMAP 2012-2015

The NTFS & Roadmap exemplify Greece's effort to adopt a sustainable economic model based on sound business environment. Each step implemented contributes to the growth of the Greek economy and supports job creation. Coupled with the first two pillars of the National Export Strategy and other related government initiatives, it is expected to significantly simplify pre-customs and customs procedures and in general trading across borders making it one of Greece's competitive advantages.

Key objectives of the Trade Facilitation Strategy are:

- To reduce the number of days needed to export by 50% by 2015
- To reduce the cost to export by 20% by 2015
- To establish a National Single Window for Exports

In essence, this national reform effort that is supported both by the private and the public sector, highlights the priority to simplify trade across borders and support 'extrovert' entrepreneurship in Greece, as one of the top priorities for the Greek government and as the primary factor for the country's economic rebound.

For more information: <http://www.mindev.gov.gr/?p=6807>

OPERATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS

The Operational Steering Committee was set up for the implementation of the National Strategy and the 25 actions it includes (Cabinet Act No. 2-25/1/2013/GG19A). The OSC acts under the auspices of the Extroversion Steering Committee (PMD Y216/2012, GG 3190b/30.11.2012).

The OSC consists of members of both public and private sector while the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is one of the technical consultants.

For a more efficient organization of the implementation of the Roadmap, the OSC decided to form eight (8) Working Groups which will undertake the coordination of the implementation of reforms in the various actions.

Following the mentality governing the trade facilitation procedures which main objective is to create trusted relationships and cooperation between the public and the private sector, these Working Groups consist of executives from all stakeholders.

The Working Groups are:

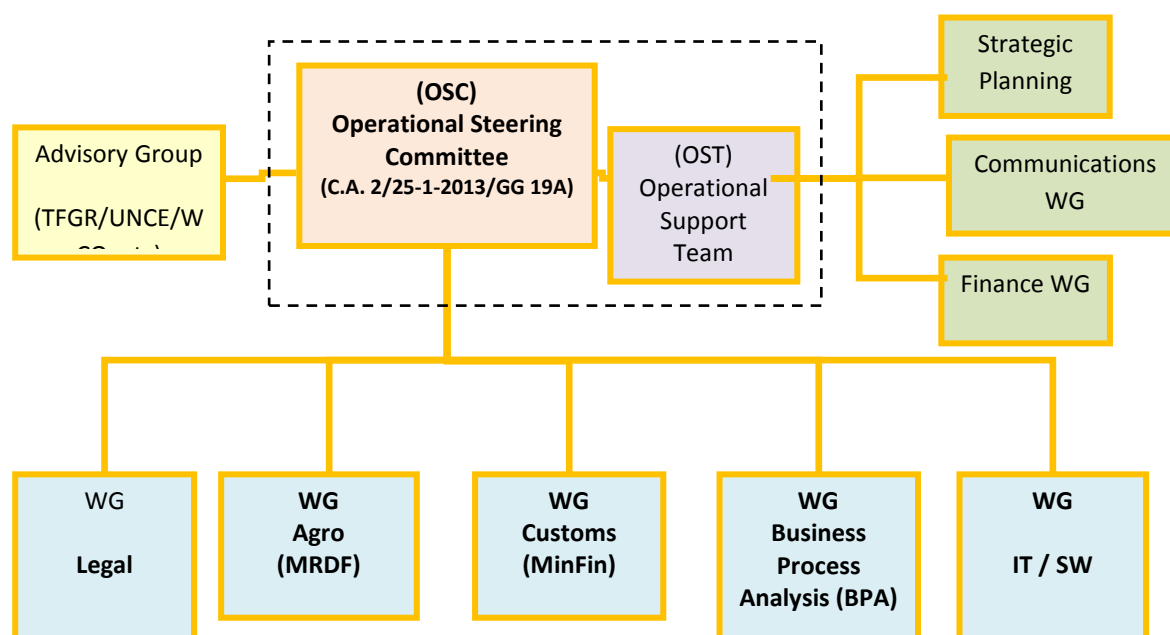
1. **Strategic Planning**, responsible for the formation and implementation of the National Strategy's guidelines



2. **Communication**, in charge of the promotion and dissemination of information relevant to procedures (current and future)
3. **Finance**, responsible for securing the necessary funds that will allow for the implementation of the National Strategy
4. **Legal**, this working group will map the problems and inefficiencies of existing legal framework governing exports.
5. **Agro and Pre-Customs**, for the invigoration of the products from the primary sector
6. **Customs**, for the simplification and acceleration of customs procedures
7. **Business Process Analysis-BPA** for the streamlining of procedures in dynamically exportable Greek products
8. **IT - Single Window**, for the implementation of the National Single Window for Exports

The members of each WG put together 17 detailed project plans under UNECE's and special experts' guidance. Thereby, each WG is driven by an analytical and pre-determined timeline aiming at achieving the actions set in the Roadmap.

OSC SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM





REMARKABLE RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY REDUCTION OF TIME AND RED-TAPE IN CUSTOMS OFFICES

One of the most important parameters towards the successful implementation and at the same time one of the objectives of the NSTF is the simplification of customs procedures.

In this framework, significant progress was made and reforms that have a direct impact on time and volume of documents as well as the cost of the procedure were implemented. Since 2 April 2012, the electronic submission of the export declaration through ICISnet is in effect (D19A 5012006/12.03.12 SDMOF), while the Customs Administration in the framework of the pilot programme for selected Customs offices in Piraeus (5th and 6th) as well as the customs office at the Athens International Airport proceeded to some important reforms such as:

- **Electronic submission of the export declaration**
- **Direct notification to the exporter as to the acceptance or not of his/her export declaration**
- **Ability to present goods in other areas that the customs offices approves**
- **Ability to collect the Export Accompanying Document by another authorized person, other than the customs broker.**
- **Extent the working hours in selected customs offices in order to boost both exports and imports**

In pilot customs offices results recorded:

1. **Direct routing of low-risk goods in times not exceeding 30 minutes**
2. **Reduction in the percentage of controls in medium and high-risk goods aligning it with the EU average (5%)**

Beyond these pilot procedures, simplified procedures are a reality in other customs offices nationwide, such as:

- **The supporting documents to the exports declaration can also be submitted in pdf**
- **Simplified export and import procedures are in effect, under commonly applied criteria, as in every EU member state.**
- **The realization of customs brokers services is possible for every individual and legal person apart from customs brokers (after the amendment of L.718/77 by L.4093/2012)**
- **The obligation of exporters' signature notarization on authorizing documents to customs representatives has been abolished.**

NEWS

OPERATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE FOR TRADE FACILITATION



More changes in the customs procedures are imminent in the near-term future, as ICISnet will be fully operational; most important of which are:

- **The electronic submission of the import declaration**
- **Customs and tax and other charges will be paid through an e-application**
- **Low-risk declarations will be released immediately**
- **Exporters will have the ability to print the Export Accompanying Document**
- **Procedures already implemented in the customs pilot programmed will be roll out to all customs offices national wide**

For more information: <http://portal.gsis.gr/portal/page/portal/ICISnet>

CALENDAR OCTOBER

**1 OCTOBER:
KICK-OFF MEETING FOR
BPA PROJECTS FOR 5
PRODUCTS**

**20 OCTOBER:
E-SHOP GUIDE
PUBLICATION**

HIGHLIGHTS

“We acknowledge that the progress made over the last months is indeed significant. The liberalization of customs activities & simplification of processes, gave us the opportunity to reduce our rates by 50% & at the same time to improve the export clearance time by one day.

This development directly supports the Greek exporters & fits perfectly with the National Strategy of Exports.”

DHL EXPRESS HELLAS S.A.

OPERATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE FOR TRADE FACILITATION
tradefacilitation@ypanyp.gov.gr