Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism

22 October 2015
PART I: Contents

1. The TOAM Platform
2. Objectives and Institutional Mechanism
3. Role of MCCI as National Focal Point
4. Pilot Phase and Launch
Mauritius: Company Perspectives - An ITC Series on Non-Tariff Measures

Mauritian exporters claim to be less affected by trade barriers than many other countries that have participated in the ITC business surveys on non-tariff measures. Among the 400 Mauritian firms surveyed, 27% of exporters were adversely affected by non-tariff measures; 36% of importing firms reported they were affected by non-tariff measures.
Non-Tariff Measures

Defining Non-Tariff Measures: What are they?

- Policy measures that act as ‘structural bottlenecks’ on export and import, other than customs tariffs, - import bans, restrictive import licenses, unreasonable product labelling and standards.

- Mandatory requirements, rules or regulations legally set by the government of the exporting, importing or transit country

- Restrictive and distorted effects on international trade.

MCCI
Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism

- Online platform for reporting Trade Obstacles
- Accessible to all operators
- All Government Agencies linked
- Formal mechanism for following-up and addressing reported obstacles

www.tradeobstacles.org/mauritius
3 main functionalities

1. **Report a trade obstacle**: allows user to describe the details of the problem faced. The user must be registered to be able to send a report.

2. **Receive trade alert**: allows users to get email alerts on the obstacles reported by other users and solutions provided by the authorities according to different criteria.

3. **Analyse the trade obstacles**: allows users to see all trade obstacles reports created as well as summary statistics.
The Institutional Mechanism

When a report is valid, the agency concerned has to submit a response to the NFP who will then publish it online as a part of the obstacle report. Any update concerning the status of the report and/or the actions taken by the concerned agency will be communicated by email to the user who reported the obstacle. Additionally, all registered users will be notified of any modification or update in those reports that concern the products and the markets of their interest. The chart below illustrates how the mechanism works.
Objectives of the TOA Mechanism

• Provide a **new communication channel** for public-private dialogue on trade obstacles

• Contribute to the **identification and removal** of trade obstacles

• Assist national authorities in the **development and implementation** of trade facilitation policies

• Provide companies and TSIs with **relevant and up-to-date information** on trade rules and procedures

• **Improve** the business environment
TOAM in Mauritius

• Chair of National Monitoring Committee (NMC)
  ➢ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (International Trade Division)

• National Focal Point (NFP)
  ➢ MCCI

• Inter-Agency Protocol
  ➢ NMC, NFP and all agencies have signed an inter-agency Protocol (approx. 26 agencies)
List of Agencies (1)

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade Division (ITD)
- Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI)
- Division of Veterinary Services (DVS)
- National Plant Protection Office (NPPO)
- Food Import Unit (MOH)
- Dangerous Chemicals and Control Board (DCCB)
- Pharmacy Board
- Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development
- Attorney General’s Office
- Commerce Division (MICCP)
- Industry Division (MICCP)
List of Agencies (2)

- Ministry of Technology
- Customs Department, Mauritius Revenue Authority
- Board of Investment
- Enterprise Mauritius
- Mauritius Standards Bureau
- Mauritius Ports Authority
- SMEDA
- Competent Authority – Seafood
- Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance
- Ministry of Tourism and External Communications
- Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities
- Ministry of Business and Enterprise
MCCI: National Focal Point

- Responsible for administration and management of the website
  - Validation of reported trade obstacles in collaboration with NMC
  - Ensure prompt transmission of information to relevant agencies to maintain confidentiality
  - Updating users on the status of their reported obstacles (through the TOAM)
  - Posting updated trade information in news section of the website
MCCI: National Focal Point

• Communication and Promotion Campaign
  
  ➢ Dissemination of brochures to exporters, importers, business associations and trade support institutions
  
  ➢ 100% Challenge TV Programme
  
  ➢ Press Campaign
  
  ➢ Awareness Workshops
The Pilot Phase: Training of Operators

Testing the Platform
- 3 focus groups interviews
- Present the TOA platform
- Training operators how to use the platform
- Help them register as a user and report an obstacle

Evaluation of the TOAM Website
- Obtaining comments on website from operators by filling in questionnaires
- Provide feedback and suggestions to ITC
Training Sessions for Evaluating the Platform

3 Focus Groups

- 14 Exporters
- 8 Importers
- 4 Business Associations
Official Launch: 10 September 2015
Results in Numbers (as at 22 October 2015)

30 Operators Trained

> 50 Registered Users

12 Obstacles Reported / 3 Solved
Thank you!

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PART II: Contents

1. How to Register as a User?
2. Reporting a Trade Obstacle
3. Updates & Obstacles Analysis
How to Register as a User?

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How to Register as a User?

**Required Fields**
- Title, Name, Email, Password,
  Notification Language, Country of Residence, Organisation Type

**Optional Fields**
- Telephone Number, Organisation, Job Title
The Alert System

Alerts

- Receive email notifications of obstacles faced by operators in sectors and markets of interest to you
- You can, at any time, modify the alerts’ settings or decide not to receive anymore alerts from the page Edit my alerts (within the module MY ACCOUNT).
Reporting a Trade Obstacle

Context of the Obstacle
- When and Where?
- Is it a recurring problem?

Type of Obstacle
- Stringent regulation, administrative burdens, transparency issues, discriminating behaviour of officials, time constraints, high costs amongst others

Affected Product & Additional Information

Report a new obstacle
Please, fill in the form below referring to only one obstacle and one product at a time (if the obstacle product, please identify only the main product affected).

1. Context of the obstacle
2. Type of obstacle
3. Affected product
4. Additional information

You faced an obstacle when *
- Importing
- Exporting

Towards (from) which country? *

Please select

Describe the context of the obstacle *

Describe the trade obstacle context
What Happens after Submission of the Report?

**Validation**
- The National Focal Point and Chair of the National Monitoring Committee validate the obstacle jointly.

**Obstacle Published on TOAM Platform**
- After validation, the obstacle becomes public but details of the company remain confidential at all stages of the process.

**Request for Information sent to Relevant Agencies**
- The National Focal Point then sends the report to the relevant agencies and requests for clarifications/action to be taken.
## Status Updates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacles status</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Colour code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>Confidential (NFP and NMC)</td>
<td>The obstacle report has been submitted by the registered user and has to be reviewed by the NFP.</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under review</td>
<td>Confidential (NFP and NMC)</td>
<td>The obstacle report has been reviewed by the NFP but further details are needed in order to validate it.</td>
<td>Green Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not valid</td>
<td>Confidential (NFP and NMC)</td>
<td>The obstacle report has been reviewed and rejected by the NFP because its content is inappropriate or the problem reported does not correspond to an obstacle as defined in the TOA platform.</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-going resolution</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>The obstacle report has been reviewed and validated by the NFP. The obstacle has been communicated to the relevant agencies.</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solved</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>The obstacle has been removed by the relevant agencies.</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-going resolution (Special Case)</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>The obstacle cannot be removed in the short term as it represents a special case. Discussions on how to solve the obstacle will continue within the NMC.</td>
<td>Grey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Online Updates Increase Transparency

Report's updates

07/08/2015  New

22/09/2015  Ongoing resolution <14d  Update - Public

Dear User, Thankyou for using the TOAM platform. The reported trade obstacle has been validated. We have sent details of the problem to the relevant agency and we shall keep you updated on the progress made to resolve this issue. Best Regards, The National Focal Point

22/09/2015  Ongoing resolution <14d  Request for info (Valid) - Public

Message sent by the NFP on 22/09/2015

Dear Sir, Please find attached a reported trade obstacle falling under the purview of your Agency. We would be grateful if the necessary actions can be taken to resolve this issue. Relying on your usual collaboration. Thanks and Best Regards, The National Focal Point

Response from the competent agency on 30/09/2015

Thankyou for your query. Please note that the Mauritius Standards Bureau has a documented set of procedures with regards to CN No. 43 of 1994 - Toys (Safety) Regulations 1994; the information is accessible online on the MSB Website: mbs.inhet.mu/English/Documents/MSB/updates2015/Procedure%20for%20Toys.doc

30/09/2015  Solved  Update - Public

Dear User, According to the new procedures at the the Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB), Importers of toys are no longer required to submit applications for 'Certificate of Conformity' through the Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU). They can now apply directly to the MSB. As indicated in the reply above, the new guidelines are available on the website of the MSB. Best Regards, The National Focal Point
Obstacles Analysis

View Obstacles Reported by Other Users

- Click on Obstacles Analysis → View the Reports

View the reports
## Notify the same obstacle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Resolution Date</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>16/08/2015</td>
<td>Importing</td>
<td>Informal or unusually high payment</td>
<td>Foodstuffs, beverages and tobacco</td>
<td>21/09/2015</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>03/08/2015</td>
<td>Exporting</td>
<td>Government Institution</td>
<td>Administrative burden</td>
<td>21/09/2015</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>20/08/2015</td>
<td>Importing</td>
<td>Government Institution</td>
<td>Regulatory problem</td>
<td>21/09/2015</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>20/08/2015</td>
<td>Importing</td>
<td>Government Institution</td>
<td>Delay or time related problem</td>
<td>30/09/2015</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>07/08/2015</td>
<td>Importing</td>
<td>Government Institution</td>
<td>Delay or time related problem</td>
<td>30/09/2015</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>06/08/2015</td>
<td>Importing</td>
<td>Government Institution</td>
<td>Informal or unusually high payment</td>
<td>21/09/2015</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fee of MUR 500 payable to customs for ruling on HS codes classification is considered unfair.

Notify the same obstacle
Other Useful Resources

- User guide
- Trade obstacles classification
- FAQ
- News and documents
- Useful links
- Visit the demo site

Join the Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism

Report an obstacle
- Report the obstacles you face when exporting or importing your products and let the responsible authorities find a solution.

Set up your alerts
- Get timely updates on the problems faced by other trade operators in the markets and product categories you are interested in.

View the reports
- See the obstacle reports submitted to date and understand what the main concerns are for trade operators.

Latest obstacles
- 09/10/2015
  Vessel to Reunion was planned to depart on Tuesday 06.10. On Friday 02.10 morning, we are informed that departure of vessel would be delayed to Thursday 08.10. In the afternoon, we learn that the vessel... read more

Statistics
- 10 Obstacles registered
- 1 Obstacles solved
- 9 Obstacles ongoing resolution

News & documents
- 12/10/2015
  E-Procurement in the Public Sector System (e-PS)
  The Government e-Procurement System (e-PS) was launched on... read more
Thank you!

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