
Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Transport Facilitation (TFWG)

1. Objective

The Working Group on Transport Facilitation (TFWG) will monitor and guide the work for implementation of the *Flagship Axes Action Plan* as developed by the EC Technical Assistance for the SEETO Strategic Work Programme 2012-2014. Based on this Action Plan during the Western Balkan Summit of August 2015 agreement has been reached on certain policy ("soft") measures as outlined in the summit conclusions. The TFWG will act as a coordinating body for the implementation of these measures.

The objective of the TFWG is to deal with wide range of issues related to transport barriers, including rail¹ and road border crossing issues, ports and terminals. The TFWG will stimulate the dialogue between the private sector and operators on one hand, with the national transport and other public authorities. The TFWG will closely liaise with the CEFTA Committee of Trade Facilitation especially in regards to the implementation of Framework agreement between Customs Administrations of CEFTA Parties for simplification of inspections, exchange of data, and cooperation of trade partnership programmes.

To reach this objective the TFWG may also establish corridor related subgroups per flagship axes corridor (or the newly extended TEN-T core network corridors) if deemed necessary.

2. Membership

- > 2.1. Members of the TFWG will be:
 - National contact points: Public officials delegated from ministries responsible for transport who are in charge of international transport relations and from ministries responsible for trade as well as representatives from the European Commission (DG MOVE, DG NEAR as lead DGs, and other DGs relevant to the implementation of the policy "soft" measures and the Flagship Axes Action Plan).
 - Custom Authorities representatives and other border agencies, including Police offices' representatives are invited to participate to the work of the TFWG as members in accordance to the needs expressed by the Chairman, national contact points or the Permanent Secretariat of the Steering Committee.
 - Representatives from the Transport industry (associations, hauliers, operators, freight forwarders, port authorities and other market players) are considered as members of the TFWG (and subsequent subgroups, if any) and shall actively participate in performing the tasks of this WG. The list of representatives from the transport operators is not exclusive and can be updated throughout time; it shall be created by the Permanent Secretariat in close cooperation with the Members from 2.1.

¹ In cooperation with the Railway Working Group -RWWG

- > 2.2 Representatives from institutions mentioned under 2.1 from EU Member States neighbouring the Western Balkans region may be invited accordingly, if the issues and actions of interest to the Regional Participants require coordinated approach.
- > 2.3 Representatives from CEFTA Parties (Secretariat and CEFTA standing Committees, notably the Committee on Trade Facilitation), UNECE, World Bank & IFC, EBRD, EIB as well as active projects and initiatives dealing with transport & trade facilitation will be regularly invited to meetings and shall be encouraged to actively participate in performing the tasks of this WG in order to have a coordinated and synchronised approach.
- > 2.4. The Chairman of the Railway Working Group will be regularly invited to the meetings and shall actively contribute to the work of the TFWG.

3. Chairmanship

The TFWG will be chaired by high-level official from the European Commission.

The responsibilities of the Chair include, though not limited to:

- > Scheduling meetings and presiding the meetings;
- > Focus on achieving the objectives of the TFWG according to its mandate;
- > Guide and direct the TFWG in prioritizing and fulfilling the Action Plan objectives and activities (includes guidance and liaison with SEETO structures, as well as with EC and international organisations);
- > Encourage the members to participate actively in policy dialogue on the pertinent issues for seamless transport operations on the flagship axes/core corridors;
- > Coordinate the different services of the European Commission represented in the TFWG
- > Decide on the need and scope of any corridor subgroups together with the members of the Group.

4. Secretariat to the TFWG

The Permanent Secretariat shall act as a support secretariat to the TFWG and its Chair.

The Permanent Secretariat shall take necessary preparatory activities for organisation of the meetings, and preparation and distribution of background materials. It shall be responsible for preparing the project management plan for the facilitation and monitoring of the implementation of the transport soft measures that have been identified by the Western Balkan 6 and the SEETO Flagship Axes Action Plan.

The TFWG Chair will give the final approval to the meetings' conclusions.

The Permanent Secretariat will have the following task and activities:

- Elaborate a Project Management Plan for the implementation of the Western Balkans policy actions ("soft measures") identified and agreed by the Western Balkan 6 Meetings, identifying activities, milestones, deliverables, actors, key performance indicators and verification of success.

- Further elaborate the SEETO Flagship Axes Action plan identifying activities, milestones, deliverables, actors, key performance indicators and verification of success.
- Regularly gather information about the implementation of the individual projects and inform the TFWG about successful implementation or delays, proactively alerting the Chairperson and the TFWG Members about possible implementation problems.
- Coordinate the facilitation process with relevant stakeholders in the Regional Participants and EU and liaise with future EU Core Coordinators or facilitators to be appointed;
- Promote the harmonisation of policies, strategies and good practices among the RPs, as well as promote the SEETO Flagship Axes development EU-wide with final aim of improving the attractiveness of the flagship Axes/core corridors;
- Liaise closely with the European Commission (DG NEAR) to identify potential projects to be implemented via EU grants.

5. Meetings

The meetings of the TFWG will take place at least twice per year. The Permanent Secretariat will notify the members on the time and venue of the meetings.

The meetings can take place in Western Balkans or in EU countries, but the Secretariat will solicit the Members that meetings are held back-to back with visits on border-crossing points, ports or other facilities, where operations could be observed, if possible.

If a member of the TFWG is absent from the meeting, he/she shall communicate his/her position in writing within period not longer than 10 days from the date of the receipt of a request. After that period, if no written interventions, it shall be deemed that the member concerned has no objection.

6. Reporting

Recommendations issued by the TFWG shall be communicated to the Steering Committee of the MoU for Development of the South East Europe Core Regional Transport Network through the Permanent Secretariat. TFWG members may be called upon to present a Report on implementation of the Action Plan for the Annual Ministerial meetings.

The Chair and/or the Permanent Secretariat will report annually to the Steering Committee on the work of the TFWG and progress in the implementation of the Flagship Axes Action Plan.

TFWG members will report on every meeting the progress in the implementation of the Flagship Axes Action Plan in their own national framework.