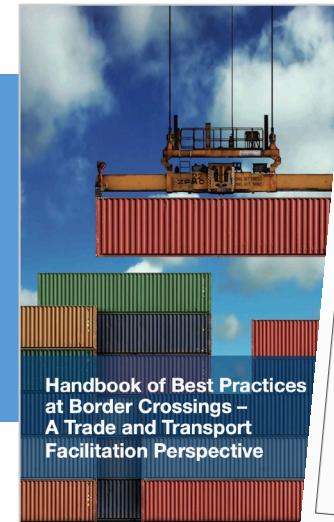


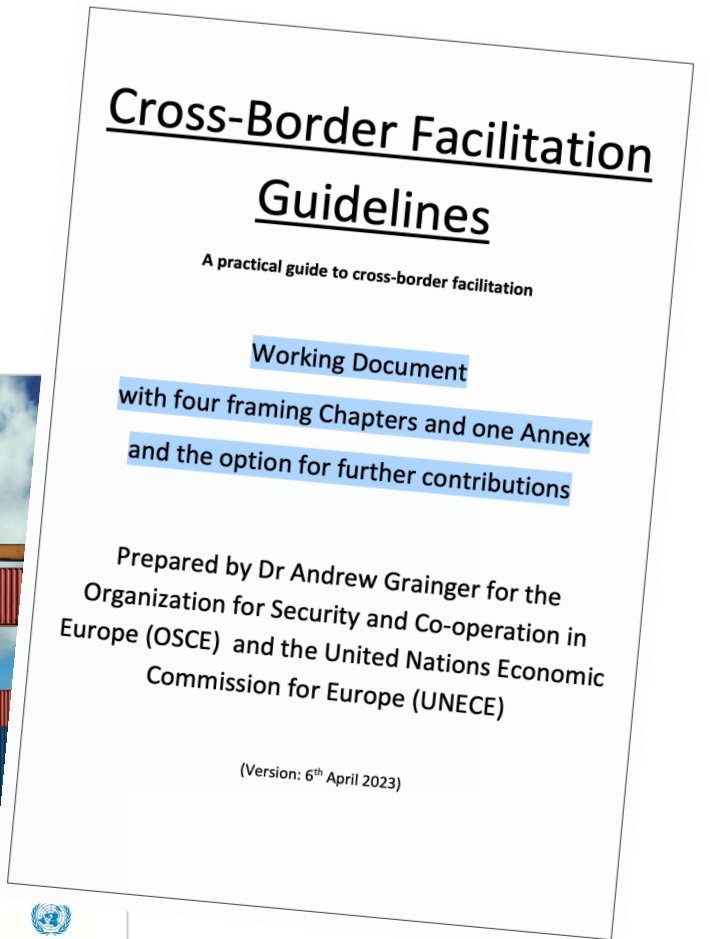
# Cross-Border Facilitation Guidelines

**Working Document**

Feedback and suggestions are very welcome!



**Handbook of Best Practices  
at Border Crossings –  
A Trade and Transport  
Facilitation Perspective**



# Underlying idea for this publication

## ❑ Develop a **resource** that

- Can be used as a **comprehensive introduction** to the subject and suggest action points for policy makers, officials, and business operators
- Can be used as a **framework resource for training**

## ❑ **Updates** the 2012 “Handbook of Best Practices” to reflect the considerable developments

- Trade and transport connectivity
- Customs and Border modernization programmes
- WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, etc

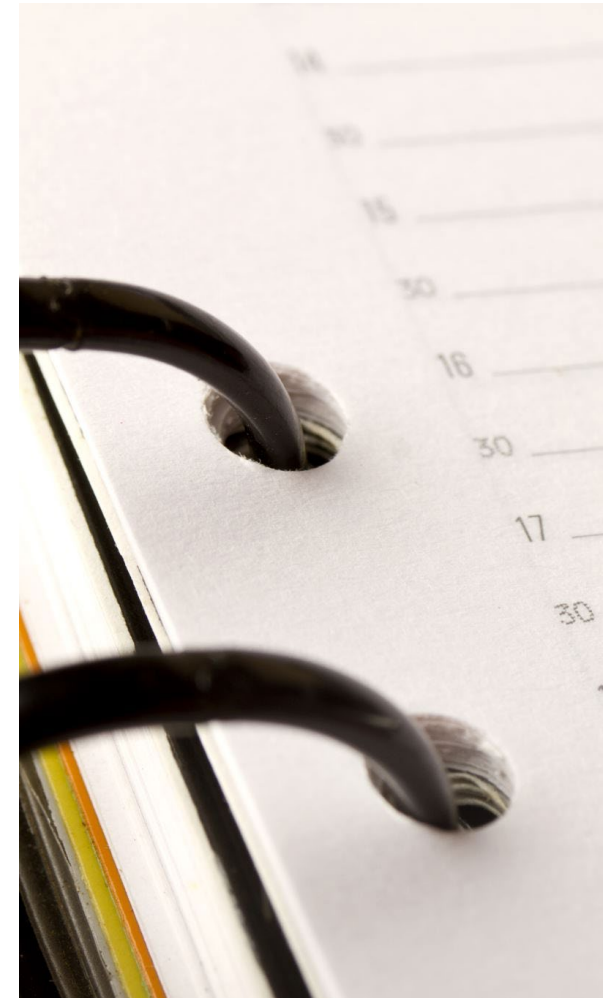
## ❑ **Does not reinvent the wheel**

- A sizable literature has evolved since 2012
- Many good, up-to-date reference materials are published by UNECE, World Bank, WCO, OSCE, OECD, ITC etc
- Seminal academic publications and journal articles can be purchased or borrowed from libraries

## Solution:

### ❑ Commission **framing set of guideline chapters** that can be extended (like a ring binder)

- With seminal content already produced by others; Commissioned original materials; Bespoke content added by teachers, educators, learners, etc
- Into a handbook (or online) type resource



- ❑ Four Chapters plus Preface, and one Annex
- 1. **CROSS-BORDER FACILITATION: BACKDROP AND CONTEXT**
- 2. **CROSS-BORDER FACILITATION: THEMES AND PRINCIPLES**
- 3. **GETTING TO GRIPS WITH CROSS-BORDER TRADE AND TRANSPORT COSTS**
- 4. **CROSS-BORDER FACILITATION INSTRUMENTS AND ITINERARIES**
- 5. **ANNEX 1 – TRAIN THE TRAINER RESOURCES**

- ❑ Feedback is very welcome, especially about
  - Content
  - Scope for extending the guidelines by
    1. Commissioning further, new original materials
    2. Including existing, seminal materials
    3. Using the developed Guidelines/ Handbook for training

The term “**cross-border facilitation**” is used in this publication as a **shorthand label for the many themes and principles that seek to improve cross-border transport and trade flows.**

It thus ties together topics such as: **transport facilitation; border and border crossing management; customs facilitation;** the mitigation of **Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs)** on trade costs; the **facilitation of trade, customs, and transport procedures;** effective access to **financial services;** and **education and training.**

**Border crossing facilities and trade gateways (e.g., ports and airports) are a focal point but, in line with modern supply chain management practices, much of the effort associated with border controls can be shifted up or down the supply chain, for example, during the loading or unloading of vehicles.**

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❑ Chapter 1 **builds the case for cross-border facilitation** by reference to the international business environment, international supply chain management principles and transport practices, and the specific need for businesses to be competitive in such an environment.

❑ **Trends in transport and trade policy**, and the **need for effective control**, are elaborated, too.

❑ The underlying premise for cross-border facilitation is that **there is always scope for innovation and improvement** from which border agencies and business operators can benefit.

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Figure 1-3: Cross-border transport network example; International railway networks within Europe and neighbouring regions; 2022

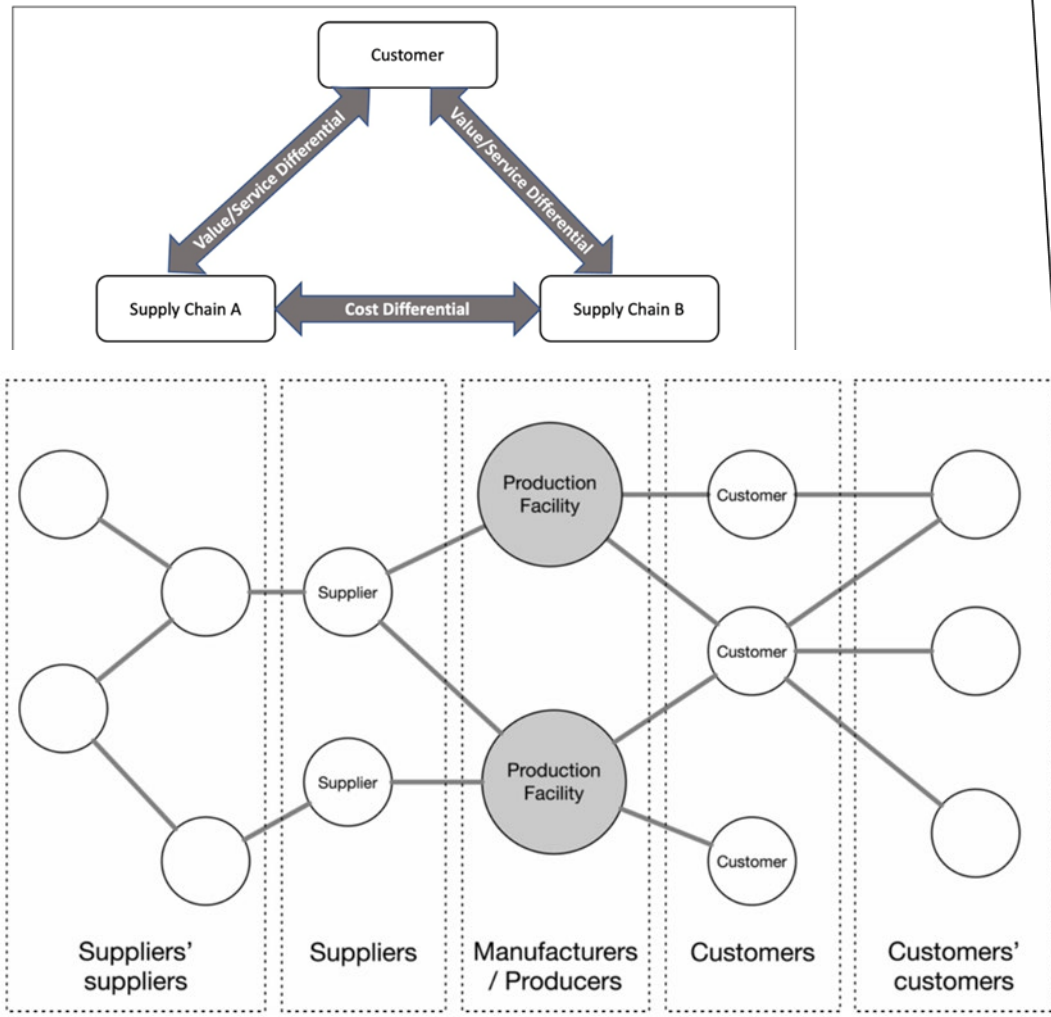


Source: International Transport Infrastructure Observatory<sup>7</sup>

# Chapter 1

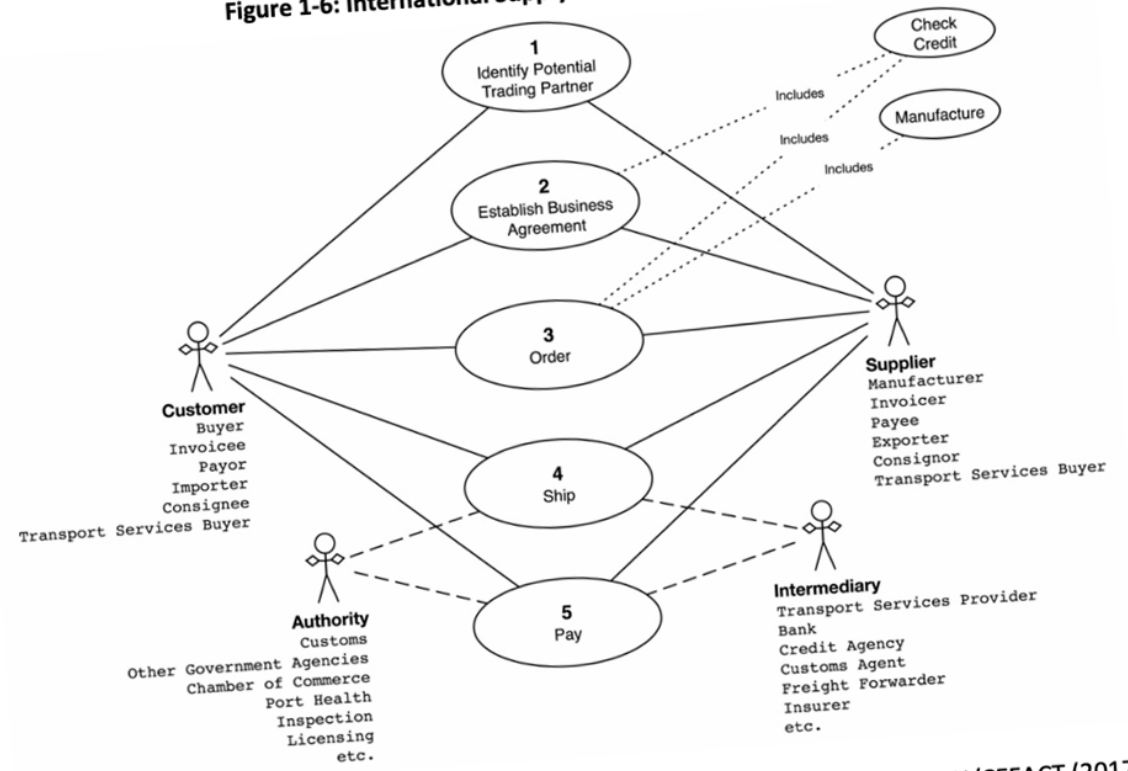
## Example Discussion Point

Figure 1-4: Value and cost/service differentials as a source for competitive advantage

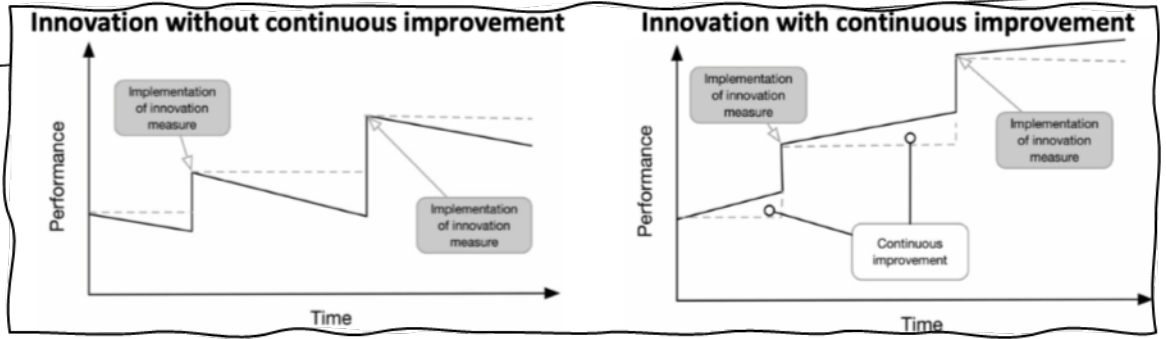


Source: author

Figure 1-6: International Supply Chain Reference Model



Source: adapted from SWEPRO (2002) and UN/CEFACT (2017)



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Chapter 2 introduces themes and principles that shape how the current “as-is” can be reimaged.

This is a long chapter with lots of signposts to subjects that dominate contemporary conversations within cross-border facilitation.

1. Transport Facilitation
2. Border Crossing Management
3. Customs Facilitations (e.g. IPR, OPR, Customs Warehousing, Transit, etc)
4. Regulatory Cooperation to mitigate the impact of NTMs
5. The Facilitation of Trade and Customs Procedures
6. Trade Finance and Payment Services
7. Education and Training

**Concludes with a summary overview of key principles for each of the subjects that shape conversations about cross-border facilitation.**

## Example: For transport facilitation the Summarised principles are as follows

- ❑ “The **development of cross-border transport infrastructure must be co-ordinated** to safeguard connectivity between trade partners as well as with domestic transport infrastructure;
- ❑ The use of transport systems is subject to **regulation that should be co-ordinated and harmonised with trade partners**; transport specific international organisations (Table 2-2) lend instruments and recommendations that can be adopted and followed;
- ❑ Efforts should be made to **identify impediments resulting from inefficient transport procedures. Solutions that reduce or remove their impact should be sought**;
- ❑ **Transit procedures (international and domestic) should be accommodated in the most cost-effective way.** The TIR system offers a model that is used in many countries (Box 2-3).”





## Example: For border and border crossings management, the principles are as follows

- ❑ **Goods and vehicles should not be “stuck at the border”**; touchpoints between regulators and business operators, and subsequent impacts upon cross-border trade flows are to be minimised;
- ❑ **Trade, customs, and transport authorities must work together to facilitate the flow of goods across borders and safeguard regulatory control objectives.** Such co-operation and co-ordination might be at internal, national, and international (cross-border) levels;
- ❑ **Design requirements for border crossings and trade gateway facilities need to be considered so that control functions can be performed efficiently with minimal disruption to trade flows.** Industrial engineering and operations management principles concerning layout design that are dependent on strategic requirements (including facilitation), handling requirements, processes, flows, space requirements, and staff requirements must be considered.



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### Quote:

*“A good understanding of trade and transport costs is important. It enables relevant actors to take informed decisions about how to reduce them. Actions might be taken internally within the organisation, for example, by reviewing operational practices and perusing steps that reduce experienced costs. Actions can also be aimed at reducing the transaction costs between supply chain partners, including those with regulatory agencies. Cross-border facilitation principles, such as those discussed in Chapter 2, apply. Modern information and communication technology can be particularly effective in reducing or illuminating many of the experienced transaction costs.”*

- ❑ Chapter 3 elaborates on **trade costs** that impact upon businesses and the competitiveness of cross-border supply chains. **Transport and travel costs, together with information and transaction costs, are of significant concern** (e.g., WTO 2023).
- ❑ But there are multiple levels at which mitigating action can be taken. **Performance improvements can be achieved** by looking inward into the organisation itself, or outward by working in partnership with others, and by seeking to improve the transport and trade environment.

# Many things to think about.... And discuss

## Extract...

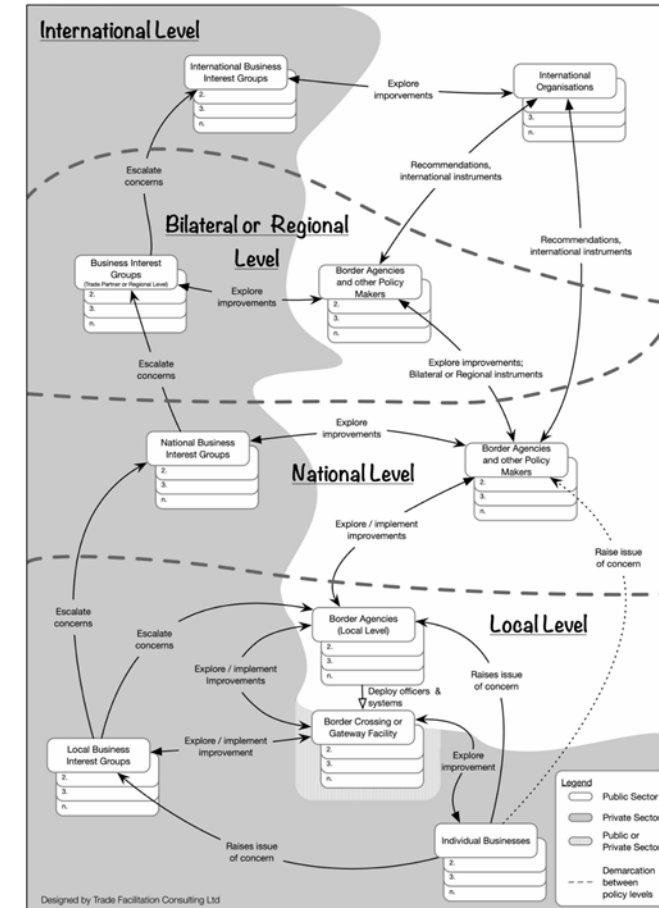
### Consultation Models

1. Collaborative Consultation Vehicles (e.g. NTFC and PRO Committees)
2. Border Agency specific consultation vehicles (e.g., Customs-Private Sector groups)
3. Local Consultation Vehicles (e.g. border/port user groups)
4. Arm's length approaches (e.g. public consultations with invitation for formal feedback)
5. Assessment and research driven consultation approaches (e.g. diagnostic studies)
6. Informal approaches

### Levels of coordination

- Local
- National
- Regional/Bilateral
- International

Figure 3-1: Escalating, co-ordinating, and implementing cross-border facilitation efforts; the public-private sector interplay between policy level



Source: updated and adapted from Grainger (2010)

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- ❑ International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (UNECE 1982)
- ❑ International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonisation of Customs Procedures - Revised Kyoto Convention (WCO 2006)
- ❑ WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (WTO 2014)

- ❑ Key international instruments are the focus of Chapter 4.
- ❑ These are **reviewed** in detail along with the cross-border facilitation measures that they provide. Those measures are then **discussed within the context of itineraries** that reform-minded policy makers and their stakeholders may wish to consider.
- ❑ The fact that most cross-border facilitation measures do not stand on their own, but built upon another, is emphasised.

# Example: Stepping-stones / Reform Itinerary for speeding up border crossing flows

- ❑ **Multi-lane clearance arrangements** to accommodate flows where processing speeds differ;
- ❑ **De minimis rules** for low value cargo (e.g., shipped using express and postal services); this exempts a large volume of shipments that would otherwise be cumbersome (and costly) to processes;
- ❑ **Pre-arrival processing** enables risks to be assessed before goods arrive. Where co-operation with transport operators works well, this measure can also prevent non-compliant goods from being shipped before costs escalate. Advance sharing of information about goods and vehicles also enables border staff to improve their operational forecasting models, thus making sure they are optimally resourced;
- ❑ **Risk management** ensures that always complaint operators are not needlessly delayed at the border;
- ❑ **Transit procedures** that fast-track or exempt transit shipments from border controls. This speeds up border clearance because vehicles do not need to be unnecessarily delayed. And because goods are shipped under seal and operators are known, the non-compliance risk is low;
- ❑ **Customs facilitations that allow for inland clearance** (e.g., under transit arrangements) and fast-tracked treatment at border crossings;
- ❑ **Post clearance audit** control methods that reduce the need to conduct detailed administrative checks at border crossing facilities;
- ❑ **Authorised Trade Regimes** that give preference to the most compliant, low-risk traders – and can thus be fast-tracked at the border;
- ❑ **Advance rulings** for technically complex compliance issues (e.g. tariff classification and origin), thus reducing the risk of delays at the border;
- ❑ **Coordinated Border Management** practices reduce touchpoints with business operators, thus improve processing flows at border crossing facilities. They also help improve control outcomes by ensuring that customs and non-customs agencies work together in the most coordinated manner;
- ❑ **Efficient payment procedures** that allow duties and fees (if applicable) to be paid instantly or in advance without giving any reason for goods to be held or delayed;
- ❑ **Standardised procedures and mutual recognition of certificates, licences, permits, and authorisations** reduce the regulatory burden associated with product specific NTMs, prohibitions, restrictions, or vehicle controls. Moreover, it can significantly help reduce demand on border crossing control services;
- ❑ **Joint border controls** between the neighbour countries reduce touchpoints with business operators even more, thus further reducing the potential time it takes to clear border crossings;
- ❑ **Aligned operating hours** on both sides of the border ensure that facilities are staffed and business operators do not need to wait.

## Annex 1 – Train the Trainer Resources

### 1 Context

One of the aims for these cross-border facilitation guidelines is to encourage training. The purpose for this Annex is to give trainers pointers about useful complementary resources and activities specific to this publication.

This annex is structured into three parts:

1. Reference to key resources that can be used to complement Chapters 1-4;
2. Reference to key resources that inform on specific cross-border facilitation topics and measures, which can be used to training beyond what is covered in this publication;
3. Reference to additional topics relevant to reform minded, cross-border facilitation policy makers and practitioners, which can be used to training beyond what is covered in this publication.

A good starting point is for trainers to establish their students' learning needs. Ideally, these are established prior to developing and conducting any cross-border facilitation motivated training programme. But even where they have been established, it is always useful to double-check and confirm with individual learners<sup>61</sup> prior to (or at the onset of) the delivery of training. Common learning motivations might be:

- To get a better general understanding about why cross-border trade and transport flows should be facilitated, and how that might be achieved;
- Specific to one of the cross-border facilitation themes (i.e., transport facilitation; border and border crossing management; customs facilitation; Non-tariff Measures; the facilitation of trade, transport and customs procedures; the facilitation of financial services; education and training);
- Specific to the implementation of a cross-border facilitation measure or practice in one or more of the overlapping cross-border facilitation themes (e.g., border crossing design and operations; single window systems; electronic documents);
- To gain mastery over the subject by understanding the interplay between themes, principles and topics – as is often required when: working with relevant public and private sector stakeholders; conducting policy and impact assessments; evaluating policy options; etc.).

Ideally, learning activities and course content should be tailored as closely as possible to the established learner's needs. Formats can range from short overview courses to detailed programmes that underpin professional competencies, such as those of the WCO (see Box 1-6).

In addition to the resources outlined here, trainers should also seek input from learners by building on prior knowledge and drawing on any first-hand expertise. Small group exercises as well as

<sup>61</sup> e.g., during booking, at registration, or in the classroom (in person or virtual)

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□ Feedback is very welcome,  
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- ▶ Scope for extending the guidelines by:
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