



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Executive Committee

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

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**Recommendations, standards, and deliverables supporting implementation:**

**Deliverables in support of implementation:**

**Reports and executive guides**

## United Nations Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide\*

Submitted by the secretariat

### *Summary*

This note presents the new version of the United Nations Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG) e-learning platform, an initiative led by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), with the purpose of better supporting countries in their efforts to strengthen transparency for rules and regulations on trade facilitation, streamline clearance processes and harmonize trade documentation requirements, for easier and faster trade transactions across borders.

Document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2023/13 is submitted to the twenty-ninth session of the UN/CEFACT Plenary for information.

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\* Available at <http://tfig.unece.org>.



1. The United Nations Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG), developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), is a web-based interactive tool that supports countries in the implementation of trade facilitation reforms. It helps public and private sector actors to better navigate the wide array of existing trade facilitation instruments in order to identify appropriate methods and tools for achieving their reform objectives.

2. ECE, which is the secretariat to the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and e-Business (UN/CEFACT), is the focal point of TFIG maintenance and implementation. It does so in close partnership with all of the UN agencies and, in particular, within the context of its Memorandum of Understanding on trade facilitation with the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as well as the agreement between UN Regional Commissions on cooperation in trade facilitation.

3. The Guide is a major reference resource for government officials and traders around the world. At the same time, it is a core tool for planning of and training on trade facilitation activities. Since its launch in September 2012, the use of the Guide has grown exponentially. So far, TFIG has received over 7 million hits, from more than 300,000 single users. TFIG is currently available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish at <http://tfig.unece.org>.

4. This is in line with the fact that over the past decade, the relevance of trade facilitation as a key instrument for bolstering international trade has become increasingly evident. Building upon the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), the TFIG offers a concrete tool for scaling up the implementation of the Agreement in international technical assistance programs for developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

5. In particular, the TFIG includes information on instruments and organizations in the field of trade facilitation as well as training material and country case stories for the sharing of best practices and solutions. The Guide is structured in:

- **Domains:** which are subject matter areas shaped by a supply-chain perspective on trade facilitation, and introduce approaches and methodologies that underpin trade-facilitation efforts;
- **Itineraries:** where users can explore questions such as “How to reduce delays at border crossings?” and “What steps need to be taken for establishing a Single Window?”;
- **Instruments:** which provide references to international instruments as guidance and source of inspiration;
- **Organizations:** which list and briefly describe inter-governmental organizations involved in work related to trade facilitation;
- **Case stories:** which provide country cases developed in the context of the TFIG project, illustrating success stories in the implementation of trade facilitation measures;
- **Training:** which includes training materials and offers a methodology to design and conduct training workshops based on TFIG contents.

6. ECE is pleased to announce that the TFIG e-learning platform has been completely modernized to better support countries in their efforts to strengthen transparency for rules and regulations on trade facilitation, streamline clearance processes and harmonize trade documentation requirements. The new TFIG website, now made available by the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, in cooperation with the Sustainable Transport Division of ECE, is a pivotal tool that can help to drive the international agenda towards efficient, accessible, and equitable cross-border trade.

7. In its latest version, the TFIG offers an exceptionally user-friendly experience and incorporates an abundance of updated information covering diverse aspects of trade facilitation. It includes the latest updates of the ECE and UN/CEFACT recommendations, papers and data reference models, as well as relevant work from partner organizations and case studies of countries.

8. With the brand-new interface and features, policy makers and trade facilitation implementers in countries as well as organizations such as the WTO, the World Bank, Regional Development Banks and donors will be able to:

- Easily identify what is available from the UN system as a whole in order to support trade facilitation implementation in terms of:
    - Standards, recommendations, guidelines and best practices;
    - Available implementation assistance, including studies on technical barriers to trade, support and training for national trade facilitation committees, among others.
  - Obtain a coordinated, “One UN” response to address specific requests for support of trade facilitation implementation.
  - Facilitate the work of other mechanisms, such as the WTO TFA Facility, the Global Trade Facilitation Alliance, and others, and of donors, who now approach each UN organization separately, without the assistance of any mechanism for internal “cross-UN” coordination and information sharing. In this way, the TFIG initiative will contribute to increased coordination and value for money for all concerned parties.
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