

Q1: Respondent details

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Q2: Country or customs territory: Burundi

Q3: Organization: Public sector

Q4: Title of case story:

UNOFFICIAL REPORT ON TRADE FACILITATION IN BURUNDI

Q5: Case story focus:

Implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement and/or trade facilitation measures more generally (e.g. trade and transport facilitation).

Q6: Case story abstract:

This unofficial report provides an overview of the national ratification process, the national political context and ongoing trade facilitation projects and programmes concerning Burundi.

Q7: Funding partner: Bilateral donor, multilateral organization

Q8: Project/programme type: Single country, regional

Q9: Your text case story:

UNOFFICIAL REPORT ON TRADE FACILITATION IN BURUNDI
OVERVIEW

This unofficial report provides an overview of the national ratification process, the national political context and ongoing trade facilitation projects and programmes concerning Burundi.

TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT (TFA): RATIFICATION AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

As a general rule, binding international treaties signed by the Republic of Burundi must be ratified by Parliament before they are enacted by the Head of State. With regard to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), the Ministry of Trade has already set up the National Trade Facilitation Committee, and the instrument to ratify the Protocol of Amendment with a view to the insertion of the TFA is in the process of being drafted. So far, Burundi has notified its category A commitments under the TFA.

National Trade Facilitation Committee

The National Trade Facilitation Committee was officially established by Decree No. 100/59 of 4 April 2016 on the creation, mission, composition and functioning of the National Trade Facilitation Committee. The Committee is overseen by the Ministry of Trade, assisted by the Burundi Revenue Office (BRO) and the Federal Chamber of Commerce.

The National Committee is responsible for:

1. Coordinating activities relating to the implementation of the TFA.
2. Identifying the country's trade facilitation needs and, more specifically, conducting a self-assessment of those needs in order to apply for funding from development partners.
3. Assessing the type and level of action required to implement the range of measures contained in the Agreement.

4. Contributing to raising awareness of matters relating to trade facilitation measures among all stakeholders in the public and private sectors.

5. Determining Burundi's position prior to regional and international meetings on trade facilitation.

6. Monitoring and evaluating mission reports on national negotiations regarding trade facilitation.

Source: Decree No. 100/59 of 4 April 2016 on the creation, mission, composition and functioning of the National Trade Facilitation Committee.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

(a) National context

Burundi is a landlocked country wedged between Central and East Africa, and the region's feeder ports are 1,100 km away. Burundi's trade and transport policies are set out in the following documents:

- "Burundi 2025" vision;
- the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRSP II);
- the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS 2012);
- Report by the East African Community on the 2012 Trade Policy Review; and
- Burundi's Infrastructure Action Plan.

All of these documents work towards achieving the country's objectives in terms of economic development, poverty reduction and improving transport and communication equipment. To make the country's economy more competitive, Burundi has introduced several reforms aimed at facilitating trade by reducing non-tariff barriers and ensuring freedom of transit and the free movement of goods within the East African Community's (EAC) common market. As part of these reforms, the Burundi Revenue Office (OBR) was created through Law No. 1/11 of 14 July 2009. This law completely overhauled the organization of the tax and customs authorities and replaced the quasi-ministerial authorities with the OBR, an agency with a high degree of managerial autonomy that operates on the results-based management model. In the customs sector, considerable efforts have been made to facilitate trade, and the ASYCUDA++ computerized clearance system was introduced in 2005. The OBR began migrating to the latest version of the system, ASYCUDA WORLD, in 2011. The system enables the OBR to automate certain procedures, including the registration and risk-based processing of declarations submitted remotely, as well as control of the withdrawal of bonded goods or goods in transit. In addition, the OBR has published regulatory, legislative and administrative texts. New border posts that streamline customs traffic were built between 2011 and 2012, and work in this area will continue. Bilateral agreements to operate one-stop border posts have been signed with neighbouring countries.

(b) Regional context

Improving trade logistics in Burundi requires extensive regional cooperation and investment in national and regional infrastructure.

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

- In 2006, Burundi ratified COMESA's Regional Customs Bond Guarantee Scheme, which aims to eliminate superfluous administrative and financial costs.
- The construction of a Great Lakes railway linking Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi is in the pipeline.
- Burundi levies COMESA's harmonized transit toll; it also applies COMESA's transport licensing system, whereby international transport lorries have one single licence that is valid throughout the region and can load goods in all member States.

East African Community (EAC)

- Burundi has set up a national committee to monitor the mechanism for identifying and eliminating non-tariff barriers (NTBs), and participates actively in the EAC regional forum on NTBs.
- The construction of a regional road to link Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi is underway.

COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Agreement

This Tripartite FTA will open up new trade opportunities with members of the South African Development Community (SADC) that are not party to COMESA, including South Africa.

- A Revenue Authorities Digital Data Exchange (RADDEx) system has been established to connect the five customs authorities in the EAC. With this system, it is possible to find out, for example, what products are on their way to Burundi from the ports in Tanzania or Kenya. The aim is to improve service quality by ensuring that the EAC customs authorities work closely together. The system will also make it more difficult for fraud to be committed *en route*.
- Another innovative measure is the installation of one-stop border posts (T-1) to streamline customs procedures and reduce the almost permanent queues at customs offices by responding quickly to customers and to requests from stakeholders. Under the Consensual Transport Master Plan for Central Africa drawn up by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), a corridor to improve integration between Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo is planned; it will link Bujumbura, the DRC border at Kavimvira, Uvira, Bukavu and Kinshasa entirely by road.

Source: unctad.org/meetings/en/presentation

Q10: Lessons learnt:

- The National Trade Facilitation Committee has been established.
 - Burundi's category A commitments under the TFA have been notified.
 - Several reforms have been undertaken to facilitate trade by reducing non-tariff barriers and ensuring freedom of transit and the free movement of goods within the EAC common market.
 - The TFA has not been ratified.
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