

Editorial



The WCO SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (the SAFE Framework) has proved to be a significant catalyst in international customs reform, the key elements of which are the concepts of Authorised Economic Operator and Mutual Recognition. The key to its success has been the dynamic nature of the instrument. Since its introduction in 2005, substantial revisions were made in 2007, 2010, 2012 and 2015, reflecting the WCO's commitment to ensure its ongoing relevance.

From its beginnings as a narrowly-formulated multilateral response to the risk of terrorism to the international supply chain, it has evolved into a much broader risk mitigation strategy. As such, the original focus on a new societal risk (i.e. terrorism) has evolved to include pecuniary risk (cost of theft, diversion, insurance) to business, and further to include the risk of infringing customs laws generally.

Implementation has, however, been inconsistent around the globe, with a key concern of the international trading community being the paucity of tangible, documented, meaningful, measurable and reportable benefits.

The Special Report in this edition of the Journal contains the WCO's announcement of its next iteration of the SAFE Framework, which will likely be implemented in June this year. Among other things, SAFE 2018 will introduce a requirement for the provision of certain minimum tangible benefits for AEOs, something that is already reflected in the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. Such developments are to be welcomed, and will hopefully go some way to addressing private sector concerns.

The Editorial Board looks forward to the adoption of SAFE 2018, and would welcome articles for publication in the Journal that address the way in which it is implemented around the world.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Widdowson'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large loop at the beginning.

David Widdowson
Editor-in-Chief