

2018 Edition of the SAFE Framework of Standards

The following announcement was made by the World Customs Organization (WCO) on 27 February 2018.¹

19th Meeting of the SAFE Working Group finalized the 2018 edition of the SAFE Framework of Standards

The 19th meeting of the SAFE Working Group (SWG), held from 21 to 23 February 2018 at the WCO headquarters in Brussels, brought together over 100 delegates from Customs administrations, partner government agencies, the Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG), international organizations and academia.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Ana B. Hinojosa, WCO Director Compliance and Facilitation, welcomed the new Customs Co-Chairperson Ms. Suzanne Stauffer (the EU) and all the SWG delegates, appreciating their commitment and hard work towards updating the SAFE Framework of Standards and developing new tools over the last two years. Given the global security concerns and the fresh impetus on trade facilitation, she underlined the importance of the SAFE Framework of Standards and associated tools with regard to enhancing supply chain security and facilitation through enhanced partnerships based on trust, transparency and technology.

The key outcome of this concluding meeting of the 2018 review cycle is the finalization of the 2018 SAFE Framework of Standards. Some of the notable features of the updated SAFE Framework include the requirement of advance electronic data on postal items; addition of text on data quality; provision for certain minimum tangible benefits to AEOs; harmonization of data filing requirements and Single Window concept, as well as strengthening of cooperation with other government agencies entrusted with regulatory authorities over certain goods (e.g. weapons, hazardous materials) and passenger control, and revision of the definition of the term ‘Validation’.

Other highlights of this cycle had been the development of AEO and MRA Packages that included a number of new and updated tools (e.g. comprehensive list of AEO benefits; AEO Validator Guidance; Updated AEO Template, MRA Strategy Guide, MRA Implementation Guidance, MRA Templates, FAQ on MRA, and Advance Cargo Information (ACI) Implementation Guidance) to provide guidance and further support to Members and partners stakeholders in effective and harmonized implementation of AEO programmes and MRAs.

The SWG also developed a Trader Identification Number (TIN) Package including a Recommendation and Guidelines that would further facilitate an efficient implementation of MRAs, greatly benefiting traders and Customs administrations.

Furthermore, the SWG discussed and endorsed the AEO Validator’s Training Modules, the Guidance on the use of data analytics, a FAQ on the linkages between the SAFE AEO programme and the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) Article 7.7, and the updated Integrated Supply Chain Management (ISCM) Guidelines.

Throughout the meeting, a number of interesting and very informative presentations and interventions were made by several delegates on the implementation of AEO, MRA, ACI, and data analytics. Delegates also exchanged views on various projects/pilots concerning the implementation of the ISCM concept, such as smart and secure seal pilot, AOLIX project, and PROFILE project.

Finally, the SWG, through a panel discussion, explored and provided suggestions on how the SAFE Framework of Standards and associated tools could further contribute to enhancing supply chain security and facilitation by providing a fair, stable, predictable, secure and sustainable trade environment, in line with the WCO theme of the year: “A secure business environment for economic development.”

The updated SAFE Framework of Standards and the newly developed and updated tools will be presented to June 2018 Policy Commission and the Council for their potential consideration and adoption, before their publication.

Notes

- 1 <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2018/february/19th-meeting-of-the-safe-working-group-finalized-the-2018-edition-of-the-safe-framework-of-standards.aspx>