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REPORT OF CHINA (2023 EDITION)

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北京睿库贸易安全及便利化研究中心

Beijing Re-code Trade Security and Facilitation Research Center

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## SUMMARY

This report mainly consists of two parts: a qualitative analysis based on an article-by-article review of China's implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and a quantitative analysis based on a quantitative assessment of China's trade facilitation level. For this year, we have significantly adjusted and optimized the quantitative assessment method and enhanced the integration of quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. Both the results of qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis show that China's trade facilitation level remained basically steady while rising slightly.

In 2022, the score of China's trade facilitation quantitative assessment index is 86.23 points (with a full mark of 100 points), up 1.02 points from the previous year, a slight increase of 1.20%.

A distinctive feature of China's trade facilitation process and business environment in this year is that there are relatively few macro institutional adjustments and that optimizations mainly occur in certain areas. Domestically, the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) held in October 2022 and the first plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee summarized China's economic and social development in stages and made overall arrangements. It was within expectation that the macro policy environment would remain generally stable before the important conference. Internationally, the impact of the COVID-19 has been lingering on, coupled with the crisis in Ukraine which has triggered a sudden change in the international market environment. The basic structure of global trade and even the basic conditions for survival are facing challenges that have not been seen in decades. Affected by this, the Chinese government responded cautiously, focusing its promotion of trade facilitation mainly on the optimization of specific policies and the implementation of measures. The customs and other government departments optimized law enforcement and improved services with obvious effects. Therefore, in an environment full of uncertainty, China's quantitative assessment index of trade facilitation still maintained a slight upward trend.

There has been little change in the score of most sub-factors of trade facilitation, among which the "Opportunity to Comment and Information before Entry into Force, and Consultations" index having the largest increase of

9.38 points, the rest of the index rose by less than 0.30 points. The "Movement of Goods Intended for Import under Customs Control" index gained the highest score of 100, which performed best. Despite the highest increase of the index "Opportunity to Comment and Information before Entry into Force, and Consultations", the score was still tied with "Border Agency Cooperation" as the lowest among the 11 indicators, with only 75.00 points, which remains the weakest point in China's trade facilitation and business environment.

**Major changes in trade facilitation include:**

**1** Customs continues to implement pragmatic reforms. In order to effectively address the COVID-19 challenges, China Customs has taken such measures as comprehensively promoting the supervision mode for processing trade of enterprise groups, temporarily exempting the collection of interest on deferred duties and taxes on sales for domestic consumption by processing trade enterprises, and carrying out dedicated actions for promoting cross-border trade facilitation. The measures are practical and received positive feedback from enterprises.

**2** Laws and regulations framework witnessed significant changes. A series of important laws and regulations have been amended, promulgated and implemented, such as the Law of the P.R.C. on Administrative Penalty, the Customs Law of the P.R.C., Food Safety Law of the P.R.C., the Law of the P.R.C. on Import and Export Commodity Inspection, whilst the Biosafety Law of the P.R.C. has been newly promulgated and implemented. The collection of public opinions before legislation has been greatly improved. The number of projects soliciting legislative suggestions increased by 84.6% and the number of suggestions solicited increased by 51.2%, which not only reflects the frequentness of customs legislative activities in China this year, but also shows the improvement of public participation in the customs legislative process.

**3** Information disclosure has improved significantly. The promulgation of all rules before they came into force is in line with the required time limit, which represents a remarkable progress compared with the past; the "Database of Legislation" column on the website of the General Administration of Customs

provides convenient access for traders and other stakeholders.

**4** The AEO system construction has made substantial progress. The new version of the Customs Criteria for Advanced Certified Enterprise has been released, which has adjusted the classification of enterprises and improved the transparency of the certifying policy, although the effect of the implementation of the policy needs to be improved.

**Main suggestions:**

**1** Since the outbreak of the COVID-19, the problems of time-consuming customs clearance process and high cost associated with imported cold chain food have become increasingly prominent. The pandemic prevention policies at local level frequently change, and the business community has complained that it is difficult to adapt to them. It is suggested that customs should make improvement on this as soon as possible.

**2** While the facilitation measures for advanced certified enterprises continue to increase, some are not fully implemented in actual operation, and the overall degree of satisfaction of advanced certified enterprises is not high enough. While the publication of the new Criteria on Advanced Customs Accreditation of Enterprises increased policy transparency, customs certification criteria in recent years have changed quite frequently, bringing difficulties for enterprises to adapt. It is suggested to strengthen policy implementation and improve policy stability and continuity.

**3** Some problems have not been improved in spite of years of suggestions, which have become chronic ones, including: the content coverage of the English website of China Customs and the timeliness of updating are obviously insufficient; the functions of China National Trade Facilitation Committee have not been fully played; involvement of the business community in policy making has been low and improvement is still limited; and the introduction and full participation of third-party professional institutions in general policy making, AEO and other fields is still lacking.

## PREFACE I



Anabel Gonzalez  
Deputy Director General, WTO

Since the entry into force of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in 2017, the TFA has generated multifaceted economic benefits over the last five years, including in the areas of digitalization, resilience, inclusiveness, and sustainability of global supply chains. With the TFA, trade facilitation has joined trade opening as an essential element of national, regional and global trade policy reform. WTO Members are currently faced with global challenges and the TFA has added an entirely novel dimension to multilateral trade cooperation: the need to work together to alleviate frictions caused by trade procedures and processes.

Following its ratification of the TFA in 2015, China, the world's largest trading nation in goods, has made remarkable progress in improving its trade facilitation and doing-business environment in general, according to widely recognized assessments by international organizations such as UNCTAD, the World Bank Group, the OECD and the WTO. China has notified all measures of the TFA and implemented all TFA provisions ahead of schedule in January 2020. More recently in particular, a series of specific measures have been taken including simplifying documents, optimizing processes, improving automation, and reducing charges. The use of "smart" governance to accelerate TFA implementation by China's customs administration bears witness to its hard work in adapting to advanced trade technology. These measures have enhanced the stability, transparency, and predictability of China's opening-up policies, while reducing cost and saving time for cross-border trade.

It takes collaborative efforts of all stakeholders, including governments, businesses and academia to improve trade facilitation globally. I am pleased to see that the Trade Facilitation Annual Report of China, prepared by the Beijing Re-code Trade Security and Facilitation Research Center (Re-

code), shows that China's implementation of the TFA has made steady progress over the past year with areas of strength and weakness also identified. I believe that the work done by Re-code will bring additional value into a more comprehensive assessment of a Member's implementation of the TFA, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation against each Article of the TFA.

Looking to the future, I hope that China will continue to take a leading role in carrying out domestic reforms to advance digital and sustainable trade facilitation with dynamism, including furthering its efforts in areas such as the publication of its time release study, institutional cooperation, functioning of its National Trade Facilitation Committee and public-private partnership. I also wish that more independent professionals like Re-code will be committed to contributing to the meaningful cause of trade facilitation.

Arabel Gonzalez  
Deputy Director General, World Trade Organization

## PREFACE II



Ricardo Trevino Chapa  
Deputy Secretary-General, WCO

It is my pleasure to preface the Trade Facilitation Annual Report of China, and I would like to commend Beijing Re-code Trade Security and Facilitation Research Center (Re-code) for this publication. The report highlights the positive steps undertaken by China to further promote trade facilitation at their borders and also precisely identifies the areas where improvement is needed, which is of great added-value to move forward and pursue the efforts in an efficient way.

Since the ratification of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in 2015, China paid significant attention to the objective of facilitating trade. This was especially done through the modernization and simplification of its border procedures, thanks to the promotion of paperless trade, the development of the Single Window as well as the establishment and constant improvement of the Authorized Economic Operation (AEO) system. Focusing its efforts on the adequate implementation of the WTO TFA, China has highlighted the importance of improving the function of governments in trade facilitation, together with their traditional role in revenue collection and protection of society, to move towards sound and agile trade flows. This approach is fully in line with the Strategic Plan of the WCO, which defines these functions as the main strategic objectives of Customs administrations in today's world.

The work of China in the modernization and simplification of its procedures has always been conducted with due consideration given to the full use of technology, exploiting their potential to achieve the main Customs objectives. The “3S” concept (“Smart Customs, Smart Borders and Smart Connectivity”) implemented by China Customs is a perfect example of this mindset and is again aligned with WCO's strategy, which identifies “Technology and Innovation” as one of its main areas of focus for the years to come. Customs operations must adapt to the global environment and trade in constant evolution, through the automation of its procedures and the promotion of ever more transparency within supply chains. In this perspective, I particularly appreciate the approach and direction taken by China, noting that more can and will be done as highlighted in the report.



Knowing your strengths and weaknesses is the prerequisite to achieve meaningful progress and monitor the developments. The successful implementation of the TFA definitely depends on this kind of diagnostic that requires to be accurate. In this connection, the WCO has already developed the Time Release Study (TRS) which provides a set of relevant indicators to measure performance at borders. Nowadays, the WCO is working on a more comprehensive and ambitious project, namely the WCO Performance Measurement Mechanism (PMM), which intends to become the world reference in the way Customs performance is assessed. These instruments can effectively support countries in the proper implementation of WTO TFA articles.

I hope that this report by Re-code will provide international organizations, government agencies, traders and researchers with valuable references in their collective pursuit of measuring and further improving trade facilitation at the border.



Ricardo Trevino Chapa  
Deputy Secretary-General, World Customs Organization

## PREFACE III

It is on the 4th of September 2015 that China ratified the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement – a ground breaking agreement that promises to streamline and significantly reduce the “red tape” and bureaucratic procedures that slow and impede international trade, thereby reducing the time and cost of doing business across borders. It is well known, that implementation of the large trade facilitation agenda can contribute to improving the ways in which the government revenues are collected, as well as to bettering conditions for foreign investors, thereby reinforcing national competitiveness.

Implementing this Agreement demands strong political support and full commitment of the trade community. In light of this, the Trade Facilitation Annual Report of China, prepared by Re-code Trade Security and Facilitation Research Centre, is very timely and provides clear guidance and action oriented recommendations. The results of this report are expected to enable investors, traders and other stakeholders to better understand and monitor progress in trade facilitation, support evidence-based decision-making, identify challenges and opportunities, and capacity building and technical assistance needs.

I hope this report will help China and its partners to advance trade facilitation agenda to the advantage of the government, businesses, cross-border traders, producers and consumers, to enhance regional and global integration and to ultimately better achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Agenda 2030.



Maria Rosaria Ceccarelli

Chief, Trade Facilitation Section

Economic Cooperation and Trade Division

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

## FOREWORD

In this seventh edition of the Trade Facilitation Annual Report of China, we put more efforts on a series of optimizations of the content which include the following aspects:

- Further refine the Summary, in which a review of the significant progress and major shortcomings in China's trade facilitation process within the year is provided;
- The content of laws and regulations cited in the review is simplified;
- The quantitative assessment methods have been revised and improved considerably in the Quantitative Assessment Report on China's Trade Facilitation;
- English translations are edited to a higher standard.

This edition of the report covers the timespan from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022. During this period of time, the COVID-19 pandemic was still disrupting and slowing down international economic and trade development, the Sino-US trade frictions eased one day and intensified another day, the Ukraine crisis broke out abruptly, global trade rules and patterns faced enormous challenges, world markets faced more uncertainties amid a struggling recovery. China has made enormous efforts to contain the epidemic and restore economic growth. Goods production and foreign trade continued to grow, the process of trade facilitation kept on advancing, while the business community experienced high stress. During the past year, China Customs and other regulatory agencies did not make overall macro policy adjustments, but continued to focus more on improving specific measures to simplify customs clearance, reduce the burden on enterprises and help them cope with the difficult situation.

At the time when this report was completed, the 20th CPC National Congress and the First Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee had been held in Beijing, ushering in a new leadership of the CPC Central Committee, which will have a major impact on China's economic and social development. In addition, China has also made major changes to its COVID-19 prevention and control policies. It remains to be observed how these changes will affect China's trade facilitation process.

For years, the report has been kindly supported by many professionals and institutions. On this occasion, I would like to extend my special heartfelt thanks and deep gratitude to Ms. Anabel Gonzalez, Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Mr. Ricardo Trevino Chapa, Deputy Secretary-General of the World Customs Organization, and Ms. Maria Rosaria Ceccarelli, Chief of the Trade Facilitation Section at the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), who took time out of their busy schedules to preface the report, which gives us tremendous encouragement by recognizing our work. Meanwhile, my sincere thanks go to the following companies for their longstanding support to the report and Re-code: Intel China Ltd., Cummings (China) Investment Co., Ltd., Nissan (China) Investment Co., Ltd., Shenzhen Mbase Consultants Co., Ltd., Tyco (China) Investment Co., Ltd., Flex Information Technology (Shenzhen) Co., Ltd., Shanghai Xingya Customs Brokerage Co., Ltd., Shanghai Xinhai Customs Brokerage Co., Ltd., Jiangsu Yuetong CPAs Co., Ltd., UPS (Guangdong), and Philips (China) Investment Co., Ltd. I would be remiss not to thank the customs counsellors and attaches of the European Union, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Belgium, Belarus, India, Australia and other countries and regions based in China for their attention to the research work of Re-code as well as their support for and appreciation of this report.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Shenzhen Channelton Logistics Development Co., Ltd. and all the team members of the report, in particular, Mr. Liu Ping, former Director of the Tariff and Trade Affairs Directorate of the WCO, for their unremitting efforts that contributed to the remarkable improvement of this year's report.

Any constructive criticism and suggestions will be accepted with an open mind. All professionals are sincerely welcome to participate in the project. Online contact: [https://www.re-code.org/%E8%81%94%E7%B3%BB%E6%88%91%E4%BB%AC?locale=zh\\_CN](https://www.re-code.org/%E8%81%94%E7%B3%BB%E6%88%91%E4%BB%AC?locale=zh_CN) (Chinese), <http://www.recode-research.org/contact.html> (English); Wechat: jiangxp1234.



Director Beijing Re-code Trade Security and Facilitation Research Centre

## READERS' GUIDE

This report is structured according to Section I of Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It reviews how China has implemented TFA, provision by provision, paying close attention to the highlights and bottlenecks of China's trade facilitation. Re-code also made an assessment and produced a quantitative report.

On September 4, 2015, China ratified the protocol of WTO TFA, becoming the 16th member to accept it and contributing significantly to its implementation at an early date. China had reservations about Paragraph 6 of Article 7 "Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times", Paragraph 4 of Article 10 "Single Window", Paragraph 9 of Article 10 "Temporary Admission of Goods and Inward and Outward Processing", and Article 12 "Customs Cooperation". This Report also reviews these provisions except Article 12.

Drawing on the international experience, we have changed the nomenclature of the annual report based on the years of data coverage since the 2020 edition. This is the 2023 edition.

Among the main body of the text, those parts listed by Arabic numbers or English letters, and spanning the full width of the content area, are the original articles of WTO TFA. The rest are comments made by Re-code.

The regulations, policies, and information sources contained in this Report are attached to the text of its electronic version published on the official website of Re-code (Chinese: [www.re-code.org](http://www.re-code.org); English: [www.recode-research.org](http://www.recode-research.org)) with hyperlinks for the readers' reference.

This Report is for reference only. The research and comments in this Report are only for reference and are not necessarily exhaustive or completely accurate.

This Report is open-ended. Readers are welcome to make comments and suggestions to help us render it more thorough and accurate.

All the information, materials, and data in this Report are valid until August 31, 2022.

# TEAM MEMBERS

**Directors:** Jiang Xiaoping, Guo Guo

## Experts

### **Mr. Jiang Xiaoping**

Director, Beijing Re-code Trade Security and Facilitation Research Centre. Mr. Jiang used to serve in the General Administration of China Customs, Local Customs Authority, Bureau of Foreign trade and other government agencies as well as foreign trade corporation and global top 500 companies. He is now a member of the think-tank of the China Customs magazine, guest professor of the University of International Business and Economics and cross-border trade expert of Asian Development Bank (ADB). Being an active participant and influencer in the development of China Customs System, Mr. JIANG has hosted and organized a series of research projects with applied value, including Customs Control System of International Inbound and Outbound Express Freight, Current Status and Development of Small-scale Trade in Border Regions (ADB program), Reform on the Circulation Management System of Bonded Goods in Special Customs Supervision Zones, and Research on Release Time of Import and Export Sea Cargoes. Mr. Jiang is the initiator, designer, organizer, coordinator as well as writer of the Annual Report on Trade Facilitation in China.

### **Mr. Li Zhuo**

Mr. Li has long been engaged in customs affairs with rich experience in customs, business, and taxation. Mr. Li is familiar with international trade, customs regulation and customs clearance, and skilled in integration of overall customs clearance procedures. He is a member of the project of Annual Report on Trade Facilitation in China.

### **Mr. Zhang Hao**

Experienced expert in Customs Affairs. Mr. Zhang has been engaged in customs declaration and logistics service for 17 years and served as the director of shipping and logistics manager in the factory in mainland China of a Taiwan-invested company and an American listed company respectively. Skilled in trade compliance of enterprises and management of bonded processing trade, he does deep study on policies and regulations of customs as well as inspection and quarantine matters.

### **Mr. Xiong Bin**

Founding partner of Shenzhen Mbase Consultants Co., Ltd. Mr. Xiong has long been engaged in the research of trade policy, providing consultations on the management of foreign-related enterprises, and offering technical services. He is equipped with outstanding capabilities in solving challenging problems concerning foreign affairs. Mr. Xiong provides guidance to many large and medium-sized enterprises on issues regarding customs, taxation, foreign exchange, business, trade mode and supply-chain, and helps them to establish trade compliance management system. He is actively involved in the planning of innovation of new-type trade mode, research and policy promotion. He has been serving as the guest trainer for the Training Center of Ministry of Commerce, China International Chamber of Commerce,

China Trade Promotion Association and China Chamber of Commerce of Metals, Minerals & Chemicals Importers & Exporters. He has authored a number of books including Techniques of Customs Trade Enterprises, Report on Risk Management of Customs Matters of Foreign-related Enterprises, Practice and Techniques of Processing Trade and Handbook of AEO Accreditation. He is a member of project of Annual Report on Trade Facilitation in China.

### **Mr. Guo Guo**

Mr. Guo has long been engaged in customs information matters, is adept at customs and foreign trade policy. He is an expert in whole-process management of the production of customs information products. He is a member of the project of Annual Report on Trade Facilitation in China .

### **Mr. Yu Deshui**

Mr. Yu has served in local-level positions in the customs (inspection and quarantine) field for a long-time, and thus is familiar with technical regulation, standard and conformity assessment procedures of inspection and quarantine. Mr. Yu hosted or participated in a number of academic and policy research programs hosted by the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of China and its subordinated bureaus as well as programs of provincial and municipal level. He worked as the team leader or member in several scientific and policy-making research projects, has a number of essays published, and took a leading role in revising two industrial standards of SN. He is a member of the project of Annual Report on Trade Facilitation in China.

### **Mr. Zhou Zhuojian**

Mr. Zhou has a master degree of economics and specializes in international trade and data analysis. Mr. Zhou joined Beijing Re-code Trade Security and Facilitation Research Centre in 2014, and he was involved in the design and implementation of a few research projects, including Time Release Study of Import and Export Goods at Ports in China, Assessment Indicator System of Trade Facilitation and Charge Survey at Ports, and undertook the process collection and data analysis.

### **Mr. Wang Jin**

Mr. Wang Jin, a senior consultant on customs affairs of Qingdao Key Enterprise Management Consulting Co., Ltd., and also the founder of the WeChat public account "Guanhai Consulting". As an expert of China customs affairs, Mr. Wang has in-depth theoretical knowledge on customs laws and regulations, and he also has rich experience on practical customs operations. Mr. Wang provides professional and efficient consulting services regarding customs affairs for import and export enterprises.

### **Mr. Lin Qian**

Senior partner of Beijing DHH Law Firm and practicing attorney, a researcher of Beijing Re-code Trade Security and Facilitation Research Centre and adjunct professor of Graduate School of China University of Political Science and Law. Mr. Lin was a senior legal expert on customs laws who was engaged in trials of smuggling cases and legislation in the General Administration of China Customs. He is currently a guest writer of "Lin's Legal Lens" column of the China Customs Magazine, publishing dozens of articles on import and export trade compliance and legal risk prevention. He's also the author of Lin's Legal Lens, a popular book on trade compliance of imports and exports.

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## GLOSSARY

	China Customs
	General Administration of China Customs (GACC)
	Inspection and Quarantine
/	former General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ)
	Ministry of Commerce
	Ministry of Finance
	National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC)
	Authorized Economic Operator (AEO)
AEO	AEO Mutual Recognition
	Credit Management
	Declaration
	Classification
	Valuation
	Guarantee
	Administrative Review
	Advance Ruling
	Single Window (SW)
	National Customs Clearance Integration Reform
	Inward Maintenance
	Outward Processing
+	Internet + Customs
	Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)
	Quarantine of Animals and Plants
	Health Quarantine
	Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)
	Transports Internationaux Routiers (TIR)
	European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road
	Free Trade Agreement (FTA)
	Pilot Free Trade Zone
	Voluntary Disclosure
	Advance Declaration
	Two-step Declaration
	Shipside Pick-up
	Tarif Guarantee Insurance
	Loading upon Arrival at Port
	Aggregate Taxation

Ensure Stability on the Six Fronts and Security in the Six Areas

Double-Random Inspection and One Disclosure

Delegate Power, Streamline Administration and Improve Government Services

Smart Customs, Smart Borders and Smart Connectivity