

# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON TRADE FACILITATION AND CREATING CEFTA MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

## BACKGROUND

In November 2014 CEFTA Ministers agreed to launch negotiations on a framework agreement on trade facilitation. This commitment was reiterated by Prime Ministers at the latest Western Balkans Summit held in Vienna on 27 August 2015. The target date to conclude the negotiations is mid-2016 and the resulting agreement will take the form of an Additional Protocol to the Agreement.

The negotiations on trade facilitation are underway and a total of four rounds of negotiations are to be held by mid-2016.

The agreement on trade facilitation in CEFTA will address the following points:

- Simplification of inspections related to all clearance procedures, and reduction of formalities to the possible maximum extent
- Identification of the means and obligations relating to the exchange of data between customs authorities to the extent that each national legislation allows
- Recognition of mutually national Authorised Economic Operators Programmes in each CEFTA Party provided that both legislation and implementation of each national programme is fully in line with the relevant EU *acquis*

Given the importance of ensuring common standards relating to data and the challenging technicalities of exchanging data in an efficient and effective manner, technical assistance to assist the Parties during the negotiations was deemed valuable. It was also seen as an opportunity to strengthen CEFTA's Management Information Systems (MIS) and enhance transparency.

## OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of this project is to support the efforts of CEFTA Parties to facilitate trade in line with the commitments taken by the Parties in the Agreement and under SEE 2020.

The specific objectives include:

- Facilitate the negotiations on trade facilitation by providing technical advice and guidance to the CEFTA Parties regarding the potential role of IT in meeting the various trade facilitation objectives
- Identify the technical improvements required in CEFTA Parties' IT systems to implement the final agreement
- Support the CEFTA Secretariat in its efforts to improve Management Information Systems (MIS) to respond more efficiently to current and future CEFTA activities in the period 2015-2020

## ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Component 1: Technical Assistance for Negotiations of Protocol on Customs Cooperation

- Brainstorming and discussion with each individual CEFTA Party on possible IT solutions and/or implications related to the negotiation topics. These discussions are held (physically and /or virtually) in advance of each round of negotiations. They allow the individual CEFTA Parties to identify specific IT related issues of relevance to them and support them to elaborate their negotiating position
- In consultation with the CEFTA Secretariat, assist with preparations for the negotiation sessions

- Project experts are available during each negotiating session to provide technical inputs as requested

### Component 2: Technical Assistance to CEFTA Secretariat to develop MIS Capacity

- Identification of current and future needs of CEFTA with the regard to MIS capacity
- Analysis of all the technical specifications of existing databases managed by the CEFTA Secretariat
- Assessment of the available hardware and software infrastructure at CEFTA Secretariat
- Proposal for improvements of the HW/SW infrastructure (in line with the identified needs)
- Identification of the available sources of international, regional and national information (and/or databases) relevant to trade in/with the CEFTA Region

- Collection and documenting of requirements

### IMPACT ON CEFTA

This project contributes to the one of CEFTA's main priorities trade facilitation as it provides practical IT based solutions to the challenging issues of timely and accurate exchange of a wide range of information between the Parties. The TA provided under the project also contributes to capacity building among officials from the various authorities as they become more familiar with the role and potential of IT to support implementation of their responsibilities on trade facilitation. Strengthening the MIS at the CEFTA Secretariat and in particular the enhancement of the databases managed by the Secretariat will improve transparency.

## SUMMARY PROJECT INFORMATION

Dates:	January - December 2015
Budget;	€ 43,000
Partners:	SEED, Safenet d.o.o and CEFTA
Financiers:	CEFTA Project Facility/EU
Beneficiaries:	CEFTA ministries responsible for trade, customs administrations and technical agencies

### CONTACT PERSON/FURTHER INFORMATION

SafeNet d.o.o. ✉ [office@safenet.rs](mailto:office@safenet.rs) 🔗 [www.safenet.rs](http://www.safenet.rs)  
 Vladimir Obucin, SEED ✉ [Vladimir.Obucina@eu-seed.net](mailto:Vladimir.Obucina@eu-seed.net)  
 Umut Ergezer, Technical Expert, CEFTA Secretariat ✉ [umut.ergezer@cefta.int](mailto:umut.ergezer@cefta.int)

