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## Communique

TFIWG Meeting 21 August 2024

The ABF convened the second TFIWG meeting of the year at the Department of Home Affairs in Belconnen ACT with the Chair Ms Sasha Billett, Acting Assistant Secretary Customs and Border Modernisation Branch, conducting opening formalities and meeting administration.

Discussion commenced with an update regarding submissions to the ABF's Regulatory Sandbox, with advice provided to members regarding the consultation process underway to consider the feasibility, risk and approach of the submission received. Members acknowledged the value of recent face to face workshops held to confirm the guidelines for controlled trials and to generate additional topics. Members noted the importance of including content which recognises and emphasises contributions of the export sector, while further acknowledging the benefits of a partnership approach to problem-solving.

An update was provided in relation to the Channels Survey conducted in June 2024. Results indicated industry preference for online interaction via self-service and using digital portals; optimising the ABF website user experience is recommended; and enhanced processes for information sharing and resolution of issues are required, including further phone and email contact options. Members were advised that information on all engagement forums will be included on the ABF website as part of its content refresh.

Members then discussed global developments in relation to e-commerce, consequences of changing de minimis values, and international approaches. Members noted that foundational matters, including reaching agreement on a definition of e-commerce, must be considered ahead of any proposed approach to a future e-commerce reporting model. Other issues raised included cost recovery, clearance of Master Air Way Bills (MAWB), pre-border shipping data, differences between Self-Assessed Clearance (SAC) Declarations, and competitive neutrality principles. This must be viewed through a lens of digitalisation and use of artificial intelligence, and it was agreed that modernisation of e-commerce requires co-design with industry and government stakeholders.

Members noted the transition of the Simplified Trade System (STS) Unit on 1 July 2024; it will continue to support delivery of incremental reform, including the Digital Trade Accelerator Program (DTAP).

Discussion turned to the Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR), with members acknowledging the intention is to achieve legal interoperability with trading partners' frameworks, promote industry engagement and confidence, and technology neutrality, rather than prescribing specific technologies to support electronic transferable records (ETRs). A consultation paper will be published in September 2024.

Members were briefed about the ABF's cost recovery calculations, with acknowledgement that while cost recovery arrangements implemented by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) varied in comparison, both were aligned to the Government's cost recovery framework.

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# Trade Facilitation Initiatives Working Group

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The next TFIWG meeting will be held on 20 November 2024.

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