

**Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee  
Government Issue Paper  
Secure Trade Lanes Subcommittee  
Trade Partnership and Engagement Working Group**

**December 2023**



**U.S. Customs and  
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**Office of Field Operations/Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT)  
Secure Trade Lanes Subcommittee  
Trade Partnership and Engagement Working Group  
December 2023**

**Action Required:** Informational

**Background:** The 15th Term of the Customs Operations Advisory Committee (COAC) instituted a restructuring of the previous subcommittees to align more with CBP's vision and priorities. Under the Secure Trade Lanes Subcommittee, a Trusted Trader Working Group was formed. This working group has continued the work that was completed under the former Trusted Trader Subcommittee. The 16th Term of the COAC is a continuation of this effort, and the working group changed its name to Trade Partnership and Engagement (TPE). The COAC met for the first time this session on February 10, 2022.

The former COAC subcommittee provided CBP with recommendations and advice on a Trusted Trader Program. Trusted Trader Strategy is an integration of the CTPAT and Importer-Self Assessment (ISA) programs into a consolidated program that includes supply chain security and trade compliance. The program was implemented via the Trusted Trader Pilot Program, announced in the Federal Register (79 FRN 13992) on June 16, 2014.

The transition from ISA to CTPAT Trade Compliance has been completed and all former ISA participants are enrolled in the CTPAT Trade Compliance. The Trusted Trader pilot has been concluded and the CTPAT Trade Compliance program opened the program for new applications on August 1, 2022.

Although there is also a COAC Forced Labor Working Group under the Intelligent Enforcement Subcommittee, the COAC Secure Trade Lanes Subcommittee's Trade Partnership and Engagement Working Group was focused only on the aspects of forced labor that impact the CTPAT Trade Compliance program.

**Current Status:**

The latest Statement of Work (SOW) for the Trade Partnership and Engagement Working Group pivots the focus to the CTPAT Security program while continuing efforts to enhance the Trade Compliance program. Shifting the focus from Trade Compliance importers to all Security entities will allow an expanded pool of trade stakeholders to provide input and engage with CBP on the CTPAT program. This broader focus to encompass CTPAT Security will result in enhanced partnership and further program development to reflect the current trade climate.

This COAC session will focus on the following:

- Further develop the CTPAT program.
- Standardize the validation process.
- Review current benefits and propose actionable additional benefits for CTPAT partners.
- Review metrics that evaluate and mutually quantify benefit effectiveness for industry and government.
- Propose strategic interagency partnership engagement approach to Trusted Traders.

- Provide input on areas of CTPAT Trade Compliance related to benefits not previously recommended.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) implemented new forced labor requirements in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. The new requirements for forced labor were effective August 1, 2022, and existing partners were required to submit documentation by August 1, 2023.

The COAC and CTPAT Trade Compliance participated in an in-person, one-day meeting in March 2023. Discussion included enhancing the forced labor compliance benefits, developing a CTPAT Trade Compliance program dashboard, and a strategy for future partner government agency engagement. There was also discussion about developing a new SOW that would reflect the commitment to expand the focus from Trade Compliance importers to include all trade entities in the CTPAT program.

As a result of the new SOW, the working group was expanded to include a Supervisory Supply Chain Security Specialist (SSCSS) to provide knowledge about the validation process and the documentation that is requested. The primary focus of the discussions since the off-site meeting have been on CTPAT Security validations and opportunities to reduce redundancies. CBP provided the group validation materials for review and comment which is ongoing.

The TPE working group also focused discussion on the new recommendations that were provided at the June 2023 General Meeting. Representatives from Regulatory Audit and COAC had the opportunity for robust discussion of the various audit mechanisms and requisite information. COAC is now refining the recommendation and the group will reconvene for further discussions.

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