

**Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee
Government Issue Paper
Secure Trade Lanes Subcommittee
Cross-Border Recognition Working Group**

March 2024



**U.S. Customs and
Border Protection**



Pub #3591-0224

Cross-Border Recognition Working Group

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Action Required: Informational

Background: Within the Secure Trade Lanes subcommittee, a Cross-Border Recognition working group was formed. The working group is tasked to provide U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) with recommendations and advice on various trade facilitation approaches.

The working group consists of government participants, industry subject matter experts, and at times may require coordination with other COAC working groups and/or subcommittees considering cross border scope.

Objectives and Scope of Activities:

The working group is tasked to review, provide feedback and formulate strategic recommendations in the following areas: potential improvements to physical, technical, and operational aspects of border infrastructure; improvements and/or potential changes to operations of the current joint inspection program (Unified Cargo Processing); and the further development of the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT) program and that of Mexico's Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) program to verify that the two programs are in line with each other with regards to the mutual recognition arrangement (MRA) signed in 2014.

The Statement of work (SOW) and strategic objectives the group will focus upon are:

- Consider possibilities of technologies that could potentially modernize, simplify, and/or harmonize customs procedures to the greatest extent possible.
- Propose enhanced data sharing.
- Review operational procedures at selected land ports of entry.
- Provide input regarding the scope of the Unified Cargo Processing program.
- Consider ways to maximize the current MRA with Mexico Customs.

Current Status:

- Beginning November 16, 2023, a regular cadence of bi-weekly meetings has been established.
- Initial discussion content primarily focused on an overview of CTPAT support for/to U.S./Mexico land border Trade and program benefits (FAST Lane access).
- Over the subsequent three sessions to date, additional topics covered several components with nexus to De Minimis, and the inherent threats and trends of same; CBP challenged the work group on discussion as to steps the Trade may consider in working with CBP to combat the severe level of sustained threats associated with precursor and Fentanyl smuggling.
- The Trade's interest has ranged from business resumption processes in the rail environments, receiving status updates and lessons learned on the current Unified Cargo Processing program and seeking to work toward a similar Trade to Government liaison with Mexico as is experienced with CBP via COAC engagement.

Next Steps: The working group's activity is anticipated to take at least 12 months. The next bi-weekly meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2024.

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Date: January 25, 2024