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PRESS RELEASE

Belize Hosts National Workshop on Time Release Study

Belmopan, May 15, 2023.

Today, the Directorate General for Foreign Trade and the Belize Customs and Excise Department, co-chairs of the National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF), launched a National Sensitization Workshop on a Time Release Study (TRS) for Belize with technical support from the World Customs Organization (WCO). This event will take place from May 15 to 19 at the Customs and Excise Department conference room in Belize City.

On September 2, 2015, Belize ratified the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement and has since established its implementation coordinating body (the NCTF) and developed its National Trade Facilitation Implementation Roadmap. In compliance with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, members are required to periodically measure and publish average release times for goods in a consistent manner, using tools such as the TRS developed by the WCO.

The national workshop will build the capacity of the Customs Department and other regulatory border agencies to conduct Time Release Studies. The first two days will provide invited guests and participants of the TRS Working Group with an overview of (i) the status of the TRS Project and the work completed in 2018; (ii) the WCO facilitation instruments and tools; (iii) the TRS methodology; and (iv) Belize's reform and modernization initiatives. Subsequent days will be dedicated working group sessions focusing on the application of the WCO TRS software, the TRS process mapping, the analysis, and reporting writing. The key outputs from the workshop will be to finalize the scope of the TRS, revise business process maps and the action plan, and formalize a TRS Working Group.

The TRS is an important tool for Belize since it will identify the physical release time of goods. Additionally, it will provide guidance to the NCTF to

take the necessary measures to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of border procedures. It will also provide evidence-based information to the international community on Belize's performance capacity, which is useful for policymakers and investors.

The workshop is made possible through funding from the Government of Belize and the Caribbean Development Bank.

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