



BULLETIN

FACILITATION OF TRANSPORT AND TRADE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The need to facilitate and secure logistics processes in Latin America and the Caribbean

Background

In recent decades, many factors have brought about huge growth in transport volumes in Latin America and the Caribbean. These include favourable macroeconomic conditions, increased standards of quality and efficiency, and regional integration efforts that have led to both a drastic reduction in customs duties and the construction of infrastructure projects with regional scope. In this context, Latin America and the Caribbean, while remedying its shortfall in quality logistics services and infrastructure, must redouble institutional efforts to deliver effective, definitive and comprehensive responses to the questions of facilitation and security in the logistics chain. Failure to do so will see logistical costs increase, making the region less competitive.

This bulletin examines the existing relationship between facilitation and security, in which too much emphasis on either aspect may undermine the effectiveness of the other, and with it, the competitiveness of the economy. The first and second sections analyse the respective importance of logistical security and facilitation in regional competitiveness. The next two sections look at the need to harmonize facilitation and security requirements, a process in which ICT (information and communications technology) serves as an essential catalyst. The fifth section briefly examines some security measures and their impact on facilitation in Latin America and the Caribbean. The sixth section analyses some of the reasons preventing the effective adoption of these measures. The seventh section details how facilitation and security elements are incorporated into an integrated and sustainable logistics policy. A list of recommendations and general conclusions is provided at the end of the document.

This *FAL Bulletin* examines the role of logistical security and facilitation in the competitiveness of Latin America and the Caribbean.

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I. Facilitation and regional competitiveness



II. The role of logistical security in the competitiveness of Latin America and the Caribbean



III. The need to harmonize facilitation and security requirements



IV. ICT as a catalyst of facilitation and security processes



V. Brief analysis of some security measures and their impact on facilitation



VI. Conceptual divergences affecting the adoption and impact of facilitation and security measures



VII. Facilitation and security in an integrated and sustainable logistics policy



VIII. Conclusions



IX. Bibliography



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

I. Facilitation and regional competitiveness

According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), trade facilitation is the simplification and harmonization of the different procedures that govern international trade, including the activities, practices and formalities needed for presenting, communicating and processing the data required for the existence of foreign trade. Transport facilitation, on the other hand, seeks to eliminate and simplify the formalities, procedures and documents needed for the timely and efficient movement of people, luggage and cargo in different transport infrastructures, making the economy more competitive and productive without neglecting operational security or the social or environmental aspects involved. Facilitation processes therefore substantially improve the development of international trade and can deliver considerable benefits for the international community and for regional integration in particular, by helping to reduce border crossing costs, thus favouring greater trade and tourism.

The impact of facilitation measures on competitiveness has been examined extensively in specialized literature. Some of the findings concerning the situation in Latin America show that delays at border crossings can account for between 4% and 12% of logistical cost overruns (Schwartz et al., 2009). Other studies estimate that if the customs processing time in the Port of Santos were reduced by four days, Brazil's logistics costs could be cut by up to 16% (World Bank, IDB and ECLAC, 2010).

An interesting analysis on the importance of efficient logistics and effective facilitation measures was carried out by the World Bank, in relation to tomato exports from Costa Rica to their final point of sale in Nicaragua. The study examined the logistics costs¹ incurred by both a small producer and a large-scale exporter in selling one kilogram of tomatoes in the other country. The findings revealed that transport accounted for almost a quarter (23%) of the total cost incurred by the small producer, followed by customs (11%) and taxes (6%). For the large-scale exporter, the main cost was customs processing (10% of the final price), followed by transport (6%) and taxes (5%). Comparing these figures reveals that differences in production scale and infrastructure-related and logistical inefficiencies mean that small producers pay over three times as much for transport services. This means that if they want to compete with large exporters, they must reduce their profit margin by 16%. Another salient aspect of the study referred to the facilitation of processes, with border crossing costs (customs

and waiting times) capable of accounting for up to 11% of the total cost of the product in question (World Bank, 2013). These figures can be explained by shortcomings in physical infrastructure (facilities), technology (computer systems) and procedures (lack of harmonization of control regulations). In this particular case, phytosanitary controls of agricultural products such as tomatoes must take place on both sides of the Peñas Blancas border crossing between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, which along with other factors can cause transit times of up to 10 hours. These delays also increase wastage during transport and prevent more efficient production linkages. Lastly, the waiting time at Peñas Blancas, to return without merchandise, is 24 hours. On average this represents 22% of the total transport price, which partly explains the surcharge paid by small producers.

II. The role of logistical security in the competitiveness of Latin America and the Caribbean

Supply chain security refers to the set of actions carried out to safeguard the correct and timely functioning of supply chains in the face of external threats such as terrorism and crime. Terrorism includes all actions involving the use of means of transport (including containers) as a weapon or device to contain explosive, radioactive or pollutant elements, with the intention of inflicting terror on the population. Crime includes actions such as the illegal traffic of goods or people, as well as the theft of the cargo or of the vehicle (Pérez Salas, 2013).

Lack of supply chain security also threatens economic competitiveness by increasing insurance premiums and service operating costs, which in turn makes products more expensive and less competitive internationally. For example, it is estimated that Mexican companies invest between 15% and 20% of their logistics costs in security, often with no discernible improvements. In Argentina, losses associated with truck robberies account for between 4% and 9% of the total. In the rest of the region, although there are no recurrent statistics that allow a reliable estimate of the seriousness of the problem, the increase in criminal activity in each country is clear (Pérez Salas, 2013). Direct losses caused by criminal incidents or interruptions in the supply chain should be considered in addition to their indirect effects on the rest of the supply chain, since the growing integration of production and logistics schemes based on minimizing inventory, have shortened the chains and led to greater functional integration between companies. These changes to supply chains imply that failures or increased operating times in one of its links could have detrimental effects on third companies, even on other continents, as was seen with automotive and technology firms after the 2011 earthquake in Japan, for example.

¹ The costs considered include farm-gate price, producer's profit, transport and management costs, customs agency services and customs waiting time, storage, insurance, tax and costs and profits at the final point of sale.

Therefore, both the security and the punctuality of deliveries, affected by aspects of facilitation, are key to entering and remaining in the most competitive and profitable markets, in which the competitive advantages of proximity and price may be completely negated unless operational continuity can be ensured in all eventualities.

III. The need to harmonize facilitation and security requirements

From all of the above, it is clear that in a globalized world in which logistics networks are increasingly interconnected, security should be considered a public asset and, therefore, an essential requirement for the sustainability of trade and the social and economic development that goes with it. Similarly, various international bodies, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO), indicate that sea transport and the port sector (and by extension other cargo transfer facilities) can be burdensome in terms of lost time, if the relevant process coordination and facilitation measures are not taken, through the appropriate cooperation and information exchange between various public authorities (those responsible for customs, public health, migration, ports, shipping, and plant and animal control), private agents (carriers and users) and other entities involved in international logistics (Pérez, Paula 2009).

In this context, implementing extreme security measures can significantly affect the facilitation of customs and transport processes taking place at cargo-transfer terminals, reducing their productivity, making their services more expensive and thereby undermining their competitiveness. However, relaxing control processes in favour of greater facilitation and shorter response or operating times, may have a substantial impact on the security of operations, often making foreign trade unviable.

IV. ICT as a catalyst of facilitation and security processes

There is no single formula as to how much facilitation or security is required at a terminal, since this depends on the specific conditions prevailing in each cargo transfer facility. Nevertheless, for additional security measures not to affect the facilitation processes or the operating times of international supply chains, information technologies and improvements in administrative processes and procedures need to be brought in to obtain internationally competitive operating times, as shown in diagram 1.

Diagram 1
ICT AS A CATALYST OF FACILITATION AND SECURITY PROCESSES



Source: Author.

Similarly, if the strategy is to promote the facilitation of processes and to reduce operating times, then it will be absolutely necessary to introduce technologies that enable a level of security to be provided in accordance with international requirements. Security and facilitation are therefore two elements that go hand in hand, and which require joint analysis to prevent security requirements from slowing processing times, increasing tariffs and restricting the productivity of infrastructure, merely by designating some aspects related to facilitation.

The judicious application of measures, as well as the regional coordination of ICT investments such as smart transport systems, single-window facilities for foreign trade, electronic data exchange and transmission, cargo tracking, among many available options, would also be conducive to a more efficient regional transport system, better process security, and greater competitiveness for all participants.

V. Brief analysis of some security measures and their impact on facilitation

While risk has always been present in transport and for many is an inherent risk of the activity, in the last few decades of the twentieth century, certain criminal issues related to the transport of illegal goods, such as narcotics and weapons, as well as attacks on shipping, became serious problems for international transport flows (Sánchez et al., 2004). These events triggered a number of protection and security measures, both multilateral and bilateral in scope, which were strongly reinforced after 11 September 2001. Many of the measures had a single goal, to secure “port-sea-port” and “airport-air-airport” interfaces against terrorist threats, often without considering the impacts that these measures might have on the facilitation of the customs, commercial or transport processes involved in international trade.



Even today, despite the time that has passed, many security initiatives present significant conceptual and territorial divergences as to the emphasis and scope with which measures should be applied, creating inefficiencies in assigning the financial, human and technological resources needed to implement and achieve them. These multiple approaches and spheres of application may significantly

affect the transport and trade facilitation processes on which the same governments are working, making port and customs processes slower and more expensive, to the detriment of national competitiveness.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the most widespread security standard is the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS), issued by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), to certify ships and port facilities on the basis of minimum protection parameters. At the beginning of 2012, more than 1,144 certified port facilities were registered in the region, of which 38% were multipurpose terminals, 26% oil terminals, 23% bulk cargo terminals, 7% cruise terminals and the remaining 6% specialized container terminals. Table 1 gives a breakdown of certified terminals by country, region and type of facility.

Table 1
COMPLIANCE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SHIP AND PORT FACILITY SECURITY CODE (ISPS CODE)
AT PORT TERMINALS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 2012

Country	Subregion	Multipurpose	Bulk	Cruise and passenger	Container	Liquids, gas, oil	Total
1	Belize	Central America	1	3	1	1	6
2	Guatemala	Central America	3	2	1	4	10
3	Honduras	Central America	5	0	2	6	16
4	Mexico	Central America	59	12	9	10	131
5	Nicaragua	Central America	3	0	1	1	5
6	Panama	Central America	2	0	1	5	15
7	Costa Rica	Central America	2	1	1	0	5
8	El Salvador	Central America	3	0	0	3	6
9	Antigua and Barbuda	The Caribbean	1	1	1	1	4
10	Aruba	The Caribbean	2	0	0	1	3
11	Bahamas	The Caribbean	5	4	2	3	20
12	Barbados	The Caribbean	1	1	0	2	4
13	Bermuda	The Caribbean	3	0	0	1	4
14	Cuba	The Caribbean	14	1	1	2	23
15	Dominica	The Caribbean	3	0	0	0	3
16	Dominican Republic	The Caribbean	10	3	6	1	20
17	Granada	The Caribbean	3	0	0	1	4
18	Guadeloupe	The Caribbean	4	0	2	1	8
19	Haiti	The Caribbean	6	3	2	1	12
20	Cayman Islands	The Caribbean	2	0	1	0	3
21	Jamaica	The Caribbean	5	7	2	1	17
22	Martinique	The Caribbean	4	0	3	1	11
23	Saint Kitts and Nevis	The Caribbean	4	1	1	2	8
24	Saint Lucia	The Caribbean	2	0	1	1	4
25	Saint Vincent	The Caribbean	4	1	0	2	7
26	Trinidad and Tobago	The Caribbean	8	10	2	10	30
27	British Virgin Islands	The Caribbean	0	0	6	0	6
28	Argentina	South America	32	49	7	5	129
29	Brazil	South America	118	65	2	23	254
30	Chile	South America	26	20	1	2	75
31	Colombia	South America	31	15	0	2	64
32	Ecuador	South America	9	4	0	10	23
33	Guyana	South America	12	11	0	11	34
34	French Guiana	South America	0	1	0	1	4
35	Paraguay	South America	0	6	0	0	6
36	Peru	South America	11	6	0	1	45
37	Suriname	South America	5	6	1	4	16
38	Uruguay	South America	24	4	23	2	61
39	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	South America	13	23	0	12	48
	Total	440	260	80	66	298	1 140
	Total share	38.5%	22.7%	7.0%	5.8%	26.0%	100%

Source: Octavio Doerr, ECLAC, based on IMO and other information.

The breakdown for the subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean shows that 66.3% of ISPS-certified port facilities are located in South America, 17% are in Central America and Mexico, while the Caribbean accounts for the remaining 16.7%.

One interesting fact to note is that the implementation of the ISPS Code in Latin America and the Caribbean, while improving the security of ports and shipping, helped raise awareness of the security problem in the region, reduced the risks of terrorism, goods theft and delays to cargo in terminals, while also managing space in ports and enhancing the efficiency of customs controls.

A different fate awaited the measure put forward in 2007 by the United States Senate in response to the events of 11 September, which envisages the compulsory scanning of all containers destined for the United States in order to detect weapons, explosives or other illegal items. The initiative was due to become operational in July 2012, however international pressures were brought to bear, warning of disastrous impacts on trade facilitation. As a result, the measure was postponed until 2014, when a review of its implementation may again be requested. The export sector is concerned that if the cost of the scanning service can (and in fact will) be passed on to end consumers, the same is not true the increased operating times that the measure will cause in ports. As a result, they may be forced out of the market for failing to comply with scheduled shipments, or lose out to other terminals with more efficient cargo handling. These concerns were heightened by the findings of pilot plans implemented at major ports, some of which even withdrew from the programme because of the negative effects that it was having on their efficiency and competitiveness in comparison with other non-participant ports, which were cheaper and faster. These pilot plans required longer operating times, as well as investments in equipment, personnel training and adaptation of the terminal (Port Harbors, 2012). The same conclusion emerged from the pilot carried out in Guatemala, which caused losses of up to US\$ 35 million in the last seven months of 2011 owing to delays in the checking of containers by the Superintendence of Tax Administration. In addition, the fee for a scanner check was US\$ 22.99 per container at the end of 2009, creating a double problem for competitiveness: security services that are slow and expensive.

Land transport has seen a substantial increase in criminal activity affecting supply chains. It is of concern that despite the massive adverse impacts that these actions have on the sector, and on regional social and economic development, they do not receive the same attention and resources as terrorism and drug trafficking, even though there is evidence of links between these groups. Furthermore, only

two security initiatives, BASC certification and ISO 28000, consider domestic transport routes within their sphere of application, even though 17% of road transport drivers have suffered an attack in the last five years (IRU, 2008).

A recent ECLAC study stated the urgency of adopting effective measures to secure domestic logistics, highlighting that Latin America and the Caribbean includes two of the three most dangerous countries for the land-based supply chain (Mexico and Brazil). The risk is present in all Latin American countries, without exception. There is particular cause for concern in some parts of Central America, where activity by *maras*, armed gangs operating in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras and who work with drugs cartels, prevents the effective integration of Mesoamerican supply chains.

VI. Conceptual divergences affecting the adoption and impact of facilitation and security measures

Despite enormous international and regional efforts to improve facilitation processes and to implement more effective security measures, these aspects continue to appear on the competitiveness agenda and to demand effective solutions to the problems that afflict them. Trade and transport facilitation, along with border crossing costs, account for a large proportion of logistical cost overruns in the region, and often prevent greater intraregional integration of production, as can be seen from the above case study on tomato exports in Central America. The intensification of criminal activity targeting supply chains throughout the region, and especially on some river and land routes, calls for the implementation of comprehensive and regionally coordinated measures to address the problem.

The absence of effective solutions to the region's facilitation and security problems is mainly due to conceptual divergences regarding the sphere of application of potential measures, as well as the diversity of actors participating in logistics processes, often with legitimately competing interests. These differences, as well as the multiplicity of existing initiatives cause confusion among logistics actors, delaying the adoption of these measures. They also impede the harmonization of procedures and thereby affect trade facilitation, driving up regional logistical costs. For example, as recently as April 2012, the security programmes of the United States (C-TPAT, Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism) and the European Union (AEO, Authorised Economic Operator) were recognized as compatible. Previously, companies had to be certified separately under each programme, doubling the investment needed to comply with all of their recommendations, with the resultant losses in time and money.

The implementation of effective measures is also impaired by asymmetries in the legislative and tax status of transport throughout the region, with differences between modes of transport and between domestic and international users. This is reflected in arbitrary regulatory measures and safeguards that impede the harmonization of processes and whose sole, misunderstood purpose is to protect the sector, without considering the impact that these measures might have on national competitiveness. Alongside this, today's logistical operations are increasingly complex. National laws are often unprepared for this change, hindering (and even sometimes preventing) multimodal transport and, therefore, the integration of regional supply chains.

Another important aspect is the absence of a comprehensive approach to the phenomena that occur in both national and regional supply chains. It is commonly observed that the actions of the State, through its different agencies, are disparate and promote multiple facilitation, competitiveness, security or oversight initiatives at the same time, regarding specific aspects, facilities or modes of transport, without considering their impact on the other components of the chain. As well as generating a false sense of progress on competitiveness, these actions impair the delivery of information and training in the logistics sector, preventing the comprehensive reforms that would resolve the issues of facilitation and security in pursuit of greater national competitiveness.

Confusion among logistics actors is another element that makes it difficult to adopt measures. This became apparent when ECLAC conducted a survey to discover the degree of knowledge regarding the implementation of the ISPS Code in the region (Sánchez, 2004b). The findings revealed that only 62.3% of respondents thought that the measures applied by the ISPS Code were necessary, 35.7% considered them excessive and 4.3% indicated that they were unnecessary. It was also observed that, despite extensive dissemination by multilateral organizations, national authorities and the specialized press, there were many instances of confusion between the contents of the ISPS Code and those of the CSI (Container Security Initiative) promoted by United States customs. In 2011, a similar exercise was carried out as part of the *México Logístico* initiative to examine risk in the supply chain and the resultant requirements for the business sector in Mexico. The findings also reflected confusion among logistics actors who, given the wide range of security standards, were unable to distinguish the value added of each of the proposed initiatives. The study also noted dissatisfaction as to the actual contribution made by the security standards, with the majority of respondents indicating that they contained gaps or did not adequately

consider their company's operational context. Their proposed solution was the development of "modular" security standards that would allow greater flexibility and adaptability to the actual context in which their operations are carried out (Cedillo-Campos, 2011).

From the above it is clear that conceptual divergences over the sphere of application of facilitation and security initiatives can seriously affect competitiveness when measures are focused on one aspect to the detriment of others. Such divergences can have the following consequences:

- (a) Para-tariff measures may emerge with major repercussions for international trade, to the point where security requirements could form new barriers to foreign trade.
- (b) There may be logistical cost overruns, which reduce international competitiveness, affecting the economy's efficiency and making end prices more expensive for goods consumers.
- (c) States may be hindered in their efforts to eliminate and simplify administrative procedures, intended to boost the competitiveness of their products by streamlining procedures and thereby reducing the cost and time involved in the international transport process.

One of the biggest challenges facing the region is find solutions that address the security problem and which are consistent with the level of facilitation required by the current processes of globalization and logistical interdependence. The international experience shows that promoting collaboration and information exchange between different public and private actors in the supply chain is central to achieving technical solutions that are politically sustainable over time.

VII. Facilitation and security in an integrated and sustainable logistics policy

Supply chains are only as secure as their weakest link, meaning that comprehensive security approaches are required which duly consider their impacts on other aspects of competitiveness and the sustainability of national development. For this reason, an integrated logistics and mobility policy, such as the one proposed by ECLAC for Latin America and the Caribbean, must consider aspects related to operational security along with the provision of infrastructure, the regulation of services, and of course, the facilitation of the customs and transport processes and procedures in which various State public authorities are involved. In this regard, the policy and its sectoral plans must

help find systemic solutions that complement the efforts of the private sector. This is because an integrated facilitation-and-security approach to logistics operations will help in the adoption of cost-effective solutions by reconciling the technological, organizational and human-resources-training requirements needed to achieve progress.

At regional level, because criminal gangs do not recognize borders and are continually moving in search of areas with lower security where they can operate more easily, it is essential that sectoral public policies include changes to help coordinate measures at subregional level.

From the State perspective, inadequate service provision (both in terms of security and facilitation) affects the image of the country and increases the popular perception of insecurity or bureaucratic inefficiency. It also reduces tax revenues, discourages enterprise and private investment, and pushes up the prices of the goods consumed domestically, in short, affecting economic growth and social development. All of these aspects justify the inclusion of facilitation and security within sectoral public policies and their proper coordination with other ministerial portfolios related to legislation and public security.

Supply-chain security and process facilitation are also of increasing importance for the private sector, since they have a bearing on operating costs, through increased lead times, inventory volumes and insurance premiums, among other factors that make products more expensive and less competitive internationally. For this reason, proper supply-chain management, so as to meet security standards without affecting process facilitation and processing times, is also a task that should be performed by the private sector. It has been observed that many inefficiencies in logistics processes reside not only in the relationship between public and private bodies, but also in the relationships between private companies, owing to internal company regulations or standards that do not generate greater value for logistics processes and which obstruct the entire supply chain.

It is recommended that the facilitation and security measures be discussed previously by all interested or affected parties in a multilateral forum, so as to encourage participation and gain the full support of the whole logistics community. In its regulatory framework for the security and facilitation of global trade, the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA), sets out four essential elements for integrating these aspects:

1. Make progress in harmonizing and facilitating processes, promoting the electronic exchange of information regardless of whether it relates to import, export or transit flows.

2. Use an intelligence approach in risk analysis, as a means of reducing the number of inspections to be made and thereby not impairing the facilitation of other foreign trade.
3. Favour the inspection of high-risk cargo without opening or unloading containers, so as not to damage the cargo or its packaging and therefore increase port operating times.
4. Grant advantages and process facilitation to customs departments and companies that comply with minimum rules relating to supply-chain security, and which apply international best practices.

Greater logistical security requires greater information and coordination between the components of the supply chain. In short, this assists the facilitation of processes, creates better logistics operations and enhanced competitiveness. The survey conducted by *México Logístico* shows that implementing coordinated security measures concerning the problems faced by foreign trade generates additional benefits in the effectiveness of logistics operations, including (in order of importance):

1. Co-benefits in logistics operations, with better visibility throughout the supply chain and improved responsiveness in the event that the chain is interrupted.
2. Fewer incidents and with less value involved (robberies, contamination of shipments, etc.).
3. Standardized operations that enable better interaction with trading partners, building more enduring and profitable trade relations.
4. Lower insurance premiums where there is evidence of compliance with one or more international security standards.
5. Operational benefits granted by government agencies.

VIII. Conclusions

Process facilitation is a strategic component of national competitiveness, and one in which Latin America and the Caribbean has much to do. It is therefore essential that institutional efforts be intensified to resolve these issues, while implementing the security measures needed to safeguard supply chains. A comprehensive analysis of these factors will help detect both physical and organizational bottlenecks, which may affect the facilitation of trade processes, as well as establishing the failings that allow criminal and terrorist groups to operate. Compliance with security measures is therefore important for all spheres of society (local, national, regional and international),

since applying them judiciously and in coordination with facilitation processes not only reduces the risk levels and the vulnerability of supply chains, but also helps raise awareness of the security problem, regulates cargo terminal operations, encourages better operating conditions and increases the efficiency of checks by public authorities. All of the above have positive effects on the competitiveness and productivity of the economy.

It is clear that any supply chain is only as strong as its weakest link. That's why an integrated and sustainable logistics policy is required that provides a solution to various needs, including the legitimate requirements of logistical security and facilitation, in order to maximize efficiency in assigning financial, human and technological resources needed for their implementation and fulfilment.

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