



# A performance model for Public–Private Partnerships: the authorized economic operator as an example

*Um modelo de desempenho para parcerias público-privadas: o operador econômico autorizado como exemplo*

*Un modelo de rendimiento para asociaciones público-privadas: el operador económico autorizado como ejemplo*

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## Abstract

Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) have become known as one of the alternatives for increasing the effectiveness of border controls. Excessive controls and the lack of cooperation can hinder trade in global operations. On the other hand, Trade Facilitation (TF) is a response to the observed growth in international supply chain operations over the last few years. Since TF involves a relationship between public and private agents, alternatives to solutions within the field of international trade fall into these types of partnerships. However, simply establishing a relation between both agents does not ensure that all of the benefits of TF will be reached. The objective of this research is to propose a theoretical model, one that can indicate which factors have the most influence over TF-oriented PPPs. The relationship between each variable and the performance of a partnership were tested. To validate the proposed model, we used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings show which factors influence the success of TF-oriented PPPs, using the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) as an example. The data were gathered both at the national and international levels, focusing on professionals from the private and public sectors who either work with TF within their regular functions or have expertise on the subject. The results show that the factors that have the most influence over the performance of TF-oriented PPPs are, in order, the “micro-environment”, the “abilities of parties” and the “macro-environment”. Further PPPs that focus on TF may consider this model for implementation.

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**Keywords:** Structural equation; Performance of partnerships

## Resumo

As Parcerias Público Privadas (PPP) ficaram conhecidas como uma das alternativas para aumentar a eficiência dos controles de fronteira. Controles excessivos, falta de cooperação e procedimentos burocráticos podem atrapalhar o comércio em operações globais. Por outro lado, a Facilitação Comercial (FC) é uma resposta ao crescimento das operações de cadeias de suprimentos internacionais. Já que FC envolve uma relação entre os agentes públicos e privados, alternativas para o plano do comércio internacional encontram respaldo nesse tipo de parceria. Contudo, simplesmente estabelecer uma relação entre as partes não é garantia de que todos os benefícios da FC serão atingidos. O objetivo dessa pesquisa foi propor um

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modelo teórico que consiga indicar quais são os fatores que mais influenciam o sucesso de PPPs voltadas à FC. As relações entre cada variável e o desempenho da parceria foram testados de forma a quantificar suas forças. De forma a validar o modelo proposto foi utilizado o método de Modelagem de Equações Estruturais (SEM, na sigla inglesa). Os resultados mostram quais são os fatores que mais influenciam o desempenho de PPPs, valendo-se do programa Operador Econômico Autorizado (OEA) como referência para programas de FC. Os dados foram coletados, tanto em nível nacional, quanto internacional, focando em profissionais dos setores público e privado que trabalham diretamente com FC ou possuem conhecimento sobre o assunto. Os resultados mostraram que os fatores que mais influenciam o desempenho de parcerias voltadas à FC são, respectivamente, o microambiente, as habilidades das partes e o macro ambiente. Futuros programas de PPPs com ênfase em facilitação comercial podem se valer de modelos como esse para sua implementação.

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*Palavras-chave:* Equações estruturais; Desempenho de parcerias

## Resumen

Asociaciones Público-Privadas (APP) se hizo conocido como una de las alternativas para aumentar la eficacia de los controles fronterizos. Controles excesivos, falta de cooperación y procedimientos engorrosos pueden obstaculizar el comercio en las operaciones globales. Por otro lado, la facilitación del comercio (FC) es una respuesta al crecimiento observado en las operaciones internacionales de la cadena de suministro en los últimos años. Desde que FC implica una relación entre los actores públicos y privados, las alternativas al plan del comercio internacional son compatibles con este tipo de asociación. Sin embargo, solamente establecer una relación entre las partes no asegura se alcanzarán todos los beneficios de la FC. El objetivo de esta investigación es proponer un modelo teórico que puede indicar cuáles son los factores que influyen en el éxito de las APP dirigidas a FC. La relación entre cada variable y el rendimiento de la asociación se ensayó. Con el fin de validar el modelo se utilizó el método de Modelos de Ecuaciones Estructurales. Los resultados muestran los factores que más influyen en el rendimiento de las APP, aprovechando el Operador Económico Autorizado (OEA) como referencia para los programas de facilitación. Se recogieron los datos, tanto a nivel nacional como internacional, centrándose en los profesionales de los sectores públicos y privados que trabajan directamente con FC o tienen conocimiento de ello. Los resultados mostraron que los factores que más influyen en las asociaciones orientadas a FC son, respectivamente, el “microambiente”, las “capacidades de las partes” y el “entorno macro-”. Futuros programas de APPs con énfasis en facilitación del comercio pueden considerar este modelo para su implementación.

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*Palabras clave:* Ecuaciones estructurales; Rendimiento de las asociaciones

## Introduction

In has been demanded that border agencies, importers and exporters improve their processes and technologies to help make the movement of goods across borders quicker, smoother and safer. As the volume and complexity of trade rise, national administrations attempt to address the increased traffic without extra resources, considering the awareness of the business community of the costs of trade (OECD, 2005).

Trade Facilitation (TF) is an answer to the increased uncertainty in global supply chain operations. TF can be explained as the application of methods for the reduction of barriers that can hinder trade in global operations. Its overall objective is to increase the flow of goods, services and people across international borders without compromising the security of this process or the ability of governmental agencies (mostly customs) to charge taxes and collect revenue (Moisés, 2013).

One of the greatest benefits of TF is the reduction of trade-related costs. This benefit is interesting to both the private and the public sectors due to the advantages for former one and the clear visibility for the latter. When applied to developing countries, the need for TF measures has accelerated as a consequence of the increased participation of trade in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the dependence on faster supply chain management techniques, among other factors (Hellqvist, 2003). On the other

hand, although TF presents long-term savings and benefits to a country, there are many set-up and operating costs involved in the implementation of measures.

Duval (2006, p. 23) notes that the implementation of some TF measures “may often not be related to regulatory, training, or equipment costs, but to political costs”. Political costs indicate the importance of the government in fostering TF. TF involves a relationship between a public and a private party. Therefore, it can be viewed as a type of Public–Private Partnership (PPP), but simply establishing a relation does not guarantee that all of the benefits of TF will be made available for everyone.

Although classic PPPs are mostly oriented towards the provision of infrastructure, some that have the provision of a service as their goal are established. In international trade, this particular type of PPP is viewed as a customs–business partnership (CBP) and shares the advantages and risks of classic PPPs (Zhang & Preece, 2011). These types of partnerships have taken the form of structured programmes. One in particular is becoming the most important in international trade worldwide: the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO), from the World Customs Organization (WCO).

This paper aims to propose and validate a theoretical model that is able to measure the main factors affecting the performance or success of a TF-oriented PPP. This model draws from the theory of PPPs and presents a relational model between the

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