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Acronyms and Abbreviations

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABMS</td>
<td>Advanced Biosecurity Management System</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>AEO</td>
<td>Authorized Economic Operator</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANSA</td>
<td>National Food Safety Agency (Moldova)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Authorized Operator¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASYCUDA</td>
<td>Automated System for Customs Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AW</td>
<td>ASYCUDA World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAF</td>
<td>Biosecurity Authority of Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCP</td>
<td>Border control post or border crossing point</td>
</tr>
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<td>BiH</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<tr>
<td>C4D</td>
<td>Collaboration for Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>Capacity Building Committee</td>
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<td>CBM</td>
<td>Coordinated Border Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEFTA</td>
<td>Central European Free Trade Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEPA</td>
<td>Comisión Ejecutiva Portuaria Autónoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLDP</td>
<td>Commercial Law Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMEX</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Trade (Costa Rica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development of the United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>Europe and Central Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>Egyptian Customs Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIF</td>
<td>Enhanced Integrated Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>ePhyto</td>
<td>Electronic phytosanitary certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>eSW</td>
<td>Electronic Single Window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
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<td>EUCC</td>
<td>European Union Customs Code</td>
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<td>FRCS</td>
<td>Fiji Revenue and Customs Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY</td>
<td>Fiscal year</td>
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<td>GASI</td>
<td>General Agency for Specialized Inspection (Mongolia)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

¹ “Authorized Operators” or “AOs” are covered in measure 7.7 of the WTO TFA on Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators. Although commonly referred to as AEO and does contain aspects of the WCO AEO program, AO does not include the security component of the WCO AEO program.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>GIZ</td>
<td>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMRC</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCWC</td>
<td>International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICD</td>
<td>Inland container depot</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICP</td>
<td>Integrated check post</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICRP</td>
<td>Investment Climate Reform Program</td>
</tr>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and communications technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFC</td>
<td>International Finance Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPPC</td>
<td>International Plant Protection Convention</td>
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<td>IQMS</td>
<td>Import Quality Monitoring Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISO</td>
<td>International Organization for Standardization</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>International Trade Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>JTIP</td>
<td>Jamaica Trade Information Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KVFA</td>
<td>Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCTP</td>
<td>Lao PDR Competitiveness and Trade Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>Least developed country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBS</td>
<td>Malawi Bureau of Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCD</td>
<td>Myanmar Customs Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDT</td>
<td>Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (Tajikistan)</td>
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<td>MITT</td>
<td>Ministry of Industry Trade and Tourism (Fiji)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOC</td>
<td>Ministry of Commerce (Cambodia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOF</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance (Lao PDR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOIT</td>
<td>Ministry of Industry and Trade (Vietnam)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPI</td>
<td>Ministry for Primary Industries (New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR</td>
<td>Mutual recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRA</td>
<td>Malawi Revenue Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAQIA</td>
<td>National Agriculture Quarantine and Inspection Authority</td>
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<td>NRA</td>
<td>National Revenue Authority (Sierra Leone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>National Single Window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTFC</td>
<td>National Trade Facilitation Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBRAs</td>
<td>Other border regulatory agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCO</td>
<td>Oceania Customs Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>OLAP</td>
<td>Online analytical processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLM</td>
<td>Online licensing module</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLTP</td>
<td>Online transactional processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSBPs</td>
<td>One-Stop Border Posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2P</td>
<td>Peer-to-peer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACER Plus</td>
<td>Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAI</td>
<td>State Agriculture Inspectorate (North Macedonia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SATTFP</td>
<td>Southern Africa Trade and Transport Facilitation Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECO</td>
<td>State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIECA</td>
<td>Central American Secretariat of Economic Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOP</td>
<td>Standard operating procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECA</td>
<td>Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>Sanitary and Phytosanitary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STDF</td>
<td>Standards Trade and Development Facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>TACB</td>
<td>Technical assistance and capacity building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBL</td>
<td>Trade Board Limited (Jamaica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFA</td>
<td>Trade Facilitation Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFAF</td>
<td>Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFAWG</td>
<td>TFA Working Group</td>
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<td>TFSP</td>
<td>Trade Facilitation Support Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFTF</td>
<td>National Trade Facilitation Task Force (Jamaica)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIP</td>
<td>Trade Information Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRS</td>
<td>Time Release Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCTAD</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNECE</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIDO</td>
<td>United Nations Industrial Development Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>VTIH</td>
<td>Vietnam Trade Information Portal</td>
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<td>WACP</td>
<td>West Africa Competitiveness Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>WBG</td>
<td>World Bank Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCO</td>
<td>World Customs Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO TFA</td>
<td>World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

This report presents the highlights and progress of the Trade Facilitation Support Program (TFSP) during the period of July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020, in accordance with the fiscal year 2020 (FY20) of the World Bank Group (WBG).

THE PROGRAM

The TFSP was launched in June 2014 to support countries seeking assistance in aligning their trade practices with the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA).

The TFSP’s funding helps countries—particularly developing countries—achieve full and effective implementation of the WTO TFA and related trade facilitation reforms. TFSP funding helps client countries identify existing constraints and bottlenecks to cross-border trade; design and plan for implementation of practical reform strategies; and increase the predictability, transparency, and harmonization of systems and procedures in line with international standards covering import, export, and transit activities. The WBG has also expanded the scope of the activities funded by TFSP in response to the findings of the FY19 program stocktaking exercise by financing, for example, additional trade facilitation and gender work, increased engagement with the private sector, and stronger donor coordination at the country level (see section 1.3 and box 7 for more details on the gender work, box 5 for engagement with the private sector, and section 1.4 and box 9 for more on donor coordination).

Activities funded by the TFSP are implemented by drawing on the unique expertise of both the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), bridging the important roles of the public and private sectors in reforming trade facilitation laws, procedures, processes, and systems to align with the WTO TFA. Activities are also implemented through a whole-of-government approach (see section 1.1 and box 1).

PARTNERS

The TFSP is financed by nine development partners: the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia (DFAT), Global Affairs Canada, the European Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland (SECO), the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID, UK Aid), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The WBG works closely with global and regional partners in delivering joint initiatives and activities to ensure a coordinated and complementary roll-out of technical assistance (see section 1.4 and box 9).

PORTFOLIO

Since 2014, the WBG team has conducted over 50 TFSP-supported TFA gap assessment missions to assess the alignment of a country’s processes and procedures with the WTO TFA, identify gaps in meeting obligations under the WTO TFA, and evaluate whether further technical assistance is warranted. The gap assessments are undertaken based on formal requests by country governments for technical assistance in aligning trade practices to the TFA.

Over the years, the TFSP has financed TFA implementation support to 47 countries, the same number of countries as reported in the previous reporting period. Within the program’s portfolio, 57 percent are International Development Association (IDA) countries, and 15 percent are countries on the WBG’s FY20 list of fragile and conflict-affected situations.

PROGRAM FINANCES

Between the program’s inception in 2014 and the end of this reporting period, USD 46.7 million was received in financial contributions, which equals to 85 percent of overall partner commitments. Cumulative

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2 Based on the World Bank Group’s FY20 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations, these are Burundi, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liberia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste.
disbursements and commitments were at 81 percent at the close of FY20. The disbursement-only rate has increased by 10 percent in recent years, from 66 percent in FY18 to 76 percent in FY20. Despite the outbreak of the pandemic, disbursements under the TFSP were at similar levels in the last quarter of the reporting period as the same quarter of the previous year.

Leverage of TFSP support is achieved either by directly informing World Bank lending and IFC operations or by complementing ongoing operations through support for the trade facilitation components of larger lending and advisory projects (for instance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Costa Rica, Lao PDR, Malawi, and Mongolia). TFSP funds also inform and/or complement bilateral support from developing partners to trade facilitation reforms, for example from the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) in Vanuatu, UK Aid/DFAT in Myanmar, and USAID in Ethiopia.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE REPORTING PERIOD AND RESPONDING TO COVID-19

An enhanced TFA Tracking Tool methodology to monitor progress towards meeting the TFSP’s objective of helping countries improve alignment with the WTO TFA, as well as for countries to monitor and report on their own progress, was finalized with TFSP support during this reporting period. To assess alignment, the methodology takes a whole-of-government approach, and the enhanced methodology additionally allows for a granular review of four border agencies individually. The assessment covers legal/policy aspects, implementation procedures, and operational checks for each measure of the WTO TFA. Granular baseline and updated assessments indicate that TFSP-funded activities have helped improve client countries’ alignment with the WTO TFA. Improvements were recorded along all three dimensions, and the overall alignment score has risen from 41 percent to 51 percent (see section 1.5 for further details).

In this reporting period, the WBG completed the survey data collection portion of the Trade and Gender Surveys in the Pacific Islands region to identify the main challenges cross-border traders face related to trade facilitation at the firm level. Over 1,538 cross-border trading firms, including freight forwarding firms, were interviewed.3 The surveys provide a wealth of new data that will be disseminated broadly to governments, private sector, and civil society in and beyond the surveyed countries. The data will also be used by the WBG to inform the design of future projects in the region.

The WBG was quick to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic including in the implementation of TFSP-supported activities by ramping up the use of virtual modalities and increasing local staffing and consultants. The TFSP Secretariat and trade facilitation experts also produced a series of guidance notes and a video on best practices for border processes and procedures, particularly focused on business continuity and managing risks during the pandemic.4 In addition, support has been provided at the project level based on client requests (see section 1.2 for more information on the COVID-19 related support).

LOOKING FORWARD

In FY21, the WBG will continue to implement ongoing activities and respond to requests for support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the WBG will consider emerging requests for support from new countries through the TFSP. Discussions on possible TFSP support in FY21 are under way with Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Jordan, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Peru, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Uzbekistan, and Zimbabwe. Within the area of knowledge management and learning, TFSP support will focus on promoting the use of the enhanced TFA Tracking Tool among client countries, further rolling out the trade and gender work, and delivering a regional conference (either virtually or in person). In light of the pandemic, the WBG will further pursue innovative and virtual ways to connect with client countries.

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3 Surveyed countries were Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu.

4 Managing risk and facilitation trade during COVID-19 (video); Managing risk and facilitating trade in the COVID-19 pandemic (guidance note); and Trade facilitation best practices implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (guidance note).
Since inception, the TFSP has supported TFA implementation in 47 countries. No new countries were added to the program this reporting period. The share of International Development Association countries remains high at 57 percent of the portfolio, and the share of countries with fragile situations was at 15 percent at the end of the reporting period. Sub-Saharan Africa countries make up the biggest share of the TFSP portfolio (26 percent).

**Figures 1.1 and 1.2** provide details of the portfolio. The country statuses are not static as over the course of the TFSP program, eight countries have moved to higher income categories compared to the income category of which they joined the program. Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Nepal joined the program as low-income but have since moved to the lower-middle income category. In addition, Georgia, Guatemala, Kosovo, and Samoa have moved from lower-middle income to upper-middle income. Panama moved from upper-middle income to the high-income category.

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5 Includes both active and inactive countries to demonstrate cumulative support since the inception of the TFSP.
6 To receive support, countries are expected to have demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing trade facilitation reforms in the areas covered by the WTO TFA. The TFSP prioritizes assistance to countries with limited access to other donor support. Requests for technical assistance can be made directly to the TFSP Secretariat or through the World Bank Group offices and donors.
7 As per the World Bank’s FY20 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations, these are Burundi, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liberia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste.
8 The World Bank assigns economies to four income groups—low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and high. The classifications are updated each year and are based on GNI per capita in current USD. In each country, factors such as economic growth, inflation, exchange rates, and population growth influence GNI per capita.
TFSP support is divided into two main components: (a) technical assistance and (b) knowledge management and learning activities. Program highlights for FY20 are summarized for these two areas in the next sections, including a summary of key areas of engagement and examples of country-level outcomes. Figure 1.4 provides an overview of TFSP support by TFA measure. Annex A provides a summary of key TFSP-supported activities by country.

FIGURE 1.1
Map of 47 Countries Where the Trade Facilitation Support Program Has Provided or Is Providing Multi-Year Implementation Assistance

Note: The countries are Albania, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Burundi, Cambodia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Republic of North Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, St. Lucia, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Vanuatu, Vietnam, and Zambia.

FIGURE 1.2
Regional Breakdown of the Cumulative Trade Facilitation Support Program Portfolio

- Sub-Saharan Africa (AFR) 26%
- Europe and Central Asia (ECA) 23%
- East Asia Pacific (EAP) 21%
- Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) 21%
- South Asia (SAR) 6%
- Middle East and North Africa (MENA) 2%
1.1 Technical Assistance

Cognizant that capacity often varies among border agencies, and these disparities may hinder the ability to make significant coordinated changes, a key tenet of the technical assistance activities supported by the TFSP is the use of a whole-of-government approach. Rather than working with and supporting just the customs authority, the WBG engages with all relevant agencies that exercise border control functions within a country—e.g. customs, standards, sanitary and phytosanitary, food safety, animal health—to improve the efficiency of their respective control functions. More importantly, the WBG seeks to promote capacity, effective joint coordination, communication, cooperation, connection, consistency, and commitment on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues (the “Seven Cs”—see box 1). Improving border processes and procedures requires that every agency is involved and coordinates closely with one another. TFSP funding supports border-wide collaboration in developing solutions and improving capacity so that no key border agency is left behind.

“Trade facilitation is not all about customs. It is also about the other border agencies and the business community coming together and working towards a shared common goal.”

— PARTICIPANT, TFSP EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA (ECA) REGIONAL LEARNING EVENT

**BOX 1**

**The Seven Cs to a Whole-of-Government Approach**

Full and effective implementation of the WTO TFA requires:

1. **Capacity Building:** Designing practical reform strategies, including the development of detailed reform sequencing plans that match with country priorities, available resources, and local implementation capacities.
2. **Coordination:** Coordinating different national border agencies in connection with import, export, or transit processes and procedures.
3. **Communication:** Clearly communicating to ensure a successful reform process, especially on trade reforms where there are many agencies involved in import and export processes. Communicating the benefits and possible savings from reforms minimizes resistance to change.
4. **Cooperation:** Facilitating information exchange between national and regional border agencies as well as private sector stakeholders.
5. **Connection:** Designing and implementing ICT platforms, e.g. Trade Information Portals and Single Windows, that improve transparency and efficiency. Information technology solutions can help make trade processes more consistent and transparent, as well as more efficient.
6. **Consistency:** Consistently applying laws, regulations, and procedures to build trust and promote compliance in the private sector, while enhancing transparency in trade processes.
7. **Commitment:** Obtaining strong political and financial commitment from the highest level of the government to drive the reform process in partnership with private sector stakeholders.

The WBG works with the relevant border agencies, as well as the private sector, to promote the Seven Cs and maximize gains for traders.
Generally, technical assistance activities funded by the TFSP progress along the following building blocks:

**FIGURE 1.3**

**Building Blocks**

- **Validate self-assessments of TFA alignment in client countries**
- **Support countries in finalizing Category A, B, and C commitments**
- **Identify category commitments**
- **Provide support to develop a reform roadmap and timeline for implementation, including validation with all relevant public and private stakeholders**
- **Implement reforms**

TFSP-supported technical assistance can include help with:

- Preparing for ratification of the WTO TFA;
- Scheduling commitments and implementation timelines;
- Revising and validating self-assessments and identifying reform gaps;
- Supporting and strengthening National Trade Facilitation Committees;
- Revising or drafting trade laws and implementing regulations to ensure alignment with the Trade Facilitation Agreement;
- Simplifying, streamlining, and harmonizing trade procedures and documents to reduce time and cost to trade;
- Reviewing and establishing inventories of fees and charges associated with cross-border trade;
- Improving transparency and accountability measures related to trade practices;
- Establishing and publishing average release times;
- Fostering partnerships between the public and private sectors to catalyze trade;
- Facilitating reforms through intense engagement and lobbying;
- Integrating risk-based management systems and other contemporary border management approaches into border inspections and clearance processes;
- Revising inter-agency coordination and design of institutional capacity building plans;
- Implementing policies and practices and supporting regional solutions to facilitate the recognition of agreed-upon standards for goods crossing borders;
- Designing and implementing automated systems and innovative technologies to facilitate trade; and
- Implementing regional and external border agency coordination, collaboration, and cooperation.
FIGURE 1.4
TFSP Support by TFA Measure

Number of countries supported

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Countries Supported</th>
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<td>1.1 Publication</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Information available through internet</td>
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<td>1.3 Enquiry points</td>
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<td>1.4 Notification</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Opportunity to comment and information before entry into force</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Consultations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Advance rulings</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Procedures for appeal and review</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1 Notifications for enhanced controls or inspections</td>
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<td>5.2 Detention</td>
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<td>5.3 Test procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.1 General disciplines on fees and charges imposed on or in connection with importation and exportation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Specific disciplines on fees and charges for customs processing imposed on or in connection with importation and exportation</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3 Penalty disciplines</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7.1 Pre-arrival processing</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.2 Electronic payment</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.3 Separation of release from final determination of customs duties, taxes, fees and charges</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.4 Risk management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7.5 Post-clearance audit</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.6 Establishment and publication of average release times</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7 Trade facilitation measures for Authorized Operators</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8 Expedited shipments</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9 Perishable goods</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 1.4 (CONTINUED)
TFSP Support by TFA Measure

- **Border agency cooperation**
- **Movement of goods under customs control**
- **Formalities and documentation requirements**
- **Acceptance of copies**
- **Use of international standards**
- **Single window**
- **Pre-shipment inspection**
- **Use of customs brokers**
- **Common border procedures and uniform documentation requirements**
- **Rejected goods**
- **Temporary admission of goods and inward and outward processing**
- **Freedom of transit**
- **Measures promoting compliance and cooperation**
- **Exchange of information**
- **Verification**
- **Request**
- **Protection and confidentiality**
- **Provision of information**
- **Postponement or refusal of a request**
- **Reciprocity**
- **Administrative burden**
- **Limitations**
- **Unauthorized use or disclosure**
- **Bilateral and regional agreements**
- **National committee on trade facilitation**
Examples of TFSP-supported work include:

- Support to National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFC) is a critical element of TFSP-supported assistance. NTFCs are important platforms for institutional coordination and consultation with stakeholders through broad and active participation from both private and public sector representatives. They enable planning and ultimately foster coordinated implementation of successful trade facilitation reforms. Since inception, the TFSP has provided support to 31 countries in the establishment and/or operation of NTFCs (Albania, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Eswatini, Fiji, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Serbia, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, and Zambia) (see box 2).

- Trade Information Portals are electronic portals that make all cross-border trade information, such as regulatory information, easily available. The TFSP has facilitated the establishment and design, or has assisted in the implementation, of eight portals (Bangladesh, Botswana, Cambodia, Jamaica, Lesotho, Malawi, Vietnam, and Zambia).

- Time Release Study (TRS) is a unique tool for measuring the performance of customs and other border agencies related to trade facilitation at the border. The TFSP has assisted in completing TRSs in 13 countries (Albania, Bangladesh, Eswatini, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, Mongolia, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Vietnam, and Zambia).

- The TFSP has provided support for the ratification of the WTO TFA. In this reporting period, one country submitted the instrument of acceptance (Vanuatu) with support from the TFSP.

- Several countries made progress in their TFA notifications to the World Trade Organization (WTO). The TFSP supported six TFSP countries in preparing, finalizing, and/or notifying the WTO of their Category B and C timelines in this reporting period (Fiji, Lesotho, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Vanuatu).

- The application of risk management is a critical element that underpins all modern cross-border administrations and agencies. The TFSP supports improvements in risk management practices and has supported 30 countries in the establishment of risk management frameworks (Albania, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, North Macedonia, Malawi, Moldova, Montenegro, Nepal, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Serbia, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, and Zambia).

**BOX 2**

National Trade Facilitation Committee Capacity Building

The TFSP is engaged in capacity building efforts to enhance the function of NTFCs in various countries. A few examples of capacity building efforts in this reporting period include:

- Developing strong Terms of Reference for the NTFC [such as in Bolivia and Liberia]
- Training the NTFC on the use of newly implemented mechanisms like the Trade Information Portal [such as in Mongolia]
- Providing advisory assistance to the NTFC on the development of action plans for its working groups [such as in Serbia]
- Providing support to the NTFC in operationalization of subcommittees [such as in Malawi and Sierra Leone]
- Leading peer-to-peer events wherein each country prepared action plans to brief their respective NTFCs after the event [such as for the Pacific Islands]

With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the TFSP also provided support for COVID-19 response by:

- Helping the NTFC provide routers to enable remote connectivity [such as in Malawi]
The Authorized Operator (AO) scheme indicates that a company is compliant with requirements specified in a country’s trade laws, regulations, or procedures and therefore may benefit from additional trade facilitation measures related to import, export, or transit formalities and procedures. The full operationalization of the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) program in Kosovo in this reporting period has allowed companies to save time and costs (see box 3).9 The TFSP has supported 11 countries in the design of the AO schemes (Albania, Bangladesh, Burundi, Eswatini, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan).

Nine countries have also received support in preparation for implementation of Single Windows (Eswatini, Kosovo, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sri Lanka, Vanuatu, and Zambia). Early preparation for Single Window implementation was also provided to Ethiopia.

Box 4 provides examples of improvements that have resulted from TFSP-financed activities. Box 5 elaborates on the TFSP-funded efforts to help the private sector and small and medium-sized enterprises, which was an area of emphasis highlighted in the TFSP’s midterm review in FY19.

“Before, the clearance process could take up to 24 hours or more. Now we have more control and can turn a truck around in less than three hours. All goods can be cleared during our regular operating hours. In the past, we relied on the working hours of the inland terminal, customs, and the trucking company.”

— ZGJIM MITA, DIRECTOR OF AUTO MITA, KOSOVO’S LEADING CAR DEALERSHIP

9 See footnote 1.
TFSP-funded interventions have produced tangible results for importers and exporters in client countries. Here is a selection of results achieved:

In the Caribbean, TFSP support to other regulatory border agencies in Jamaica, Grenada, and St. Lucia, support on risk profiles, support for rolling out a Trade Logistics Tool in St. Lucia and Grenada’s Bureaus of Standards to facilitate electronic connection and data exchange with customs, as well as on the elimination of import/export licenses and associated fees for certain goods has generated a total of USD 5.7 million in savings for the private sector (see annex A for more details on the reforms that led to these savings).

In Serbia, the TFSP supported the customs administration with design and maintenance of the new-user friendly information technology (IT) application, which enables a more efficient management of business processes related to the origin of goods. Additionally, two new web-based electronic services enable traders to submit requests for advance rulings and to apply for the rules of origin examination online. This reform resulted in a 34 percent reduction in processing times from receiving requests for post-clearance verification of origin and responses to foreign customs administrations. The average time needed for the submission of an application or request has been reduced by 86 percent, and the costs have been abolished (from 2,983 RSD to 0). In a recent survey, over 66 percent of potential approved exporters reported that the new electronic services will have a positive impact on their trade.

In South Asia, TFSP supported Nepal and Bangladesh in a variety of areas, including implementation of an Online Licensing Module (OLM) in Bangladesh and improving risk management at the Biratnagar and Birgunj border crossing posts. Total savings stemming from TFSP support for the private sector is around USD 1 million. (see annex A for more details on specific activities in South Asia).

In Timor-Leste, TFSP support to simplify customs processes has reduced import time from 15.06 to 6.54 days and generated USD 5.5 million in savings for the private sector (see annex A for more details on the reforms that generated this saving).

Additionally, there are several countries where savings are expected to occur from TFSP-supported reforms. For example, the adoption of the five-border agency model (a reduction from 14 border agencies) in Malawi is expected to enhance efficiency and coordination at border posts, leading to a reduction in time and cost to trade across Malawi’s borders. In El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, the introduction of Central American Single Invoice and Declaration (FYDUCA) and air cargo improvements with TFSP support has eliminated direct fees associated with the handling of hard copies and indirect fees associated with transportation to submit documents in person. The reduction of the list of prohibited and restricted import items by 193 items in Cambodia is expected to result in a significant reduction in trade costs. The piloting of coordinated border management at the Maseru border post in Lesotho is expected to lead to faster clearance times. The enactment of a modernized Customs Code in Liberia will make import and export processes and procedures more cost-efficient, predictable, and transparent.

“Working with the World Bank Group on simplified procedures and the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) scheme, we have developed and implemented measures that minimize the costs, documentation requirements, and the time necessary for the trade community to complete customs formalities.”

— SNEZANA VUCKOVIC, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION OF MONTENEGRO
BOX 5
Soliciting and Integrating the Private Sector’s Perspective

The private sector plays a crucial role in the effective development of trade facilitation improvements because buy-in from the private sector helps to promote viable and sustainable trade facilitation reforms. With this in mind, the TFSP actively promotes engagement with private sector entities—either directly, through the NTFC, or industry associations—to gather feedback from all relevant stakeholders in order to deliver robust support.

For example:

- In El Salvador, the team met with various air cargo companies to solicit their feedback and recommendations to be shared with government authorities regarding cargo-related reforms to address causes of delays. The TFSP-supported team will follow up with authorities regarding these recommendations.

- In Kosovo, the TFSP endeavors to ensure that there is gender-balanced participation in its project events/activities in the country. The average ratio of participants is 2:3 women/men in TFSP-supported activities such as training and workshops. In addition, during this reporting period, the team directly engaged with two medium-sized AO companies, who have been certified by customs as trusted traders, to analyze the impact of the program on the reduction of time and costs of their import/export processes.

- In Malawi, the team engaged directly with private sector participants through their association representatives in the NTFC, including transport operators, clearing/forwarding agents, manufacturers, and cross-border traders associations. It also engaged with private sector participants, particularly from the ICT sector in the technical working group of the National Single Window, where their insights were important for the design and future implementation of the system.

- In Sierra Leone, the TFSP supported roundtables with the private sector through their representatives in the NTFC to understand the challenges and issues that affect their input into the reform implementation process and the level of awareness in the business community on the pending reforms and business preparedness. The team has included capacity building activities in the strategic action plan specifically for the private sector to address some of the challenges raised by them.

- In Zambia, the TFSP supported virtual engagement with the private sector to understand the issues faced because of COVID-19. Freight forwarding companies were able to provide information on the ongoing situation at the border (see section 1.2 for more on the support provided to Zambia on COVID-19 response).
1.2 COVID-19 Response

Support to trade facilitation is more critical than ever and features frequently in the WBG responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Improving border processes and procedures to enable safe and fast flow of perishable food commodities, medical and personal protection equipment, and cargoes is essential to limit the negative impacts of the pandemic on human health, jobs, and the economy. The WBG provided rapid response and assistance to countries to address COVID-19 specific challenges. Below is a summary of select COVID-19 specific responses that the program provided through both the global and country specific windows.

**TFSP activities maintained business continuity.** In this effort, the WBG teams quickly adapted their work programs to virtual modalities (e.g., increasing the use of online meetings and trainings) and increasing local staffing while also providing support to clients to access resources on the internet.

**In Kosovo**, coordination with local counterparts allowed planned TFSP-supported activities to be modified to adapt to the new operating environment under the COVID-19 pandemic. The WBG team was able to continue with sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) risk-management training for inspectors through online modules and provide online legal assistance to customs in modifying and upgrading the AEO Administrative Instruction that is in line with the European Union Customs Code (EUCC).

**In Malawi**, the TFSP supported the government to procure MiFi Routers (wireless access over a mobile device), especially for the NTFC. These are expected to assist the committee to host its first virtual meetings. The WBG team is also in the process of enabling remote connectivity for government officials that participate in working groups on key project activities such as the National Single Window, coordinated border management, and risk management.

**In Vanuatu**, the WBG and Vanuatu officials developed a remote video conferencing assistance schedule, which commenced in April 2020 and was planned to continue through 2020. This assistance is aimed at helping Vanuatu to develop a new border risk management program, specifically to advance the development of their risk-based procedures for imports and exports, and to provide assistance with the implementation of automation systems for trade in plant products (Single Window and/or electronic phytosanitary certificate [ePhyto] systems).

(Tables continues on next page)
The TFSP supported project-level assistance and guidance to keep trade flowing in the immediate term.

In Fiji, just as the first COVID-19 case was reported in the country, the TFSP supported the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) in releasing the “COVID-19 Response Budget and Revenue Policies” paper to provide details of arrangements to assist with the border clearance process during the pandemic. In addition, the TFSP-supported WBG team and the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) developed the “Remote Assistance Workplan”, which focuses on assisting BAF to implement ePhyto, developing an improved border risk management program, and scoping Fiji’s requirements for “Secondary Testing Arrangements” as outlined by the WTO TFA.

In Lesotho, the WBG team expedited the update and revamp of the Lesotho Trade Information Portal to allow for timely dissemination of trade-related information. In addition, the NTFC Secretariat, supported by the WBG team, delivered a session to NTFC members on how to expand their mandate, scope, institutional framework, and composition in response to COVID-19.

In Malawi, the TFSP also supported the Malawi Revenue Authority (MRA) with implementation of a risk management program on expedited release and clearance of COVID-19 response imports. The WBG team provided the proposed plan for implementation and the consolidated list of COVID-19 products and institutions to receive expedited treatment. In addition, support is ongoing to channel such imports through a fast-tracked lane in the MRA’s ASYCUDA World (AW) customs processing system.

In Papua New Guinea (PNG), the WBG team provided advice on which TFA articles the government could implement immediately to bring short wins for PNG to assist in improving the COVID-19 trade response.

In Serbia, the TFSP has provided support to Serbian Customs to further automate customs processes, specifically with the development of tools to electronically issue and sign the EUR.1 movement certificates on origin of goods, and to enable the online verification and authenticity of movement certificates.

In Eswatini, Lesotho, and Zambia, the TFSP supported the production of two reports in response to COVID-19: (i) the “Trade and Border Management: Action Plan to respond to COVID-19” to provide practical guidance on coordination structures, actions and activities, and particular measures to support business continuity, protection of front-line officers, and to facilitate safe cross-border trade for essential food, health and safety equipment, and medicines and (ii) the “Coordinated Border Management Report” to improve collaboration between border agencies and the private sector with the objective of moving and clearing goods faster and more cheaply.

In Liberia, the WBG team continued to engage with the government to maintain focus on the project. This has situated the team to be able to better respond to the challenges in the post-COVID-19 environment, especially by utilizing the provisions in the modernized Customs Code to help facilitate trade. For instance, the government has prioritized the implementing regulations and has identified the new regulation on valuation as priorities for implementation.

In Sierra Leone, the TFSP supported continued engagement with the government on project activities and positioned the project to be able to accelerate delivery to respond to post-COVID-19 recovery challenges. Specifically, the WBG team will focus on supporting streamlining of customs procedures and harmonization with other border agencies procedures; strengthening existing automation systems via ASYCUDA World; and enhancing digitalization of border operations to maintain balance between health and well-being and economic recovery.

The TFSP also mobilized a forward-looking view towards recovery.

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The TFSP also mobilized a forward-looking view towards recovery.
The WBG prepared two guidance notes “Managing Risk and Facilitating Trade in the COVID-19 Pandemic” and “Trade Facilitation Best Practices Implemented in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic,” which provide tangible measures and best practices that governments can implement to ensure business continuity and facilitate safe cross-border trade. The guidance notes were widely disseminated among client governments and on WBG websites. In addition, the team prepared a video titled “Managing Risk and Facilitating Trade during COVID-19” to provide additional guidance on mitigating shock and boosting recovery. The video was well-received and can be viewed on this webpage (https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2020/06/22/managing-risk-and-facilitating-trade-during-covid-19).

At the request of the Central American Secretariat of Economic Integration (SIECA) and the Regional Customs Committee, the WBG prepared and delivered a document called “Recomendaciones sobre mejores prácticas en facilitación de comercio para Centroamérica como resultado de covid-19”. The document contains a list of measures implemented by governments in Central America and describes the main obstacles that the pandemic has created for the private sector. It also includes examples of best practices adopted by governments outside of Central America and recommendations to facilitate trade during and after the crisis.

TFSP-supported SPS experts started developing a guide and a set of virtual training sessions on risk management in SPS agencies. The guide will be made widely available to SPS agencies in the ECA region.

The TFSP promoted the regional Green Corridors Initiative—a special cross-border regime in the Western Balkans enabling the unimpeded flow of essential goods at select border crossings that was set up on April 14, 2020. Green corridors represent a system of border crossings under a special regime, at which customs and other procedures are accelerated and automatic pre-arrival information is shared with border agencies for essential priority goods. Border crossings in this regime are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
1.3 Knowledge Management and Learning Activities

The TFSP supports knowledge management activities that aim to create knowledge, facilitate knowledge sharing, support peer-to-peer learning, and assist WBG teams and client countries in measuring activity progress and results.

Participation in events, workshops, and conferences that focus on trade facilitation and peer-to-peer learning is key for TFSP visibility and for the team to stay engaged at the forefront of the TFA agenda.

Examples of major events delivered in this period, including one virtually, are:

- First, the WBG team prepared for a robust schedule of activities at and around the Aid for Trade Global Review 2019 that took place from July 3-5 at the WTO in Geneva. The WBG team co-hosted a Peer-to-Peer event on July 2 to provide an opportunity for client countries to share experiences on the following topics: the legislative changes required to implement the TFA, enquiry points, and measuring the success of TFA implementation. The WBG team also made presentations at several sessions and co-hosted “Facilitation Feud”—a game quizzing contestants on the Trade Facilitation Agreement based on a survey with answers collected from trade experts. The TFSP Secretariat operated an informational booth through the duration of the three-day event and showcased the virtual reality films that were produced to highlight the impact of TFSP support in Guatemala and Honduras as well as in Sierra Leone (see box 8 for more information on the Sierra Leone virtual reality film). The team also contributed to the Aid for Trade at a Glance 2019 publication by authoring the chapter on “The critical role of trade facilitation in supporting economic diversification and structural reforms”.

- The TFSP supported a workshop with North Macedonia Customs and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in Skopje in September 2019 on the best practices related to the development and implementation of a National Single Window. During the two-day workshop, participants (including high-level officials of the customs authorities of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) countries, UNECE, the European Commission, and the World Bank Group) discussed the results of the UNECE’s long-term projects focusing on trade facilitation and the Single Window system in the region. See annex B for more information on this workshop.

- With the spread of COVID-19, the WBG had to limit in-person engagements in the second half of the reporting period. However, that has not stopped implementation of the TFSP-funded activities as the WBG continued providing support to its client countries by pivoting to virtual meetings and engagements (see box 6).

Annex B has a list of other global, regional, and country-level events that the WBG organized or presented at during the reporting period with support from TFSP.

BOX 6
Virtual Conference

Together with Serbia’s private sector association, AmCham, the TFSP supported the “Green Corridors—the path to faster foreign trade” virtual panel discussion and online conference in June 2020. The meeting’s objective was to facilitate discussions with the private sector, the NTFC, customs, the Ministry of Transport, and phytosanitary and veterinary inspection agencies on the Green Corridors initiative in CEFTA to streamline trade in the Western Balkans region. More than 30 companies participated in the event.

Based on the success of this virtual conference, the TFSP will support the planning and delivery of virtual events in order to convene partners and counterparts in light of the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to limit the ability to travel.
The TFSP continued supporting the work on gender and trade facilitation. To date, the trade and gender survey has been rolled out in five countries in the Pacific region (Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, PNG, and Timor-Leste) to identify specific challenges that men and women cross-border traders and freight forwarders at the firm-level face, particularly as it relates to trade facilitation. The survey was piloted in Fiji at the end of the previous reporting period, and the final report with recommendations was published in January 2020 after it was presented to the government of Fiji and Heads of Customs across the Pacific at the Oceania Customs Organization (OCO) Customs Change Management and Gender Equality Workshop (see box 7 for a summary of key findings and survey results). Between February-April 2020, the survey was rolled out in Vanuatu, Samoa, Timor-Leste, and PNG. Reports for those four countries, as well as a comparative regional report, are expected to be finalized and disseminated in the next reporting period.

“Trade facilitation is important for female traders. Promoting gender equality is key for implementing reforms to increase private investment.”

— MERE SAMISONI, OWNER OF HOT BREAD KITCHEN, FIJI

**BOX 7**

**Trade and Gender Survey in Fiji & Initial Findings**

To help fill the data gap on how trade facilitation interventions impact traders by gender at the firm level and in an effort to better inform future trade policy design and implementation, the WBG—through TFSP—piloted the Trade and Gender survey in Fiji in FY19, and the final report was published this reporting period. The following highlights the key findings and recommendations from the Fiji report.

A total of 529 traders and 42 freight forwarders working with different sized firms and sectors were interviewed in Fiji. The survey found that women-led firms are highly underrepresented and accounted for only 10 percent of the 4,702 active cross-border trading firms in the country. Additionally, women traders bear a greater burden of double duty (i.e. having to balance work and home responsibilities such as child and elder care) than their male counterparts, with 17 percent of women traders spending more than 5 hours per day compared to only 2 percent of men spending the same amount time on family care obligations.

**Key trade facilitation-specific findings** showed that of the surveyed traders:

- A higher percentage of men traders (45 percent) compared to women traders (28 percent) find official regulations and procedures to be consistently implemented by border officials.
- Women traders find it more difficult to understand official regulations and procedures than men traders.
- Over 90 percent of women and almost 80 percent of men traders say they are not or do not know if their business is regularly consulted on changes to official trade processes and procedures.

(Box continues on next page)
**BOX 7 (CONTINUED)**

- Fewer women (64 percent) than men (85 percent) traders pre-declare shipments.
- Almost half of the surveyed traders do not know if formal grievance procedures exist.
- All seven AOs in Fiji are large, male-led firms.
- Only about 15 percent of men and women traders report that fees can be paid electronically all the time. In addition, 38 percent of women traders reportedly prefer to pay official fees in cash in comparison to 13 percent of men traders.

**Key recommendations** based on survey findings:

- Access to information is a key obstacle to both men and women traders and freight forwarders. Improving access to and the quality of information on border-related processes and procedures as well as ensuring information is disseminated through a wider range of channels (media, trade/industry associations, consultations mechanisms) can mitigate the problem.

- The large majority of traders and, to a lesser extent, freight forwarders are unaware of the NTFC’s existence, resulting in a weaker committee and a less inclusive platform for dialogue. Efforts should be made to strengthen and formalize the role of the NTFC as well as traders’ knowledge of and participation in the Committee through strategic communication campaigns. It would also be beneficial to promote more female representation in the NTFC.

- The survey highlights that traders have a lack of knowledge of and confidence in the existing formal grievance procedures. It is imperative that the government is responsive to the concerns of the private sector and makes formal grievance procedures widely known to all traders, and women traders in particular.

- Given the relatively low percentage of traders, in particular women traders, that either pre-declare or know whether they can pre-declare, it would be beneficial for the government of Fiji to improve communication around pre-declaration practices—including by making requirements clearer and information more accessible.

- The government should expand the AO scheme, including to women traders, by enhancing communication about the program and AO qualification requirements.

- Only a small share of men and women traders in Fiji report that fees can be paid online all the time. Improving online payments will not just save time for the traders, it also allows officials at the border to focus more closely on enforcement issues, minimizing fraudulent behavior.

This is the first report of its series in the Pacific region, and four additional country reports (Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu) and a comprehensive regional report will be released in the next reporting year. The reports are coupled with extensive communications efforts to disseminate key findings to public and private stakeholders across and beyond the region.

The web portal of the enhanced TFA Tracking Tool was launched for client countries in the reporting period. All countries with validated assessments not only have whole-of-government "alignment scores" to assess their level of full and effective implementation for each measure of the WTO TFA, alignment scores are now also captured granularly by four proxy agencies individually [see section 1.5 for more details]. During the reporting period, there were 234 new visitors to the website compared to 104 new visitors in FY19. Only designated and approved users can see the country scores, and each country’s NTFC or equivalent assigns specific representatives to access their respective country profiles on website. Most client users were from the ECA region. Section 1.5 provides more details on the Tracking Tool methodology along with a summary of alignment scores for the TFSP-supported countries.

Finally, based on the great success of the virtual reality film focused on the border between Guatemala and Honduras that was produced in the previous reporting period, the WBG team produced a second virtual reality film in Sierra Leone (see box 8).

1.4 Working in Partnerships

Partnerships are essential for the optimal delivery of the program and a coordinated roll-out of technical assistance in participating countries. Over the past years, with support from the TFSP, the WBG has delivered multiple workshops, undertaken missions, and worked on knowledge products and technical assistance jointly with the following organizations:

- World Trade Organization: Partnership on multiple fronts, including annex D, knowledge management activities and peer to peer events, and an advance course for NTFC chairs in multiple regions

- International Trade Center (ITC): Joint activities in Sri Lanka and in Jamaica and other Caribbean countries

- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD): Joint missions to Guatemala, Jamaica, and others

We used to face big challenges during the export process. There would be long delays at the port. Our trucks would arrive before midnight and could be stuck in queue for hours, even days. The documentation process was so complicated.”

— ABDULAI BANGURA, SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGER, SIERRA AGRA

10 The Tracking Tool assess alignment across 37 technical measures. The TFA Tracking Tool is not intended to be a ranking exercise. To preserve confidentiality, country-specific alignment scores can only be viewed by designated and vetted users of each client country represented on the website. The general public is able to view overall scores as well as other non-sensitive information.

11 “New visitors” is the number of first-time website visitors for each respective reporting period timeframe.

12 The Annex D + group is comprised of the following organizations: IMF, ITC, OECD, UNCTAD, UNECE, World Bank, World Customs Organization.
Liberia, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Suriname; joint regional NTFC event in Ethiopia and global NTFC event in Geneva

- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe: Participation in TFA workshops in Tajikistan, Ukraine, and North Macedonia and participation in United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) forums
- Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC), UNCTAD, and the World Customs Organization (WCO): Joint missions to Bangladesh, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Tajikistan; Tonga on TRS
- United States Agency for International Development: Joint TFA assessments in Bangladesh, Moldova, Montenegro, and Serbia and participation in TFA workshops in Central America. Upcoming joint activities in Ghana and Zambia
- TradeMark East Africa: Burundi assessment
- Enhanced Integrated Framework: Partnership with the European Commission in Cabo Verde, Myanmar, and Vanuatu
- International Air Transport Association: Partnership in Central America for air cargo, expedited shipments
- World Customs Organization: Joint activities in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, and in the Western Balkans, Tonga

Box 9 provides select examples of how the TFSP works in partnership with other donors at the country level.

**BOX 9**

**Donor Coordination and Collaboration**

The WBG recognizes the importance of coordinated development assistance to increase aid effectiveness, avoid duplication of work, and minimize client fatigue. For example,

In Madagascar, TFSP has supported the NTFC in mapping the positioning of the Committee against fellow donor engagements on its activities. Using this map, the NTFC was then better positioned at coordinating and engaging with other donors on priority activities. For example, proper outlining of activities provided a proper scope of intervention for the African Development Bank to then provide support as the NTFC’s technical and financial partner on priority activities such as the Trade Information Portal and on border risk management.

With TFSP support, WBG country teams regularly conduct information sharing meetings with other donor agencies on the ground to facilitate transparency and understanding of commonalities and differences in their activities.

- In Malawi, the WBG team is actively engaging with development partners, TradeMark East Africa (who is planning to enter the space) and DFID, to ensure work programs are streamlined and leveraged to maximize impact.
- In ECA, the TFSP-supported work is closely aligned with the regional USAID and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) projects.
- In collaboration with the European Union (EU) and DFID, the WBG through TFSP support established the Private Sector Development Donor Group (PSDDG) in Zambia four years ago. The PSDDG is composed of about 16 partners with the objective of sharing and updating each other of our programs, exploring the possibility of collaboration, and preventing duplication of programs. PSDDG occasionally engages the private sector and government to obtain an understanding of new challenges and opportunities, which influences the design of new programs.

WBG teams also monitor opportunities for complementary work with other development agencies. In Sierra Leone, for example, the team facilitated meetings with donors and development partners supporting private sector growth to discuss coordination of initiatives, including joint implementation of the Time Release Study with the WCO and capacity building for customs officials; DFID’s newly funded “Invest Salone” program with a component on improving port systems; and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) on possible establishment and operations of trade enquiry point(s) under the EU-funded West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACP), and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) on capacity building for the customs department.
1.5 Progress in Improving WTO TFA Alignment

With the development of the granular TFA Tracking Tool methodology and website, the WBG is better positioned to demonstrate and monitor progress towards the TFSP’s objective of helping countries improve alignment with the WTO TFA. The tool also provides countries with a comprehensive data set of their individual alignment with the TFA, which will inform the design of an appropriate reform program and allow tracking of progress in a results-based manner. The TFA Tracking Tool helps demonstrate changes in TFA alignment over the following three dimensions:

(a) The legal/policy dimension measures the extent to which legal or administrative measures are in place that establish policies consistent with the TFA.

(b) The implementing procedures dimension determines whether procedures consistent with the TFA have been developed to give effect to relevant policy prescriptions.

(c) The operational check category measures the extent to which policies and procedures consistent with the TFA are applied in practice.

The TFA Tracking Tool takes two approaches to measure alignment with the WTO TFA:

(i) A whole-of-government approach, which was developed in a prior reporting period, is utilized to evaluate a country as a whole, which means that all agencies relevant to the particular trade facilitation measure should be aligned with the TFA’s requirements in order for a country to receive full credit. For implementation to remain manageable, four agencies are defined per country as a proxy for the whole-of-government: [a] customs; [b] agency responsible for plant protection and quarantine; [c] agency responsible for Standards; and [d] agency responsible for food safety and/or animal health.

(ii) The new granular approach to the TFA Tracking Tool methodology that was finalized in this reporting period allows for a further breakdown of scores by each of the aforementioned proxy agencies, which enhances the ability to track progress by each specific agency over time. The enhanced TFA Tracking Tool website was also launched in May 2020 to integrate the granular aspects of the methodology into the alignment score visualizations.

With the transition from the standard methodology to the new granular methodology of assessment and measurement, some country scores were either adjusted upward or downward based on the new scoring criteria. By the end of the reporting period, baselines for 30 countries in the TFSP portfolio had been validated, and more are in the process of being validated. The measurements behind those baseline scores were undertaken between 2015 and 2018. Baseline scores for 21 TFSP-supported countries have also been updated by the WBG, demonstrating an improvement in their overall alignment with the WTO TFA from 41 percent alignment in the baseline scores to 51 percent in the FY20 updates. The overall alignment score for this reporting period is based on (1) country scores reported via the granular method, and (2) the addition of Albania, Bangladesh, and Eswatini into the basket of countries—with both baselines and updates—used for the calculation of the overall alignment score. Figures 1.5–1.7 show further breakdowns of the changes in baseline and updated scores.

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13 The percentage improvement may increase or decrease between reporting periods subject to additional countries being included in future calculations. For example, the baseline score reported in FY19 was 44 percent, given that other (fewer) countries were included in the calculations.

14 The 21 countries included in the end of FY20 calculations are Albania, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Eswatini, Fiji, Guatemala, Honduras, Kosovo, Liberia, Montenegro, Nepal, Nicaragua, Panama, Republic of North Macedonia, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Serbia, and Vanuatu.
FIGURE 1.5
Overall Alignment by Measure

Note: Baselines are 2015–18; updates are 2018–20
FIGURE 1.6
Changes in Overall Dimension Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Baselines</th>
<th>Updates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal/policy</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational check</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing procedures</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Baselines are 2015–18; updates are 2018-20.

FIGURE 1.7
Changes in Alignment to Trade Facilitation Agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alignment Status</th>
<th>Baselines</th>
<th>Updates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not aligned</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially aligned</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially aligned</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully aligned</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The figure shows the proportion of the 37 TFA measures that are either not aligned, partially aligned, substantially aligned, or fully aligned among the 21 countries with baseline and update scores. The objective is for the proportion of “not aligned” measures to decrease while the proportion of “partially,” “substantially,” and ultimately “fully aligned” measures to increase as assessments are updated. A score between 0-33 percent is categorized as “not aligned”. A score between 34-66 percent is categorized as “partially aligned”. A score of 67-99 percent is categorized as “substantially aligned”. A score of 100 percent is categorized as “fully aligned”. Baselines are 2015–18; updates are 2018-20.
1.6 SUSTAINABLE REFORMS

The TFSP supports interventions that will create and maintain the momentum necessary for reforms. In other words, the TFSP provides support to sustainable reforms that continue to generate results and gains for stakeholders after project closure. For example,

**Central America**

SIECA requested support to develop a data cube and calculation methodology to collect data to monitor time trade performance across the region. An online analytical processing (OLAP) cube was developed by the WBG with TFSP support, and it has been in use by SIECA since March 2019. In addition, members of SIECA have been trained to use tool and to create new data cubes using other data sources from their own systems. This has resulted in the longer-term ability of SIECA members to create and/or update their data cubes own their own, fostering self-sufficiency in this process.

**Fiji**

During early phases of TFSP support, the initial approach was focused on removing dual processes within BAF, FRCS, and Ministry of Health by eliminating the requirement for industry to physically lodge paper documents while also having to upload the same data/information electronically into government systems. Although the initiative started as a trial within cargo reporting processes (i.e. cargo manifests), agencies have acknowledged the benefits to accepting other electronic documents in the future. Gaining this early buy-in is critical to implementing further reforms in this area. This mindset was demonstrated by BAF’s implementation of a COVID-19 plan that includes acceptance of electronic paperwork in other cargo clearance processes. BAF and the Ministry of Health now have permanent access to the FRCS ASYCUDA system for screening manifests and cargo clearance documents, and staff have been trained and provided ongoing access. FRCS has also taken a lead role in sharing successes and lessons learned from this reform within the region.

**Kosovo**

The WBG supported customs in drafting, reviewing, and finalizing the legal basis for Kosovo’s AEO program. The legal provisions are now in place, the customs officers are trained, and a review committee has been established to handle applications. With TFSP support, the WBG has built capacity within customs to continue operations after project closure.
Malawi

The WBG team utilizes a hands-on approach to capacity building. Through this, it has witnessed client counterparts taking ownership of the processes. For example, the project made recommendations for enhanced risk management at the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS). The recommendations were then incorporated by MBS officers as they compiled and adopted a Risk Management Policy for the Import Quality Monitoring Scheme (IQMS) and a risk management plan. These documents were consolidated by the MBS on its own, but it drew heavily on the recommendations made by the team. Timelines were also set by the institution on its own. This ownership of the process is going to ensure sustainability in implementation of the program. In addition, based on the recommendation to increase coordination between MBS and MRA, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Operational Cooperation between the two institutions was signed, setting out a framework for their joint work and ensuring that the two institutions continue to coordinate beyond the life of TFSP support.

Mongolia

The Trade Information Portal (TIP) and TRS are in the very early stages. Nonetheless, the TFSP-funded project takes a forward-looking view toward sustainability by planning to provide training to the government officials on future TRS data collection, undertaking analysis, and measuring impact of reforms. On the TIP, training will be provided to relevant government officials on managing the portal and refreshing the data.

North Macedonia

Since fall of 2018, the State Agriculture Inspectorate (SAI) and the WBG have worked together on the development of a framework for a risk-based approach to border controls for products under the jurisdiction of the SAI. This includes guiding documents for agency inspectors—risk classification of commodities, inspection plan, training plan, and internal surveillance, with an emphasis on compliance through more deliberate outreach to the business community. By helping to develop training and internal monitoring plans, the TFSP supports future capacity and critical monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the reforms continue to run smoothly in the long term.

Zambia

The NTFC, through which the TFSP supports transfer of knowledge and skills, is a key body for the coordination, planning, and implementation of trade facilitation reforms and will continue to serve this role after TFSP supported has completed. In addition, the TFSP supports legal, regulatory, and policy changes that embed the reforms into the institutional mandates of the agencies it provides assistance.
2.1 Program Administration

The administration of the TFSP sits at the intersection of the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation, reflecting the importance of both institutions to improving trade processes and procedures. Global experts on trade and public and private sector development from both institutions work on the TFSP-supported interventions, together with field-based staff, and they are complemented by consultants worldwide.

2.2 Donor Engagement

There was active engagement throughout the year with all donors of the TFSP. Two TFSP Consultative Committee meetings were held: the first meeting took place in July 2019, in connection with 2019 Global Aid for Trade Review in Geneva, Switzerland, and another meeting took place in January 2020 in connection with the Development Partners Forum in Washington, D.C. The semi-annual consultations provide development partners with updates on the progress of the program and with the opportunity to discuss the strategic direction of the TFSP. As the pandemic unfolded in the second half of the reporting period, the Secretariat made a strong effort to keep its partners informed of the possible impact on the program. Details of the status and efforts undertaken to address the impact was communicated to the partners, including links to outputs produced to help client countries address border management processes related to the pandemic.
2.3 Communications and Outreach

Communications is an important element of the TFSP and focuses on:

- Raising awareness of program activities, results, and effects
- Increasing the visibility of the program and donor partners
- Disseminating useful trade facilitation material to stakeholders

During the reporting period, the TFSP continued to build a foundation for communications and to embed it within project activities. The communications plan for FY19–20 guides the program’s approach to strategic communications and is supplemented with guidance for team members on how to incorporate communications into specific activities, including by meeting donor visibility requirements. Towards the end of the reporting period, the Secretariat and country teams also quickly developed communication channels with clients in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The communications plan will be updated for FY20–21.

Annex C provides details of select communications efforts made in the reporting period.

2.4 Financial Overview

At the end of the reporting period, USD 46.7 million had been received from the TFSP development partners since the program’s launch. This is 85 percent of overall partner commitments and is in alignment with the agreed transfer schedules per individual administrative agreements. Figure 2.1 shows receipts and outstanding payments by donor.

The program disbursement rate increased from the previous reporting period—from 69 percent in FY19 to 76 percent in FY20 (figure 2.2). Cumulative disbursements since program inception plus activity commitments at the end of FY20 totaled 81 percent of cash receipts (annex D has further financial details). Despite the outbreak of the pandemic, disbursements under the TFSP were at similar levels in the last quarter of the reporting period as the same quarter of the previous year.
FIGURE 2.1
Receipts and Outstanding Payments, USD thousands

Note: Includes $0.95 million to core TFSP and $1.615 million to Zambia

FIGURE 2.2
Cumulative Disbursements, USD thousands
Container ship crossing Pacific waters
© Shutterstock/Lee Yiu Tung
3.1 Lessons Learned

The WBG continues to learn lessons in relation to the design and execution of the TFSP-supported activities. While some of the challenges are unique for each country, others are common across most countries. Below are some of the key challenges and lessons learned to implementation experienced most often across projects and countries:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGE</th>
<th>LESSON LEARNED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face interactions must be limited. While there are online modalities available, not all officials have the same technological capabilities or capacity to access online resources.</td>
<td>The program must remain flexible in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by pivoting and adapting work streams. In addition, governments have to re-allocate resources and priorities to combat the spread of the virus, but a watershed event such as the pandemic can spur governments to expedite the implementation of certain trade facilitation measures and reforms in order to minimize disruptions to trade flows. If these measures can be extended beyond the current crisis, these trade facilitation reforms can have economy-wide impacts on recovery efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade facilitation work continues despite the global pandemic, although some delays will be inevitable.</td>
<td>The TFSP continues to support guidance and technical assistance to countries to implement best practices to facilitate the flow of goods. Some delays to trade facilitation projects will be inevitable, despite efforts to move work forward through WBG country offices, which are utilizing virtual modalities and relying more on local staff and consultants. Progress also depends on government clients and the private sector’s ability to connect in person and remotely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent delays or frustration with implementation goals hampers the trust among stakeholders and commitment to the reform agenda.</td>
<td>Commitment is needed at all levels. High-level political commitment to the trade reform agenda is essential to successful implementation of interventions and may even fast-track the legal reforms required and source financing for heavy-cost projects. Commitment by different government agencies and private sector entities is required for achieving results that benefit a wide range of stakeholders. Prioritization of reforms with the identification of deliverables and close attention to key milestones throughout the implementation process are relevant to sustaining political support and private sector engagement. Sequencing of reforms is also critical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear mandates or frequent changes at customs, border agencies, and the NTFC Secretariat affect the speed and sustainability of reforms.</td>
<td>The implementation process requires resilience to consolidate changes and adequate communication to enable private sector awareness and adherence to a new operational framework and services. Countries with more stable administrative frameworks generally make faster progress. Full and effective implementation of reforms requires clear legal mandates and legal foundations. From a legal standpoint, codifying interagency cooperation through an inter-agency agreement can establish the ground rules for how agencies will interact as well as how they will exchange trade data and handle import and export declarations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>LESSON LEARNED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication, regular consultations, or coordination.</td>
<td>Bringing stakeholders together, especially at the early stages, spurs reforms. Meetings among public and private stakeholders bring to light national, regional, and international best practices that can help motivate national and regional reform efforts and help identify common obstacles, solutions, and achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differing agency interests can spark resistance or lead to a push for alternate approaches, potentially derailing and delaying project implementation. Coordination can help anticipate resistance and disseminate benefits to stakeholders. A high-level reporting mechanism can help make informed decisions (see lessons learned on NTFCs).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved donor coordination and collaboration between relevant international organizations on the ground can enhance implementation. The establishment of donor coordination committees has proved beneficial to TFA implementation and to the trade reform process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation cannot be rushed, especially if it excludes important stakeholders and proper planning from the process. There needs to be a strong foundation with consultation and engagement of all key stakeholders.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation capacity varies across border agencies, and customs agencies often have higher implementation capacity than other agencies.</td>
<td>Capacity building across all border agencies is vital. Building clients’ capacity to enhance their overall understanding of trade reforms and ensure that benefits of interventions are maximized is critical; capacity building is often also required to ensure client buy-in and cooperation in delivering the projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some government agencies are not aware of the importance of prioritizing their border activities, such as inspection or sampling of imports or exports based on (a) risk of the commodity’s origin; (b) the historical compliance information of the importer and exporter; (c) the further processing that may be done to minimize risks upon entry; and so on.</td>
<td>Failing to recognize where to set priorities may result in inefficient and ineffective allocation of resources, and thus data collection and analysis serve to help clients better identify, prioritize, and target reforms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance data collected by customs or other border agencies is often not shared between them. Similarly, inspection or documentary review is undertaken independently by each border agency, resulting in each agency working in its own space.</td>
<td>SPS agencies should cooperate with customs agencies and other border agencies to more effectively manage the risk of consignments. Developing more collaborative approaches for information sharing, conducting joint inspections, and transferring some activities between agencies could improve efficiency processes and procedures at the border and better allocate limited resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>LESSON LEARNED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders are unaware of the benefits of reforms.</td>
<td>It is important to show results and improved alignment with the TFA over time by monitoring and measuring progress over time. Current tools for monitoring and measuring progress need to be strengthened, modified, and improved in many countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using a best practice approach (i.e. designing from the bottom up rather than top down) drives the development of a better solution contextualized for the local environment because the end beneficiaries’ needs are considered from the onset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NTFC is weak or inactive.</td>
<td>A good mechanism for obtaining buy-in and consensus on reform implementation priorities is the creation of an NTFC with the participation of the private sector. Early setup of an NTFC also supports the efficient use of resources because it improves coordination among participants and reduces the risk of duplicating funds. More important, the NTFC can take the lead in making decisions to sequence reforms on the basis of identified priorities and can ensure that there is sequential flow between technical assistance on a measure and its implementation. Leaving a large time gap between assistance and implementation might jeopardize the effort. Programs for technical assistance should be linked to an agreed implementation plan, preferably endorsed by the NTFC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each NTFC Secretariat requires a legal framework. Having a legal framework that defines the secretariat’s functions is key in ensuring that the NTFC can deliver its mandate effectively. A formal bill describing the role and powers of the secretariat will also provide the secretariat with legal authority to deliver its functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The NTFC Secretariat should have an adequate structure with dedicated professionals to support the implementation process, including program and project management and strong communications capabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NTFCs should periodically take stock of the streams of technical assistance coming from different development partners and take steps to achieve a balance between the requirements for technical assistance and the capacity of the beneficiary organization to receive it. Some clients report having “workshop fatigue”, which should be avoided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordination of activities between key border agencies involved in trade facilitation is essential. The NTFC can play a key role in coordination among border agencies and leadership across relevant government entities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a global lack of data on how trade facilitation interventions impact traders by gender at the firm level.</td>
<td>The problem is deeply rooted. No country can easily confirm the number of women that undertake cross-border trade in their respective countries. Interventions must be designed inclusively — benefiting women as well as men — and strong data on the gender of those who participate actively in cross-border trade is needed in order to do this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of automation and reliance on old paper-based systems.</td>
<td>A base level of automation across trade facilitation agencies is needed given the exponential development of technology today. Ensuring an adequate level of automation will enable deployment of TFA assistance to be more effective as all border agencies will be better positioned to implement reforms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Looking Forward

The COVID-19 pandemic has re-confirmed the importance of trade facilitation to keep essential goods moving across borders to limit the pandemic’s impact on human health and the economy. The WTO TFA is critical in supporting recovery efforts and ensuring swift delivery of essential goods and a vaccine when ready for wide distribution across the globe. The TFSP will continue to provide support to governments with immediate needs to maintain business continuity in light of the pandemic (such as support to the NTFCs, on customs measures on advanced rulings and risk management, temporary admission of goods and inward/outward processing, and on border agency cooperation), and to effectively implement the WTO TFA to support recovery (including, for instance, on trade facilitation measures for Authorized Operators, formalities and documentation requirements, Single Window, and knowledge sharing).

As demand for TFSP support continues to grow, assistance to IDA-eligible, low-income, and fragile and conflict-affected countries will be prioritized. Additionally, middle-income countries that act as gateways to least developed countries (LDCs) or whose performance significantly affects the performance of regional LDCs, and small island nations are also considered for support. Priority areas of support in addition to the aforementioned support for COVID-19 response and recovery include legal gap analysis and review, Time Release Studies, post-audit clearance, Trade Information Portals, and support to border management agencies other than customs.

The WBG will continue to assist countries where implementation has begun with TFSP support. Additionally, several countries have expressed a need for technical assistance and could be supported by the TFSP subject to the availability of funds in FY21 (see box 10).

In the area of knowledge management, the TFSP will support the following activities:

- **Trade facilitation and gender survey.** Building on the work undertaken in the reporting period in the Pacific Islands (see box 7), the reports will be disseminated to key stakeholders and beyond in the next reporting period. Roll-out in select African countries is expected to start in the next reporting period, subject to the availability of data and the impact of the pandemic.

- **TFA Alignment Tracking Tool.** The team will continue to add baselines and updated scores to the portal. With the launch of the enhanced TFA Tracking Tool website near the end of the reporting period, the team will step-up efforts to promote the use of the tool by client countries.

- **Integrated impact assessment methodology** for WBG transport and trade facilitation initiatives in Malawi. A firm will undertake the TRS+ after government approval to initiate the work has been secured.

- **One regional conference on border collaboration and coordination** is expected to be undertaken jointly with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility and other international partners in the next reporting period. The conference was scheduled to take place in this reporting period but had to be postponed due to the pandemic. The Secretariat will work with the WTO in delivering the conference in the next period, either virtually or in person. A broader, virtual, global event focusing on the importance of the WTO TFA in relation to COVID-19 is also being considered.

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**BOX 10**

Countries Where TFSP Implementation Opportunities Are Under Discussion

- Afghanistan
- Burkina Faso
- Jordan
- Mali
- Mozambique
- Niger
- Peru
- Solomon Islands
- Tonga
- Uzbekistan
- Zimbabwe
Border between Montenegro and Croatia
© Shutterstock/EQRoy
The Trade Facilitation Support Program has provided support to 47 countries in aligning trade practices with the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement across Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia. The following are summaries of activities by region.

Annex A

Summary of Country-Specific and Regional Activities
AFRICA

Botswana (inactive in FY20)

TFSP support to Botswana

The TFSP did not provide any support to Botswana in the reporting period. The TFSP helped Botswana launch the Trade Information Portal (TIP) in March 2016. The TIP provides access to all relevant information from 16 agencies involved in the trade supply chain. The portal is hosted by the Botswana Investment Trade Center on behalf of all the government agencies involved in the import-export process. Through the portal, traders can get information on all the regulatory requirements for carrying out trade transactions. The portal also contains downloadable copies of all the documentation the traders will need.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through Internet

Burundi (inactive in FY20)

TFSP support to Burundi

The TFSP did not provide any support to Burundi in the reporting period. Previous support complemented a larger investment climate project in the country and focused on risk management capacity building (training and implementation action plan jointly with the World Customs Organization (WCO)) around the customs intelligence function. The WBG and the WCO jointly helped Burundi roll-out its Authorized Operator (AO) program.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.4 Risk Management
7.5 Post-Clearance Audit
7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators (with the WCO)
Eswatini

TFSP support to Eswatini

The TFSP is supporting government efforts to enhance Eswatini’s trade performance through an improved alignment with the WTO TFA. Support includes assistance with coordinated border management, the National Trade Information Portal, the National Electronic Trade Single Window, and strengthening the National Trade Facilitation Committee—all of which are part of the National Trade Facilitation Roadmap. The Roadmap guides implementation of trade facilitation reforms and identifies a number of other strategic initiatives for the next three years (ending in March 2022). The implementation of the National Trade Facilitation Roadmap initiatives is targeted to benefit the trading community, including small and medium enterprises and women who play significant roles in trade in the country.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

- 7.4 Risk Management
- 7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
- 7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators
- 8 Border Agency Cooperation
- 10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
- 10.3 Use of International Standards
- 10.4 Single Window
- 23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- The TFSP provided support for the development and launch of the Eswatini Trade Information Portal (ETIP) to enable online publication of trade-related information. This includes the development and launch of e-Tariff Books that will link to the ETIP, improving classification of goods. The e-Tariff Books was informed by training on the Harmonized Classification System provided with TFSP support.

- Business processes of 12 trade regulatory agencies in Eswatini were documented and streamlined with TFSP support in preparation for the implementation of a National Single Window. With the automation of streamlined processes, the Eswatini Dairy Board has already seen early results and reduced the processing time for certificates, licenses, and permits (CLPs).

- With support from the TFSP-funded local team, the NTFC facilitated the establishment of a technical working group (also known as “Project Team”) to drive implementation of seven strategic initiatives, and as a result, strong buy-in and support from the government ministries, departments, agencies, and the private sector has been obtained.

- The TFSP supported strengthening customs risk management to ensure improved risk profiling practices and better integration of risk management into border inspections. A risk improvement action plan was finalized with agreed timelines for the implementation of priority action plans by customs.

- In March 2020, the automated release of the Green Lane was partially implemented by the Swaziland Revenue Authority based on the recommendation made by the TFSP-supported team.

- The government, with TFSP support, has started to engage with the Republic of South Africa in
preparation for the implementation of a proposed One Stop Border Post at the Ngwenya Oshoek Border Post. The development of a One-Stop Border Post between Eswatini and South Africa will build on the support provided on coordinated border management and the National Single Window initiative.

- In preparation for the implementation of the Eswatini National Single Window (ENSW), the TFSP supported the NTFC in reviewing and presenting the Eswatini National Single Window Blueprint to the ENSW Project Team and key stakeholders. This process resulted in the establishment of a strategic partnership between the Eswatini Revenue Authority (lead agency for the ENSW) and the Royal Science and Technology Park of Eswatini in leading the implementation of an ENSW. The ENSW Legal Framework Concept Paper was approved by the NTFC for development of the Omnibus Act in March 2020. The NTFC has subsequently expanded the scope of the recommendation on the development of the Omnibus NSW Act to cover the entire trade facilitation program.

- The formalization process of the NTFC was completed with TFSP support, and the government published an announcement in the Gazette in November 2019, mandating trade facilitation one of the government’s development priority areas.

- In February 2020, a mission for mapping border processes was conducted by the TFSP-supported team at the Ngwenya Border Post, and a mapping report is undergoing validation by the relevant stakeholders. The report will inform the coordinated border management model/blueprint for Eswatini. The NTFC Secretariat, with TFSP support, will develop a picture of how the different initiatives can link together towards achieving the national trade facilitation (NTF) program vision.

- The TFSP-supported team drafted an NTFC Communication and Implementation Plan, which is critical for the continuous communication of NTF work to the public, as well as reporting to the Cabinet.

**Ethiopia (inactive in FY20)**

**TFSP support to Ethiopia**

The TFSP was not active in Ethiopia in the reporting period, though support was provided as part of the WBG’s COVID-19 response for Africa. Prior to the reporting period, TFSP-supported activities were implemented alongside the Ethiopia Investment Climate Program, which aimed to streamline and simplify high priority regulations, processes, and practices that are burdensome for trade. The first phase of the program addressed investment climate issues that are preventing investments and productivity growth. The trade component of this program aimed to decrease the time to export and import by addressing legal and regulatory constraints and introducing risk management, process simplification, and increased transparency of trade processes. Previous TFSP-supported work contributed to the early preparations of the Single Window. TFSP support provided in Ethiopia has resulted in USD 61.4 million in savings for the private sector. Recommendations to create separate windows for clearance of goods helped to reduce lines and waiting time; roll-out of a new customs data management system made documents submission faster; support for the launch of a new railway between the most commonly used seaport in Djibouti and Addis Ababa helped to decongest road traffic and reduce inland transportation time for imports; improvements in risk-based inspections; electronic issuance of Certificates of Origin for certain destinations; and extension of hours of operations of Ethiopian and Djibouti Customs at the main land border-crossing at Galafi contributed to these savings.
Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through Internet
3 Advance Rulings
7.1 Pre-arrival Processing
7.4 Risk Management
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
10.2 Acceptance of Copies

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work

- A key result of TFSP-supported work in Ethiopia was the assistance provided in reducing physical inspections of imports, which led to a reduction from 60 percent to 30 percent.
- Support was provided on revising and drafting new legislation on customs, e-commerce, and special economic zones affecting trade facilitation. This new legislation led to streamlined procedures, including a one-stop shop that was set up for customs clearance in industrial parks.
- The roll-out of an electronic certificate of origin has eliminated the need to physically interact with customs for approval because registered exporters can now get a certificate instantly from their own offices. Eight documents were eliminated for imports and three for export. ASYCUDA++, an older customs management system, was replaced with a new, more advanced customs management system that offers more convenient user features and allows Internet-based access from any location. Altogether, these initiatives have led to an import-time reduction of six days and an export-time reduction of five days since 2016.
- A consolidated, detailed customs guide was published and is the first of its kind in Ethiopia.
- Eight commodity-based clearance windows were opened to facilitate import and export trade, enabling faster and prioritized clearance.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The TFSP complemented the Ethiopia Trade Logistics Advisory Project, for which total bilateral financing (with UK Aid) was around USD 2 million, with a World Bank trade logistics investment loan of USD 150 million.

Lesotho

TFSP support to Lesotho

The TFSP provides support to Lesotho to enhance coordinated border management and improve the Lesotho Trade Information Portal. The TFSP has also provided support for revising legislation, developing blueprints and frameworks, enhancing the implementation of ASYCUDA World, and strengthening the National Trade Facilitation Committee Secretariat.
Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through Internet
7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
8 Border Agency Cooperation
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
10.4 Single Window
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- Border agencies have signed an MoU on border agency cooperation. The MoU outlines work modalities, including delegation of duties and responsibilities, where all agencies have agreed that Lesotho Revenue Authority (LRA) will serve as the lead agency. This initiative is being piloted at the Maseru border post for now and will be rolled out to other borders. Due to sharing of common facilities and joint inspections, as well as separation of commercial and non-commercial traders, time to import has decreased. In follow-up, the TFSP-supported team also assisted with the preparation of a draft coordinated border management report, including recommendations, which have helped the border agencies to further improve processes and prioritize clearance of essential goods. All medicinal products in the fight against COVID-19 have been exempted from duties and import tax, including all donations towards the fight against this pandemic.

- With support from the TFSP, the LRA championed three regional workshops to create awareness among 203 border agencies staff members on the goods for which importation or exportation is either prohibited or restricted from exiting or entering Lesotho, as well as for which permits are required. Results from this TFSP-supported activity include: (i) improved voluntary compliance through improved transparency and predictability; (ii) reduced costs to legitimate trade and compliance though faster clearance of goods, reduced physical inspection, and improved risk management; and (iii) promoted harmonization and collaboration between the multiple regulatory requirements at the border, ensuring the smooth flow of goods for legitimate trade across Lesotho’s borders.

- The TFSP provided support to facilitate the connectivity of the revenue authorities of South Africa and Lesotho (the South African Revenue Service [SRA] and Lesotho Revenue Authority). The connectivity allows for data matching in SRA’s and LRA’s customs systems. The two authorities are in the testing phase of the single declaration.

- The National Trade Facilitation Roadmap was presented to the Lesotho Coordinating Committee on Trade [LCCT] Sub-Committees made-up of (a) Standards, Product Development and Market Diversification [SPDM], (b) Market Access [MA], (c) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), and (d) National Trade Facilitation Committee [NTFC]. This has increased stakeholder understanding on Trade Facilitation Reforms and established a buy-in and ownership of the roadmap by relevant stakeholders.

- The NTFC finalized and submitted Categories B and C notifications to the WTO. The final workshop to finalize the notifications was preceded by three consultative meetings with the Technical Working Group [TWG] and one with the NTFC (its Secretariat is supported by the TFSP). This has resulted in a unified voice and understanding among agencies on the sole and collective capacity needs of the agencies, which is important when requesting cooperation with development partners.

- The TFSP-supported team worked with a designated Lesotho Trade Information Portal (LTIP) team comprising of officers of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) to revamp the outdated LTIP in Lesotho. This entailed the drafting of a work plan...
and assigning responsibilities. The TFSP-supported team conducted an online workshop and training for the new version of the LTIP to team members, which is tentatively scheduled to be launched in the next reporting period.

The TFSP-supported team produced a draft stakeholder analysis for the LTIP. The stakeholder analysis identifies the project’s key stakeholders and assesses their interests in the LTIP as well as the ways in which these interests may affect the project. The analysis also includes the best methods and channels on how to communicate with the respective stakeholders.

Liberia

TFSP support to Liberia

Through TFSP support, the WBG team assisted the government of Liberia in preparing for ratification of the WTO TFA in this reporting period. In addition, the team provided support towards the establishment of the National Trade Facilitation Committee and passage of the modernized Customs Code. TFSP support to Liberia in the previous reporting period included support for a National Single Window vision, a risk management program, process simplification, and pre-shipment inspection that contributed to more transparent and predictable cross-border trade for the private sector.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.4 Risk Management
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
10.3 Use of International Standards
10.4 Single Window
10.5 Pre-shipment Inspection
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

The Liberian legislature ratified the WTO TFA in September 2019, but the government has yet to present the instrument of ratification to the WTO. Through TFSP support, the team will continue pushing for the instrument to be prepared and deposited at the WTO.

Through TFSP support, a TOR was developed to establish the NTFC. The TFSP-supported WBG team sustained engagement, and the government approved the TOR and signed the Administrative Regulation establishing the NTFC in August 2019.

Through sustained lobbying by the team, the Liberian legislature passed the modernized Customs Code along with other relevant instruments and received Presidential approval on December 21, 2019.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The TFSP-supported FY20 activities in Liberia were complementary to a project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development to assist in improving the business environment in the country.
Madagascar

**TFSP support to Madagascar**

The TFSP-supported work is a component of the larger Investment Climate Reform Program (ICRP) in Madagascar, which closed in June 2020. After focusing primarily on the creation of an NTFC and on the review of fees and charges, the work has consisted of technical assistance on the coordination of the execution of the NTFC’s roadmap.

TFSP-supported work in Madagascar has generated USD 11.5 million in savings for the private sector by reversing the implementation of advanced cargo declarations. This recommendation prevented a duplicative process and averted additional unnecessary fees ranging from 50–80 euro per container.

**Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)**

- **6.1 General Disciplines on Fees and Charges Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation**
- **23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation**

**FY20 update on key activities**

- TFSP supported the NTFC’s roadmap and activities. The TFSP-supported WBG team engaged with the new director general of Customs, who co-presides the NTFC, to advance roadmap implementation and move towards the appointment of the permanent focal point at the Ministry of Trade for the NTFC. This appointment was, however, put on hold due to the ministry’s intense staff mobilization and re-prioritization for COVID-19 response.
- The team moved forward with technical discussions with the NTFC to provide guidance on coordinating priority activities, which includes the creation of a trade portal.

**Leverage or complementarity of funds**

The TFSP-supported roadmap allowed the committee to map, coordinate, and engage with other donors in Madagascar on priority activities. This is especially critical as other donors in the country mostly engage on targeted activities. For instance, proper delineation of trade portal and border risk management activities provided a proper scope of intervention for the African Development Bank to then provide support as the NTFC’s technical and financial partner on those priority activities.

Malawi

**TFSP support to Malawi**

The TFSP is supporting Malawi in improving its cross-border trading environment and aligning the country’s facilitation systems and procedures with the WTO TFA, including support to the NTFC, implementation of a National Single Window (NSW), and coordinated border management. The WBG regularly engages with private sector stakeholders in Malawi to build understanding of and confidence in trade facilitation reforms. A firm will undertake the TRS+ [an integrated impact assessment methodology for WBG transport and trade facilitation initiatives] after government approval to initiate the work has been secured.

The TFSP is also providing support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication

1.2 Information Available through Internet

2.1 Opportunity to comment and information before entry into force

2.2 Consultations

7.4 Risk Management

8 Border Agency Cooperation

10.4 Single Window

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- The project commenced a program of support to the Malawi Revenue Authority (MRA) towards implementation of expedited release and clearance of imports for COVID-19 response and also procured MiFi routers to enable remote connectivity for the NTFC and the TRS+ Technical Working Group.

- The TFSP-funded WBG team contributed efforts towards the implementation of an NSW by conducting a business process re-engineering exercise for the NSW to fill a critical gap that was identified in the blueprint compiled under the Southern Africa Trade and Transport Facilitation Program (SATTFP). Functional and technical specifications were also drafted for consideration by stakeholders. The team assisted with drafting a Terms of Reference to hire a resident advisor who will support the client with day-to-day implementation of the overall framework and coordination to implement the system on the ground.

- With respect to coordinated border management, the TFSP-supported team conducted follow-ups with high level government officials and facilitated a meeting of the Principal Secretaries—chaired by the Chief Secretary to the government. The five-agency model (instead of 14) proposed through TFSP advisory support was endorsed, and the go-ahead was given for a pilot to be implemented at the Mwanza border post.

- The TFSP provided ongoing support to the MRA and Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) by facilitating workshops and dialogue between the two institutions on the use of MRA’s ASYCUDA World by MBS. Plans towards piloting of this activity were also advanced. These sessions resulted in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Operational Cooperation by the MRA and MBS, which provides a framework for coordinated border management between the two institutions, including use of MRA’s ASYCUDA World system by MBS, joint inspections, etc. The TFSP-supported team commenced drafting a list of products of interest to MBS with associated HS codes to be flagged in ASYCUDA World.

- With input and support from the TFSP-supported team through earlier missions, the Malawi Bureau of Standards adopted a new risk management policy for the Import Quality Monitoring Scheme (IQMS). The MBS also adopted a risk management plan, which incorporates the project’s proposed implementation plan for enhancing the institution’s risk management capacity.

- The TFSP also provided support on One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) for Dedza and Mwanza, launched the TRS+, and continued to support the hosting of NTFC meetings. It also supported operationalization of a Corridor Development Subcommittee of the NTFC.
Leverage or complementarity of funds

The TFSP-supported work complements a larger World Bank Southern Africa Trade and Transport Facilitation Program in Malawi that initially focused on stakeholder consultations, quality assurance, reduction and streamlining of border agencies, construction of one stop border post infrastructure, and building of a National Single Window. The project is also supporting preparation of the Southern Africa Trade and Connectivity Project (formerly Nacala Regional Trade Project), in which some of the activities under the SATTFP will be further built on and other interventions will be made to improve trade facilitation and logistics and enhance regional value chains.

São Tomé and Príncipe (inactive in FY20)

TFSP support to São Tomé and Príncipe

TFSP did not provide support to São Tomé and Príncipe in the reporting period. Earlier support complemented a larger IFC advisory project to remove obstacles to sustainable tourism and to develop and facilitate trade internally and overseas.

The private sector savings from TFSP-supported work in São Tomé and Príncipe is an estimated USD 1.3 million. These savings were achieved primarily from the introduction of electronic documents, a single payment for fees, as well as the elimination of the requirement for the port exit note and tax certificate.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.1 Pre-arrival Processing
7.2 Electronic Payment
7.4 Risk Management
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
10.2 Acceptance of Copies
10.4 Single Window
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work

- The TFSP supported interagency risk management and helped consolidate multiple border inspections, in addition to implementing a phased Single Window for trade approach.
- The TFSP supported TFA implementation, including adopting risk management procedures, creating a National Trade Facilitation Committee jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and automating technical control agency systems in ASYCUDA World.

Sierra Leone

TFSP support to Sierra Leone

The WBG continued to support the NTFC, which was approved in FY19 with TFSP support. The WBG and WCO assisted customs in establishing a working group to undertake preparatory work for Sierra Leone’s first
Time Release Study. In addition, the team also evaluated the pilot phase of ASYCUDA World. Previously, TFSP support was provided to undertake a WTO Gap Assessment jointly with the WCO and UNCTAD.

**Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)**

7.1 Pre-arrival Processing  
7.9 Perishable Goods  
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

**FY20 update on key activities**

- The WBG, through TFSP support, facilitated the National Trade Facilitation Committee’s adoption of the Sierra Leone Trade Facilitation Strategy 2019–2024 and the TORs that established three NTFC technical subcommittees, as well as supported the NTFC to commence implementation of the action plan.
- The WBG and WCO supported the Customs Department of the National Revenue Authority to establish a working group comprising of representatives from customs and other government border agencies, logistics, port, customs brokers, and the private sector to undertake preparatory work for Sierra Leone’s first TRS. With the support of the WBG, data collection points were identified, a draft TRS survey questionnaire was prepared, and a TRS implementation plan drafted.
- The WBG evaluated the pilot phase of ASYCUDA World and presented the initial findings and recommendations to management of customs and the National Revenue Authority. The team specified re-programming to be undertaken by UNCTAD, new procedures to be followed by customs and other border control agencies as well as risk management reforms per the country’s approved action plan.

**Leverage or complementarity of funds**

On the basis of the TFA Gap Assessment, the WCO is committed to jointly providing technical assistance in undertaking a Time Release Study, risk management, and general staff development for customs.

**Togo (inactive in FY20)**

**TFSP support to Togo**

TFSP support to Togo has completed and informed a WBG lending project to strengthen customs processes and improve trucking areas. The TFSP previously supported two main initiatives: (A) the Trade Information Portal, and (B) efforts to further advance the capacity and effectiveness of the National Trade Facilitation Committee.

**Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)**

1.1 Publication  
1.2 Information Available through Internet  
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation
Zambia

TFSP support to Zambia

The TFSP supports Zambia in improving trade facilitation and border management procedures, which will expedite the movement, release, and clearance of goods by aligning trade procedures with selected measures of the WTO TFA. This includes support to the NTFC and support on risk management, coordinated border management, COVID-19 response among other trade facilitative activities.

Private sector savings of USD 1.7 million were achieved through reductions in time to import and export (by four and two days respectively). Specifically, TFSP-supported reforms on the introduction of the more advanced customs data management system (ASYCUDA World) and connection of border regulatory agencies to it; risk management, including joined inspections at the border; reduction of mandatory processing time limit at the border; and extension of hours of operation in main Zimbabwe-Zambia land border post (Chirundu) generated these times and cost savings.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.3 Enquiry Points
7.2 Electronic Payment
7.4 Risk Management
7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
8 Border Agency Cooperation
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
10.3 Use of International Standards
10.4 Single Window
10.5 Pre-shipment inspection
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- The TFSP supported the production of two reports in response to COVID-19: (i) “Trade and Border Management: Action Plan to respond to COVID-19” to provide practical guidance to Zambia on coordination structures, actions and activities, and particular measures to support business continuity, protection of front-line officers, and to facilitate safe cross-border trade for essential food, health and safety equipment, and medicines and (ii) “Coordinated Border Management Report” to improve collaboration between border agencies and the private sector with the objective of moving and clearing goods faster and more cheaply.

- The TFSP-supported team, in collaboration with the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), carried out a Time Release Study in February 2020 at three locations: Kenneth Kaunda International Airport, Victoria Falls Border Post at the Zambia/Zimbabwe border, and the Kazungula Border Post at the Botswana/Zambia border. The results of the study will be used to establish a baseline for the time and number of procedures currently needed for processing import and export cargo. The TRS implementation team is finalizing the data collection and analysis with ZRA. The TRS report is expected to be issued in the next reporting period.
The TFSP-supported team on the Coordinated Border Management (CBM) work stream agreed to a joint work plan with ZRA to establish a CBM governance structure, review current business processes, carry out a legislative, technological, and human resources/change management analysis, and from this combined knowledge, develop a blueprint proposal for a new, coordinated management structure for Zambia’s border agencies.

The TFSP provided support for the introduction of risk assessment methods and tools to help coordinate regulatory delivery for Zambia’s sixteen border agencies. This involved developing a framework for organizing coordinated/joint border inspections across multiple agencies. Using information gathered through consolidated risk profiles, inspections are now carried out jointly by agencies at the same time. Based on ASYCUDA data, ZRA recorded 4,755 joint inspections from July 2019-June 2020 from 32 stations with other border agencies at all the borders. The Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency is now inspecting only 30% of cargo compared to 80% prior to the implementation of this reform.

Because of the increased awareness on the Authorized Operators (AO) scheme facilitated by the TFSP-supported team, the ZRA has increased the number of AOs from 54 to 59 and are finalizing due diligence on an additional 15 applications, which will bring the number of AOs to 74.

The Zambia Metrology Agency (ZMA) was connected to the Zambia Electronic Single Window (ZESW) and the Single Payment Point in the previous reporting period, and ZMA and ZCSA commenced pilot joint inspection on destination inspections for all overlapping products to reduce on time and cost for industry. In this reporting period, the TFSP-supported team prepared a restructuring memo.

With support from the TFSP on the preparatory work, connectivity of ZCSA to ASYCUDA World (AW) has resulted in the reduction of clearance times for imported consignments. Before connectivity to AW, it was extremely difficult to measure the time it took to clear the consignments.

The NTFC, with direct and indirect TFSP support, ratified the following committees to enhance the implementation of the WTO TFA agenda and transparency of decision-making: (i) National Risk Management Sub-Committee; (ii) Project Working Group on Modernization of Customs Clearing Agents Licensing Framework, Accreditation & Certification; (iii) Steering Committee on the Zambia Information Trade Portal; (iv) Time Release Study Working Group; and (v) Working Group on Coordinated Border Management.

The TFSP provided support, in collaboration with USAID, for the launch of the Trade Information Portal in May 2020. The portal will provide a single point of access for all the information on regulatory requirements to undertake international trade. This will save time and cost for the private sector in seeking information.

As a result of the risk management technical assistance, a risk assessment tool was designed for Zambia Metrology Agency to (i) inform selectivity criteria for trade facilitation, (ii) inform the structure and language of regulations, (iii) prioritize allocation of inspection resources, (iv) inform internal standard operating procedures, and (v) set frequency of inspections.

**Leverage or complementarity of funds**

Early TFSP-supported work in Zambia led to an additional USD 1.6 million USAID grant for the TFSP to support the Zambian government.
CARIBBEAN

Regional Highlights of Achievements of TFSP Funded Work

In the Caribbean, TFSP support provided to Jamaica, Grenada, and St. Lucia generated a total of USD 5.7 million in savings for the private sector. USD 5.6 million of these savings is attributable to time reductions in all three countries from reforms in other border regulatory agencies (OBRAs). In Grenada and St. Lucia, support was provided to Bureaus of Standards, and in Jamaica, support was provided to the National Compliance and Regulatory Authority. The TFSP-supported WBG team assisted in the preparation of risk profiles and connection of these agencies to the ASYCUDA customs data management system. In addition, in St. Lucia and Grenada, a Trade Logistics Tool was rolled out in the Bureaus of Standards, facilitating electronic connection and data exchange with customs. Time to trade in St. Lucia and Grenada was reduced from three to one day, and in Jamaica, time to trade fell from 7.4 to 1.6 days. Additional USD 96,000 in savings were generated in Jamaica and Grenada from the elimination of import/export licenses and fees for certain goods.

Country-specific Activities

Grenada (inactive in FY20)

TFSP support to Grenada

The TFSP did not provide active support to Grenada in this reporting period, and the regional project under which the team delivered advisory services concluded in December 2019. Previously, the TFSP supported assessments to determine the level of alignment of Grenada’s national policies with the WTO TFA in three areas prioritized by the government: (A) advanced rulings, (B) appeal procedures, and (C) Single Window. UNCTAD supported the government’s implementation of the Single Window, and the TFSP supported Grenada regarding rights of appeal and risk management.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

4 Procedures for Appeal or Review
7.4 Risk Management
10.3 Use of International Standards
Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work

- The TFSP shared best practices on appeals administration through peer-to-peer learning.
- TFSP resources were used to support the roll-out of the tool to automate import approval processes at the Bureau of Standards. The automation tool allows the bureau to fully leverage data from ASYCUDA to apply risk management to its border clearance processes.

Jamaica

TFSP support to Jamaica

The TFSP supported implementation of the Jamaica Trade Information Portal (JTIP), implementation of risk management and coordinated border management, and removal of duplicative and distortive export and import licensing requirements. In the previous reporting period, the TFSP also supported a regulatory gap analysis related to the Customs Code.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through Internet
6.1 General Disciplines on Fees and Charges Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation
7.4 Risk Management
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
10.3 Use of International Standards

FY20 update on key activities

- The JTIP, implemented and launched in May 2019 with TFSP support, now contains over 500 legal documents, forms, measures, and information pages drawn from 34 ministries agencies and departments. In this reporting period, the TFSP supported the sustainability of the JTIP by providing two consultants for site maintenance and capacity building of the portal. In November 2019, the JTIP received ministerial-level endorsement from the Honorable Prime Minister and Ministers of Cabinet, underscoring their commitment to the trade facilitation reform agenda. Since its launch, the portal has had over 6,000 hits. The Trade Board Limited (TBL) operates the JTIP and has signed MoUs with eight agencies to contribute content to the portal.

- To advance the implementation of risk management and coordinated border management, the WBG supported the National Trade Facilitation Task Force (TFTF) in agreeing on the risk profiles for inclusion in ASYCUDA. With TFSP support, the WBG also worked with agencies on developing new processes to implement ASYCUDA World. As of October 2019, all the commodity risk profiles for the six border agencies (National Compliance Regulatory Authority, Veterinary Services Division, Plant Quarantine Division, Trade Board Limited, Ministry of Health (environmental public health), Food Storage and Prevention of Infestation Division) have been included in ASYCUDA, and agencies are using the system to hold and release consignments.
Through the TFSP, the WBG continued its support for implementation of TFA Article 10.1 on Formalities and Documentation Requirements. By October 2019, the TBL reduced the number of products for which export (by 10) and import licenses (by five) are required. This was undertaken based on assessments and recommendations made in FY19 by the TFSP-supported WBG team, resulting in direct cost savings to the private sector. The WBG will continue to advocate for removal of duplicative and distortive license requirements.

In October 2019, the government established a joint select Committee of Parliament to review and report on the revised Jamaica Customs Bill. The TFSP supported a review of this bill during the last reporting period. The Committee commenced deliberations in December 2019.

**Leverage or complementarity of funds**

The tabling of the Jamaica Customs Bill [2019] was included as a prior action in a World Bank loan on economic resilience. An indicative trigger related to the development of regulations to give effect to the act has been proposed and is being discussed with the government. The government has requested technical assistance to develop customs regulations.

**St. Lucia (inactive in FY20)**

**TFSP support to St. Lucia**

The TFSP did not provide active support to St. Lucia in this reporting period, and the regional project under which the team delivered advisory services concluded in December 2019. Previously, the TFSP supported TFA assessments to determine St. Lucia’s level of alignment with WTO TFA measures on the Single Window, electronic payment systems, and risk management.

**Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)**

10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

**Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work**

- With TFSP support, the WBG facilitated a technical workshop on the design of an electronic Single Window and facilitated discussions between public and private sector stakeholders on a shared vision for the Single Window in St. Lucia.
- TFSP funding supported the deployment of the automation tool for import approval by the Bureau of Standards in St. Lucia. This initiative helps support the integration of border clearance processes through the ASYCUDA World platform.
CENTRAL AMERICA

Regional Activities

The WBG has begun preparations (with TFSP support) to provide assistance on a Time Release Study Plus (TRS+) at several ports across the region. The TRS+ expands on the WCO Time Release Study methodology. The intent of the TRS+ is to comprehensively measure the total time it takes to satisfy the regulatory and business requirements that are applied before the arrival of goods at the border, as well as the time taken for the port and terminal processes and other elements involved in the import and export of goods. The TFSP-funded WBG team is also exploring whether a method to capture gender specific aspects in each stage of the TRS+ can be applied.

Prior to the reporting period, the WBG, through TFSP support, helped the Council of Ministers of Economic Integration review the regional Customs Code for Central America and its regulations to align those instruments with the WTO TFA, to reduce clearance times and required formalities and documentation to trade. During this reporting period, the WBG has continued to follow up with regional and national authorities to support their implementation of reforms.

Previously, the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) requested support to develop a data cube and calculation methodology to collect data to monitor time trade performance across the region. The data cube and the calculation methodology were both developed and are currently in use by SIECA [see section 1.6 for more information on the data cube].

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through Internet
3 Advance Rulings
4 Procedures for Appeal or Review
7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
8 Border Agency Cooperation
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
11 Freedom of Transit
FY20 update on key activities

- The team prepared a document called “Recomendaciones sobre mejores prácticas en facilitación de comercio para Centroamérica como resultado de covid-19” at the request of SIECA and the Regional Customs Committee. The document supports the region in facilitating trade during and after the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic’s impact on international trade highlights the importance of revamping the modernization agenda and standardizing processes and systems in Central America, which would contribute to economic integration. In FY21, the team will follow up with SIECA and the main stakeholders on the recommendations in this document.

- The team prepared a TOR for a consultant firm to conduct a TRS+ at several ports across the region. The ports to be studied include the Pacific Corridor; Costa Rica—El Salvador for the ferry project; the Costa Rica—Nicaragua border; and the Guatemala—Mexico border. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and based on a decision by management, the process of conducting the TRS+ is on hold, though, preparatory work was undertaken during this reporting period.

Country-specific Activities

Costa Rica

TFSP support to Costa Rica

The TFSP is supporting the development of an integrated procedure for the operation of a multi-modal service between El Salvador and Costa Rica. The TFSP has also continued to support the government of Costa Rica in coordinated border management and identifying measures to reduce excessive requirements and time to trade at land border posts. Assessments of formalities and documentary requirements have been undertaken, and recommendations have been made. The recommended reforms are expected to expedite movement, release, and clearance of goods by reducing documentary requirements and eliminating the need for printed copies. The results will include faster, more transparent, and easier trade processes, as well as savings for the private sector.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.1 Pre-arrival Processing
8 Border Agency Cooperation
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

FY20 update on key activities

- With TFSP support, the WBG provided assistance to bilateral Costa Rica and El Salvador groups (customs, immigration, seaports) to develop an integrated procedure for the operation of a multi-modal service (land transport/ferry) between Puerto de la Unión Centroamericana (El Salvador) and Puerto Golfito (Costa Rica). The multi-modal transport service will improve transit through the Pacific Corridor, help save time, and simplify procedures in logistics by avoiding land transit through two countries (Honduras and Nicaragua). Both Costa Rica and El Salvador expect to initiate ferry operations in the upcoming months.

- The team prepared a TOR for a consultant firm to conduct a TRS+ for the Pacific Corridor and Costa Rica—El Salvador ferry project.
With TFSP support, the Ministry of Foreign Trade (COMEX) notified the WTO at the end of 2019 of the status of its WTO TFA Article 10.1 implementation. Its improvement plan for the provisions of Article 10.1 include a variety of topics, such as eliminating the requirement for extra documents when a customs declaration is subject to “yellow channel” for documentary inspection.

In 2019, the WBG team provided technical assistance to Costa Rica in the development of five workshops on Coordinated Border Management (CBM) at the border posts of Peñas Blancas, Paso Canoas, Puerto Limón, Puerto Caldera, and Aduana Santamaría. Around 150 people from the public and private sectors participated.

The WBG provided technical assistance (with TFSP support) for the development of the Priority Agenda for Trade Facilitation. On December 13, 2019, Presidential Decree No. 42065-MP-COMEX was published, in which all actions identified in the Priority Agenda are declared as public and national interest.

Based on the technical recommendation from the WBG, Costa Rica implemented a border coordinator position within Peñas Blancas customs on its border with Nicaragua. Similarly, COMEX decided to hire a coordinator for customs (border coordinator of Paso Canoas and Sabalito) at its border with Panama based on the WBG recommendation. The coordinators will provide high-level support in the modernization, management, and operation of land borders, ports, and airports, as well as support to the national trade facilitation committees.

From January to June 2020, an inventory of approximately 4,000 standards (agreements, laws, decrees, resolutions, and guidelines) related to foreign trade was developed with TFSP support and made available to COMEX. This compilation of regulations can be used as input for the future National Trade Portal.

Other advances resulting from the WBG team recommendations include allocation of the resources by the government of Costa Rica to improve the infrastructure of the platform located in Peñas Blancas. Videoconferencing equipment was purchased at the Peñas Blancas and Paso Canoas borders. Barcode readers were purchased and put into operation at the Peñas Blancas customs. The processes for the inspection and sampling of animal origin merchandise at the Peñas Blancas and Paso Canoas customs have been improved, for example, by extending the hours of the laboratories that provide analysis services.

**Leverage or complementarity of funds**

TFSP-supported work informed a World Bank lending operation for Costa Rica. The team co-led the preparation of a $157 million IPF, of which $52 million corresponds to customs. The project was approved by the board in March 2020.

**El Salvador**

**TFSP support to El Salvador**

The TFSP supports the government of El Salvador in its efforts to improve trade facilitation processes for air cargo trade, including support to undertake a comprehensive process mapping of all agencies that are responsible for air cargo. The program is also providing assistance for the implementation of multi-modal transport operations between El Salvador and Costa Rica (i.e., ferry service). In addition, support has been provided to El Salvador in its effort to implement an e-signature program for the Ministry of Economy. Previously, support was provided for El Salvador to join the Honduras-Guatemala Customs Union; however, a change in government in El Salvador has made the Customs Union less of a priority, and no new support has been provided in this specific area.
Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through Internet
7.8 Expedited Shipments
8 Border Agency Cooperation
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
10.2 Acceptance of Copies

FY20 update on key activities

- In September 2019, the team organized several meetings with the Secretary of Investment and Commerce as well as with customs authorities on its trade facilitation agenda. The team agreed to provide technical assistance on the following activities:
  a) the ferry project between El Salvador and Costa Rica;
  b) follow-up on the pilot plan to improve air cargo (interconnection between customs and Comisión Ejecutiva Portuaria Autónoma [CEPA]);
  c) collecting and organizing information to support a trade portal;
  d) mapping and re-engineering the customs logistics processes of Acajutla Sea Port; and
  e) diagnosis and recommendations on the processing of urgent shipments (couriers).

- With respect to the ferry project between El Salvador and Costa Rica, the project has provided assistance to bilateral El Salvador and Costa Rica groups (customs, immigration, seaports) to develop an integrated procedure for the operation of a multi-modal service (land transport/ferry) between Puerto de la Unión Centroamericana (El Salvador) and Puerto Golfito (Costa Rica). The multi-modal transport service will save time and simplify procedures in logistics by avoiding land transit through two countries (Honduras and Nicaragua). Both countries expect to initiate ferry operations in the upcoming months.

- The team has prepared a TOR for a consultant firm to conduct a TRS+ on the Pacific Corridor and Costa Rica—El Salvador ferry project.

- In FY21, the team will continue to follow up on the ferry project and the pilot plan to improve air cargo. The team will also confirm the government and the private sector’s interest in the other three activities identified for technical assistance, for which the team did not start support during this reporting period.

Guatemala

TFSP support to Guatemala

TFSP is providing support to Guatemala on the establishment of coordinated joint border operations with Mexico. The TFSP has also supported the Customs Union between Guatemala and Honduras with recommendations to implement risk management tools, post-clearance audits, and an Authorized Operator program to facilitate the movement of goods.
Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.1 Pre-arrival Processing
7.4 Risk management
7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
8 Border Agency Cooperation
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

FY20 update on key activities

- In November 2019, Guatemala and Mexico signed an agreement on mutual administrative assistance and exchange of information on customs matters. The agreement will enable the establishment of coordinated joint operations to exercise controls on the means of transport and goods that are part of the trade flow between the two countries. The TFSP-supported team mapped processes, measured trade times, and recommended improvements to be made, which laid the technical base on which the agreement was signed.
- The team prepared a TOR for a consultant firm to conduct a TRS+ at the Guatemala—Mexico border.
- The team had planned a mission to meet with the new government authorities, but it was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, the team held initial meetings with the Vice Minister of Economy of Guatemala virtually to present the advisory project. One of the potential areas that the team may address in FY21 is the continuation of work in Tecun Uman II, the main land border between Mexico and Guatemala.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The team provided prior actions and triggers on trade facilitation for a $500 million WBG lending project.

Honduras (inactive in FY20)

TFSP support to Honduras

The TFSP did not provide active support to Honduras in this reporting period. The TFSP supported the Customs Union between Honduras and Guatemala with recommendations to implement risk management tools, post-clearance audits, and an Authorized Operator program to facilitate the movement of goods.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.1 Pre-arrival Processing
7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
8 Border Agency Cooperation
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The team provided prior actions and triggers on trade facilitation for a $500 million WBG lending project.
Nicaragua

TFSP support to Nicaragua

The TFSP continued to support the mapping of trade processes during the reporting period to ensure that the private sector has access to complete information on steps and documents required to trade through the Trámites Nicaragua website [http://www.tramitesnicaragua.gob.ni/?l=es]. The TFSP has also supported technical assistance at the Port of Corinto to enhance transparency as well as reduce clearance times.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through Internet
6.1 General Disciplines on Fees and Charges Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation
7.1 Pre-arrival Processing
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

FY20 update on key activities

- In the reporting period, the TFSP continued to support publication of procedures to trade. With TFSP support, the WBG team provided capacity building and technical support to the government to update its website [tramitesnicaragua.gob.ni] in accordance with the latest updates on administrative processes for trade from UNCTAD’s webpage.
- As a result of the website update, new information on trade procedure requirements was uploaded. Several sessions were held with both public and private sector stakeholders to make further adjustments and validate the updates. A few procedural improvements were discussed by the private sector.
- The authorities have requested a final revision to be conducted and suggested making a final presentation in Puerto Corinto to conclude the exercise (COVID-19 permitting or through other modalities).

Panama

TFSP support to Panama

During the reporting period, a change in government administration led to staff changes in most of the technical teams with which the WBG team has been working. The new administration has not provided an official request for support from TFSP. Previously, the TFSP provided support for the establishment and strengthening of the National Trade Facilitation Committee, integrated risk management for transshipments, and an e-payment module.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.2 Electronic Payment
7.4 Risk Management
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation
FY20 update on key activities

In the last reporting period, the project delivered technical specifications for an e-payment module for Panama’s food safety border agency and delivered an integrated risk management action plan to border agencies. No new assistance has been provided due to the change in government administration; however, several exchanges have been maintained with officials responsible for the trade facilitation agenda.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP-supported work informed the Panama Pandemic Response and Growth Recovery Development Policy Operation.
EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Country-specific Activities: East Asia

Cambodia

TFSP support to Cambodia

Early TFSP support to Cambodia complemented a World Bank project focusing primarily on implementing a national trade repository. In FY20, TFSP financing continued to focus on [A] supporting the government of Cambodia in the formation of a NTFC that meets TFA requirements to coordinate and implement trade facilitation reforms and commitments and [B] reviewing regulations on prohibitions, restrictions of goods, and risk management practices.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through Internet
7.4 Risk Management
10.1 Formalities connected with importation, exportation and transit
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- As a result of TFSP-supported advisory services, the list of prohibited and restricted import items was reduced from 2,050 to 1,857 (a reduction of 193 items), taking effect on April 1, 2020. Leading up to this, the WBG with TFSP support assisted the government of Cambodia in reviewing and streamlining regulations on prohibitions, restrictions of goods stipulated in Sub-Decree 209, and risk management practices to facilitate trade in the previous reporting period. Following the WBG’s recommendation, the government formally established a task force to review the regulations. The TFSP also supported the introduction of a risk management methodology, helped facilitate a series of consultation workshops, and provided recommendations, including (A) better management of commodities through post-entry controls and therefore, removal of low-risk commodities from the list of restricted and prohibited items.
goods and (B) re-assessment of the need for multiple documentary requirements for imports and exports. This reform is expected to result in a significant reduction in trade costs.

- The government removed the presence of Camcontrol (another agency that was present at the border alongside customs) at border checkpoints. This is expected to significantly reduce compliance costs and fees for importers and exporters. The reform was a result of joint advocacy effort by the WBG (with TFSP support) and other development initiatives.

LAO People’s Democratic Republic (PDR)

TFSP support to Lao PDR

TFSP support to Lao PDR has focused on establishment and implementation of an AO program. Earlier support to Lao PDR focused on border agency cooperation.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators
8 Border Agency Cooperation

FY20 update on key activities

- Through TFSP support, the Lao Customs Department completed a brochure on the AEO program in both Lao and English, and the brochure will undergo review by the Director General of the Customs Department for publication in the next reporting period.
- The Guidelines on Management of Authorized Economic Operator developed with TFSP support was approved by the Minister of Finance (MOF) in April 2019. Subsequently, a dissemination workshop on the AEO program procedures and rules was conducted by Customs Department for 35 key customs staff and 30 traders. This activity was carried out jointly with the WB-financed Lao PDR Competitiveness and Trade Project (LCTP).
- As part of implementation efforts under the mentioned MOF’s Guidelines, the Lao Customs Department issued a supplemental recommendation in May 2020 to guide customs officers on the AEO program. Based on the country’s limited implementation capacity, AEO implementation will follow multiple phases, and the Lao Customs Department will also be training customs officers to ensure their understanding of the program. Lao Customs Department is now revising its action plan under the AEO program and aims to open the application process for traders by the end of December 2020.
- The TFSP-supported consultations on the AEO Guidelines were closely linked to the MOF’s efforts to establish formal guidelines on customs brokers. The MOF approved these guidelines in August 2019.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP financing complements a World Bank lending project that supports the government’s trade and integration priorities. The activities of AEO program are closely linked with the WB-financed LCTP that also implements a larger part of the TFA measures.
Mongolia

TFSP support to Mongolia

The TFSP currently supports the development of a TIP and the undertaking of TRS. Previously, support has also been provided on risk-based inspections and Authorized Operators, and NTFC

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through Internet
7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- TRS preparations took place from mid-June until mid-September 2019. The team developed 11 questionnaires based on the business process maps agreed upon with both Customs and the General Agency for Specialized Inspections (GASI). The TFSP-supported WBG team collaborated with several stakeholders—including the NTFC, brokers association, Customs, GASI, railway authority, and MIAT (a national airway company)—to communicate the TRS objectives and organizational matters and provide the necessary training on the data collection process. Data collection and training was supported in several locations, including Zamyn-Uud, Southern border control post (BCP), Altanbulag (Northern BCP), and at the Buyant-Ukhaa international airport. Data entry took place twice between the end of October 2019 and January 2020 with strict quality checks. The COVID-19 outbreak caused some delays in the finalization of calculations, but the TRS report was completed in Mongolian. The TFSP supported team has discussed findings and draft recommendations with GASI, Customs, and the NTFC.

- An advisory agreement with Customs on TIP was signed in mid-August 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the procurement process and created delays for the project, especially by limiting international travel of key experts to support local preparations. Nevertheless, necessary online meetings and TIP trainings with Customs and NTFC have taken place. Sample terms of references were also provided to assist with the required institutional set-up, such as the TIP project Steering Committee and Technical Committee. The TFSP-supported team is also working on developing a communication strategy.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support to Mongolia complements a USD 2.3 million World Bank Export Development project to increase competitiveness of export-oriented sectors (meat and dairy).

Myanmar

TFSP support to Myanmar

TFSP support, following the delivery of the final TFA assessment and discussions with clients in 2015, has included implementation activities in the following areas: (A) assistance with the establishment
of a National Trade Facilitation Committee, which has been completed, (B) capacity building on risk management and early discussion on the establishment of a customs intelligence unit, which is ongoing, (C) publication of the customs valuation procedures in the National Gazette, which is ongoing and (D) review and re-drafting of the customs law to reflect new challenges and needs of modern customs operations, which is also ongoing.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
7.1 Pre-arrival Processing
7.4 Risk Management
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
10.3 Use of International Standards
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- With the continued technical advisory support of the TFSP, the Myanmar Customs Department (MCD) completed the first level of internal management review and revision of a new draft customs law that will enable implementation of a modernized customs administration that is based on international standards, including the WTO TFA and the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention.
- Through TFSP support, Myanmar submitted its WTO TFA notification of definitive dates for implementation of its Category B commitments.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP funding complements a World Bank trade facilitation project, and work under TFSP also helped leverage a lending operation currently in preparation (with a component focusing on modernizing customs and improving trade facilitation). The TFSP-funded TFA gap analysis helped inform UK Aid/DFAT bilateral funding.

Vietnam

TFSP support to Vietnam

While the TFSP-funded Vietnam Trade Information Portal (VTIP) project closed in 2017 following the launch of VTIP in July 2017, the TFSP has provided regular technical support in updating the VTIP and training for the General Department of Vietnam Customs [the VTIP host agency]. Previous support also included establishment of the National Trade Facilitation Committee and advice on analyzing the results of Vietnam’s Time Release Study. In FY19, the TFSP financed focus group discussions with traders in Vietnam, as part of a larger regional initiative on women and cross-border trade.
Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

- 1.1 Publication
- 1.2 Information Available through Internet
- 7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
- 23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- In FY20, minor TFSP support was provided in collaboration with DFAT bilateral support to extend the provision of technical assistance to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT) on the Free Trade Agreement Portal and to ensure its complementarity with the TFSP-supported work on the National Trade Portal.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

Early TFA engagement informed preparation of the National Logistic Action Plan and contributed to the content of a larger proposed World Bank lending project.

Regional Activities: Pacific Islands

TFSP support to Pacific Islands

Following the delivery of diagnostic and in-country TFA assessments to clients in six WTO Pacific Islands countries (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu), requests for further support of the implementation of TFA reform roadmaps were received from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Vanuatu. This work focuses on implementation activities related to risk management systems, simplification and harmonization of processes and procedures, and coordinated border management.

The TFSP-funded WBG team has facilitated national awareness and strategy visioning workshops for the implementation of the TFA in Fiji, Samoa, and Vanuatu. Recommendations from the workshops were used as direct inputs for the preparation of a regional IFC advisory project to support implementation of the TFA across the Pacific islands of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Vanuatu.

The TFSP has also assisted with a TFA needs assessments and reform roadmaps for non-WTO Pacific countries—the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, and Palau—complementing the ones already produced for the WTO Pacific countries listed above.

FY20 update on key activities

- In December 2019, biosecurity and customs officials from Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Samoa (customs only), and the Solomon Islands (biosecurity only) participated in a World Bank led “Regional Border Risk Management and Digital Information Workshop” in Auckland, New Zealand. The workshop focused on developing a better understanding of managing border risk and sharing awareness of common risks in the region to encourage a future cooperative approach between countries where practical.
- Participants received briefings, undertook discussions, and made site visits to New Zealand Customs and Ministry for Primary Industries [MPI] work areas. They were updated on joint border response systems
and new initiatives relating to the gathering of data for border risk management purposes. Participants shared examples from their own country experiences. Fiji provided a thorough update on its ongoing TFA project plans. Each country prepared a country specific “next steps” action plan to brief their respective NTFC and agency heads on the current impediments and opportunities that exist for improvement of border risk management processes within their TFA programs.

- A Trade and Gender Survey to identify the main challenges that cross-border traders face related to trade facilitation at the firm level was carried out in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu, and Timor-Leste. The survey was first piloted in Fiji in the last reporting period, and survey findings and recommendations for Fiji were finalized and published this reporting period. The Fiji report was presented to Heads of Customs and senior management of 14 Pacific Islands during a conference organized by the Oceania Customs Organization (OCO) in Nadi, Fiji in December 2019. Data collection in Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu, and Timor-Leste took place this reporting period as well, and the report findings and recommendations are expected to be published in the next reporting period. A total of 1,538 cross-border trading firms (including freight forwarders) were interviewed across the five countries.

Country-specific Activities: Pacific Islands

Fiji

TFSP support to Fiji

With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WBG with TFSP support quickly provided support to the government of Fiji in developing a response to the pandemic. Through TFSP, the WBG also assisted with Fiji’s notification and provided support for the ratification and categorization process. Previously, the TFSP supported the National Trade Facilitation Committee with the development of the Fiji TFA Roadmap and National TFA Action Plan. Activities and priorities identified for implementation include: (A) assistance to harmonize multi-agency border processes, to streamline processes and requirements, and to harmonize data; (B) assistance in preparation to implement a Single Window system, including collaboration and coordination; and (C) assistance in developing the trusted trader program and related risk profiling. In addition, in response to donor interest, the TFSP supported a pilot Trade and Gender Survey in Fiji to identify the main challenges that cross-border traders face related to trade facilitation at the firm level.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.4 Risk Management
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- In March 2020, FRCS prepared a “COVID-19 Response Budget and Summary of Revenue Policies” paper to provide details of arrangements to assist border clearances during the pandemic. The NTFC (and working group) arrangements established under the WBG TFA program were key enablers for the development of this plan.
- In August 2019, a TFSP-supported mission was conducted to assist the Ministry of Industry Trade and Tourism (MITT) to examine the current status of Fiji’s Category B and C notifications to agree on achievable definitive dates for the August 22, 2019, TFA notification. This included leading
individual meetings and focus groups with public sector stakeholders, including officials from MITT, the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS), Biosecurity Agency Fiji (BAF), Ministry of Health, Forestry Department, Fisheries Agency, and the Fiji Ports Authority. A draft notification was prepared and provided to MITT for consideration, including an update on technical assistance and capacity building (TACB).

- In December 2019, Fiji biosecurity and customs officials participated in a World Bank led “Regional Border Risk Management and Digital Information Workshop” in Auckland, New Zealand. The workshop was attended by five Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste. The workshop focused on developing a better understanding of managing border risk and sharing awareness of common risks in the region to encourage a future cooperative approach between countries where practical.

- FRCS played a lead role in the Auckland workshop and presented the successes and lessons learned from its efforts to share data between agencies and streamline cargo clearance procedures across the border [the Single Manifest Project implemented with TFSP support]. See section 1.6 for more details on this project.

- BAF officials participated in the New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries’ (MPI) demonstrations of its Joint Biosecurity Management System (JBMS), and this insight is assisting BAF to consider its future Biosecurity Management System (BMS) that is being scoped. The WBG continues to support BAF’s intentions to develop an Advanced Biosecurity Management System (ABMS) by leading remote workshops with BAF officials to assist BAF in further defining its requirements.

- In June 2020, the WBG and BAF developed a “Remote Assistance Workplan” with focus on assisting BAF to implement E-Phyto, developing an improved Border Risk Management Program, and scoping Fiji’s requirements for “Secondary Testing Arrangements” as required in the TFA.

- The Trade and Gender Survey was piloted in Fiji from May to June 2019. A total of 571 active, cross-border trading firms (including freight forwarding firms) were interviewed. In this reporting period, survey responses were analyzed to identify the cross-border trade facilitation challenges that all traders face in Fiji, and particular attention was paid to identifying challenges that disproportionately hinder the ability of women-led firms to undertake cross-border trade. The findings and recommendations were presented to the government of Fiji as well as relevant private sector stakeholders in December 2019. The final “Fiji Trade Facilitation Challenges for Women Traders and Freight Forwarders: Survey Findings and Recommendations” report was published in January 2020.

**Papua New Guinea**

**TFSP support to Papua New Guinea**

During this reporting period, the TFSP supported Papua New Guinea’s TFA notification efforts as well as carried out the Trade and Gender Survey to identify the main challenges that cross-border traders face related to trade facilitation at the firm level. The TFSP has also supported Papua New Guinea in [A] improving customs risk management in customs and the National Agriculture Quarantine and Inspection Authority (NAQIA); [B] efforts to enhance border coordination between customs and quarantine functions; [C] formation and development of the National Trade Facilitation Committee; and [D] developing integrated processes for clearance by the Customs Service and NAQIA.
Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.4 Risk Management
8 Border Agency Cooperation
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- The TFSP supported Papua New Guinea to finalize their definitive notification requirements to the WTO.
- Data collection for the Trade and Gender Survey was undertaken from February to March 2020. A total of 183 active, cross-border trading firms (including freight forwarding firms) were interviewed. Analysis of the results is ongoing, and the final report is expected in the next reporting period.

Samoa

TFSP support to Samoa

The TFSP has assisted Samoa with categorization of WTO TFA articles and has provided support for its ratification and notification process. Following a WTO TFA awareness briefing and a strategy and visioning workshop for the private sector and government officials, the TFSP assisted the National Trade Facilitation Committee with the development of the Samoa TFA Roadmap and National TFA Action Plan. Activities and priorities identified for implementation include: (A) assistance to harmonize multiagency border processes, to streamline processes and requirements, and to harmonize data; (B) support to coordinate border management; (C) support on improving the risk management system; and (D) assistance with the assessment of preparedness to implement a National Single Window. In addition, based on donor interest, the TFSP supported the Trade and Gender Survey in Samoa to identify the main challenges that cross-border traders face related to trade facilitation at the firm level.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through Internet
7.4 Risk Management
8 Border Agency Cooperation
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- The TFSP supported Samoa in finalizing its notification requirements to the WTO.
- Data collection for the Trade and Gender Survey was undertaken from February to March 2020. A total of 195 active, cross-border trading firms (including freight forwarding firms) were interviewed. Analysis of the results is ongoing, and the final report is expected in the next reporting period.
Timor-Leste

TFSP support to Timor-Leste

The project under which TFSP support was channeled for support in Timor-Leste concluded in December 2019. Priority actions for implementation included: (A) simplifying procedures and enhancing the implementation of risk management; (B) conducting a targeted Time Release Study (TRS) and implementing key recommendations; and (C) aligning the sanitary and phytosanitary and customs legislation with the TFA and international best practice.

As part of the Trade and Gender Survey work in the Pacific Islands region to identify the main challenges that cross-border traders face related to trade facilitation at the firm level, the TFSP also carried out a survey in Timor-Leste. The findings of this work will be launched in the next reporting period.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.4 Risk Management
7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
10.3 Use of International Standards
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work

- The TFSP funded technical assistance toward the establishment of a Time Release Study (TRS) working group. The TRS Working Group was tasked with planning, undertaking, and reporting on the results of the TRS, particularly on the import of containerized cargo through the Port of Dili. The TRS was undertaken in June 2019. The TFSP supported training and technical assistance toward the TRS methodology, approach, and online software; about 30 percent of the participants were women.

- The TFSP also funded technical advice to align the Plant Health Decree Law and the draft Animal Health Decree Law with the draft Organic Law for the structure of the Ministry of Agriculture. All drafts were developed in consultation with the government and private sector stakeholders.

- The WBG made technical recommendations to draft import regulations for plants and plant products, biosecurity risk, and animals and animal products, as well as to draft export regulations for plants and plant products.

- Data collection for the Trade and Gender Survey was undertaken from February to March 2020. A total of 197 active, cross-border trading firms (including freight forwarding firms) were interviewed.

- In Timor-Leste, the TFSP-supported reforms reduced import time from 15.06 to 6.54 days and generated USD 5.5 million in savings for the private sector. This was achieved by recommending that the Tariff Classifications and Valuation Section be eliminated from the customs clearance process; enabling legal foundations for the new customs management system (ASYCUDA World) by drafting the new Customs Code that entered into force in 2017, as well as creating risk profiles, import process maps, and sharing of other intellectual property with UNCTAD to enable ASYCUDA implementation; implementing interventions to improve risk-management practices in the Risk Management Unit of customs; updating Timor-Leste’s 2012 HS Tariff classification to a newer ASEAN-compliant 2017 version; and providing extensive trainings to customs brokers and government officials to increase their knowledge and minimized the number of errors in submitted documents, which respectively contributed to a smoother customs clearance process.
Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support to Timor-Leste is complementing a USAID-funded Customs project.

Vanuatu

TFSP support to Vanuatu

The TFSP has supported Vanuatu with categorization of WTO TFA articles and the ratification and notification process. Following a WTO TFA awareness briefing and a strategy and visioning workshop for the private sector and government officials, the TFSP assisted the National Trade Facilitation Committee with the development of the Vanuatu TFA Roadmap and National TFA Action Plan. Activities and priorities identified for implementation include: (A) assistance to harmonize multiagency border processes, to streamline processes and requirements, and to harmonize data; (B) support to the biosecurity agency to improve its biosecurity risk and compliance for import and export clearances and to improve its risk management system; (C) assistance to amend biosecurity regulations to align with customs pre-arrival processing; (D) coordinated advice to traders for biosecurity holds; and (E) assistance with the assessment of preparedness to implement a National Single Window (NSW), including drafting of a blueprint for implementation. In addition, based on donor interest, the TFSP supported the Trade and Gender Survey in Vanuatu to identify the main challenges that cross-border traders face related to trade facilitation at the firm level.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

- 7.4 Risk Management
- 10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
- 10.4 Single Window
- 23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- The TFSP provided support towards Vanuatu’s May 2020 ratification of the WTO TFA.
- In December 2019, Vanuatu biosecurity and customs officials participated in a World Bank led “Regional Border Risk Management and Digital Information Workshop” in Auckland, New Zealand. The workshop was attended by representatives from five Pacific island countries and from Timor-Leste. The workshop focused on developing a better understanding of managing border risk and sharing awareness on common risks in the region to encourage a future cooperative approach between countries where practical.
- Biosecurity Vanuatu officials participated in the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries’ (MPI) demonstration of its Joint Biosecurity Management System (JBMS), and this insight is helping Biosecurity Vanuatu in considering future options for its current Vanuatu National Single Window project. At the end of the workshop, Vanuatu officials prepared a border risk management action plan with identified issues of concern in their current border risk management program.
- Biosecurity Vanuatu identified the need to develop a new border risk management program, specifically to advance the development of their risk-based procedures for imports and exports, and to obtain assistance with the implementation of automation systems for trade in plant products (Single Window and/or ePhyto systems). Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the WBG team and Vanuatu officials developed a
remote WEBEX assistance schedule for this process, which commenced in April 2020 and was planned to continue through 2020.

- During January 2020, remote assistance was provided to Department of External Trade to undertake its TFA implementation progress assessment and report requirements to the WTO under the TFA notification process for February 22, 2020.

- Data collection for the Trade and Gender Survey was undertaken from February to March 2020. A total of 392 active, cross-border trading firms (including freight forwarding firms) were interviewed. Analysis of the results is ongoing, and the final report is expected in the next reporting period.

**Leverage or complementarity of funds**

Through the close partnership between the WBG and the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), the EIF Tier 2 project is providing USD 1.5 million funding for the establishment of an electronic Single Window system in Vanuatu, leveraging the work undertaken by the WBG that was financed under the TFSP.
EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Regional Activities

In Europe and Central Asia, the TFSP supports countries in aligning their rules and regulations and their implementation capacity with the requirements of the WTO TFA.

FY20 update on key activities

- Alignment of trade processes and procedures with the WTO TFA was assessed for the Western Balkans countries using the revised TFA Tracking Tool methodology [see section 1.5 for more details on the tool]. The revised methodology was applied to the original USAID/WBG sponsored national self-assessments from 2014/2015 as well as the update from 2018.

- The TFSP continued to finance technical assistance to sanitary and phytosanitary agencies in the region by initiating contacts and collaboration with phytosanitary agencies in North Macedonia, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This work follows technical assistance to regional food and veterinary agencies. The objective is for these agencies to use a risk-based approach to inspections and sampling, which would reduce the level of inspections performed at the present time. This would also speed-up border/terminal processing of cargo and in turn continue to protect the safety and health of consumers. In addition, food, veterinary, and plant experts are developing a series of video recordings on risk management of goods for SPS agencies, which will be offered online in the coming fiscal year.

- The WBG and the USAID Regional Economic Growth Project (USAID REG Project) have been collaborating since September 2015 to help the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) parties establish NTFCs. All CEFTA countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, and Serbia) have established NTFCs through support from the two partners. USAID REG and the WBG (with TFSP support) have been providing operational assistance and expert guidance to select NTFC working groups. For example, TFSP supported the development of NTFC annual reports, workplans for NTFC technical working groups, the collation of inventories of trade-related fees and charges, presentation of TRS results, and event facilitation.

- The WBG co-hosted, and participated in, a number of regional events, meetings, and conferences in FY20 with TFSP support. See annex B on Knowledge Management for more details on the events and meetings.
Country-specific Activities: Europe

Albania

TFSP support to Albania

During this reporting period, the WBG engaged with the Albanian General Directorate of Customs on the adoption of new procedures based on the recommendations provided in the Time Release Study conducted through TFSP. Discussions were also held with the Ministry of Finance and Economy on the implementation of recommendations provided in the Study of Fees and Charges conducted with TFSP support.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

6.1 General Disciplines on Fees and Charges Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation

6.2 Specific Disciplines on Fees and Charges for Customs Processing Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation

7.4 Risk management

7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times

7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators

8 Border Agency Cooperation

10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

11 Freedom of Transit

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- The WBG team updated its assessment on the level of alignment between Albania’s trade facilitation practice and the WTO TFA. The update allows the team to monitor Albania’s progress toward the full and effective implementation of the WTO TFA by comparing the updated measurement with a previously established baseline.

- The TFSP financed a two-day workshop on Authorized Operators (AO) for Albania and Kosovo Customs in February 2020, in Pristina. The workshop sought to make progress in the development of AO programs by both administrations, and the agenda included a visit to the premises of one of the newly approved AOs in Kosovo and videoconference Q&A session with a senior customs official from Slovakia. See annex B on Knowledge Management for more information on the workshop.

- As required by CEFTA Additional Protocol 5 on Trade Facilitation and the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, Albania committed to doing inventory and publishing all trade-related fees and charges, including amount, justification, method, and timing of payment. A study on trade-related fees and charges was developed. A TFSP-funded consultant compiled an inventory and analyzed the underlying legal basis, justification, and proportionality of the fees and charges as well as developed recommendations for elimination, reduction, and harmonization. In September 2019, the report was finalized and sent to the NTFC for review and discussion.

- A new single act for fees and charges called “For determination of fees to perform special services and their administration by the Customs Authority” was implemented by the customs administration based
on the provisions of the new Customs Code and the study of fees and charges conducted with TFSP support. This instruction, among other things, provides guidance on the special services and fees for these services (Annex 1 of the instruction), as well as identified the responsible authority for collecting the fees. Annex 2 of the instruction explains the steps for encashment procedures for the fees and contains all the registration formats for each type of service.

- The customs administration of Albania adopted a number of improvements in response to the recommendations formulated in the TFSP-supported TRS implemented in 2018. These included:
  - Enabling electronic closing of the transit declaration by integrating automated control of goods from the moment that the goods enter the Albanian territory to the specification of the type of customs regime.
  - Enabling the provision of scanned documents needed to support the transit declaration in the ASYCUDA World System, which replaces the previous requirement to submit hard copies. This applies to the invoice, cargo manifest, and authorizations to enter, transit, or leave the Albanian territory.
  - Simplifying and making more transparent the procedures for the approval and functioning of customs representation, specifically registration of the customs representative, procedures for the approval of direct and indirect representation, and procedures for the customs agent/agency licensing process.
  - Adopting an order regarding performance criteria for all structures of the Albanian Customs Service. The order was adopted by the Customs Directorate and establishes clear standards by which performance can be tracked and assessed.
  - Aiming to investigate the time and cost savings for traders of the “Paperless Customs” initiative launched in FY19 based on recommendations made in the TFSP-supported TRS to allow companies to file customs declarations electronically, a survey among the seven biggest trading companies operating in Albania was conducted with TFSP support. An initial review indicates savings have been generated for the private sector as a result of this new process.
  - The TFSP supported North Macedonia and Albania Customs with the establishment of joint controls at their joint border crossing point (BCP) Qafe Thane/Kjafasan. The TFSP financed the preparation of a report on procedures mapping at the border on both sides. Similar support was provided to the border authorities of Serbia and of the Republic of North Macedonia regarding joint controls at the Tabanovce/Presevo BCP.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support complements the Albania Investment Climate Competitiveness Project and a World Bank development policy loan on trade and transport facilitation. It also aligns with a regional USAID project and a Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) trade facilitation project, both supporting trade facilitation initiatives.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

TFSP support to Bosnia and Herzegovina

In this reporting period, the TFSP supported WBG team engaged with the SPS authorities on a risk management capacity building program. Previously, in collaboration with USAID, the TFSP supported Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) with the establishment and operation of an NTFC, which was created in FY18. The NTFC has adopted a work program for the period of 2020–2025 along with an action plan.
Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

8 Border Agency Cooperation
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- Building on last year’s scoping visit, the team engaged with the SPS agency of the Republika Srpska that subsequently completed a detailed questionnaire regarding its activities and focused on border controls. An expert mission was undertaken in July 2019 to meet with agency management, inspectors, and private sector representatives and to visit border facilities in both the Republika Srpska and the Federation and with the BiH Plant Protection Administration.

- A training on risk-based border controls for SPS agencies was proposed by the TFSP-supported WBG team to the federal SPS agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The COVID-19 outbreak, however, interrupted the dialogue, and face-to-face training is not possible at this stage. Instead, the TFSP financed the development of a set of virtual training sessions on risk management in SPS agencies. This material will be made widely available to SPS agencies in the ECA region.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support is complementary to the IFC’s Bosnia Investment Climate Project. TFSP support complements the work of two regional trade facilitation projects funded by USAID and GIZ.

Kosovo

TFSP support to Kosovo

The agreed areas of TFSP assistance in Kosovo include helping to operate the NTFC working groups, implementing the Authorized Operator program, supporting the Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency (KVFA) with the development and implementation of a risk management framework and an annual sampling plan, and repeat of the Time Release Study.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

6.1 General Disciplines on Fees and Charges Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation
7.4 Risk Management
7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators
10.4 Single Window
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation
**FY20 update on key activities**

- The TFSP-supported WBG team has been working with the Phytosanitary Department of KFVA since the fall of 2019 on the elaboration of a risk-based approach to trade controls. A first workshop was held in December 2019 on the elements and processes related to risk management, and a second workshop was held in January 2020 to make further progress. See annex B on Knowledge Management for more information on these workshops.

- The TFSP has been supporting the Kosovo Customs Administration with the development of an AO program and with outreach to the private sector. Customs recently established a committee to review and approve applications for the AO program. In February 2020, the TFSP supported a second workshop for the AO teams of the Albania and Kosovo Customs Administration (the first was held in May 2019). Since then, Kosovo Customs has established an AEO Review Commission and officially launched the program in October 2019. Customs has now certified two Authorized Operators. Commission representatives shared information on its set-up and functioning, including their experience and challenges during the certification process, with their Albanian peers.

- In 2016, the TFSP supported Kosovo customs with its first Time Release Study. This study will be repeated during calendar year 2020/21 depending on the COVID-19 situation, and preparations are underway.

- A WBG team assessed the alignment level of Kosovo’s trade processes and procedures with the WTO TFA using the granular TFA Tracking Tool methodology.

**Leverage or complementarity of funds**

TFSP support complements the work of two regional trade facilitation projects funded by USAID and GIZ.

**Republic of North Macedonia**

**TFSP support to the Republic of North Macedonia**

During FY20, TFSP support to North Macedonia focused on continuing capacity building with the Phytosanitary Inspectorate as it related to risk-based border inspections, preparations for a Time Release Study, coordinated border management through joint border controls with Serbia, and preparations for a National Single Window.

**Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)**

- **7.4 Risk Management**
- **8 Border Agency Cooperation**

**FY20 update on key activities**

- The TFSP provided support in implementing risk-based inspection in the State Agriculture Inspectorate (SAI)—Phytosanitary Inspection of North Macedonia. Several rounds of workshops and meetings were organized with members of SAI, where senior officials and border inspectors convened with a WBG expert and developed seminal documents for the introduction of a risk-based border inspection regime for phytosanitary products. Together with the Phytosanitary Inspectorate, the TFSP developed
a comprehensive manual for border inspectors. From it, the team also developed a brochure on SPS risk-based border inspections, which will be available in early fall.

- The WBG, Macedonia Customs, and the NTFC have agreed to collaborate on the implementation of a Time Release Study. The team began the mapping of border crossing points and terminals when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, and the planned implementation date of May 2020 had to be postponed. A detailed Terms of Reference has been developed and can be activated as soon as the environment allows.

- Joint border controls between North Macedonia and Serbia were established in August 2019, when the Prime Ministers of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia marked the official launch of joint controls at the BCP Tabanovce—Preshevo. High-level delegations and senior customs and police representatives of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia attended the event, along with representatives of the chambers of commerce. Leading up to the establishment of the joint border controls, the WBG organized workshops and shared international best practices materials as well as conducted analysis and prepared a report on the feasibility of a joint (one-stop) border crossing control zone at the road border Tabanovce—Presevo. One of the models described in the reports was chosen to be the model that is being implemented by both countries. It is expected that this reform will result in faster flow of passengers, goods, and vehicles; a greater number of tourists in the two countries, as well as transit tourists; and improved control of border formalities by all competent authorities at one stop.

- In September 2019, TFSP co-hosted a workshop with Macedonia Customs and the UNECE in Skopje on the best practices related to the development and implementation of a National Single Window. High-level officials of the customs authorities of the CEFTA countries, UNECE, IBRD, the WBG, and the European Commission launched a second expert workshop on the implementation of the Single Window system concept for export and import customs clearance and data exchange for the Western Balkan countries. During the two-day workshop, participants discussed the results of the UNECE’s long-term projects focusing on trade facilitation and the Single Window system in the region.

**Leverage or complementarity of funds**

TFSP support complements the work of two regional trade facilitation projects funded by USAID and GIZ.

**Moldova**

**TFSP support to Moldova**

The TFSP supported the government of Moldova with amending its regulations on customs valuation of goods. The TFSP previously provided support to Moldova to update its Category B and C notifications and supported the drafting of the National Trade Facilitation Committee Action Plan for Trade Facilitation Agreement implementation. The project also provided support to the National Food Safety Agency (ANSA) on risk assessment.

**Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)**

- **7.4** Risk Management
- **23.2** National Committee on Trade Facilitation
FY20 update on key activities

- In December 2019, the government approved amendments to the customs valuation rules, which were developed and promoted by TFSP-funded work.
- The TFSP continues to support the suitability of the NTFC.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The TFSP support is aligned with the IFC Moldova Investment Climate Reform Project.

Montenegro

TFSP support to Montenegro

The TFSP provides support to Montenegro in the development of a service-oriented approach towards trade to be achieved by way of transparent, streamlined and consistent procedures, regulations and control methods through the expanded use of simplified procedures, inventory of fees and charges, and trade facilitation measures for Authorized Operators. The TFSP also supports the development of the necessary IT instruments that enable proper functioning of a risk management system, as well as capacity building for a post-clearance audit unit to ensure that auditors and managers have all the necessary knowledge and skills to plan and carry out their duties.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

6.1 General Disciplines on Fees and Charges Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation
7.4 Risk Management
7.5 Post-Clearance Audit
7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- The TFSP supported the development of legislation and procedures ensuring efficient protection of international supply chains against security threats while also facilitating trade by the internationally recognized method of instituting an Authorized Operator program. The TFSP supported trainings dealing with the authorization criteria; verified process and post-authorization control; and drafted amendments to the decree on the conditions for granting AO status, standard operating procedures for AOs, AO guidelines, a self-assessment questionnaire and clarifications to the self-assessment questionnaire. An independent validation commission confirmed that the Montenegrin AO program meets the requirements and criteria.
- The TFSP financed training on conducting audit assessments with select Montenegro customs staff to strengthen the efficiency of assessments of an Authorized Operator’s financial solvency and its compliance with customs and taxation rules. Training was provided by the Institute of Certified Accountants
with an aim to enable efficient, quality-controlled audits of Authorized Operators using appropriate methods and to establish a quality assurance program ensuring that audits are undertaken to the requisite standards.

- In response to the capacity building request by the Risk Management Unit, the TFSP supported two weeks of training to upgrade the customs risk management statistical reporting system (business intelligence) from online transactional processing (OLTP) to online analytical processing (OLAP) based on a multi-dimensional method. Twenty new risk management reports were created with a parameter of a single point entry for all reports. The new system should result in a reduced percentage of interventions and improved effectiveness (“hit rate”).

- The TFSP supported the upgrade of an existing software module within the customs information system, enabling 24/7 clearance time for holders of authorizations for simplified procedures (previous clearance time for simplified procedures was 07:00–13:00, Monday to Friday) and enabling the wider use of simplified customs procedures by economic operators. The percentage of import declarations processed within simplified procedures in relation to the total number of declarations has increased by 91 percent.

- Following an NTFC request, the TFSP supported an inventory of all fees and charges imposed on the import and export of goods that are prescribed by regulation or applied in practice. Based on the inventory, an analysis and comparison with relevant standards is being carried out, and will propose measures for simplification, consolidation and/or elimination, where practicable. The final report with recommendations will be developed in the next reporting period.

- The TFSP supported technical assistance for a second Time Release Study. The questionnaires used in the first TRS were reviewed and additional questions that are relevant for assessing the implementation performance of the Trade facilitation Strategy were incorporated. However, the study was postponed until spring 2021 due to COVID-19.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support complements the work of two regional trade facilitation projects funded by USAID and GIZ.

Serbia

TFSP support to Serbia

To ensure that trade continues to flow during the COVID-19 pandemic, the TFSP is supporting Serbian customs to further automate customs processes and promote the regional Green Corridors Initiative.

The TFSP has also supported the customs administration of Serbia with the maintenance of a new user-friendly and sophisticated information technology (IT), promoted the concept of joint controls at the main road BCP between Serbia and North Macedonia, and supported the National Trade Facilitation Committee. In prior reporting periods, TFSP provided training and capacity building on post-clearance audit practices regarding complex transactions involving transfer prices, royalties, and license fees. The TFSP also supported the NTFC with developing new action plans for its permanent specialized working groups and the drafting of the mandatory annual NTFC report to the government.
Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

3  Advance Rulings
6.1  General Disciplines on Fees and Charges
7.4  Risk Management
7.5  Post-Clearance Audit
7.6  Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
7.7  Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators
8  Border Agency Cooperation
10.1  Formalities and Document Requirements
23.2  National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- At the request of the customs administration of Serbia to ensure that trade continues to flow during the COVID-19 pandemic, the TFSP is supporting the development of tools to electronically issue and sign EUR.1 movement certificates on origin of goods and to enable the online verification and authentication of movement certificates. New software eliminates direct personal contact by enabling electronic submission of requests for the issuance of EUR.1 movement certificates along with the supporting documentation. It also enhances the security of certificates through automatic generation of security verification codes and QR codes to the certificate and provides an online system for verification of the authenticity of certificates to foreign customs administrations.

- The TFSP supported the Serbian Customs Administration with maintenance of the new-user friendly and sophisticated information technology application launched in June 2019, enabling efficient management of business processes related to the origin of goods. Additionally, two new web-based electronic services enable traders to submit requests for advance rulings and to apply for the rules of origin examination online (a requirement to be awarded the preferential approved exporter status). The new IT application enables customs to work faster, more efficiently, and be more responsive to traders’ needs.

- The TFSP supported the NTFC Serbia with the preparation of a Single List of Fees and Charges in relation to export, import, and transit and in line with the requirements of CEFTA Additional Protocol 5, which was officially notified to the CEFTA Secretariat for publication in CEFTA Transparency Pack in December 2019. The Single List contains information on 122 different types of fees and charges levied by 10 different competent authorities. In consultations with the NTFC, the TFSP provided a set of recommendations for the abolishment or reduction of certain fees, as well as recommendations regarding required proofs of payment as many competent authorities continue insisting on original proofs of payment. The Single List was also publicized on the NTFC website.

- The TFSP supported the establishment of joint (juxtaposed) controls between Serbia and North Macedonia at the road traffic border crossing point of Presevo/Tabanovce with the aim to reduce the time and cost of commercial cargo clearance for traders. Serbia ratified the agreement with North Macedonia on joint traffic controls at Presevo-Tabanovce border crossing in late July 2019.

- The TFSP provided advisory assistance to the NTFC on the development of action plans for the NTFC’s permanent working groups for 2020–2021. A series of consultations were held with the four national private sector associations through the working groups in order to define priority actions for the NTFC in the coming period. There is considerable inclusion of women in each of the working groups, with
many of the national associations sending women representatives to participate in consultations. The action plans were formally adopted in January 2020. Additionally, the TFSP supports the NTFC with compiling mandatory annual reports to the government of Serbia on NTFC work.

- With TFSP support, the WBG promoted the system of “Green Corridors” at selected border crossings within the CEFTA region that was set up in April 2020 to facilitate traffic and trade in goods in the region as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Border crossings in this regime are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In Serbia, this system includes the border crossings of Sremska Raca, Presevo, Gostun, and Merdare. Together with private sector association, AmCham, the TFSP organized an online conference on the “Green Corridors” initiative in CEFTA in June 2020, to facilitate discussions between the private sector and representatives of the NTFC, customs administration, Ministry of Transport, and border phytosanitary and veterinary inspections.

- The TFSP Secretariat updated its assessment of Serbia’s alignment with the WTO TFA using the granular TFA Tracking Tool methodology.

**Leverage or complementarity of funds**

TFSP support complements the work of two regional trade facilitation projects funded by USAID and GIZ.

**Country-specific Activities: Caucuses**

**Georgia**

**TFSP support to Georgia**

TFSP support to Georgia has been centered on assistance in developing a standard operating procedures manual for customs valuation and on creation of a National Trade Facilitation Committee.

**Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)**

7.4 Risk Management

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

**FY20 update on key activities**

- The National Trade Facilitation Committee, created as a result of TFSP-supported efforts in the previous reporting period, gathered twice on August 15, 2019, and November 15, 2019. The Committee discussed pressing issues related to introduction of the new Customs Code and related secondary regulation, with particular attention paid to the Authorized Operator program. With an aim to ensure continued cooperation and work on trade facilitation measures, the Committee established a permanent working group tasked with elaborating new proposals and recommendations on international trade issues.

- In October 2019, TFSP supported a three-day workshop with experts from the Georgia Customs Department to review and finalize a draft of a standard operating procedures manual (SOP) for customs valuation control. The main changes introduced were procedures for the application of WTO alternative methods of valuation (deductive, computed, and fall back methods), as well as questionnaire and technical aid to support customs implementation of these methods. A final version of the manual was translated and submitted to customs in December 2019.
Country-specific Activities: Central Asia

Қазақстан (inactive in FY20)

TFSP support to Қазақстан

TFSP did not provide active support to Kazakhstan in this reporting period. Previously, the TFSP assisted the government in creating the National Trade Facilitation Committee, the development of the NTFC action plan, and provided guidance on the notification process for Categories A, B, and C of the WTO TFA.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Кыргыз Республика

TFSP support to Кыргыз Республика

In the Kyrgyz Republic, the TFSP has provided support to the government in setting up the NTFC. More recently, the project provided support to two NTFC working groups (one on Time Release Study and another on risk management). Support was provided in previous reporting periods for the implementation of a TRS. The report on the TRS was published on the official customs website, and customs is actively working on implementing the TRS recommendations. Due to COVID-19, curfews and emergency measures were imposed in the Kyrgyz Republic, which has made it more difficult to communicate and collaborate with project stakeholders. A TRS has been postponed until the situation at the borders normalizes.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through Internet
7.4 Risk Management
7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Customs Service initiated requests for support of a new Customs Targeting Center, assistance with establishing a Pre-arrival Information Portal, and help with security tools for Customs Services’ ICT infrastructure. Customs was also interested in the priority “green lane” system established by the EU and the Western Balkan countries for priority processing of essential goods at borders. The TFSP supported best practice guidance and advice in response to these requests.
- The TFSP continued supporting work with SPS agency staff on the development of risk categorizations for products under SPS jurisdiction and the development of a monitoring sampling plan and a handbook detailing implementing procedures. In November 2019, a standard operating procedures (SOP) manual on
import controls based on risk analysis was approved by the Director of the State Inspectorate of Veterinary and Phytosanitary Safety.

- Five product-specific SOPs (for dairy and meat products) were developed during this reporting period with TFSP support. SOPs for cereals, animal skins, and other products are being drafted.

- The WBG provided assistance to develop a more informative and user-friendly website for traders based on a request by Kyrgyz Customs in the previous reporting period. A new website was launched by the Kyrgyz Customs Service in April 2020, providing information on customs operations and a calculator to determine customs payments for certain categories of goods. Further planned improvements include the electronic submission of declarations and integration with the Kyrgyz Government’s Open Data Portal.

**Leverage or complementarity of funds**

TFSP support complements the work of two regional trade facilitation projects funded by USAID and GIZ. The TFSP is also coordinating with the OSCE regarding the planned implementation of a second Time Release Study in 2021.

**Tajikistan (inactive in FY20)**

**TFSP support to Tajikistan**

The TFSP did not provide active support to Tajikistan during this reporting period. Previously, TFSP supported customs in simplifying procedures for clearing goods, as well as both the customs administration and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT)/National Trade Facilitation Committee on the development of an Authorized Operator scheme and expedited procedures for agricultural exports. With TFSP support, the WBG also reviewed the situation in Tajikistan related to risk-based border controls carried out by SPS agencies. The WBG also collaborated with the customs administration and the NTFC on the implementation of a Time Release Study. It also assisted the customs administration with the development of its national nomenclature for goods in line with WCO standards.

**Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)**

7.4 Risk Management
7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators
7.9 Perishable Goods
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

**Leverage or complementarity of funds**

TFSP support complements the work of two regional trade facilitation projects funded by USAID and GIZ.
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Lebanon

TFSP support to Lebanon

The TFSP supports the Lebanese government in adopting best practice trade facilitation policies and strategies, including through [A] the development of a customs strategy, [B] the development of a risk management strategy, [C] the development a national electronic Single Window vision agreement leading to a holistic National Single Window framework, and [D] the undertaking of a Time Release Study.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.4 Risk Management

FY20 update on key activities15

- A customs strategy and a risk management strategy were developed and submitted to customs for consideration in the previous reporting period. Due to major political instability, the WBG team could only undertake one mission in this reporting period.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP funds are complementary to financing received under the Umbrella Facility for Trade. Discussions are also ongoing about a larger lending project and on involvement in the Port of Beirut disaster reconstruction.

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15 The TFSP is collaborating closely with the government of Lebanon to respond to the Port of Beirut disaster.
SOUTH AMERICA

Bolivia

TFSP support to Bolivia

TFSP supported work in Bolivia was initiated in the previous reporting period and focuses on the creation of the National Trade Facilitation Committee.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY20 update on key activities

- The TFSP-supported team has developed draft TORs for the NTFC in Bolivia and a draft action plan on trade facilitation based on the TFA Gap Assessment. In the reporting period, the team worked closely with the government in moving the TORs and creation of the NTFC forward.
- In October 2019, elections led to domestic turmoil and change of leadership in many key positions, and most WBG support to the country was placed on hold. In February 2020, a Supreme Decree creating the NTFC was close to passing but was again placed on hold because of the outbreak of COVID-19.
- At the end of the reporting period, the TFSP-supported team explored virtual ways of assisting the government to address challenges caused by the pandemic.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support to Bolivia is complemented by the WCO’s support to customs in aligning border management process and procedures with the WTO TFA.
SOUTH ASIA

Regional Highlights of Achievements of TFSP Funded Work

In South Asia, TFSP provided support in Nepal and Bangladesh to comprehensively train government officials on a variety of trade-related subjects, to improve risk-management at the border crossing posts of Biratnagar and Birgunj in Nepal, as well as to implement an Online Licensing Module (OLM) in Bangladesh. In 2018, time to import at Biratnagar and Birgunj fell by 0.4 days respectively, and time to export was reduced by 1 and 0.8 days respectively, leading to a total of USD 985,000 in savings for the private sector in Nepal. The OLM reform in Bangladesh is estimated to generate at least USD 71,000 in savings annually from the reduction of fees associated with documents that have been eliminated with the introduction of OLM. Total savings from TFSP-supported reforms is around USD 1 million for the private sector.

Country-specific Activities

Bangladesh

TFSP support to Bangladesh

TFSP support in Bangladesh complemented a larger WBG project that was completed in the reporting period. TFSP support was centered around strengthening Bangladesh’s border agency coordination, risk management, legal framework, and other trade processes.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through Internet
7.4 Risk Management
7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators
10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation
Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work

- An OLM was piloted in December 2018 and became fully operational in October 2019. It was officially launched in July 2019 with formal inauguration by the Commerce Minister. The full-fledged OLM includes new features per requirements of the Chief Controller of Imports & Exports. The OLM helped simplify the registration application process by providing online facilities to submit applications for import/export registration. This helped automate 55 services related to export and import, reduce the number of in-person visits and time associated with them, reduce documents, and deliver approximated USD 71,000 in savings in associated fees for the private sector community.

- Through TFSP support, the Ministry of Commerce launched a national trade portal to provide access to information in both English and Bangla for traders regarding the import and export processes. Since launch, the portal has had 383,448 views from 159 countries.

- Time Release Studies were completed in the port of Chittagong, air cargo, inland container depot, Dhaka, and Benapole. Through technical assistance and simplification of procedures, import clearance time was reduced from 12.2 days to 9.6 days at the port of Chittagong.

- The reform initiatives helped the country prepare for the implementation of a Single Window program, which was financed by a WBG loan.

- With TFSP support, Bangladesh was also successful in establishing a National Trade Facilitation Committee, adopting a risk management framework, and undertaking a comprehensive revision of its customs code.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

World Bank investment project financing of USD 74 million was leveraged for the Single Window program, trade portal sustainability, and risk systems (as complementary activities).

Nepal

TFSP support to Nepal

TFSP support in Nepal complemented a regional WBG project that was completed in the reporting period. TFSP supported work on risk management, post-clearance audit, and transit.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

- Risk Management
- Post-Clearance Audit
- Freedom of Transit

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work

- Stakeholder validation undertaken in 2019 suggests that the following improvements have taken place since the initial assessment was carried out in 2015: [A] increase in Category A measures from 2 to 9, [B] decrease in Category B measures from 15 to 13, and [C] decrease in Category C measures from 19 to 14.
The TFSP provided support on risk management to the Department of Customs in Nepal since 2013. Analysis of ASYCUDA World (AW) transaction data revealed that green channel clearance steadily rose from less than 1 percent at both Birgunj and Biratnagar (2013/14) to more than 45 percent and 27 percent respectively by 2018/19. In addition, cumulative import and export clearance times have reduced by approximately 47 percent at both border posts, bringing a total of TFSP-supported savings of USD 985,000 for the private sector. These results were validated by private sector surveys as well as stakeholder consultations. Another factor contributing to reduction in clearance time, in Birgunj in particular, was the operationalization of an integrated check post (ICP).

Inland container depot (ICD) operators at the borders in Birgunj and Biratnagar were tailored to enable interface with AW. As a result, when trucks enter Nepal from these land customs stations, all information (i.e., time, data, truck number, driver name, and commodity) is captured electronically to generate an entry gate/exit pass. From a control perspective, this entry and exit pass generation is a considerable improvement, because through AW, customs can now electronically account for all trucks and commodities that enter and exit the ICD. Also, clearance times can now be assessed using the entry and exit date and time in AW. This improved automated control will facilitate greater control of the border posts because of the reduced need to manually record data and to account for transactions, ultimately speeding up processing and enabling automated risk management.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The TFSP financed advisory activities informed a USD 99 million World Bank Nepal–India Regional Trade and Transport Project, including supporting the creation of a National Single Window and the Nepal Trade Portal.

Sri Lanka

TFSP support to Sri Lanka

There was only minor TFSP support to Sri Lanka in the reporting period because of a variety of circumstances such as the prevailing political atmosphere and the spread of COVID-19. Previously, the TFSP financed a TFA gap analysis, which helped secure additional funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for an implementation project as well as an action on the TFA in a USD 100 million development policy loan and a component on trade facilitation (including National Single Window implementation) in a planned investment project (potentially also USD 100 million) for FY19–20. The planned investments did not take place, however, principally due to the political situation in the country.

Main areas of technical assistance recommended for inclusion in the DFAT financed project (TFA work priorities)

1.1 Publication
1.2 Information Available through the Internet
7.4 Risk Management
10.4 Single Window
FY20 update on key activities

- Although minimal activities took place with TFSP support in the reporting period, the WBG continued to push for the action areas highlighted in the National Single Window Blueprint, the Improving Effectiveness of Risk Management Report, and the guidance notes on the legal changes to the Customs Ordinance, which were delivered in the last reporting period.

- The TFSP supported Sri Lanka with its transparency notifications to the WTO by jointly delivering a workshop with the US CLDP Program.

- The TFSP provided minor technical support for the Trade Information Portal and the NTFC through an ongoing WBG project.
I. Knowledge Management Products

A. ONLINE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT TRACKING TOOL

The TFA Tracking Tool website was launched during the last reporting period and serves as a mechanism for countries to track their full and effective implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement and to report on their progress over time. The website underwent a re-design during this reporting period to support visualization of the enhanced, granular methodology and was launched in May 2020. Data for 30 Trade Facilitation Support Program-supported countries are currently available for viewing by approved users on the website; and the overall average alignment score for these 30 countries is 47 percent.

B. ONLINE COLLABORATION PORTAL: TRADE INFORMATION PORTALS

An online collaboration website was launched in April 2019 for client countries to share experiences about trade information portals. Over 45 members from client countries, WBG staff, and trade information portal experts have joined the platform, which leverages the WBG Collaboration for Development (C4D) online software. During the reporting period, seven new blogs were published: welcoming Zambia to the TIP family; wishing the Jamaica trade information portal a happy 1st birthday; welcoming Mongolia; COVID-19 and TIP; providing updates on the Eswatini trade portal (40 percent on track despite COVID-19); TIP version 3 coming; and the key to sustainability.
II. Select Events Supported by the Trade Facilitation Support Program (Peer-to-Peer Learning, Policy Dialogue)

1. PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING EVENT: ENSURING THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT—GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, JULY 2019

A trade facilitation learning event was jointly hosted by the WBG and the WTO TFAF for client countries in Geneva on July 2. The event built on the success of the previous Aid for Trade peer-to-peer [P2P] event and several joint regional events demonstrating the close bond between TFSP and the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF). Over 55 representatives from 15–20 countries participated in the event, predominantly from Ministries of Trade, customs, and SPS agencies. The agenda focused on the current state of play and the review of notification requirements and deadlines. It provided an opportunity for client countries to share experiences on the following topics: the legislative changes required to implement the TFA, enquiry points, and measuring the success of TFA implementation.

Event news article:

Event agenda:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-1vDiOiKcjNCLDxKJidnXRKcQjbjAGK

Event presentations and speaker bios:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tydLTIcevc0hcH5ga0Ccxtd5rOINWkB
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xrN4AJcydQzG6xyuQML6-E-rZhMq30f

Presentation made by the team:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tydLTIcevc0hcH5ga0Ccxtd5rOINWkB

Event photo gallery:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WR1Hh9Zpmj6FVc3DntRWmQZT5LqU

2. AID FOR TRADE GLOBAL REVIEW—GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, JULY 2019

The Aid for Trade Global Review 2019 took place from July 3-5 at the WTO in Geneva under the theme of “Supporting Economic Diversification and Empowerment for Inclusive, Sustainable Development through Aid for Trade”. The WBG team made presentations in a number of sessions, including: Trade capacity building in Zambia—A case study in country ownership and donor coordination; Gender integration in aid for trade facilitation—Existing tools and lessons learnt; Driving economic empowerment and diversification through international SPS standards; and Future directions on aid for trade with key donors [the latter hosted by DFID].
In addition, the WBG team and the WTO’s TFAF co-hosted Facilitation Feud—a game quizzing contestants on the Trade Facilitation Agreement based on a survey with answers collected from trade experts. Teams were made up of representatives from client countries, implementing and donor partners.

**News article:**
https://www.tfafacility.org/dont-miss-our-event-facilitation-feud-aid-trade-global-review

**Event photo gallery:**
https://www.flickr.com/photos/world_trade_organization/albums/72157709400865307/with/48204418202/

**Social media coverage:**
https://twitter.com/wto/status/1146822660787200001
https://twitter.com/wto/status/1146809656909676544LSEP
https://twitter.com/wto/status/1146806725896482817
https://twitter.com/wto/status/1146793407492345856

3. **TFA CONFERENCE—CAIRO, EGYPT, JULY 2019**

On July 17–28, the Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP), in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, International Trade Administration, and WBG, held a conference on the WTO TFA for officials from the Egyptian Customs Authority (ECA), members of the Egyptian National Trade Facilitation Committee, and representatives from the Federation of Egyptian Industries. In June, Egypt submitted its instrument of ratification and notified its B and C categories under the Agreement. At the conference, the Undersecretary of Egypt’s Ministry of International Trade and Industry and the Head of the ECA Customs Reform Unit presented on Egypt’s submissions, priorities for reform, and the progress the country has made in forming its NTFC and advancing customs draft legislation incorporating many TFA reforms. The WBG participated in expert panels, which featured a line-by-line review of the TFA provisions, and experts engaged multiple Egyptian agencies in a discussion on the TFA’s principles and best practices for its implementation.

**News article:**

4. **ADOPTION OF SIERRA LEONE’S NATIONAL TRADE FACILITATION PLAN—FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE, AUGUST 2019**

Since 2017, the WBG has supported Sierra Leone’s progress towards its trade facilitation goals, including the development of a National Trade Facilitation Plan (2019–2023). The country’s trade facilitation reforms are spearheaded by the multi-agency NTFC. In August, the five-year plan was formally adopted at the NTFC meeting attended by both the private and public sectors. By 2023, the strategy aims to reduce the time and costs needed to move goods across Sierra Leone’s borders to the level of fifty percent efficiency of middle-income countries.
5. WCO MEETINGS TO REDESIGN THE WCO TIME RELEASE STUDY—BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, SEPTEMBER 2019

The WBG was invited to participate in meetings to discuss the redesign of the WCO Time Release Study—a strategic and internationally recognized tool to measure the time required for the release and/or clearance of goods, from the time of arrival until the physical release of cargo, with a view to finding bottlenecks in the trade flow process and taking necessary measures to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of border procedures. The WCO TRS is specifically referenced in Article 7.6 of the WTO TFA as a tool to measure and publish the average release time of goods. The WBG team was invited to share practical experiences on implementation of the TRS as a key performance measure to assess, evaluate, and enhance the implementation of the WTO TFA.

6. SINGLE WINDOW WORKSHOP—SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA, SEPTEMBER 2019

In September, together with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the North Macedonian Customs Administration, the WBG co-hosted a workshop on best practices on the development and implementation of a National Single Window. Senior officials in the customs authorities of CEFTA countries, the UNECE, the European Commission, and the WBG participated in the two-day workshop. The WBG also supported a second expert workshop on the implementation of Single Window systems for export and import customs clearance and data exchange for Western Balkans countries. In the coming years, all countries in the Western Balkans will be developing Single Windows for trade through a loan from the World Bank.

Media article:

7. AEO TRAINING—VIENTIANE, LAO PDR, SEPTEMBER 2019

The World Customs Organization, with support from the WBG, conducted an “Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) Validation Training Course” for Lao People’s Democratic Republic from August 26–30 in Vientiane. This course was aimed at developing the Lao Customs Department’s capacity to effectively examine, validate, and grant an AEO status to compliant, secure and trusted economic operators, with a view to support the implementation of an AEO program in line with the provisions of the SAFE Framework of Standards and Article 7.7 of the WTO TFA. Twenty (20) officers from Lao Customs Department benefited from this training. Participants from other government agencies such as commerce, agriculture, fisheries, planning, and food and drugs, as well as representatives from the private sector also attended some modules of the training course.

News article:

8. ISO GLOBAL CONGRESS ON TRADE FACILITATION AND STANDARDS—CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, SEPTEMBER 2019

The WBG participated in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Week 2019 in Cape Town to discuss how the participation of developing countries is crucial for the future of the ISO. The meeting was part of a series of events that took place the same week including the ISO General Assembly, which focused on defining the future strategy of the organization.

Presentation—Key quotes from William Gain, Global Product Specialist for Trade Facilitation and Border Management:

“It’s important for developing countries to participate in global value chains, but additional policy choices and drivers around economic development are needed to ensure that benefits are sustained in the long-term and shared equally.”
“Addressing these challenges to empower developing countries, and level the playing ground cannot be done in isolation. International cooperation between organizations such as the ISO, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) is critical. The global approach has to be the answer.”

Event news item:
https://www.iso.org/news/ref2433.html

9. WTO PUBLIC FORUM AND TF COMMITTEE MEETING—GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, OCTOBER 2019

The WBG participated in the 2019 Public Forum—the WTO’s largest annual outreach event. It provides a unique platform for heads of states, parliamentarians, leading global businesspeople, students, academics and non-governmental organizations to come together and debate on a wide range of WTO issues and on some of the major trade and development topics of the day. The WBG partnered with the WTO TFAF to host a booth and provide an interactive space for participants to view trade facilitation work on the ground by showcasing the virtual reality films from Sierra Leone and Central America. Over 1,500 participants attended the forum.

Event news article:

10. STDF WORKING GROUP MEETING—GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, OCTOBER 2019

The WBG participated in the Standards Trade and Development Facility (STDF) working group meeting, which brings together partners and donors to take stock of the facility’s reach and results. The TFSP team informed participants of upcoming activities, including a brainstorming session on the creation of an SPS e-Cert Advisory Group—approved by the STDF Working Group in October 2019. The group, including WBG membership, is being set-up under the STDF to drive global collaboration on electronic SPS certification, which aims to improve efficiency and security, as well as reduce the time and costs to trade.

11. WTO TF COMMITTEE MEETING—GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, OCTOBER 2019

World Trade Organization members met under the Trade Facilitation Committee from October 15–16, including a dedicated session on technical assistance. Members reviewed a record number of 87 new notifications.

A number of delegations delivered presentations on their experiences with the implementation of TFA measures.

Meeting agenda and minutes:
https://tfadatabase.org/trade-facilitation-committee/meeting/2019-10-15

12. COSTA RICA AND EL SALVADOR: BILATERAL WORKSHOP ON FERRY OPERATIONS—SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR, OCTOBER 2019

A bilateral workshop on ferry operations in Costa Rica and El Salvador was held in San Salvador on October 25. Participants included the quarantine authorities, customs, ports authorities, SIECA, the Ministry of Economy of both El Salvador and Costa Rica. The workshop aimed to define the macro processes for ferry operations, as well as set a defined work plan to move forward. A new ferry terminal and service between both countries will be launched in 2020 and will enable the efficient trade of goods between both countries. The ferry initiative is part of the country’s Trade Facilitation Action Plan, which is led by the National Trade Facilitation Committee, coordinated by the Ministry of Economy, and supported by the WBG.

13. COORDINATED BORDER MANAGEMENT WORKSHOPS—COSTA RICA, NOVEMBER 2019 TO FEBRUARY 2020

A series of workshops on coordinated border management were held from November to February 2020. The workshops, led by WBG experts, aimed to train participants in coordinated border management to modernize
processes, learn from best practices, and promote the implementation of technology. Border agencies in Costa Rica participated in the workshops, including the quarantine authorities, customs, and the police.

14. PACER PLUS DONOR MEETING—AND TRADE FACILITATION—WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND, December 2019

The donors for PACER Plus - a trade and development agreement that aims to lower barriers, provide greater certainty for New Zealand businesses, and raise living standards, create jobs and increase exports in Pacific Island countries—met in Wellington in December. The WBG presented on trade facilitation and shared experiences from TFSP implementation.

15. CEFTA WEEK—TIRANA, ALBANIA, DECEMBER 2019

Chaired by Albania’s Ministry of Economy and Finance, a conference named the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) Week was held on December 15–16 in Tirana. The event was attended by over 100 representatives from Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Kosovo. Key topics included the creation of a regional trade facilitation committee; the establishment of a regional platform for Authorized Operators; identifying important sectors for facilitating trade of specific products and preparing the CEFTA legal framework for their full liberalization; negotiating and finalizing the regional risk management strategy; negotiating trade in services and agreeing on the commitment of the parties to further liberalize cooperation in this field; and regional initiatives to improve e-commerce and efforts to ensure free movement and right of establishment in the Western Balkans for natural and legal persons.

16. TFSP REGIONAL BORDER RISK MANAGEMENT AND DIGITAL INFORMATION WORKSHOP—AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, DECEMBER 2019

In December, the WBG held a workshop in the Pacific on “Regional Border Risk Management and Digital Information Workshop” in Auckland, New Zealand. Biosecurity and customs officials from Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Samoa (customs only), and the Solomon Islands (biosecurity only) participated in the event. The workshop focused on developing a better understanding of managing border risk and sharing common risks in the region to encourage a future cooperative approach between countries where practical. Participants received briefings, undertook discussions, and made site visits to New Zealand customs and the Ministry for Primary Industries. They were updated on joint border response systems and new initiatives relating to the gathering of data for border risk management purposes. Participants shared examples from their own country experiences, and Fiji provided a thorough update on its ongoing TFA project plans. Each country prepared a country specific “next steps” action plan to brief their respective NTFC and agency heads on the current impediments and opportunities that exist for improvement of border risk management processes within their TFA programs.

17. OCEANIA CUSTOMS ORGANISATION (OCO) WORKSHOP ON GENDER EQUALITY IN CUSTOMS—NADI, FIJI, DECEMBER 2019

The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) organized a regional workshop on “Change Management and Gender Equality” from December 2–6 in Nadi. The workshop was attended by 23 senior management staff (11 female/12 male) from 14 OCO member countries. The five-day workshop adopted a mixed training methodology such as presentations, group and plenary discussions. The WBG presented on trade facilitation and gender-specific barriers to trade in the Pacific. Some barriers included a lack of understanding and access to information, cumbersome procedures and inconsistency in tariffs and practices of regulation, limited representation industry/trade associations, and others. A key outcome from the conference was a draft action plan for increasing gender equality in customs, which the OCO is planning to develop further and provide support as needed.
Media article:

18. SPS RISK MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP—PRISTINA, KOSOVO, DECEMBER 2019

Since the fall of 2019, the WBG has been working with the Phytosanitary Department of the Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency (KFVA) on the development of a risk-based approach to trade controls. A workshop was held for KFVA phytosanitary officials in December in Pristina. It covered a review of existing compliance data, risk considerations that may be used in a risk-based inspection and sampling plan, improving data collection to support planning going forward, and drafting a risk management framework to guide policy decisions and standard operating procedures.

19. WILDLIFE FORUM—WASHINGTON, DC, JANUARY 2020

The WBG and the Global Environment Facility-funded Global Wildlife Program hosted a Wildlife Forum with the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCCWC) on January 27 in Washington. The forum convened donors, NGOs, and other US-based implementing partners to share information and on strengthening partnerships to promote sustainable development and combat wildlife crime. Thematic discussions featured presentations, panels, and demonstrations showcasing key governance, economics, trade, and technological issues that impact wildlife crime. The WBG presented its work on trade facilitation, the WTO TFA, and the National Single Window.

Event page:

20. SPS RISK MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP—PRISTINA, KOSOVO, JANUARY 2020

The WBG hosted a second workshop on a risk management for phytosanitary inspectors of KFVA. The workshop focused on the development of a strategic risk management policy, the establishment of risk categorization of commodities, and the development of standard operating procedures supporting the consistent application of risk-based inspection and sampling. The strategic risk management policy outlines the responsibilities, legal framework, planning processes, reporting, and overall structure of a risk-based management strategy for KFVA. The strategy also links to operational documents that will guide the work of KFVA phytosanitary inspectors.

21. JOINT AEO WORKSHOP—PRISTINA, KOSOVO, FEBRUARY 2020

The WBG held a joint workshop for the AEO teams of the Albania and Kosovo Customs Administrations. This was the second joint workshop (the first one was held in May 2019). Since then, the Kosovo Customs Administration has launched the AEO scheme and certified two Authorized Economic Operators. The workshop shared experience and lessons learned from Kosovo with Albanian peers. The workshop sought to address the challenges faced by customs and AEOs during the application and approval process, provide practical information concerning mutual recognition (MR), and how to maintain the momentum of a joint and collaborative approach. The agenda included a visit to the premises of one of the newly approved AEOs in Kosovo. On the second day, a videoconference Q&A session was held with a senior customs official from Slovakia so that participants could dialogue about the challenges faced by EU member states with regards to the introduction of MR agreements.

22. WTO TF COMMITTEE MEETING—GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, FEBRUARY 2020

World Trade Organization members met under the Trade Facilitation Committee in February to consider requests for additional time to notify Category B definitive dates from various Members.

Meeting agenda:
https://tfadatabase.org/trade-facilitation-committee/meeting/2020-02-20
23. TFA WORKING GROUP—BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, MARCH 2020

The twelfth TFA Working Group (TFAWG) meeting brought together over 100 delegates from WCO member nations, represented by customs administrations and relevant ministries, as well as trade negotiators from Geneva, donors, and other relevant stakeholders such as other global standard-setting bodies, the private sector, and academia. The agenda included an update on TFA ratifications/notifications and included a joint session with the Capacity Building Committee (CBC). Breakout sessions focused on key TFA matters, including the WCO’s Mercator Program; new opportunities for the Time Release Study, post-clearance audit and transit; the Single Window; customs cooperation, account-based management, and the release from final determination of Customs duties, taxes, fees and charges. The TFAWG also agreed on the 2020–21 work plan and elected a new chair and vice-chairperson for the committee. The WBG participated in the meeting and shared practical implementation experiences from the TFSP.

News article about the working group meeting: http://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2020/march/12th-tfawg.aspx

24. STDF WEBINAR—VIRTUAL, MAY 2020

The WBG was invited to participate in a webinar hosted by the Standards Trade and Development Facility (STDF). The theme of the session was “Future-proofing safe trade during COVID-19”. The virtual discussion highlighted how STDF partners are responding to COVID-19 and the support available, particularly for developing countries who are facing unprecedented trade challenges. The WBG spoke about its active role in supporting developing countries to protect plant health and facilitate safe trade during the pandemic, and how safe trade solutions play an essential role in protecting livelihoods and supporting economic recovery.

News article on the webinar: https://standardsfacility.org/future-proofing-safe-trade-during-covid-19

25. STDF WORKING GROUP MEETING—VIRTUAL, JUNE 2020

The WBG participated in the STDF working group meeting, which brings together partners and donors to take stock of the facility’s reach and results. The STDF 2019 Annual Report was launched at the meeting in the context of World Food Safety Day 2020 (June 11). Over 50 members from STDF’s global network joined the online launch, which focused on facing the future and shaping safe trade outcomes.

News article on the working group meeting: https://us4.campaign-archive.com/?u=1dd6e410f4874eaf3175abc&id=2287b5f418


26. MEETING ON GREEN CORRIDORS IN THE CEFTA REGION—VIRTUAL, JUNE 2020

Together with Serbia’s private sector association, AmCham, the WBG organized a virtual panel discussion on Green Priority Lanes to streamline trade in the Western Balkans region. The Green lane system was first implemented in April 2020 with WBG support at selected border crossings in the CEFTA region as a trade facilitation measure during COVID-19. The meeting was themed “Green Corridors—the path to faster foreign trade” and aimed to facilitate discussions with the private sector, the NTFC, customs, the Ministry of Transport, and phytosanitary agencies. Over 30 companies participated in the event.

Panelists focused on the demonstrated viability of green priority lanes in facilitating the efficient transport and trade of goods. Participants also discussed the measurable effects of the implementation of Green Lanes and the required changes to customs procedures. The customs administration presented steps already taken to relax transport and trade restrictions, and recommended the expansion of specific lanes for priority supplies. Other recommendations included the increased presence of customs police and more weighing-scales to reduce wait times at the border.

News article on the AmCham website: www.amcham.rs/news.33.html?newsId=3003

Event recording: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbfgQgkywF8&feature=youtu.be
Communications is an important element of the Trade Facilitation Support Program mission and focuses on:

- Raising awareness of program activities, results, and effects
- Increasing the visibility of the program and donor partners
- Disseminating useful trade facilitation material to stakeholders

During the reporting period, the TFSP Secretariat continued to build a foundation for communications and to embed it within project activities. The communications plan for FY19–20 guides the program’s approach to strategic communications and is supplemented with guidance (including donor visibility requirements) for team members on how to incorporate communications into specific activities. The Secretariat stepped up communications support to specific projects in the reporting period and will continue this effort going forward to increase visibility of projects and to ensure that the results reach target audiences.

The TFSP leveraged the following communications channels in FY20 (July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020):

### I. COVID-19 Communications

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, TFSP communications pivoted quickly to relevant topics that enabled a virtual dialogue with our government partners. Since all mission travel was banned, the WBTFSP team produced a short video, so that our experts could virtually connect with...

The note was widely disseminated in multiple languages: English (16,151 downloads), French (100 downloads), Russian (191 downloads), Spanish (165 downloads), and Portuguese (178 downloads).


All materials were published on the TFSP website and the WBG’s dedicated external webpage on COVID-19 and trade, along with additional notes prepared by the WBG’s Global Trade and Regional Integration Unit: https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/trade/brief/trade-and-covid-19.

Both the video and the guidance notes were shared widely with donor partners, country clients, and implementing partners. Many of these organizations then shared the resources with their stakeholders, thereby further expanding the reach of the communications. Some examples: the guidance notes and video were published on the World Trade Organization’s Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility: COVID-19 Trade Facilitation Repository: https://www.tfafacility.org/covid19-trade-facilitation; tralac (Trade Law Centre South Africa) COVID-19 Resources and the video was shared in the latest newsletter of the Standards Trade and Development Facility (STDF): https://us4.campaign-archive.com/?u=1dd6e410f4f874eaf3175abc&id=025d4eefb46.

II. Program Website

The TFSP website (www.worldbank.org/en/programs/trade-facilitation-support-program) is the main vehicle for program communication. It houses communication products, reform news, and blogs of interest to stakeholders and other users. The number of website visitors has grown steadily since the launch of the website: from 1,500 page visitors at the end of FY17 to 6,388 as at June 30, 2020.
III. Trade Post Blog

The WBG team has written a number of blog posts about the work and experiences of TFSP-funded activities. The posts have been published on the WBG Trade Post blog, a global platform to bring together observations from the field and reflections on research by the WBG’s experts on international trade.

The following blog posts were developed during the reporting period (page views are from the date published up to June 30, 2020):

**In Ethiopia, Electronic Single Window Cuts Costs and Time to Trade** [1,333 page views]:

**Ending the Invisibility of Women Traders** [313 page views]:

**Simplifying Trade Energizes Businesses in Kosovo** [694 page views]:

**ePhyto: Promoting Safe and Efficient Trade** [959 page views]:

**Sierra Leone: Trade Facilitation Improvements are Starting to Bear Fruit** [1,467 page views]:

IV. Trade Publications

During the reporting period, the WBG’s TFSP team was asked to share experiences from program implementation and authored sections/contributed to three key publications on trade:

**WTO: Aid for Trade at a Glance 2019 — The Critical Role of Trade Facilitation in Supporting Economic Diversification and Structural Reforms** [Chapter 6]:
https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/aid4trade19_e.pdf#page=162


**Fiji: Trade Facilitation Challenges for Women Traders and Freight Forwarders:**

V. Social Media

The program shares updates widely on the WBG social media platforms, including on Twitter (@WorldBank: 3.3M followers) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/worldbank: 2.65M followers). From time to time, the WBG senior leadership team co-promotes our initiatives (@CeylaP_WBG, 20.3K followers; @CarolineFreund, 9.6K followers).

VI. Brochure and Banners

The TFSP brochure [http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/119111561482785120/TFSP-Brochure-2019-web.pdf] and pop-up banners were updated to increase the visibility of the program and donor support at key events. Over 500 copies have been shared at events, missions, and meetings. The brochures can also be downloaded from the TFSP website. Two program-wide banners are at the team’s disposal for use at key events.
VII. Factsheets

The factsheets developed in the previous reporting period provide a short summary of the program as well as an outline of its mandate, activities, and results. Regionally specific factsheets also have been created to provide more specific information about TFSP supported activities in the regions. In addition, thematic factsheets have been developed to promote certain project areas, such as our work in trade and gender and the TFA Tracking Tool. All have the logos of TFSP’s donors. In the reporting period, the factsheets were distributed at events, meetings, and conferences.

VIII. Presentations

Program-specific presentations have been developed for key events according to the specific thematic areas of focus. The aim is that the templates—with the latest program information—can be readily accessed by the program team and customized accordingly. This ensures that programs, activities, and key messages are communicated consistently, regardless of the location or event.

IX. Media Engagement/Outreach

The program works in close consultation with the WBG global communications network to leverage greater coverage for TFSP activities. At the country level, this involves working closely with the WBG communications coordinators on the ground who have an established network of local media contacts to reach target audiences in TFSP-supported countries. It may also involve working with the relevant authorities—customs, the National Trade Facilitation Committee, and so on—in the TFSP-supported countries to assist in media engagement.

Some recent examples include the launch of trade information portals in Zambia; the launch of an electronic Single Window in Ethiopia; the development of a rules of origin database in Serbia; the launch of the Authorized Economic Operators Program in Kosovo; the development of a risk-based border control system with the State Agriculture Inspectorate—Phytosanitary Inspection in North Macedonia; a Time Release Study in Kyrgyz Republic; the establishment of joint border controls in Serbia and North Macedonia; the Jamaica Customs Act; and Aid for Trade 2019—joint activities implemented with the WTO TFAF, including a peer-to-peer event on the successful implementation of the TFA in Geneva. Local media engagement at the country level is an effective way to engage the private sector through local press articles.

Here is a selection of articles/media mentions:

July 1, 2019: The Aid for Trade: At a Glance Report
https://www.facebook.com/119473564762124/posts/2373498462692945?sfns=mo

July 1, 2019: Making Trade Faster, Cheaper and Easier in Sierra Leone
https://www.facebook.com/119473564762124/posts/2375292755846849?sfns=mo

July 5, 2019: Facilitation Feud
https://twitter.com/wto/status/1146822660787200001
https://twitter.com/wto/status/1146809656909676544
https://twitter.com/wto/status/1146806725896482817
https://twitter.com/wto/status/1146793407492345856

July 12, 2019: Jamaica Customs Act
http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/latestnews/Clarke_says_new_Customs_Bill_will_modernise_Customs_procedures
https://www.jacustoms.gov.jm/article/customs-house-weekly-1
July 16, 2019: Developing Risk-Based Border Control System with State Agriculture Inspectorate–Phytosanitary Inspection in North Macedonia

July 17, 2019: Egypt: CLDP Initiates Technical Assistance on the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation

July 27, 2019: Serbian Parliament Ratifies Agreement with North Macedonia on Joint-Border Controls

August 5, 2019: Customs Conducts Time Release Study in Kyrgyz Republic
http://www.customs.kg/index.php/ru/component/content/article/1-latest-news/2435-2019-08-08-09-57-36
http://www.ibc.kg/en/news/members/4573_the_state_customs_service_conducted_a_time_release_study_in_the_kyrgyz_republic

August 16, 2019: Authorized Economic Operators Program Launches in Kosovo
https://indeksonline.net/dy-kompani-kosovare-marrin-statusin-operator-ekonomik-i-autorizuar/

August 25, 2019: Joint Border Controls—Serbia and North Macedonia:

September 4, 2019: Macedonin: Sharing Best Practice for Single Window Systems

September 4, 2019: Lao PDR Advances with AEO Implementation

October 17, 2019: Authorized Economic Operators Program Launches in Kosovo
https://indeksonline.net/dy-kompani-kosovare-marrin-statusin-operator-ekonomik-i-autorizuar/
October 17, 2019: Television: RTK Morning Show
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKUdLxckyl

December 6, 2019: Public Invited to Make Submissions on New Customs Bill in Jamaica
http://www.loopjamaica.com/content/public-invited-make-submissions-new-customs-bill

December 27, 2019: Serbia: NTFC publishes Single List of Fees and Charges in relation to Export, Import and Transit

December 9, 2020: OSO Raises Awareness on Gender Equality In Customs Administrations In the Pacific

January 5, 2020: New Electronic Single Window to Ease Doing Business in Ethiopia
https://allafrica.com/stories/201512230946.html


January 2020: Serbia: Publication of the National Action Plans for the NTFC
http://nktot.mtt.gov.rs/en/expert-groups/

February 6, 2020: Joint Workshop on AEO with the Albanian and Kosovo Customs Administrations
https://www.facebook.com/DoganaShqiptare/

February 19, 2020: Beta Version of the Zambia Trade Information Portal Launched
http://smarteagles.net/2020/02/19/beta-version-zambia-trade-information-portal-launched/

March 1, 2020: Eswatini: Government Launches Trade Portal

March 20, 2020: Eswatini Trade Information Portal on Kusile Breakfast Show
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZ71Tcz0M1M

March 27, 2020: Malawi: MRA, MBS Seal Deal to Address Delays in Clearance of Goods

March 27, 2020: Malawi: MRA, MBS Sign MoU to Curb Import of Sub-Standard Goods

May 11, 2020: Eswatini Trade Portal on 40 percent Track Despite COVID-19

http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off_the_Wire/2020-05/29/content_76107103.htm
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apaxQdvn00g

June 2020: Serbia: NTFC Launches Annual Report
X. Reform Communication and Communication Campaigns

In some cases, deeper communications support is required to ensure that the technical assistance provided and results achieved by the TFSP are disseminated locally and made known to the end beneficiaries (that is, the private sector) so that they can take advantage of reformed processes. This effort involves working with the relevant local authorities (such as the customs administration and the NTFC) to structure their communication around the reforms through dissemination plans and targeted media engagement.

For example, in Kosovo, the TFSP helped to raise awareness about the Authorized Economic Operators program within Customs, with border agencies and the private sector. A targeted communications campaign aimed at businesses promoted the benefits of AEO status.

In Albania and Kosovo, the TFSP is providing communications advisory support to the food and veterinary agencies to provide communications training and planning (communications strategy) to prepare for the implementation of risk-based import controls, which will likely result in lower inspection and sampling rates.

In Ethiopia, the TFSP helped the government to raise awareness about the new electronic Single Window [https://esw.et/esw-trd/] and the associated benefits.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, the TFSP provided support to the Customs Service to update its official website and improve the transparency and availability of trade related information.

The team is currently supporting the development of a communications strategy to support the launches of new trade information portals in Eswatini [www.eswatinitradeportal.com], and Mongolia, and a second iteration of the portal in Lesotho, all of which are expected to be introduced next fiscal year.

Going forward, communications campaigns will also be considered to promote overarching TFSP products and initiatives, such as the trade and gender study in the Pacific, and so on. The campaigns will leverage various communication channels (as previously outlined) and will involve targeted engagement at both the global and country levels. Messages and platforms will vary by audience need and thematic objectives.

XI. Multimedia Products

The program has produced a number of videos, which are showcased on the TFSP website. In the previous reporting period, the program embarked on a new and innovative approach to reach audiences, which continued during this reporting period. The TFSP produced two 360° virtual reality films aimed at transporting stakeholders to client countries to witness the effect of the program’s projects.

The first film [https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2019/02/06/360-video-trading-across-borders-in-guatemala-and-honduras] was produced at the Corinto Border between Guatemala and Honduras. It showcases a recently signed customs union between the two countries, which helped reduce time to trade from 10 hours to just 15 minutes. Customs workers, truck drivers, and businesses were interviewed at the border to find out what trade looks like on the ground. The video was showcased at the World Bank Group’s Development Partners Forum and launched via an innovative media campaign on the Bank’s social media channels (garnering 803K+ views). A Spanish version of the film was also posted online [http://blogs.worldbank.org/es/latinamerica/uni-n-aduanera-entre-guatemala-y-honduras-de-10-horas-15-minutos].
The second film was launched during this reporting period. It was developed with support from the TFSP (https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2019/06/27/making-trade-faster-cheaper-and-easier-in-sierra-leone) and was produced at the Freetown Port in West Africa—home to 80 percent of Sierra Leone’s trade—and highlights the NTFC’s five-year trade facilitation action plan to guide the country’s modernization efforts. It includes interviews with the Ministry of Trade, customs workers, and businesses like Sierra Agra—the country’s only juice processing company—who are already benefiting from trade facilitation improvements. The film was debuted at the Aid for Trade event in Geneva in July 2019 and disseminated via a media campaign garnering over 976K+ views. A full list of channels where the film was promoted is as follows:

- World Bank Facebook
- World Bank Africa Facebook
- World Bank Global Website
- World Bank Africa Website
- World Bank Sierra Leone Website
- TFSP website
- World Bank Africa Twitter
- World Bank Finance Twitter
- World Bank YouTube Channel
- World Bank Trade topic page
- Veer.tv

Both videos are among the top 40 videos with the most views on the WBG YouTube channel, which has hundreds of videos (if not more). The films were also showcased, including live demonstrations with headsets, at Aid for Trade 2019 and the 2019 WTO Public Forum in Geneva in October 2019.

A third film, focusing on the TFSP gender work in the Pacific, was planned during this reporting period. Due to the COVID-19 situation and associated travel restrictions, the film has been placed on hold.
Annex D

Financial Overview
All amounts are in USD thousands and as of end June 2020.

**Cash receipts (June 30, 2020)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>FY14</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
<th>FY17</th>
<th>FY18</th>
<th>FY19</th>
<th>FY20</th>
<th>Total cash receipts by donor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,745</td>
<td>1,472</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,559</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1,821</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4,388</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,554</td>
<td>1,869</td>
<td>2,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>443</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>1,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,504</td>
<td></td>
<td>596</td>
<td>1,651</td>
<td>988</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>754</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,947</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>3,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
<td>754</td>
<td>3,217</td>
<td>1,350</td>
<td>2,539</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US*</td>
<td>950</td>
<td></td>
<td>650</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>240</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total by year:</strong></td>
<td>2,771</td>
<td>7,549</td>
<td>7,614</td>
<td>5,567</td>
<td>10,028</td>
<td>9,049</td>
<td>4,190</td>
<td>46,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative:</strong></td>
<td>10,320</td>
<td>17,934</td>
<td>23,501</td>
<td>33,529</td>
<td>42,578</td>
<td>46,768</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes core and Zambia specific support

**Outstanding donor payments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>3,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>1,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>2,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>8,684</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cash receipts as percentage of overall donor commitments**

| Total receipts and outstanding commitments | 55,018 |
| Percentage receipts                      | 85.0   |
### Disbursements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY14</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
<th>FY17</th>
<th>FY18</th>
<th>FY19</th>
<th>FY20</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>224</td>
<td>2,191</td>
<td>5,307</td>
<td>7,467</td>
<td>6,867</td>
<td>7,367</td>
<td>6,237</td>
<td>35,60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative</strong></td>
<td>224</td>
<td>2,415</td>
<td>7,722</td>
<td>15,189</td>
<td>22,056</td>
<td>29,423</td>
<td>35,660</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Disbursement rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY14</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
<th>FY17</th>
<th>FY18</th>
<th>FY19</th>
<th>FY20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total incl. commitments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>