

Annual Report

JULY 1, 2022–JUNE 30, 2023

TRADE FACILITATION SUPPORT PROGRAM



WORLD BANK GROUP

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEO	Authorized economic operator	NTFC	National Trade Facilitation Committee
AO	Authorized operator	OCO	Oceania Customs Organization
AR	Advance rulings	OGAs	Other government agencies
ASYCUDA	Automated Systems for Customs Data	PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
BIVAC	Bureau Veritas Liberia	PPIU	PACER Plus Implementation Unit
C-JET	Competitiveness for Jobs and Economic Transformation	PSS	Private sector savings
CoP	Community of Practice	SACU	Southern African Customs Union
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework	SAQ	Self-assessment questionnaire
e-Phyto	Electronic phytosanitary	SARTFP	Southern Africa Trade Facilitation Project
FCS	Fragile and conflict-affected situations	SPC	The Pacific Community
FY	Fiscal year	SPS	Sanitary and phytosanitary
GNI	Gross national income	STDF	Standards Trade Development Facility
IATA	International Air Transport Association	SW	Single Window
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
ICT	Information and communication technology	TFMICS	Trade Facilitation Program for Middle Income Countries
IDA	International Development Association	TFSP	Trade Facilitation Support Program
IFC	International Finance Corporation	TIP	Trade Information Portal
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention	TRS	Time Release Study
ISO	International Standards Organization	UN/CEFACT	United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business
ITC	International Trade Center	UNCITRAL	United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
LDCs	Least Developed Countries	UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
LNSW	Lesotho National Single Window	UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
NLE	National Logistics Ecosystem	WB	World Bank
NSW	National Single Window	WCO	World Customs Organization
		WTO	World Trade Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the progress made in supporting countries with implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA) and other related measures through the Trade Facilitation Support Program (TFSP) between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, in accordance with the fiscal year 2023 (FY23) of the World Bank (WB).

THE PROGRAM

TFSP was launched in June 2014 to support countries seeking assistance to improve their cross-border trade environments and better align their trade practices with the WTO TFA (see **box 1**). TFSP's funding helps countries—particularly developing countries—achieve **full and effective** implementation of the WTO TFA measures 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, including prioritization and sequencing of activities,
- Increase the predictability, transparency, and harmonization of systems and procedures in line with international standards covering import, export, and transit activities.

BOX 1

WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

The WTO TFA entered into force in February 2017 when two-thirds of the WTO Membership accepted the Agreement. The TFA contains measures to expedite the movement, release, and clearance of goods exported, imported, and in transit. It also contains measures related to cooperation between customs and other border agencies on trade facilitation and compliance issues. Uniquely, the Agreement includes special and differential treatment measures that allow developing and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to identify and notify the measures requiring technical assistance and capacity building support for implementation.

The World Bank is part of “Annex D,” which is a group of organizations that offer TFA implementation support.



Trade Tips Podcast episode on the WTO TFA
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“The idea of Kentucky Bourbon cake made in Jamaica is what global trade is all about. It’s putting all of these ingredients together and serving them to the world. We need trade facilitation for this to take place.”

CEO OF JAMAICA
PRODUCERS GROUP

Key areas of assistance include but are not limited to:

- Supporting the ratification of the WTO TFA and meeting the related categorization and notification requirements,
- Undertaking WTO TFA Gap Assessments and/or other relevant diagnostics to identify needs and inform reform action plans,
- Supporting the establishment and strengthening of National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) to lead reform efforts, promote coordination, and enhance public-private consultations,
- Assisting with the design of risk-based approaches for border clearance,
- Increasing digitalization and automation through implementation of Trade Information Portals (TIP) and/or Single Windows (SW),
- Leveraging global and regional partnerships and knowledge sharing to ensure optimal delivery of support.

Activities funded by TFSP are practical, demand-driven¹ and are implemented through drawing on the expertise of both the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), bridging the important roles of the public and private sectors in ensuring the successful reform of trade facilitation laws, procedures, processes, and systems to improve their cross-border trade environments and align with the WTO TFA and other international standards.

PARTNERS

TFSP is financed by nine development partners: Australia, Canada, the European Commission (EC), the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States of America (USA).

The WB draws on its unique network of global and regional partners in delivering joint initiatives and activities to ensure a coordinated and complementary roll-out of capacity building, technical assistance, and advocacy work. TFSP-supported experts have and continue to collaborate with other organizations such as the WTO on the delivery of knowledge sharing events and the Standards Trade Development Facility (STDF) on sanitary and phytosanitary-related (SPS) projects.

PORTFOLIO

Since the last reporting period, TFSP expanded its support to 56 countries (from 48 countries in FY22) for implementation of trade facilitation and other related reforms. The eight new countries are: Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Egypt, Indonesia, Mozambique, Peru, South Africa, St. Kitts and Nevis.

Within the program's portfolio, 29 (52 percent) are International Development Association (IDA) and blend countries,² and eight (14 percent) are countries on the WB's FY23 list of fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS).³

Near the end of the reporting period, TFSP funding to support additional activities in Sri Lanka and Mongolia was confirmed as well as funding for activities in Ghana and an enhanced work program in the Solomon Islands.

PROGRESS TOWARDS INCREASING ALIGNMENT WITH THE WTO TFA

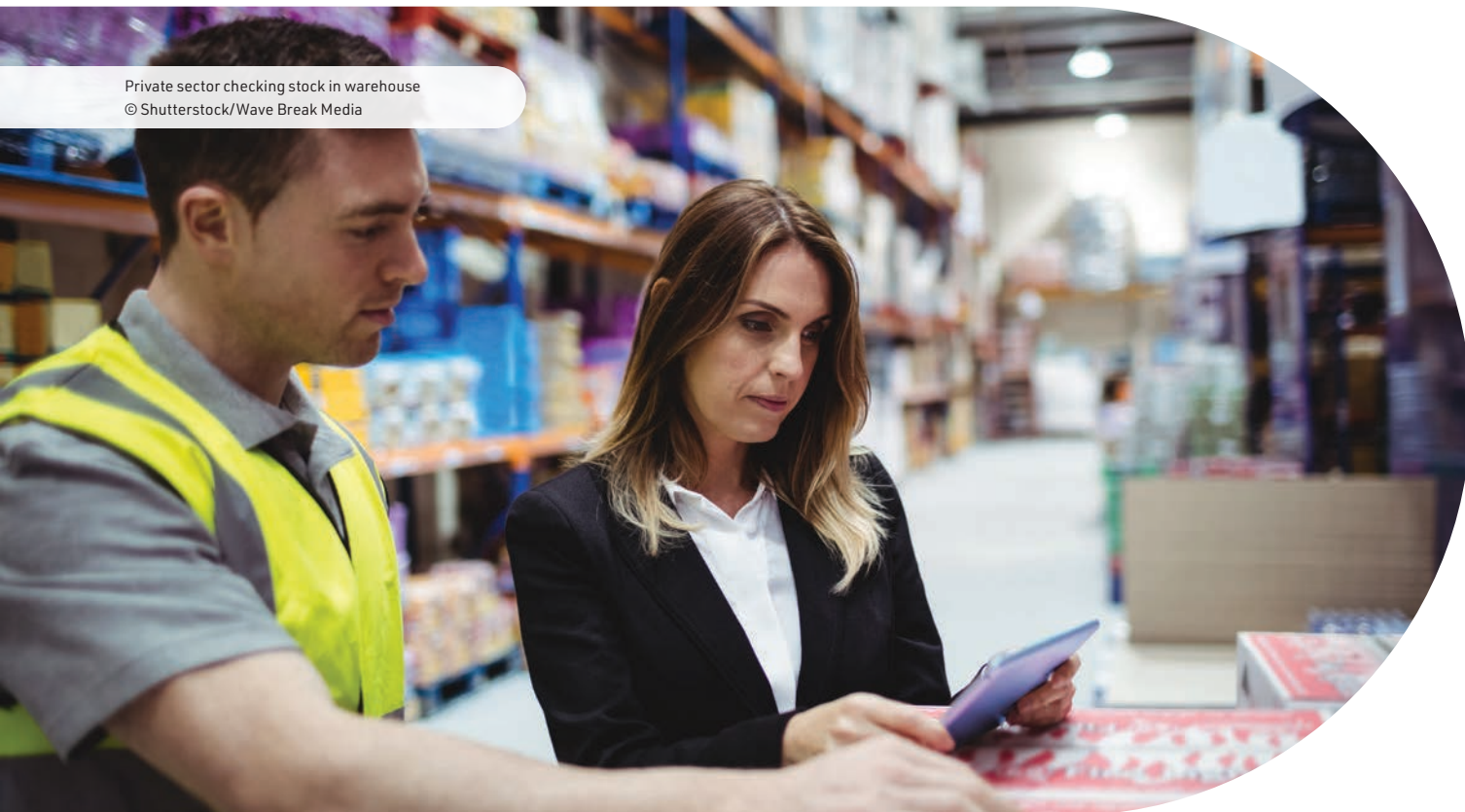
Since 2014, TFSP has supported the delivery of 47 TFA Gap Assessment reports to assess the alignment of a country's processes and procedures with the WTO TFA measures – ranging from at-the-border (e.g., test procedures, risk management, other areas) to behind-the-border (e.g., transparency and availability of information, consultations, advance rulings and more).

¹ Requests for capacity building and/or technical assistance can be made directly to the TFSP Secretariat or through the World Bank offices and donors.

² IDA countries are those with gross national income (GNI) per capita below an established threshold (USD 1,255 in the FY23) or lack the financial ability to borrow from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). Blend countries are eligible for IDA loans and are also eligible for IBRD loans because they are financially creditworthy.

³ The WB releases a list of FCS annually with an aim to inform strategic and operational decision-making. Categories of risk include: 1) high levels of institutional and social fragility and 2) violent conflict. Of the TFSP portfolio countries, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kosovo, Lebanon, Mozambique, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste are on the WB's FY23 FCS list. FY23 classification is for the period of July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023.

Private sector checking stock in warehouse
© Shutterstock/Wave Break Media



The Gap Assessment data is used to update the TFA Tracking Tool⁴ developed by the WB to monitor progress towards meeting the TFSP's objective of helping countries improve their cross-border trade processes and alignment with the 30+ measures covered in the WTO TFA. The TFA Gap Assessment covers legal/policy aspects, implementation procedures, and operational checks for each trade facilitation-related measure.

It is a unique tool that looks beyond notified commitments to track full and effective implementation of trade facilitation measures, allowing countries to benchmark and report on their level of alignment over time. The most recent data indicates that TFSP-funded activities have helped improve 22 TFSP client countries' alignment with the WTO TFA measures along the three dimensions, and the overall alignment score has risen from 41 percent to 53 percent.⁵

⁴ See <https://www.tfacountrytrackingtool.org/>

⁵ The increase in overall alignment score is reflective of 22 TFSP-supported countries with both baseline and update scores, which allows for a comparison over time.

MEASURING IMPACT THROUGH PRIVATE SECTOR SAVINGS

The impact of TFSP-supported interventions is measured through assessing private sector savings (PSS) at the project level. The WB developed the PSS methodology to estimate the benefit accrued to the private sector from increased efficiency in the cargo clearance process as a result of trade facilitation reforms. The methodology considers the estimation of impact based on two types of results: 1) impact savings as a result of a reduction in cargo clearance processing time and 2) impact savings as a result of reduction in direct trade-related fees and charges paid by the private sector.⁶

Support provided to Ethiopia, for example, has resulted in USD 61.4 million in savings for the private sector.

⁶ For any upstream and behind-the-border processes like the elimination or reduction in fees and charges imposed on imports or exports, a complementary direct cost savings method is applied that can be added to the PSS.



Customs controls at the border
©World Bank/Vigen Sargsyan

Reforms included: support for the roll-out of a new customs data management system made document submission faster; support to implement rail transit procedures for a new railway between the most commonly used seaport in Djibouti and Addis Ababa that helped to decongest road traffic and reduce inland transportation time for imports; improved 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.

For the completed TFSP-supported projects that have undergone PSS measurement, a cumulative estimate of USD 98.6 million in private sector savings has been generated.⁷ The projects were successful in meeting their project targets and helped improve efficiency of trade processes for the private sector to varying degrees.

Annex A contains more examples of PSS calculated for projects, including details on specific activities undertaken by country.

PROGRAM FINANCES

Between the program's inception in 2014 and the end of this reporting period, USD 61 million was received in financial contributions, which equals to 99.7 percent of overall partner commitments. In FY23, TFSP began receiving additional commitments from USAID through Competitiveness for Jobs and Economic Transformation (C-JET), which is pooled with other donor contributions to TFSP.

Cumulative disbursements plus commitments was at 89 percent at the close of FY23. The disbursement-only rate was at 87 percent at the end of FY23. The disbursement rate increased from last year (from 76 percent) with the resumption and acceleration of implementation activities as more countries recovered from the pandemic.

Over USD 700 million in leverage has been achieved through TFSP 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. TFSP funds also inform and/or complement bilateral support from development partners for trade facilitation reforms.

⁷ This PSS calculation is closely tied to "affected trade value," which is the portion of total trade that is affected by the reform activities, and assumes that each day saved on transit is equivalent to a reduction of trade costs by 0.6 percent. A total of USD 55.7 billion of trade was affected for the projects measured.

This method allows for the estimation of impact of reduced clearance time through a tariff equivalent reduction based on the Trade Logistics Reform Impact Model. The central idea of this method is that a good estimate of a firm's willingness to pay for border improvements is sufficient for understanding the economic value of the interventions. The Trade Logistics Reform Impact Model was designed by DECTI for the Global Trade unit, drawing on a paper by Hummels, D. L. and G. Shaur (2013) "Time as a Trade Barrier" study of American Economic Review, vol. 103, no. 7.

1

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Since inception, TFSP has supported implementation of trade facilitation reforms in 56 countries.⁸ A “mid-term” stocktaking exercise of TFSP undertaken in FY19 (covering June 2014 to June 2018) by external consultants found that the program was highly relevant and strongly aligned with the WTO TFA. The mid-term stocktaking took a formative approach and focused on assessing TFSP’s performance, identifying strengths and weaknesses of TFSP’s approach to supporting WTO TFA alignment in client countries, as well as emerging lessons learned from WTO TFA implementation. It found that TFSP was highly relevant to meeting donor partners’ policy objectives and was demand-driven. TFSP was effective in building the capacity and knowledge of individual countries in implementing trade facilitation reforms and the TFA; and furthermore, it was very efficiently managed.

Based on main recommendations from the mid-term stocktaking, TFSP increased efforts to:

- Ensure stricter criteria for accessing support
- Consider extending the range of interventions in countries, with focus especially on:
 - NTFC institutional support (see **box 4**)
 - Border agency capacity building and cooperation (see **figure 4**)
 - Regional work (see **section 1.2**)
 - Enhance private sector engagement (see **box 3**)
- Address gender issues (see **section 1.6a**)
- Improve coordination at the national level as well as with partners at the global/HQ level (see **box 6** and **box 7**)

⁸ Includes both active and inactive countries to demonstrate cumulative support since the inception of the TFSP.

Near the end of this reporting period, the TFSP Secretariat began preparations for the launch of a follow-up stock-taking, covering July 2018 to June 2023. The follow-up aims to provide an independent, updated assessment of TFSP's performance and results achieved, including progress made in integrating the recommendations from the mid-term, and it is expected to be completed in FY24.

TFSP PORTFOLIO

To receive support, proposed activities are expected to align with the WTO TFA, demonstrate client demand as well as alignment with the WB's regional and country priorities. Furthermore, countries are expected to demonstrate a strong commitment to implementing trade facilitation

reforms in the areas covered by the WTO TFA. TFSP prioritizes assistance to countries with limited access to other donor support. Assistance to IDA-eligible, low-income, and FCS are prioritized, but middle-income countries that act as gateways for LDCs or whose performance significantly affects the performance of regional LDCs and small-island nations are also considered for support.

Figure 1 and **figure 2** provide details on the portfolio.

The Sub-Saharan Africa region make up 27 percent of the TFSP portfolio, the largest share by region based on the number of countries. **Box 2** highlights some of the activities supported in Sub-Saharan Africa, and additional details on country-level work undertaken in FY23 can be found in **annex A**.

BOX 2

Key Activities Supported in Sub-Saharan Africa

TFSP has provided or is providing support to 15 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, and Zambia. Of those, 11 are IDA countries, which means they are among the world's poorest countries in need of support, and three are FCS.

Through the years, TFSP supported countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to implement reforms that promote transparency and predictability for both

the public and private sectors, including assistance to:

- Establish and/or operationalize the NTFCs in Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Zambia
- Implement TIPs in Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, and Zambia
- Establish risk management frameworks in Burundi, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Sao Tome and Principe, and Zambia
- Design Authorized Operator (AO) and/or Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) schemes in Burundi, Eswatini, Lesotho, and Malawi
- Prepare for implementation of national Single Windows (NSW) in Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Sao Tome and Principe, and Zambia

In this reporting period, Angola, Mozambique, and South Africa were added to the TFSP portfolio. Support to Angola focuses on advancing the trade digital transformation agenda through the development of the NSW and coordination of border management operations. In Mozambique, assistance areas include coordinated border management, risk management, post-clearance audit, and AEO. Support for South Africa is part of a larger Southern Africa regional program that provides assistance to the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) countries, with particular focus on Eswatini, Lesotho, and South Africa. Read more about this regional work in **section 1.2** and other country-level specific activities in **annex A**.

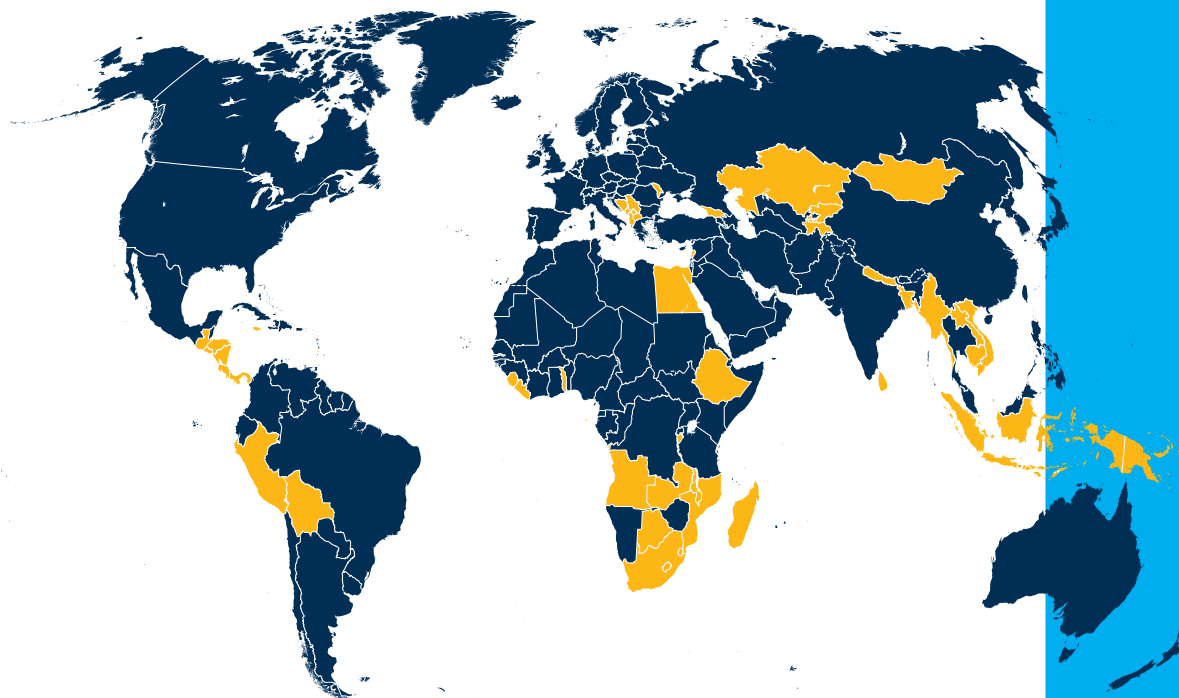


“It is really important for businesses like ours that trading practices are efficient and cost effective. I am so happy about the government’s commitment to these modernizations, as they are really helping us to improve the livelihoods of thousands of our farmers and workers all over the country. We are so excited about our future.”

**SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGER OF
SIERRA AGRA IN SIERRA LEONE**

FIGURE 1

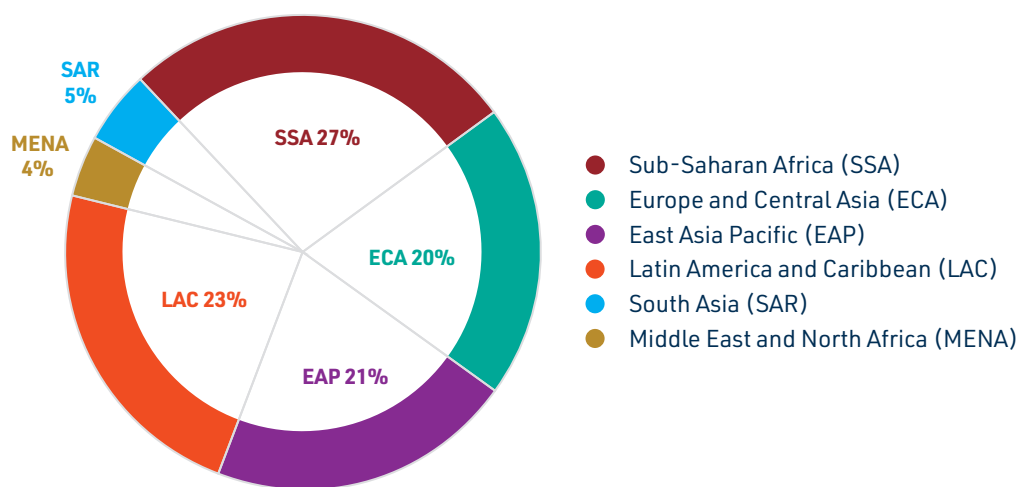
Map of 56 Countries Where the Trade Facilitation Support Program Has Provided or Is Providing Multi-Year Implementation Assistance



Source: World Bank.

FIGURE 2

**Regional Breakdown of the TFSP Portfolio
(based on the number of countries in each region)**



- Albania
- Angola
- Antigua & Barbuda
- Bangladesh
- Bolivia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Costa Rica
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Fiji
- Georgia
- Grenada
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Indonesia
- Jamaica
- Kazakhstan
- Kosovo
- Kyrgyz Republic
- Lao PDR
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Moldova
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Mozambique
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Peru
- Republic of North Macedonia
- Samoa
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Serbia
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- Sri Lanka
- St. Kitts & Nevis
- St. Lucia
- Tajikistan
- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Tonga
- Vanuatu
- Vietnam
- Zambia

To ensure efficient allocation of resources and add value where it makes sense, TFSP undertakes due diligence to not duplicate support where other development organizations are already working. TradeMark East Africa, for example, is active in the East Africa region. In West Africa, donors channel support through the Trade Facilitation West Africa (TFWA) program, and where there is scope, the International Trade Centre (ITC), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and World Customs Organization (WCO) have been providing support.

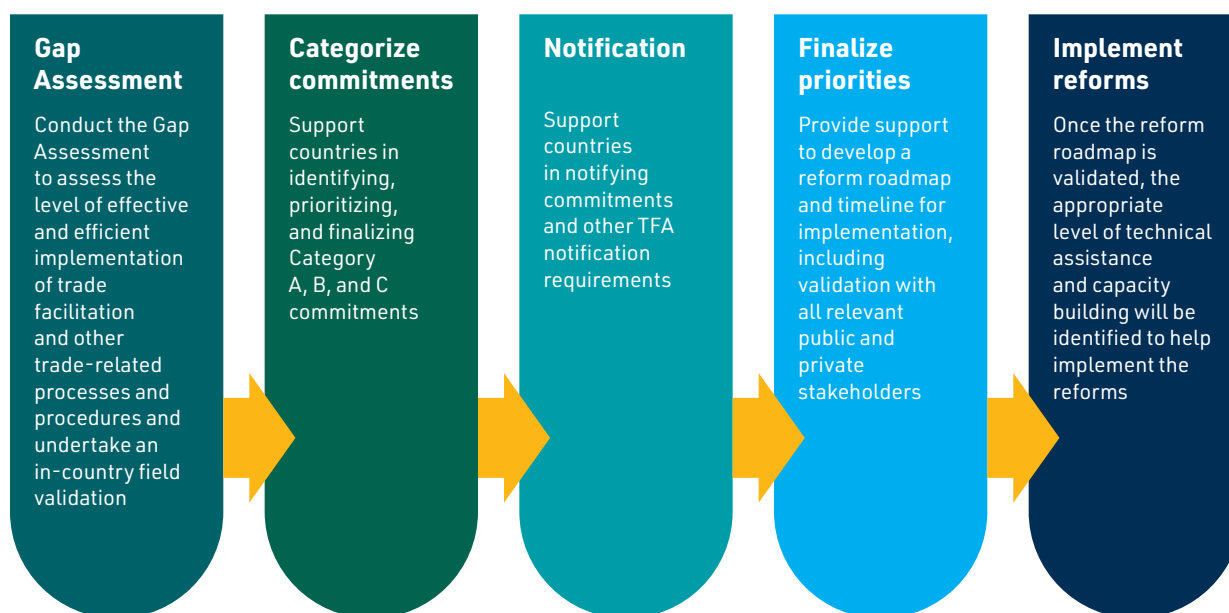
1.1 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & CAPACITY BUILDING

To help countries along the development path, the WB has provided trade facilitation support to help establish solid foundations and effective border processes and procedures for the countries to deepen their integration into the world economy through trade. TFSP support is divided into two main components: (a) **technical assistance** and (b) **knowledge management and learning** activities.

APPROACH TO DELIVERING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Generally, technical assistance activities funded by the TFSP progress along the following building blocks:

FIGURE 3
Building Blocks



Shane Sela • 1st
Senior Trade Facilitation
Specialist at World Bank Group
2mo •

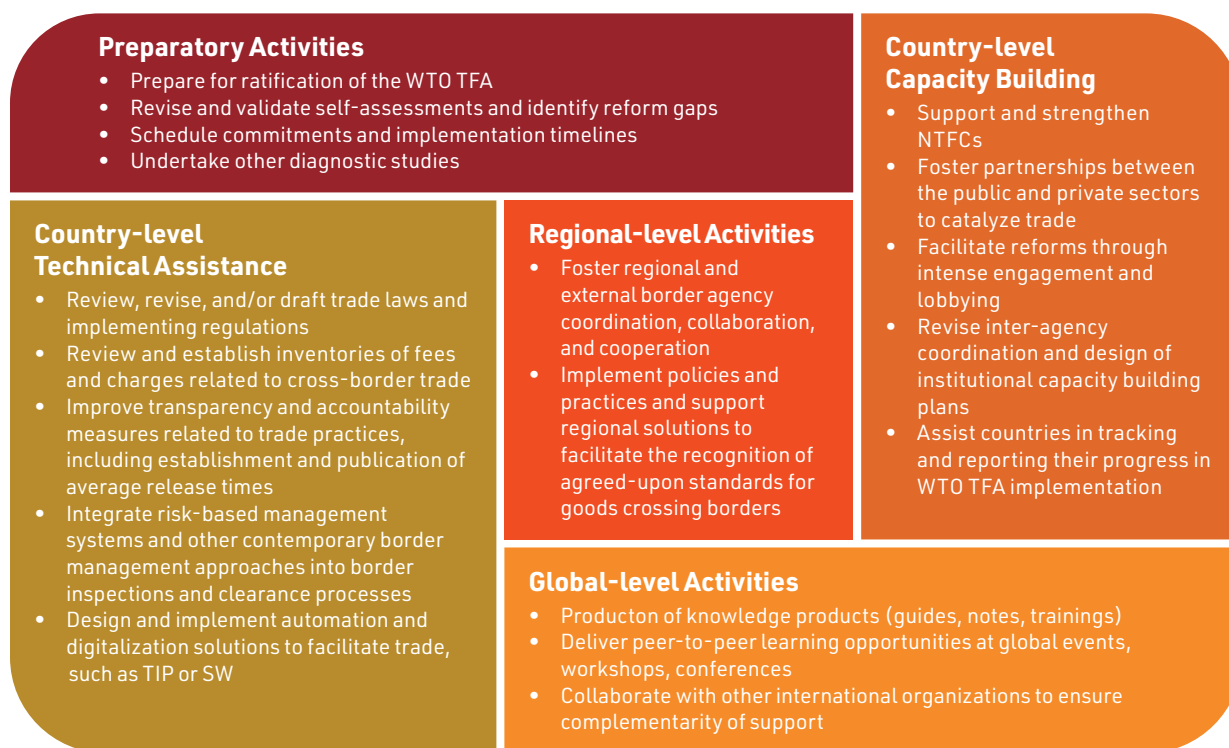
Yesterday my colleague Naim Huruglica and I met with colleagues at the Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency to further discuss implementing strategies for risk-based border management for plant product trade. Applying risk-based strategies can facilitate trade while allowing the Agency to focus its resources on risky consignments... win-win.

Technical assistance to the Kosovo
Food and Veterinary Agency
© World Bank



TYPE OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE

TFSP-supported technical assistance and capacity building can include help with:



TFSP funding is prioritized for clients' needs identified through Gap Assessments as well as the specific request for assistance made by the government (often notified by governments as "Category C" measures to the WTO). Supported activities are uniquely grounded in and implemented with a **whole-of-government approach** to ensure all border agencies (for example, standards, SPS, food safety, animal health, and human health along with customs) are involved and invested in implementing trade facilitation reforms. This is because effectively improving border processes and procedures requires that every relevant agency is involved and coordinates closely with one another to improve the efficiency of their respective control functions, taking into account the varied capacities of border agencies to implement trade facilitation reforms. This whole-of-government approach is summarized in **figure 4**.

TFSP funding supports whole-of-government collaboration in developing solutions and improving capacity so that no key border agency is left behind.

"Often the focus of border reforms is on customs administrations. Other border agencies, such as sanitary and phytosanitary agencies, are equally important in facilitating trade by addressing the gaps that contribute to inefficiencies and the inability to provide credible services to traders."

TRADE FACILITATION SPECIALIST AT THE WORLD BANK

FIGURE 4
Whole-of-Government Approach



PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Importantly, the WB engages both the government and **the private sector** when providing capacity building and technical assistance. The private sector plays a crucial role in effective development and implementation of trade facilitation reforms because buy-in from the private sector helps promote commitment and momentum to carry the reforms forward into success.

With this in mind, TFSP actively promotes engagement with private sector entities—either directly, through the NTFC, or with industry associations—to gather feedback from relevant stakeholders in order to deliver robust support. Their input is critical to validating information received from public sector representatives. **Box 3** highlights examples of how the WB engaged with the private sector to deliver activities in this reporting period.

BOX 3

Designing and Implementing Reforms with the Private Sector in Mind

To enhance communication and information-sharing with the private sector in **Angola**, the WB team assisted the NTFC in preparing a communications strategy. The strategy promotes transparency by assisting the NTFC in interacting with the public sector, trade community, and general public, highlighting the fact that they are the main beneficiaries of WTO TFA implementation, and sharing results from the reforms undertaken. Importantly, several meetings were organized by the NTFC to engage with the private sector in the development of the strategy. The communications strategy will ensure important information is conveyed to the right people, enhancing the credibility and direction of the NTFC's future work.

Listening to the private sector's concerns in **El Salvador** on the need for greater transparency for importing controlled chemical products, the WB supported the improvement of processes for importing such products. Prior to reform, the import process was cumbersome, required multiple permits, and involved multiple government agencies. The WB team—with support from TFSP—carried out a national workshop in August 2022 in coordination with the Ministry of Economy of El Salvador, which included the participation of govern-

ment and private sector representatives to identify potential areas for improvement in procedures and requirements for the import, distribution, and storage of controlled chemical products. The workshop offered an opportunity for the government agencies to work in a coordinated and collaborative way, identify areas for improvement as well as specific actions required to automate processes in the authorization of chemical product imports. As a result of the workshop, various product lists for items that do not require special permits were published in October 2022, providing more clarity and transparency to the private sector.

In **Indonesia**, consultations were held with private sector stakeholders (including traders, manufacturers, customs brokers, freight forwarders) to help review and assess the country's National Single Window in order to further reduce process repetition and duplication and improve user experience. This is part of a wider effort by the government to identify process improvements required to achieve the objectives of the National Logistics Ecosystem (NLE), which is a platform established by the government to reduce logistics costs through streamlining of processes.

CUMULATIVE SUPPORT PROVIDED OVER THE YEARS

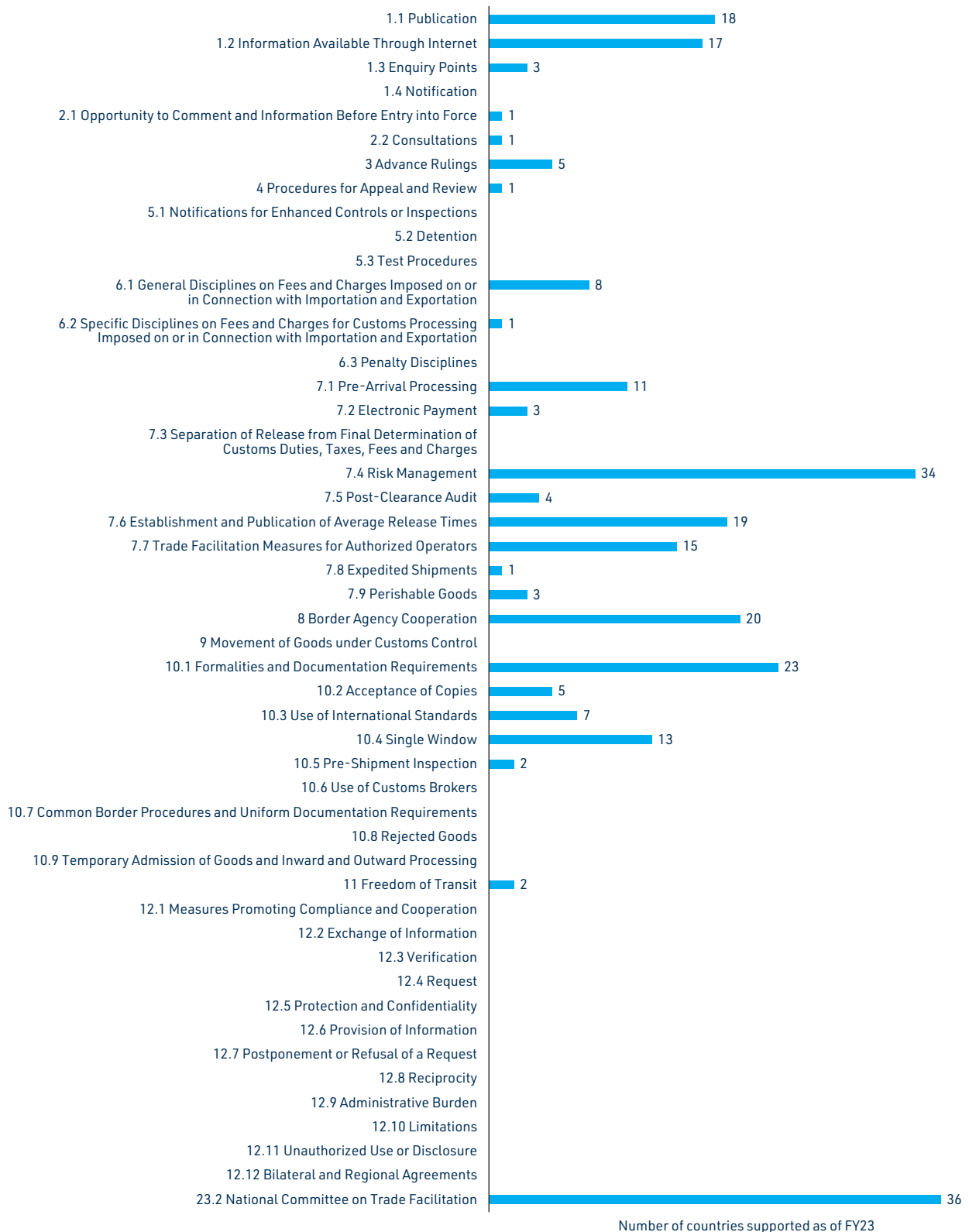
Figure 5 shows TFSP support by TFA measure cumulatively through the years. The top measures supported have been related to NTFCs, risk management, formalities and documentation requirements, publication, information through the internet, establishment of average release times, and border agency cooperation while there has been less demand for technical assistance and capacity building for the TFA measures that are easier to implement. This aligns with implementation commitments notified to the WTO wherein the bottom five measures with the lowest rate of implementation among LDCs and developing countries are risk management, authorized operators, border agency cooperation, test procedures, and Single Window.

Additionally, the WB works collaboratively with international partners to ensure complementarity of support. The WB is best placed to leverage and focus on certain measures (such as TIPs and NSWs), particularly where it connects to bilateral donor programs and WB operations.

“The NSW blueprint has been finalized with inputs from all stakeholders and with reference to international standards. We thank the World Bank and officials of Kosovo institutions as well as representatives of businesses, for the contribution made to this important process.”

DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMS IN KOSOVO

FIGURE 5
TFSP Support by TFA Measure



Examples of TFSP-supported work include:

- Support to **National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFC)** is a critical element of TFSP assistance. NTFCs are important mechanisms for institutional coordination and consultation with stakeholders through broad and active participation from both private and public sector representatives. Since inception, TFSP has provided support to 36 countries in the establishment

and/or operation of NTFCs (Albania, Angola, Antigua & Barbuda, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Eswatini, Fiji, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, the Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Togo, Vanuatu, Vietnam, and Zambia). See **box 4** for more details on NTFCs

BOX 4

The Importance of a Strong National Trade Facilitation Committee

The NTFC's role is to domestically coordinate and implement trade facilitation measures. When set up properly, it is an important mechanism for national level coordination and stakeholder (public and private) engagement on trade facilitation and other trade-related matters. It enables consensus on reform priorities, planning, and ultimately fosters coordinated implementation of successful trade facilitation interventions; and more importantly, the sustainability of reforms.

Given the importance of the NTFC for planning and implementing trade facilitation activities, as well as for public-private consultations, TFSP financing is available for technical assistance, capacity building, and advocacy support to establish NTFC where it does not exist in a client country. This includes creation of roadmaps that reinforce commitment by the government and establish governance structures. Where the NTFC already exists in the client country, the WB is often engaged in capacity building efforts to strengthen and enhance the function of the NTFC to ensure that it is structured and operating according to international standards, as well as to increase awareness of the body among private sector stakeholders. Critical success factors for sustaining NTFCs depend on having a clear mandate, political support, sufficient resources, a clear work plan with indicators, and celebrating success to build momentum around reform implementation.

In **Montenegro**, TFSP is helping to revitalize its NTFC after it halted operations in December 2019 and remained inactive throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Finance expressed interest in re-activating the NTFC and submitted a request for support to TFSP in 2022. To do this, the WB team assisted with drafting



Technical assistance to the NTFCs in the Western Balkans
© World Bank

a decision to establish a new NTFC, which was officially approved by the government during its session in May 2023 and was published in the official gazette in June 2023. This formal endorsement signifies the government's recognition of the committee's importance and its commitment to trade facilitation reforms.

The TFSP team played a key role in identifying partner institutions and facilitating the appointment process that enable a collaborative framework. Importantly, the NTFC now comprises of nine **private sector** associations, including the association of small and medium-sized enterprises. The WB team has established effective communication with the associations, enabling them to frequently express their needs and highlight trade barriers encountered.

Additionally, the team provided valuable assistance in formulating the rules of procedure, which are expected to be adopted in the next reporting period. Support was also provided to draft the decision regarding the establishment of the NTFC Secretariat (in addition to the decision to establish the NTFC), outline its composition, primary roles, and responsibilities. Moving forward, the TFSP team will continue to provide support to Montenegro in various areas, including the development of the NTFC work program, creation of a new TF strategic framework and action plans, establishment of working groups along with defining their roles, and designing a reporting template to capture monitoring and evaluation (M&E) outcomes. This will ensure the NTFC will operate effectively into the future.

MOU signed for a Trade Information Portal in Timor-Leste
© Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry, Timor-Leste



- **Trade Information Portals (TIPs)** are digital platforms that make all cross-border trade information, such as regulatory information, easily available. TFSP has facilitated the establishment and design, or has assisted in the implementation, of 11 portals (Bangladesh, Botswana, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Eswatini, Jamaica, Lesotho, Malawi, Mongolia, 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. TFSP has assisted in completing TRSs in 19 countries (Albania, Bangladesh, El Salvador, Eswatini, Kosovo, the Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Mongolia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Vietnam, Zambia, and at the Corinto Border between Guatemala and Honduras). TRSs were also repeated in FY22 in Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, and Eswatini (in addition to a repeat TRS in Zambia in FY21). In total, 27 TRS reports and time studies have been delivered with TFSP support.
- WTO Members are required to notify information on the implementation of six provisions of the WTO TFA

covering publication, internet publication, enquiry points, use of customs brokers, Single Window, and customs cooperation (known as the transparency notifications). TFSP has supported seven TFSP countries in **preparing and submitting these notifications to the WTO** (Georgia, Eswatini, Montenegro, Myanmar, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu).

- TFSP has supported 22 countries in preparing their **categorization and/or notification of timelines** for implementation of Categories B and C commitments (Albania, Bangladesh, Eswatini, Fiji, Georgia, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tonga, and Vanuatu).
- The application of **risk management** is a critical element that underpins all modern cross-border administrations and agencies. TFSP supports improvements in risk management practices and has supported 31 countries in the establishment of risk management frameworks (Albania, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kosovo, the 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).
- The **Authorized Operator (AO)**⁹ 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. TFSP has supported 15 countries in the design of the AO and/or AEO schemes (Albania, Bangladesh, Burundi, Eswatini, Georgia, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR (see **box 5**), Lesotho, Malawi, Mongolia, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan, and Tonga).
- Thirteen countries have also received support in **preparation for implementation of Single Windows** (Angola, Eswatini, Fiji, Kosovo, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Montenegro, São Tomé and Príncipe, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Vanuatu, and Zambia). Early preparation for SW implementation was also provided to Ethiopia.

⁹ 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.

BOX 5

Lao PDR AEO Program Begins Certifying Companies

The customs department of **Lao PDR** certified its first AEO company in February 2023, and more companies are expected to receive certification in the next reporting period. This certification is the fruition of multi-year support from TFSP to both help set up the AEO program framework and to raise awareness of it. The WB team began discussions with Lao PDR on the implementation of the AEO program in FY18. The WB supported the drafting of the "Guideline on Management of Authorized Economic Operators," which was approved by the minister of finance in April 2019. Upon its approval, customs continued to make enhancements on its implementation of the program by establishing AEO guidelines, a self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) manual, SAQ template and procedures, an AEO brochure and demonstration video (with support from TFSP), as well as provided training to customs officers and interested traders.

A ceremony was held to celebrate the first certification and was well-attended by the Ministry of Finance minister, Ministry of Industry and Commerce deputy minister, Ambassador of Japan (the first AEO company being a Japanese company), representatives of IFC, and some members of the business community. The minister recognized the WB for supporting the development of the AEO framework as well as for its support with capacity training. The AEO program offers many benefits to certified firms, including exemption from inspection of customs declaration documents and actual product inspection during customs procedures, that will expedite the trade process.

The customs department is committed to further promoting the AEO program to encourage applications to the program.

A cargo truck makes its way across the Lao PDR - Vietnam border
© Asian Development Bank/Creative Commons



1.2 REGIONAL WORK

TFSP continued to scale up regional work where it made sense to effectively coordinate synergies and efficiently allocate resources. For example:

CENTRAL AMERICA REGION

A customs union was formed between Honduras and Guatemala in 2017, and TFSP is providing support to the government of El Salvador to join the customs union. To do this, assistance was provided to implement advance declarations between El Salvador and Guatemala to enable more agile border crossing between the two countries. This reform is one of the stepping stones for El Salvador to join the customs union.

Since the implementation of advance declarations at the “La Hachadura” land border in August 2022, technical assistance was provided to El Salvador to carry out a pilot plan to measure import and export times from using advance declaration. According to La Popular, a company that participated in the pilot, border crossing times have reduced from 18 to 10 hours for them.

Watch press conference about the implementation of advance declarations here: <https://youtu.be/sX9Gg2Rmsh4?t=2557>

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION

Support for SACU members—with particular focus on Eswatini, Lesotho, and South Africa—as part of a new Southern Africa regional program under TFSP was launched in this reporting period. This regional program under TFSP builds upon prior WB projects, including the Eswatini Trade and Competitiveness program, the Lesotho Private Sector Competitiveness and Economic Development program and IFC investment program, and the work in South Africa under the Trade Facilitation Program for Middle Income Countries (TFMICs). TFMICs was a separate trade facilitation program co-implemented by the WB and WCO with support from the UK.

The new regional program seeks to improve regional coordination in advancing trade facilitation reforms while also providing bilateral support where appropriate. The WB team has engaged with the SACU Secretariat to collaborate on potential mutually relevant regional trade facilitation priorities within a SACU-wide agenda, including initiatives to enable customs-to-customs regional connectivity as well as the development of the regional AEO program. Read more about the regional activities undertaken in FY23 in **annex A**.

PACIFIC REGION

TFSP collaborated extensively with other international organizations (including OCO, PPIU, SPC, UNCITRAL, UNCTAD, and UNESCAP) throughout the development of the Pacific Islands Trade Facilitation Strategy. The concept note for the strategy was drafted jointly by PIFS and the TFSP-supported WB team in FY21, and it was discussed during a PIFS trade ministers meeting in July 2021. National consultations were completed in FY22, and a subsequent series of consultations were held over the course of the design and development of the strategy between November 2021 and April 2023. The Strategy is expected to be approved by the trade ministers early next reporting period.

WESTERN BALKANS

The WB supported Serbia with the development of an advance rulings (AR) tool for tariff classification, which was launched in the last reporting period. With the AR tool, the private sector is able to electronically submit their AR requests, including supporting and supplementary documentation, receive notifications, track status of their request, and receive an electronically-issued AR. The tool has been a success and has garnered interest from other countries in the region and beyond.

Given this interest, several workshops were held to showcase the positive impact of the digital AR procedures currently applied in Serbia. In December 2022, TFSP and USAID EDGE co-organized an online workshop, convening 41 attendees from various Western Balkans customs authorities. The workshop received high praise, and ongoing discussions are taking place regarding its implementation in other customs administrations.

In addition, similar bilateral online peer-to-peer sharing workshops on the AR tool were held in April 2023 for customs authorities in Malawi and in May 2023 for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Representatives from Serbia, along a TFSP-supported expert, jointly demonstrated the AR application tool and discussed its advantages and main features for both front-end and back-end users. The workshops fostered cross-country learning and encouraged regional customs to digitalize their AR procedures using this good practice example from Serbia.

Read about other regional activities in the Western Balkans region in **annex A**.

“The facilitation of trade plays an important role in the process of deeper economic integration.”

MINISTER OF TRADE OF SERBIA

1.3 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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

1.3A PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, AND CONFERENCES

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

Examples of major events that took place this period are:

- The WB and the government of Australia co-organized a session on “Enhancing TFA implementation in the Pacific through connectivity and inclusiveness” at the WTO Global Aid for Trade Review which took place in July 2022. The session showcased the recent experiences of Fiji and Tonga and offered perspectives from Timor-Leste on TFA implementation, focusing on how implementation can enhance connectivity and inclusiveness across public and private sector dimensions. The roundtable panel discussion included distinguished country representatives and trade facilitation experts who were instrumental in enhancing TFA implementation in the three countries.
- With support from TFSP, the WB alongside the Secretariat for the Economic Integration of Central America (SIECA) co-organized a high-level event in Guatemala in November 2022. It successfully convened the authorities of the six Central American countries (plus the Dominican Republic). The event was well-attended and also included private sector representatives (from airlines, logistics and manufacturing companies as well as micro, small, and medium enterprises), representatives of multilateral organizations and bilateral institutions. The event provided the opportunity for open dialogue between

“For Fiji, with TFA implementation so far, we have noticed a huge difference in the overall clearance process and the strengthening of the communication between the government agencies. Further, a full implementation of TFA will highly impact the clearance process, save cost and time, which [we are] looking forward to implement.”

CHIEF CUSTOMS OFFICER OF FIJI REVENUE AND CUSTOMS SERVICE

the private sector representatives and government authorities.

- The WB, WTO TFAF, and PIFS co-organized (with the TFSP-supported team leading preparations) a four-day peer-to-peer learning workshop focused on “Supporting the Effective Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation in the Pacific” between December 13–16, 2022, in Sydney, Australia.¹⁰

Importantly, the workshop provided the opportunity to explore and agree on implementation priorities for the Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy as well as to refine its roadmap.

High-level representatives from nine countries attended the event. Representatives from other non-government organizations (WTO, STDF, WCO, UNCTAD, OCO, SPC, PPIU, and MSG) also joined as speakers for several sessions.

- TFSP and TradeMark East Africa provided support to deliver the SACU AEO launch event, which was hosted by the SACU Executive Secretary between May 28 and 31, 2023, in Johannesburg. The session included SACU technical working group meetings for both the AEO and exchange-of-information initiatives. The culmination of the event resulted in each of the SACU Commissioner Generals signing the SACU AEO Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA). The Agreement provides reciprocal trade benefits for companies certified as AEOs in their national legislation through the recognition of SACU AEO export consignments and its facilitation on the import side of transactions.

¹⁰ The workshop was funded by TFSP, with a contribution from the WTO TFAF.

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

1.3B TRADE FACILITATION & BORDER MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (COP)



The WB Global Trade Team launched a new Community of Practice on Trade Facilitation & Border Management in June 2022. The CoP was established to facilitate knowledge sharing across

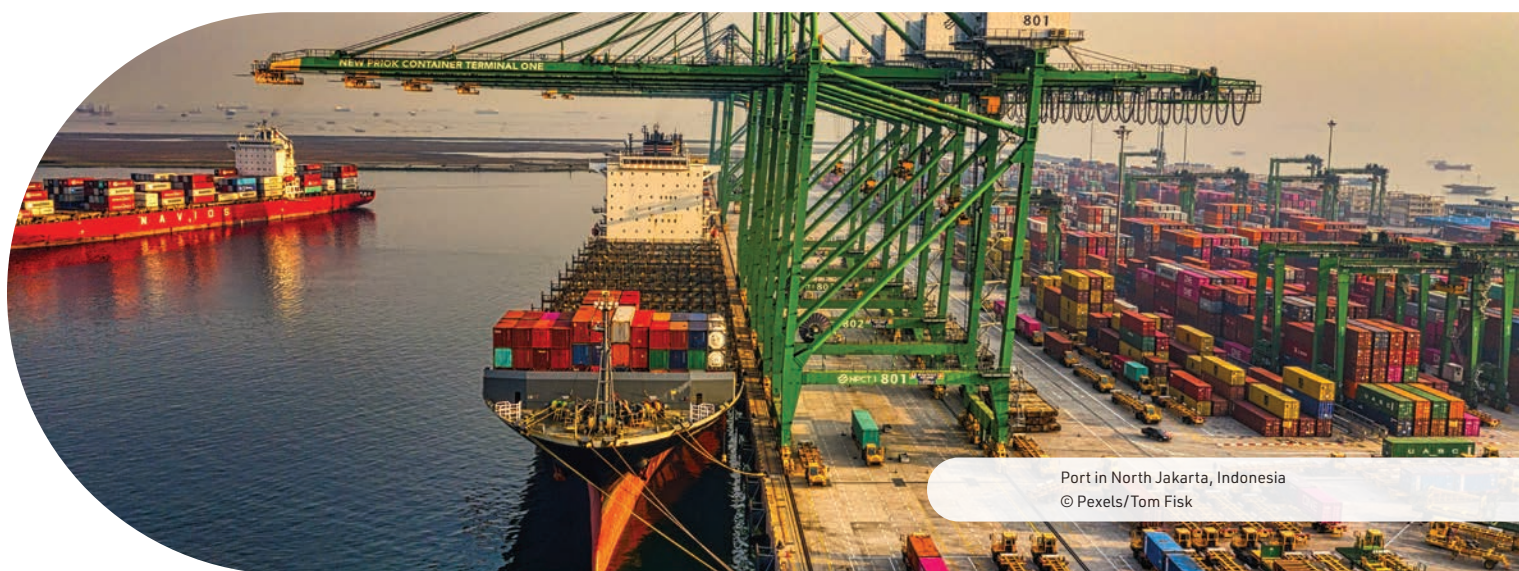
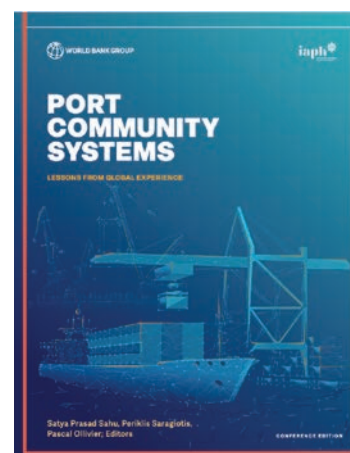
the WB by providing a forum to discuss trends and issues in trade facilitation and border management as well as support WB staff in the delivery of trade facilitation technical assistance. The CoP also aims to find links between trade facilitation and other areas of WB work, such as the Transport Global Practice, IFC Investment Climate, and IFC Trade Finance, to ensure opportunities for synergies are pursued moving forward.

In this reporting period, the CoP hosted a virtual knowledge-sharing event on July 20, 2022, to present the Lesotho National Single Window (LNSW) whose pilot became effective at the end of June 2022. TFSP supported the development of the LNSW beginning in 2017, including the blueprint, and this was leveraged to inform a WB loan for implementation of the LNSW through a WB Private Sector Competitiveness and Development Project. The

online portal aims to serve as a tool to manage trade regulatory requirements and streamline cross-border business transactions. Furthermore, the team was able to successfully integrate the LNSW with Automated Systems for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) at several levels. During the event, the project team presented on how it was implemented and discussed how this experience can be useful for other countries. The event was attended by 31 WB experts interested in the project and its success.

1.3C STUDY ON PORT COMMUNITY SYSTEMS

TFSP provided support towards the World Bank's study on Port Community Systems (PCS), which underscores their critical role in advancing maritime trade facilitation and logistics through digital platforms. The study bridges the knowledge gap that exists in developing countries by demystifying PCS functionalities and outlining best practices for their effective implementation. Divided into thematic chapters and case studies, the research explores financial, governance, and legal aspects while emphasizing customs-port collaboration and trade process optimization. It aligns with international efforts in port digitalization and offers insights into the applicability of PCS principles to Air Cargo Community Systems (ACCS). The study is an amalgamation



Port in North Jakarta, Indonesia
© Pexels/Tom Fisk

of inputs from industry experts, policymakers, and academic researchers, contributing to the broader discourse on sustainable development in international trade logistics. The study will be completed in the next reporting period.

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 TFSP, the WB has delivered multiple workshops, undertaken missions, and worked on knowledge products and technical assistance jointly with the following organizations:

- Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF): Partnership with the EC in Cabo Verde, Myanmar, and Vanuatu
- European Union: Presentation of best practices to the EU member states regarding NSW implementation jointly with TAXUD
- HM's Revenue and Customs (UK), UNCTAD, and the World Customs Organization (WCO): Joint missions to Bangladesh, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, and Tonga on TRS
- International Air Transport Association (IATA): Partnership in Central America for air cargo, expedited shipments
- International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC): Initiation of joint electronic phytosanitary certification (e-Phyto) pilot implementation, joint TFA missions, exchange of knowledge, and joint SPS diagnostic work, supporting the development of an e-commerce guide, support the IPPC's Sea Containers Task Force on practical management of sea containers
- International Standards Organization (ISO): Presentation at events and co-writing a blog on managing organizational performance during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic
- International Trade Center (ITC): Joint activities in Sri Lanka and in Jamaica/other Caribbean countries
- North American Sea Container Initiative: Co-organization of event focused on identifying potential international approaches to managing pest risks on containers moving through trade
- Standards Trade Development Facility (STDF): Ensuring synergies between STDF and WB projects and that WTO TFA objectives are included in the

projects, as well as participating in webinars on SPS and trade-related issues (read more about the WB's collaboration with STDF in **box 6**)

- TradeMark East Africa: Burundi assessment
- United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT): Presentation at virtual forum
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD): Joint missions to Guatemala, Jamaica, 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 (UNECE): Participation in TFA workshops in Tajikistan, Ukraine, and North Macedonia and participation in the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies

BOX 6

Working in Coordination and Collaboration with Others at the Global-Level

The WB continued to work together with other development partners and international organizations at the **global level** on advocacy for improvements in market access, innovation, and implementation of best practices. In this reporting period, the WB—for example—continued to collaborate with WTO STDF through (1) participating in STDF working group meetings, of which the WB is a founding partner; (2) taking part in discussions and providing input on SPS projects; and (3) working together in leveraging resources to bring about results in areas of commonality by leveraging WB technical assistance and operations. Some examples of collaboration include:

- Working with the STDF to measure the impact of implementing electronic phytosanitary certificates on small-scale traders in **Zambia**
- Proposing future collaboration on trade facilitation, capacity development for SPS agencies in **Bhutan**
- Collaborating on strategies to advance the use of electronic certificates beyond the current use in plant product trade as well as leading discussions on the use of artificial intelligence in risk management approaches in SPS

“The Trade Facilitation Support Program is directly related to the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement. We’ve had a longstanding partnership throughout the duration of the implementation period and beyond.”

WTO TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT FACILITY

BOX 7

Working in Coordination and Collaboration with Others at the Country-Level

At the **country level**, the WB recognizes the importance of coordinated development assistance to increase aid effectiveness, avoid duplication of work, and minimize client fatigue. Through information sharing, the WB teams are able to develop workplans that do not overlap with other projects ongoing in the countries. When needed and as appropriate, the WB also collaborates with other donors to deliver projects and joint workshops and events. For example,

- In **Cambodia**, TFSP-supported activities are closely coordinated with ARISE+ (EU) and other donors, including Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The NTFC, in addition, has developed a matrix of activities to ensure that the development partners work on exclusive and complementary tasks.
- In **Nepal**, fresh produce and root crops were reliant on treatments performed by treatment facilities in India, which delayed exports by up to two weeks. Given this challenge, TFSP began providing support to refurbish a treatment center in Kathmandu to allow Nepal to better meet trade demands locally. To do this, TFSP leveraged assessments funded by Australia to provide technical assistance to the Plant Quarantine and Pesticide Management

Centre (PQPMC) on better risk management and treatment. The WB also worked with PQPMC and the government of Australia to engage in bilateral discussions leading to an agreement on how the facility could treat Nepalese exports for access to Australia. For ongoing work, the WB team is working with Department of Food Technology and Quality Control (DFTQC) to implement risk-based approaches while GIZ is working to increase some areas of accreditation of DFTQC services. The support from TFSP—combined with WB operations and complementary support by other development partners—will result in improvement for Nepal’s export trade while also reducing import risks. The facility is an important link to expediting trade.

- In **Peru**, TFSP-supported activities to advance an initiative that was initially started by SECO to assist Peru with trade facilitation reforms. The SECO initiative undertook a broad assessment and road-mapping of legislative, policy and operational reforms, and developed some tools to support implementation of modernized methods for SPS management. TFSP built upon this work by supporting technical assistance for the implementation of these tools. Read more about TFSP’s work in Peru in **annex A**.

of Central Asia (SPECA) forums; development of the UN on Recommendation 38 on TIPs¹¹

- United States Agency for International Development (USAID): Joint TFA assessments in Bangladesh, Moldova, Montenegro, and Serbia; participation in TFA workshops in Central America; co-support to NTFC activities in the Western Balkans region
- World Customs Organization (WCO): Joint activities in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Tonga, and in the Western

Balkans; close partnership on implementing and updating the TRS

- World Trade Organization (WTO): Partnership on multiple fronts, including Annex D¹² knowledge management activities (including the Gender Research Hub) and peer-to-peer events

Aside from global partnerships, **box 7** provides select examples of coordination and collaboration at the country level.

¹¹ With support from the WB Global Trade Team, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) issued a Recommendation on Trade Information Portals in fall 2021. The recommendation details the different types of information for such a portal, implementation considerations, and key success factors, as well as serves as a complete guide on setting up a TIP. This recommendation will be accompanied by an e-business standard to help facilitate the exchange of such information. The UNECE working group on TIPs was led by the WB, with funding from TFSP.

¹² The Annex D + group is comprised of the following organizations: IMF, ITC, OECD, UNCTAD, UNECE, WB, and WCO

1.5 TFA TRACKING TOOL

The WB utilizes the **TFA Tracking Tool** methodology and website to better position itself in demonstrating and monitoring progress towards the TFSP's objective of helping countries improve alignment with the WTO TFA through full and effective implementation of trade facilitation reforms. The tool also provides countries with a comprehensive dataset 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:

- i. The legal/policy dimension measures the extent to which legal or administrative measures are in place that establish policies consistent with the TFA.
- ii. The implementing procedures dimension determines whether procedures consistent with the TFA have been developed to give effect to relevant policy prescriptions.
- iii. 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:

1. A **whole-of-government** approach is used 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)

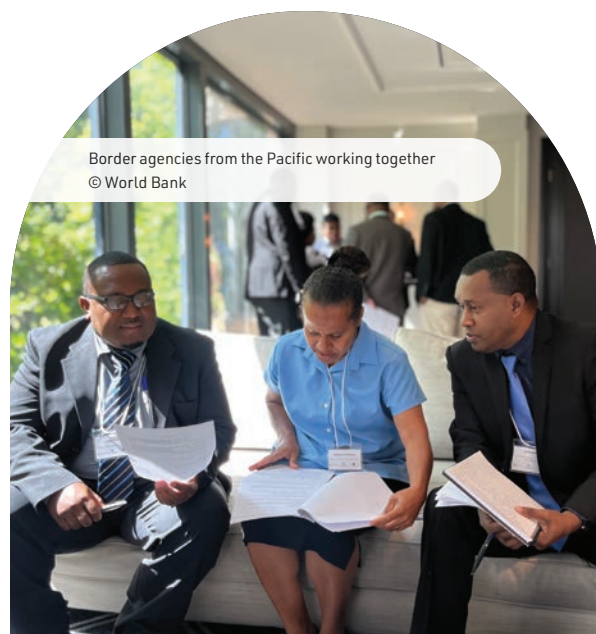
agency responsible for plant protection and quarantine; (c) agency responsible for standards; and (d) agency responsible for food safety and/or animal health.

2. The **granular** approach to the TFA Tracking Tool methodology 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 integrates the granular aspects of the methodology into the alignment score visualizations.

Since the launch of the TFA Tracking Tool, scores for 32 countries in the TFSP portfolio have been validated. The overall average alignment score for these 32 TFSP-supported countries is 47.8 percent based on either the available baseline or updated assessments. The WB has completed baseline and updated assessments for 22 TFSP-supported countries, allowing for comparison over time, which demonstrates an improvement in their overall alignment with the WTO TFA from 41 percent alignment in the baseline scores to 53 percent in their updates. In the FY23, TFSP funded validation of three update tracking tool assessments: Liberia, Serbia, and Sierra Leone.¹³ The updates for Liberia and Serbia are follow-ups to the updates from 2018 for both countries.

There were 458 new visitors¹⁴ to the website in FY23. All countries with validated assessments are able to view their whole-of-government "alignment scores," as well as individual scores by four proxy agencies, on the portal to assess their level of full and effective implementation for each measure of the WTO TFA.¹⁵ 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 the website.

Figures 6-8 show breakdowns of the changes in baseline and updated scores of TFSP countries represented on the website.



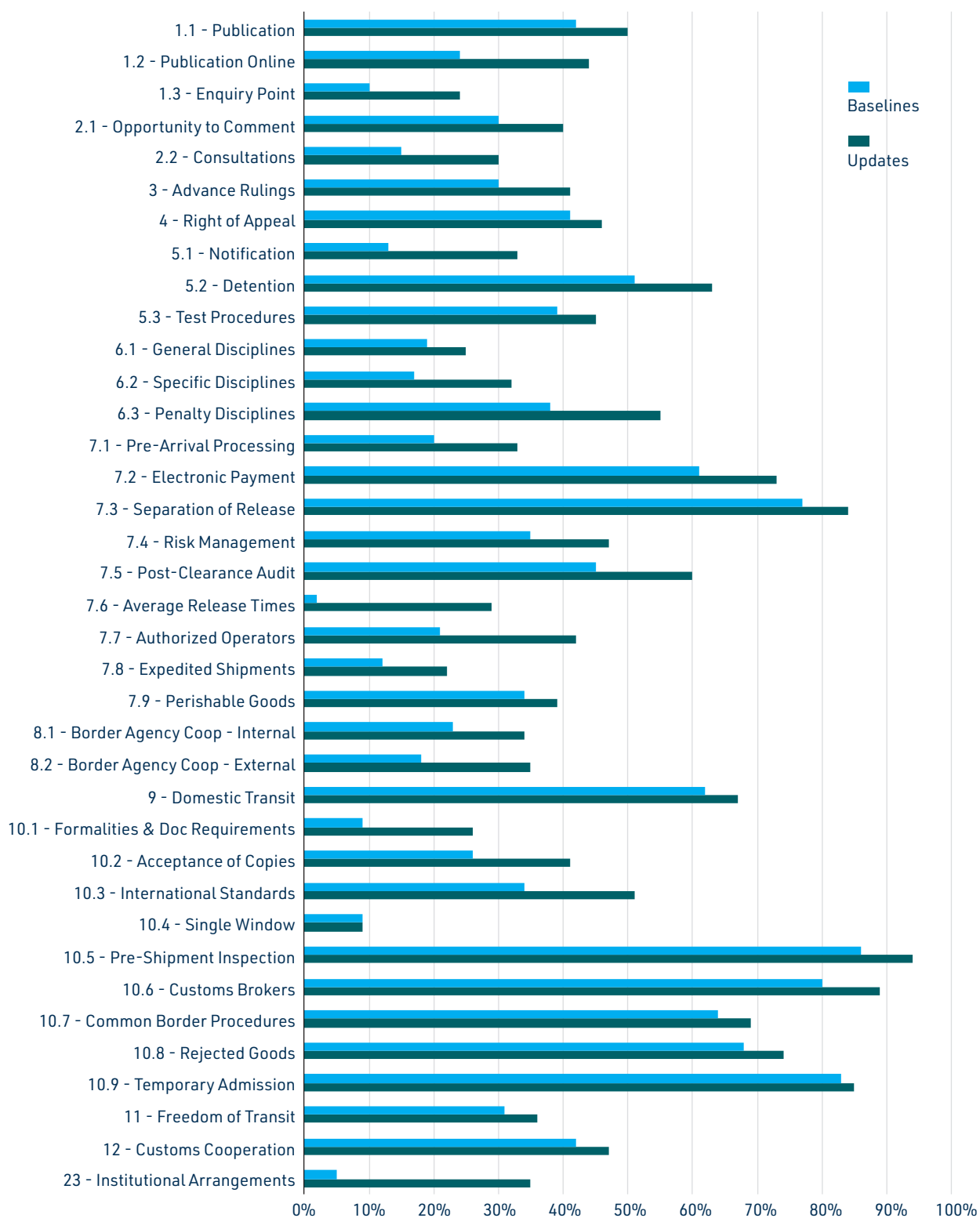
Border agencies from the Pacific working together
© World Bank

¹³ Update assessments were undertaken for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and North Macedonia in FY23. These are pending validation.

¹⁴ The number of first-time users between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023.

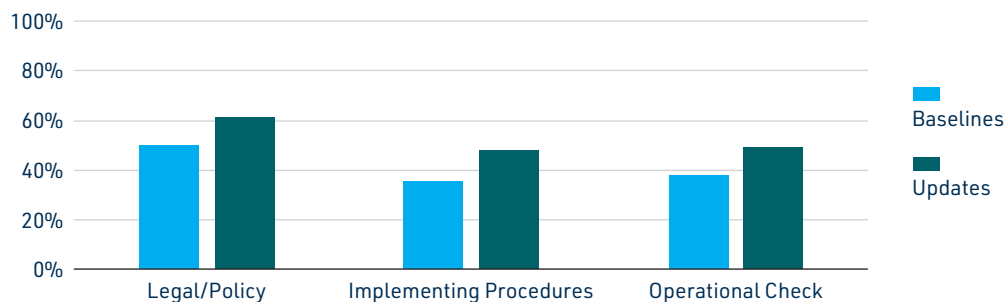
¹⁵ The Tracking Tool assesses alignment across 37 technical measures. The TFA Tracking Tool is not intended to be a ranking exercise. To preserve confidentiality, country-specific alignment scores can only be viewed by designated and vetted users of each client country represented on the website. The general public is able to view overall scores as well as other non-sensitive information.

FIGURE 6
Overall Alignment by Measure



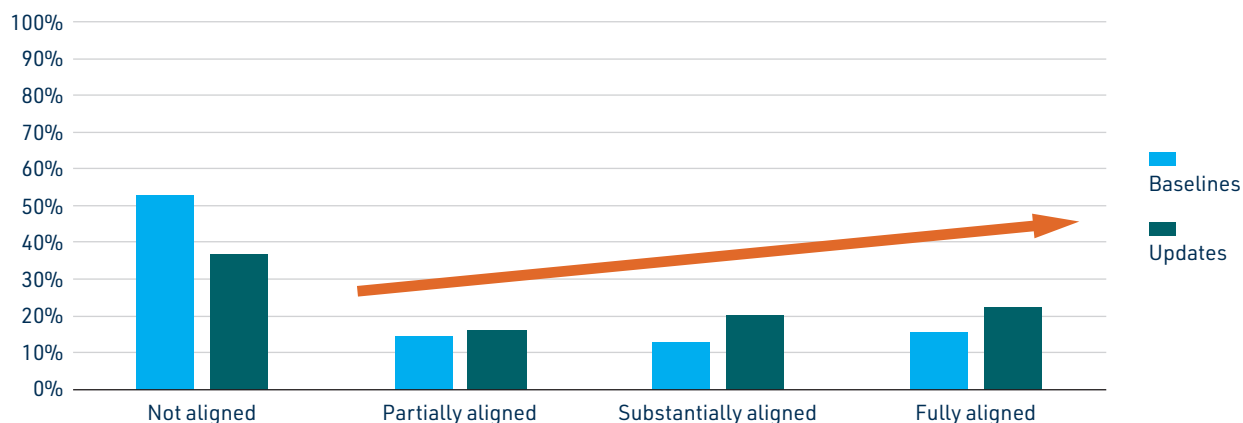
Note: Baselines are 2015-18; updates are 2018-23.

FIGURE 7
Changes in Overall Dimension Score



Note: Baselines are 2015-18; updates are 2018-23.

FIGURE 8
Changes in Alignment to Trade Facilitation Agreement



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 22 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 2018-23.



Container ship crossing water
© Shutterstock/Studio Concept

1.6 EXPANDING INTO CROSS-CUTTING AREAS

The WB recognizes that there are opportunities now more than ever to further explore and strengthen the linkages between trade facilitation and cross-cutting areas such as gender, digitalization, public health, food security, and the environment, and emergency response. More engagement on and leverage of these complementary cross-cutting issues is required to move the trade and trade facilitation agenda forward as the 21st century evolves. TFSP is responding to these cross-cutting emerging issues in addition to accelerating support to aid countries in implementing their Category C commitments.

“By creating a more gender-friendly trade environment and attracting more women to participate in international trade, we can improve economic outcomes for women.”

SENIOR PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST
AT THE WORLD BANK



Woman in Tajikistan
© World Bank/Nozim Kalandarov



1.6A TRADE FACILITATION AND GENDER WORK

Contributing to the increasingly important dialogue on how to mainstream gender and inclusivity issues into trade policy, TFSP funded various activities to promote data collection and knowledge sharing on the nexus between trade facilitation and gender.

Activities supported with a gender lens include:

- **Designing a survey tool.** TFSP support was used to develop the Trade and Gender Study methodology, which seeks to identify and quantify gender gaps by collecting data on the specific challenges faced by women compared to men-led firms (also referred to as “traders”) when they undertake cross-border trade processes and procedures.

The data and findings collected through the survey tool contribute to the field of literature on the trade facilitation and gender, and offers a useful dataset for governments, development organizations, and others in ensuring that the design of trade facilitation reforms consider gender-specific challenges. Read a sample of the data collected in the Pacific region in **box 8**.

The methodology has since been replicated in several countries through other funding sources, including in Brazil, the Philippines, South Africa, and most recently¹⁶ Tajikistan, which was launched in May 2023. With separate funding, preparations for similar surveys in Jordan and India¹⁷ began in FY23 and are expected to be completed in the next reporting period.

- **Developing strategies.** The survey work completed in the four Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste informed the development of the draft Pacific Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy, including by

¹⁶ The Trade and Gender Study undertaken in Tajikistan was financed by the government of Japan through the Quality Infrastructure Investment Project. TFSP-funded WB subject matter experts provided advice and guidance on the work.

¹⁷ Early preparations from the Trade Facilitation and Gender Study in India was provided by TFSP, including support from WB experts to participate in private sector consultations with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to prepare for the roll-out of the study in India in FY24. The next phases of survey work—including data collection and reporting—will be funded by another source.

BOX 8

Generating Gender-Disaggregated Data

TFSP supported deployment of the Trade and Gender Study in four Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste between 2019 and 2020, interviewing over 1,500 firms. Individual country reports and one comparative regional report were published and disseminated broadly to governments, the private sector, and civil society in and beyond the surveyed countries. An animated video highlighting the main findings was also produced to publicize the study in an easily sharable and digestible media format.

The surveys in the Pacific region found that of the cross-border trade firms interviewed:

- With the exception of Samoa, fewer women are consulted by the government on matters related to

border processes. Strong private sector consultations can help increase compliance to new trade rules.

- Fewer women are aware that declarations can be submitted electronically. On average, more men are aware of electronic submissions than women. Electronic submissions can often save traders time in doing business.
- Fewer women are aware that customs allows pre-declaration of shipments prior to arrival. Pre-declaring goods often allows goods to be released faster.

Findings from these studies are being used to inform the development of a regional trade facilitation strategy.

raising awareness of the gender gaps and ensuring that the new strategy takes gender-specific challenges into consideration. The draft strategy highlights where reforms may be particularly beneficial to women traders, as well as recommends that women-led industry or trade associations has a seat at the table (as observers) in the establishment of a Pacific Regional Trade Facilitation Committee. The draft is expected to be sent for final approval in the next reporting period.

- **Knowledge sharing.** TFSP funded the production of the "Trade Tips" podcast series to discuss trade issues and their possible solutions (see **section 2.3** and **annex C** for more details on the podcast). In an episode is focused on "Invisible Women," a cocoa exporter and processor in the Solomon Islands explained that while she would like to trade more, she does not always feel included in essential conversations about how. She states, "there are instances—being a female—where you don't feel you're being notified about upcoming events and developments." The episode explores why women are invisible when it comes to trade and why gender inclusive policies are important.

TFSP also supports knowledge sharing through participation in and presentations at various conferences and events related to trade and gender. For example, the TFSP-supported WB team is a member of the WTO's Gender Research Hub, which is a mechanism to knowledge-share on the impact of trade on women and gender equality. The WB team participated in Hub meetings to discuss research, upcoming opportunities for research and events, as well as provided feedback and comments on various documents.

"The TFA is really make a big difference... it will give an opportunity to woman to participate more on developing our economy as well as play a big role to enhance the improvement of the implementation of the agreement itself."

PARTICIPANT FROM TIMOR-LESTE AT THE DECEMBER 2022 PACIFIC REGIONAL WORKSHOP



1.6B DIGITALIZATION

Digitalization and automation can increase predictability and transparency and reduce time to trade. Adoption of emerging technologies and digitization is a core tool to provide transparent access to information for traders (such as through Trade Information Portals), reduce the need for in-person presence at borders, and subsequently reduce the amount of time spent on customs clearance. TFSP support to help client countries improve digitalization and automation include:

- Undertaking Digitalization Gap Analysis to design and inform the procurement of systems from a “whole-of-government” perspective. The Gap Analysis is the critical first level diagnostic to measure the digital gap across all border agencies and ensure the input into the design and delivery of the digitalization solutions meets the unique needs of at the national level and where relevant at the regional level.
- Enabling automated electronic exchange of data and inter-connection between customs and other government agencies (OGAs) through tools like the Single Window
- Aligning countries to international standards, including the WCO, UNECE, ISO, and WTO to ensure interoperability of digitalization
- Integrating and connecting data sources to enable integrated risk-based border clearance
- Connecting automated processes to issue certificates, permits, and licenses—including ePhyto, eCites, and others
- Streamlining controls through the implementation of electronic interfaces that serve as single submission points for meeting documentary requirements, paying fees and charges, and receiving timely approvals/notifications
- Reforming governance structures and operating procedures to automate major back-off workflow for customs and OGAs



1.6C PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND ENVIRONMENT

TFSP supports reforms relevant to public health. Inefficient implementation of border procedures and processes can lead to cold chain disruption and delays in getting commodities to the consumer. For perishable goods, this leads to food waste, reduction in food quality, and increased food safety risks. Under trade facilitation, particular attention is paid to perishable goods and applying risk-based approaches for clearance of SPS-related products as well as expedited treatment of perishable goods where appropriate (see **box 7** for an example of this work in Nepal). As changes in climate impact how and where agricultural goods can be produced as growing environments and the distribution of pests and crop diseases shift, proper risk management frameworks will be critical to help countries identify threats based on risk and continue the safe trade of agricultural goods in response to these variances.

On environment, TFSP is supporting the development of a methodology to measure and collect baseline data on trade facilitation’s impact on climate change and sustainability. Existing research—primarily focused on the US-Mexico border—has found that the impact on emissions as a result of reductions in wait times at the border varies on a case-by-case basis. A study of emissions at the port of entry in El Paso, for example, estimated that there is an approximate output of 12,570 grams of particulate matter in a 24-hour period. A wait time reduction of 20 percent equates to less than a 1 percent reduction of particulate matter; however, wait time decreased by at least 25 percent results in emissions reductions for almost all emissions types.¹⁸ In another study at a point of entry in Arizona that involved simulations and collection field data, it was estimated that inspection streamlining, infrastructure improvements, and fuel switching can reduce emissions by 16 percent for particulate matter, 18 percent for nitrogen oxides, and 15 percent for GHGs and carbon monoxide in a high congestion scenario.¹⁹

To further understand the linkages between trade facilitation and impact of the environment across varied

¹⁸ Shelton, Jeff, Abhisek Mudgal, Dusan Jolovic, Gabriel A Valdez, David Salgado, and Chaoyi Gu. 2016. “Port-of-Entry Emissions Inventory for the El Paso Region.”

¹⁹ Reyna, Janet, Sravani Vadlamani, Mikhail Chester, and Yingyan Lou. 2016. “Reducing emissions at land border crossings through queue reduction and expedited security processing.”



Aerial photo of Dili, Timor-Leste
© Shutterstock/Jack Nugent

country contexts, the goal is to develop a methodology to quantify how targeted trade facilitation measures (such as electronic Single Window, coordinated border management, risk management) can impact emissions, allow for comparison over time, and can be aggregated across countries. This also includes development of a core set of inputs to ensure replication and aggregation of results, particularly with regards to cost savings to traders through reducing emissions at borders. The methodology will build on the TRS and will help generate quantifiable data that enables a better understanding of how trade facilitation measures can be leveraged to contribute to meeting sustainability goals (for example, through the reduction of emissions).



1.6D EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

Many countries around the world are highly vulnerable to climate, natural disasters, and crisis situations from medical emergencies and conflict situations. At the same time, they are dependent on trade for sustaining their economies, including for responding to disasters and crises. When there is an unforeseen emergency, additional costs are often imposed by inefficient customs and border agency mechanisms such as complex import, export, and transit processes, a lack of coordination and information sharing between border agencies, and limited use of integrated data systems.

These weaknesses lead to limited opportunities for countries to benefit from regional trade agreements, and an increase in time and costs for traders, particularly

during emergencies and climate-related disasters. These constraints are amplified for agricultural traders—for example—who face higher burdens to comply with biosecurity requirements, leading to delays in or damages to perishable produce. Inefficiencies in trade can exacerbate the impact of shocks from natural disasters or health emergencies, making it harder for critical goods to quickly and efficiently reach those in need during crises. When no protocols are in place to ensure effective and timely clearance of goods during an emergency, the entry and distribution of humanitarian relief can be impeded or even blocked.

As part of a response to this, TFSP is well-positioned to help countries build solid trade foundations and architecture that strengthen their resilience against future negative shocks that impact trade, particularly through provision of technical assistance and capacity building that embed efficient and effective trade

“The TFA is cornerstone to our border agency coordination work and efforts to further enhance our government to business relations in Samoa. We believe that we can achieve a lot more in the facilitation and security of the supply chain, and of utmost importance at this time of recovery, making trade easier and cheaper.”

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE MINISTRY OF
CUSTOMS & REVENUE IN SAMOA

facilitation measures and solutions. The WB supports countries to introduce emergency preparedness measures, specifically:

- **Expedited clearance of imported cargo** of critical goods during emergencies and natural disasters
- **Modernized customs legislation** to align with international standards facilitating the flow of critical goods, ensuring mutual recognition with trading partners, and enhancing market access
- **Institutional policy reforms** for increased resilience of the built environment and infrastructure, stronger emergency preparedness, response, and post-disaster recovery
- A **“whole-of-government” approach to border clearance** with a coordinated approach at the border
- Implementation of **communication mechanisms** for traders to know in advance the process for activating emergency processes for border clearance in the time of crisis

In **Montenegro**, for example, TFSP provided support for the formulation of a new Customs Decree on carrying out customs procedures and formalities. The implementation of this Decree holds substantial potential in contributing to COVID-19 pandemic recovery. The focus on electronic customs clearance and the simplification of customs procedures aligns well with the need for efficiency and reduced physical contact in the post-pandemic environment. Here’s how it can help address strengthen pandemic recovery measures:

Contactless processes

Emphasis on electronic clearance minimizes the need for physical paperwork and in-person interactions between traders and officials. This is crucial to reduce the risk of virus transmission, aligning with health and safety guidelines.

Operational continuity

Simplified and digitized procedures enable the smooth continuation of trade activities during disruptions caused by lockdowns or restricted movement. This ensures trade flows are not severely hampered, thereby contributing to recovery.

Efficiency enhancement

Electronic submission and processing of declarations expedite customs procedures, leading to quicker clearance times. This is particularly beneficial when businesses are looking to regain momentum swiftly.

In essence, the Decree’s provisions resonate well with the requirements of a post-pandemic world. By offering contactless, efficient, and digitally-enabled customs processes, it not only supports ongoing trade activities but also aids in the effective revival of economies by facilitating safe and consistent cross-border trade.

In **Tonga**, the emergency preparedness expedited clearance procedure for vaccines, priority food products, and emergency-related cargo was piloted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The procedure was implemented just as the first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines was imported into Tonga and reduced the previous three days taken to clear the shipment to only three hours. The emergency preparedness expedited clearance procedure also helped aid efforts linked to other natural disasters, which took place during the pandemic (the category 4 Tropical Cyclone Harold, which caused damages and losses to more than 12 percent to Tonga’s total GDP; followed by the eruption of the Hunga-Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai volcano—and subsequent tsunami waves—which caused extensive damage, impacting 85 percent of the population).

1.7 SUSTAINABLE REFORMS

TFSP supports interventions that will create and maintain the momentum necessary for reforms to be successful in the longer term and continue to generate results and gains for stakeholders even after project closure. Sustainability can be fostered in many ways, including through proper training, fostering of ownership and strong leadership, and designing and implementing effective and legally binding reforms. **Box 9** provides select examples of how TFSP supported sustainable reforms.



Customs officer at the Corinto border
between Guatemala and Honduras
© World Bank

BOX 9

Fostering Ownership and Leadership to Ensure the Sustainability of Reforms

Training and Capacity Building

To ensure the sustainability of the advance declaration reform in Guatemala and El Salvador (in pursuit of the deep integration initiative between Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador), the WB team provided training and capacity building for traders on how to use advance declaration. An informational video was designed and disseminated to traders, and the video can be updated as necessary.

Prioritization

Proper identification of priorities is critical to ensuring efficient and effective use of resources to implement reforms that can be sustained. In Nepal where there are constraints to human and financial resources

within the SPS organizations, TFSP support is targeted and tailored to areas of improvement that are feasible with the existing capacities. Given the importance of exports for competitiveness and economic growth, interventions that improve export efficiencies are prioritized.

Planning

In Kosovo, the WB team worked with the NTFC to develop a sustainability plan that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and actions required to sustain trade facilitation reforms. This plan included strategies for resource mobilization, institutional strengthening, and ongoing coordination among stakeholders to ensure the continued implementation and monitoring of reforms.

TFSP-supported WB team with employees from the Fiji Ports Authority
© World Bank/Chris Morgan



An aerial photograph of a shipping yard, showing multiple rows of stacked cargo containers in various colors including red, yellow, blue, green, and white. The containers are arranged in neat, parallel lines on a paved surface.

2

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

2.1 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The administration of 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. With the institutional re-organization effective July 1, 2020, all trade facilitation work is led by the World Bank.

2.2 DONOR ENGAGEMENT

Due to the pandemic, the TFSP Consultative Committee meetings that were held in the reporting period were virtual. The first meeting took place in September 2022 and the second in February 2023. 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 TFSP.

2.3 COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Communications is an important element of the TFSP 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, TFSP continued to build on its foundation for communications and to embed it within project activities. The communications plan for FY23 to guides

the program's approach to strategic communications. It is supplemented with guidance for team members on how to incorporate communications into specific activities, including by meeting donor visibility requirements. Additionally, in FY23 two new products were launched: 1) the "Trade Tips" podcast and 2) animation on the National Single Window. Development of a new virtual 360 film was also initiated in this reporting period and will be launched in the next reporting period.

The "Trade Tips" podcast series (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/series/trade-tips-podcast>) features **six episodes**—each related

to the relevant themes of TFSP work and global trade—from trade facilitation, the NTFC, TFA, SPS to climate change, digitization, gender, and more. Each episode is short (less than 10 minutes), focuses on a specific

theme, and has an operational "how to" on the specific subject matter. The podcast format features voices from the field (i.e., clients) and WB experts. The aim was to help technical clients (non-economists) understand concepts related to trade facilitation reforms. Clients have the opportunity to listen "on-the-go" at a time/platform that is convenient to them.

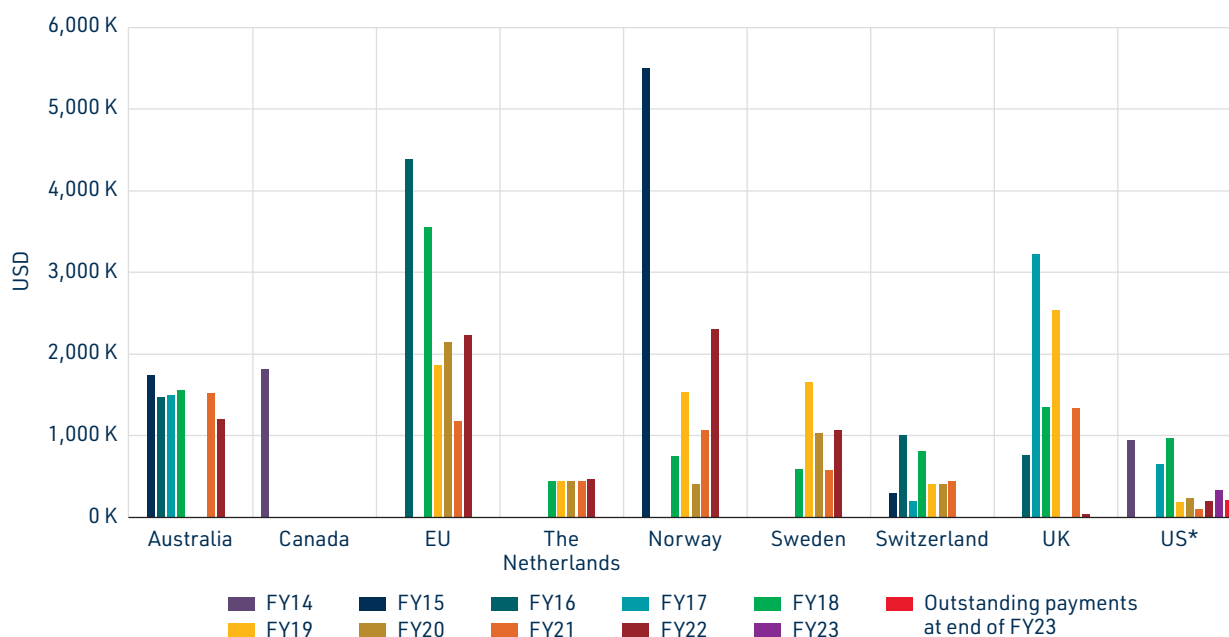
Annex C provides details on the podcast series and select other communications efforts made in the reporting period.

2.4 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

At the end of the reporting period, USD 61 million had been received from the TFSP development partners since the program's launch. This was 99.7 percent of overall partner commitments at the end of the reporting period. **Figure 9** shows receipts and outstanding payments by donor.

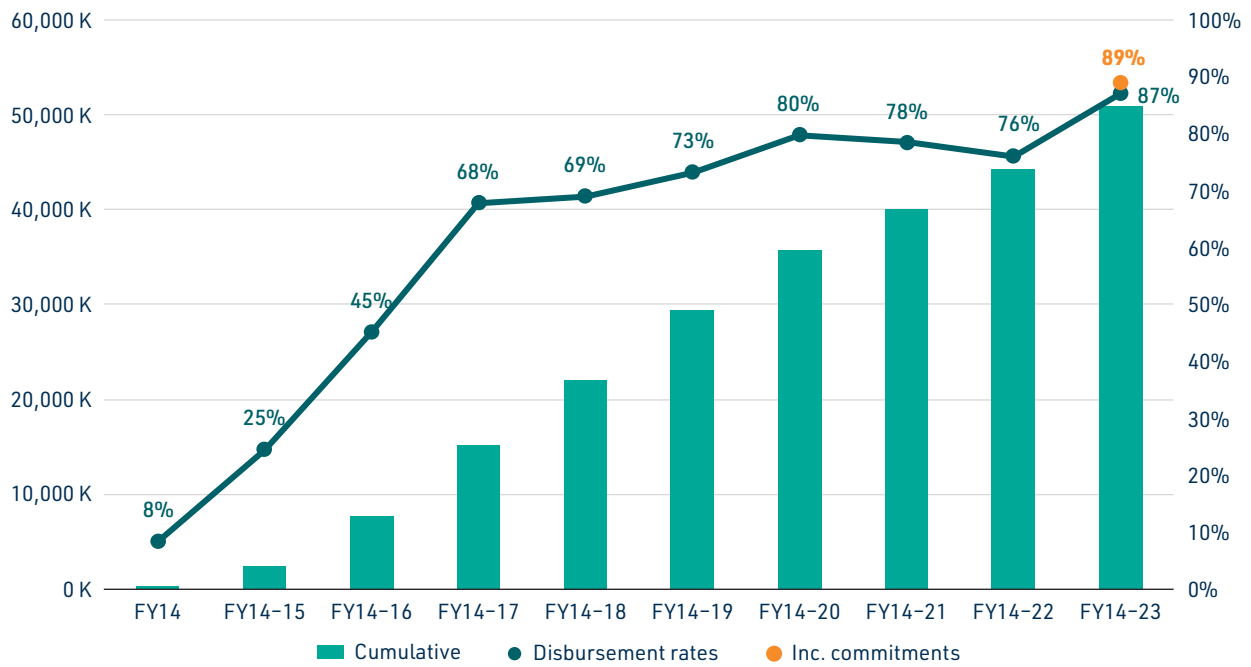
The program disbursement-only percentage increased from the previous reporting period—from 76 percent in FY22 to 87 percent in FY23 (**figure 10**). Cumulative disbursements since program inception plus activity commitments at the end of FY23 totaled 89 percent of cash receipts (**annex D** has further financial details).

FIGURE 9
Receipts and Outstanding Payments, USD Thousands



*US values reflect cash receipts after a 5 percent administrative fee is deducted. US values also include core and Zambia specific support. For all other donor receipts, the values include the 5 percent administrative fee.

FIGURE 10
Cumulative Disbursements, USD Thousands



Biosecurity officer performing an inspection
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

Crane lifting cargo from container ship
© World Bank/Chris Morgan



3

LESSONS LEARNED AND LOOKING FORWARD

3.1 LESSONS LEARNED

The WB continues to learn lessons in relation to the design and execution of 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:

Aerial shot of a cargo ship
© Pexels/ Robert So

DESCRIPTION	LESSON LEARNED/SOLUTION
Capacity challenges (such as a weak or inactive NTFC, varied implementation capacity across border agencies, and/or lack of sufficient resources) can limit the ability to carry out robust reforms.	Early set-up of an NTFC supports efficient use of resources by improving coordination among participants and reduces the risk of duplicating funds. Set-up of technical working groups in the NTFC can also help to improve coordination. Additionally, capacity building across all border agencies (taking a whole-of-government approach) is vital to enhance their overall understanding of trade reforms and ensure that benefits of interventions are maximized. Where resources are lacking, it is important to develop a project implementation plan that will take into account specific issues and capacities. The work plan should ensure there is a logical sequence in implementation and that staff is not exhausted.
Sequencing challenges occur when government agencies do not prioritize their border activities.	Trade facilitation involves developing better procedures in areas considered crucial to national security, government revenue, and private sector development. Initial general introductory “what this is all about” workshops and meetings are helpful to set priorities. Prioritization of reforms with the identification of deliverables and close attention to key milestones throughout the implementation process are important for garnering public and private sector support. It is important that proposed changes are pilot-tested and implemented in phases to ensure no unintended adverse impact or system breakdown occurs.
Weak legal frameworks (such as unclear mandates) affect the speed and sustainability of reforms.	Countries with stable administrative frameworks generally make faster progress. From a legal standpoint, codifying interagency cooperation through an interagency 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. With regard to the NTFC, each NTFC Secretariat requires a legal framework that defines the Secretariat’s functions and its mandate. It should have an adequate structure with dedicated professionals to support the implementation process, including program and project management and strong communications capabilities.
A lack of commitment can cause delays, leading to frustration with implementation goals that hampers trust among stakeholders. Commitment issues can also arise when there are elections that lead to change in counterparts, or it is not always possible to transfer overall accountability for complex multi-agency projects outside of the lead agency/agencies.	It is critical to obtain commitment at all levels. High-level political commitment may fast-track the legal reforms required and source financing for heavy-cost projects. Furthermore, commitment by different government agencies and private sector entities is required for achieving results that benefit a wide range of stakeholders, and the NTFC is a good mechanism for convening these stakeholders around a common agenda. For a robust whole-of-government approach, clear roles and responsibilities should be set for all stakeholders involved in the process of developing and implementing reforms.
Reforms may fail to sustain in the long-term without proper design of activities or sufficient capacity building.	<p>Make it explicit to the relevant government counterparts that once TFSP support is concluded, they must be ready to take over responsibility with the appropriate structures and behaviors to enable sustained reform. Deeply involving the government and private sector in the development of activities from start to finish can help ensure that client has a good understanding of the process and feels ready to carry out the work on their own going forward.</p> <p>Anchoring projects in the respective ministries, departments, and agencies can help build solid foundations to carry out the project even as government administrations change.</p>

DESCRIPTION	LESSON LEARNED/SOLUTION
A lack of communication , regular consultations , or coordination between border agencies causes delays as differing agency interests can spark resistance or lead to a push for alternate approaches.	<p>Prompt communication and messaging about trade facilitation initiatives are necessary in order to clarify any misconceptions on the possible outcomes of the initiatives and to garner whole-hearted support from the relevant agencies. Coordination can help anticipate resistance and disseminate benefits to stakeholders.</p> <p>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.</p>
A lack of public-private dialogue leaves stakeholders unaware of the benefits of reforms.	<p>Enhanced transparency and communication between the border agencies and private sector are critical to progress. Bringing stakeholders together, especially at the early stages, 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.</p> <p>Communicating the benefits of reforms is important to secure buy-in from the private sector, and a committed private sector increases sustainability of reforms. Further, raising awareness with the trade and business community country-wide leads to faster response of companies in meeting necessary standards. As such, consistent efforts should be made to have open dialogues with the private sector.</p>
A lack of automation and reliance on old paper-based systems has implications for due diligence and efficiency.	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 assistance to be more effective as all border agencies will be better positioned to implement reforms.

3.2 LOOKING FORWARD

Demand for support to implement trade facilitation reforms remains high. Sixty-nine WTO Members have implementation dates due by December 31, 2024, of which 145 are Category B and 265 are Category C.²⁰ According to the WTO, the top Category C measures due for implementation are risk management, trade facilitation measures for AOs, border agency cooperation, establishment and publication of average release times, and SW. This aligns with TFSP support which is prioritized for clients' needs as identified through Gap Assessments as well as the specific request for assistance made by the government. The WB—through TFSP—has provided strong support on risk management, formalities and documentation requirements, Trade Information Portals, Single Windows, Time Release Studies, and the extension of TFSP to December 2024 will allow the WB to continue to deliver support in those areas and other customs, border management, and trade facilitation activities and reforms for another year. The

current capacity of TFSP to provide support, however, is limited due the low availability of funds.

Given this, TFSP will prioritize support in countries where implementation has already begun, where there is momentum for full and effective reforms, and where there continues to be strong ongoing demand. The TFSP Secretariat—for example—anticipates requests for assistance from countries in the Caribbean country after the WB helped to review their TFA roadmaps in this reporting period. There is also continued demand by countries for assistance to re-vitalize their NTFCs and work in priority trade facilitation reforms since the pandemic, especially in the Pacific region.

In the area of knowledge management and learning, TFSP will continue to focus on innovative ways to share knowledge and best practices, including through the organization of events for peer-to-peer learning and the launch of a new virtual 360 video. TFSP will also continue to work on cross-cutting areas, including:

²⁰ WTO Secretariat. 2023. Update on Ratifications and Notifications. June 15.

- **Gender.** TFSP will continue to disseminate and advise on the Trade and Gender Study with the overall objective of helping countries identify and quantify obstacles that women-led firms face when conducting cross-border trade. TFSP-supported project teams will work with government counterparts to integrate the findings and recommendations into the design of activities and interventions.
- **Trade facilitation, climate, and the environment.** TFSP will continue working on the development of a methodology and indicators to measure trade facilitation's impact on climate change and sustainability. This work began in FY23 and will continue in the next reporting period. The methodology will enable to collection of baseline data to quantify how a broad range of trade facilitation measures—such as digitization, coordinated border management, pre-arrival processing—can impact paper lifecycle and/or vehicle emissions.
- **Digitalization.** TFSP will continue to support implementation of robust digital infrastructure (such as Single Windows, ASYCUDA, Trade Information Portals, and tools) to help the public and private sector automate the cross-border trade process. Ways to further upgrade the border management environment through automation and digitalization will be explored.
- **Emergency preparedness.** Leveraging the experiences and lessons learned through helping countries

with their emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic, TFSP will support countries to introduce emergency preparedness measures to help keep goods flowing during emergencies and natural disasters. Measures include expedited clearance of imported cargo, modernized customs legislation, institutional policy reform to increase the resilience of the build environment, a whole-of-government approach to border clearance, and improved communication mechanisms.

With expertise and experience in implementing trade facilitations since 2014, TFSP is well-positioned to help countries build solid trade foundations and architecture by removing administrative and regulatory bottlenecks at borders, which reduces the time and cost to access global markets while improving transparency and predictability for traders. The remaining program timeline (December 2024), however, will impact the WB's ability to continue providing much-needed support to accelerate implementation of the WTO TFA. According to the WTO, 59 WTO Members have committed to implement 575 Category C measures in 2025 and beyond, in addition to 120 Category B measures. With the Umbrella Facility for Trade (UFT) set to close in December 2024, the WB will continue to explore options with each development partner to continue the work supported by TFSP through the TFSP window under the Umbrella Facility for Trade and respond to the increasing demand for support.



Loading air freight
© Shutterstock/Pierre Yves-Babelon

Annex A

SUMMARY OF COUNTRY-SPECIFIC AND REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

TFSP has provided support to 56 countries in aligning trade practices with the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement across East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The following are summaries of activities by region.



Employee of Swire Shipping in Fiji
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Country-specific Activities: East Asia

Cambodia

TFSP support to Cambodia

Cambodia received a new allocation of funding from TFSP in this reporting period. With the additional support in FY23, the WB team carried out an assessment of trade facilitation measures at border crossings in Cambodia to inform the implementation of one-stop border posts (OSBPs), which is in alignment with WTO TFA Article 8 on border agency cooperation.

Earlier TFSP financing – together with the Japan Trust Fund – focused on (a) supporting the government of Cambodia in the formation of an NTFC that meets TFA requirements to coordinate and implement trade facilitation reforms and commitments, (b) reviewing regulations on prohibitions, restrictions of goods, and risk management practices, and (c) advising on the removal of duplicate controls at the border (see highlights of this previous work below).

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

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

FY23 update on key activities

- The WB team began consultations on the implementation of the concept of Single Stop Inspection and Common Customs Area with Cambodian and Thai Customs during a mission in January 2023. The consultations suggested that there was all-around support for the proposal but highlighted that implementation would require bilateral cooperation. Informed by these consultations, Cambodian and Thai

Customs (and Vietnamese Customs) subsequently held a bilateral meeting in June 2023 to discuss ways to improve cooperation, information exchange, trade facilitation, and transit goods.

- An assessment of trade facilitation measures at the main border crossings (i.e., Poipet at the Cambodian-Thai border and Bavet at the Cambodian-Vietnamese border in Cambodia) was undertaken, and the final report presents an array of recommendations to enhance border operations and cooperation. Findings from the assessment indicate:
 - There is an urgent need to prioritize the readiness of the Stung Bot border gate—a site designed to incorporate the Single Stop Inspection (SSI)/Common Control Area (CCA) concept.
 - The Stung Bot border gate can serve as the pilot site for implementing this innovative approach. The aim is to effectively coordinate the application of the SSI/CCA concept with the General Department of Customs and Excise (GDCE) and other relevant agencies, thereby clarifying roles and responsibilities.
 - The significance of intensifying internal consultations needs to be underlined and also calls for an agreement between Cambodia and Thailand on the processes and responsibilities related to joint inspections.
- Upon completion of the assessment, the TFSP-supported WB team held consultations on the findings with key stakeholders, including the government (GDCE of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Public Work and Transport, the Ministry of Commerce, and Thai Customs office at Ban Nong lan), and the private sector (including Cambodia Logistics Association). The respective stakeholders expressed support for the SSI/CCA work, and the WB will continue to promote regular and intense bilateral consultations and negotiations between Cambodian and Thai Customs on SSI/CCA with an objective of developing a pilot for the SSI/CCA concept.

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- From January 2018 to March 2019, the TFSP-supported project team provided advisory services to GDCE to review the list of prohibited and restricted import items (Sub-decree 209) and provided recommendations on how to reduce the prohibited and restricted list (PR list) and simplify items, as necessary, to reduce time and costs for importers.
- As a result of this review and based on the WB recommendations, new Sub-decree 17 was issued in February 2020 to replace Sub-decree 209. The new sub-decree reduced the total number of tariff lines in the PR list from 2,050 tariff lines to 1,829 tariff lines (a total of 221 tariff lines reduced).
- The TFSP-supported WB team provided advice on the removal of Camcontrol at the border checkpoints. Camcontrol's main activities are revenue collection and inspection at the border. The private sector raised concerns over duplication in the role of Customs and Camcontrol (under the Ministry of Commerce), which resulted in higher costs and delays. On January 28, 2019, the government issued Sub-decree 27 to terminate the roles of Camcontrol at all border checkpoints, and GDCE is now the only government agency working on inspection for import and export at all border checkpoints.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP funding complemented the Cambodia Support to Economic Recovery Plan ASA.

Indonesia

TFSP support to Indonesia

TFSP began providing support to the government of Indonesia (GoI) in this reporting period. Technical assistance focused on conducting an assessment of the Indonesia National Single Window's (INSW) operation

Visit to joint customs-quarantine facility in Jakarta, Indonesia.
© Pelindo



in order to identify key performance indicators (KPIs) for the National Logistics Ecosystem (NLE).²⁰ The WB team worked on identifying areas for INSW improvements, in line with internationally established good practices. Such improvements aim to remove process repetition and duplication, and in doing so address potential inefficiencies, high costs, and delays.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided

10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

FY23 update on key activities

- During FY23, the WB team successfully scaled-up engagement with different government counterparts and other stakeholders on TFSP activities. Although organizational changes within the GoI led to a delay in the start of the planned activities during the first half of the fiscal year, the government's appointment of reform champions as counterparts helped compensate for the time lost in addition to getting broader stakeholder buy-in.
- Extensive consultations with government stakeholders were conducted, which led to (1) an agreement on the methodology to assess the INSW as well as identify KPIs, and (2) intra-agency buy-in that ensured the involvement of the Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs (CMEA), Customs, and the National Single Window unit of the Ministry of Finance on the best way proceed with technical assistance.
- One virtual and another in-person mission took place to review and assess the INSW's functional and business processes. Public and private consultations and field observation were conducted at the Port of Tanjung Priok in Jakarta to help identify process improvements required to achieve the objectives of the NLE to reduce process repetition and duplication.

²⁰ This is the first pillar of GoI's major reform initiative to improve trade facilitation and the efficiency and effectiveness of the country's logistics sector (also known as the National Logistics Ecosystem).

- The data and information collected aided in the INSW assessment, including drafting of recommendations and proposal of KPIs that measure the effect of the NLE on speed and reliability of trade logistics. The draft assessment report was shared with counterparts. Using these KPIs, the GoI will be able to monitor, track, and assess in real-time the effectiveness of ongoing trade logistics reforms as they relate to the NLE's Single Window. The WB will continue providing support on this in the next reporting period, including (1) delivery of outline requirements for a dashboard to track the key performance indicators, (2) provide advice to NLE teams for development/configuration of the dashboard and its implementation, and (3) periodic reviews of the dashboard's operation and its impact on logistics service delivery.

Lao PDR (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Lao PDR

TFSP support to Lao PDR concluded in September 2021. Earlier support to Lao PDR focused on border agency cooperation and the establishment and implementation of an AEO program.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities)

7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators

8 Border Agency Cooperation

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- Through TFSP support, a Guideline on Management of Authorized Economic Operator was approved by the Minister of Finance (MOF) in April 2019. This guideline was a stepping stone for Lao PDR to promote implementation of the AEO in the country. Read more about the AEO program in [box 5](#).
- TFSP, in collaboration with WCO, provided an intensive AEO training program to the customs authorities in the Customs Department, main international checkpoints, relevant line ministries, and targeted companies. The training is important to provide practical knowledge and skills needed for launching implementation of AEO program in Lao PDR.
- Additionally, the WB team supported the Lao PDR Customs Department with the creation of several dissemination products, including an animation video demonstrating processes and steps for interested firms in applying for AEO status and an AEO brochure.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

Activities supported through TFSP complemented the WB-financed LCTP TFA implementation that supports the government's trade and integration priorities.

Mongolia (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Mongolia

Activities supported through the TFSP project in Mongolia commenced in June 2021 and is expected to continue with support to implement an advance ruling regime.

In the past, TFSP provided support to Mongolia for the development of a TIP, establishment of the NTFC, streamlining of trade and customs regulations, improvement of border inspection practices and authorized operators measures, implementation of risk-based inspections, and undertaking of a TRS. TFSP support complemented a WB project component aimed at improving trade facilitation through better access to trade information for all relevant stakeholders, including the government and traders.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- The TFSP-supported WB team supported preparatory work for a TRS in FY19 and developed 11 questionnaires based on the business process maps agreed upon with both Customs and the General Agency for Specialized Inspections (GASI). The 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. The TRS report was finalized and submitted to Customs and other key stakeholders, including GASI, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Prime Ministers office, and Ministry of Finance, in October 2020. It was recommended that the government of Mongolia uses the TRS data to prioritize, set targets, and coordinate activities to implement the WTO TFA.
- The WB team presented the main findings and recommendations to Customs as well as to the private sector (including the American Chamber of Commerce, Business Council of Mongolia, National Chamber of Commerce) during online events dedicated to trade facilitation and investor protection in December 2020. Customs has published the TRS report on their website.
- A TIP advisory agreement draft was developed and shared with the Customs Authority at the beginning of April 2019, and it was signed in mid-August 2019. The TIP, a central online depository of all foreign trade-related information that greatly benefits Mongolia's SMEs, was launched on December 11, 2020.²¹ The TFSP-supported team officially handed over the TIP to Customs and the lead agency on TIP on the same day. The TIP contains about 400 legal documents from seven ministries and a number of other agencies involved in foreign trade. The WB team organized communication campaigns before and during the launch, aimed to increase awareness and use of the portal by the private sector.

Myanmar (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Myanmar

TFSP did not provide support to Myanmar in the reporting period due to the political situation in the country. When the final TFA assessment was discussed with the government in 2015, the following implementation

²¹ Visit the TIP at www.mongoliatraderportal.gov.mn

activities were agreed upon: (a) assistance with the establishment of an NTFC, which has been completed, (b) capacity building on risk management and early discussion on the establishment of a customs intelligence unit, (c) publication of the customs valuation procedures in the national gazette, and (d) review and redrafting of the customs law to reflect new challenges and needs of modern customs operations. Support for these priority areas is on hold.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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

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).²² The TFSP-funded TFA Gap Assessment helped inform UK Aid/DFAT bilateral funding.

Vietnam (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Vietnam

Although the WB team maintained dialogue with the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT) and General Department of Vietnam Customs, as part of the DFAT FTA Portal project, no active TFSP-funded support was provided to Vietnam during this reporting period.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- In prior years, TFSP provided support for the Vietnam Trade Information Portal (VTIP), which was launched in July 2017. After its launch, TFSP provided regular support to update the VTIP, train the General Department of Vietnam Customs (the VTIP host agency), and support its integration with the FTAP.

²² Currently on hold.

- The TFSP-supported WB team assisted MOIT with the development of the Vietnam Free Trade Agreement Portal (FTAP). MOIT was keen to launch the FTAP as soon as possible in order to maximize opportunities for Vietnamese and global traders following the recent coming into force of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) free trade agreement. As such, an early version of the FTAP launched in December 2020, at MOIT's request. The final version of FTAP was launched in May 2022, at which point the system was officially handed over to MOIT through a signed agreement.

TFSP support was provided in collaboration with DFAT bilateral support for this portal, ensuring its complementarity with the TFSP-supported work on the Vietnam TIP also developed with TFSP support. Throughout the project, the WB kept DFAT closely involved in the progress because DFAT was keen to support this initiative as it considered it to be of crucial importance for promoting and facilitating trade between Australia and Vietnam for their respective bilateral key markets. DFAT provided continuous support and encouragement.

- Previous support also included provision of advice on the establishment of the NTFC and advice on analyzing the results of Vietnam's Time Release Study.
- In FY19, TFSP financed focus group discussions with traders in Vietnam, as part of a larger regional initiative on women and cross-border trade.²³

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 to implement TFA reform roadmaps were received.²⁴ Recommendations from the assessments were used as direct inputs for the preparation of a regional WB project to support implementation in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu. Additionally, the WB ramped up engagement with government counterparts in the Solomon Islands in this reporting period, and project support will be provided to implement best practice approaches to trade regulation and administration in line with Solomon Island's capacity.

FY23 update on key activities

- A Pacific Regional Workshop was jointly organized by the WB, WTO, and PIFS in Sydney in December 2022 (read more about this workshop in [section 1.3A](#)).
- Analysis and feedback from the Pacific Regional Workshop directly contributed to the development of the final Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy and Implementation Roadmap for the Pacific, which was developed with support from TFSP and based on consultations with PIFS members and donors. It will be submitted for endorsement at the Forum Trade Officials Meeting and Forum Trade Ministers Meeting in the next reporting period.

²³ Read more about the FGDs here: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/trade/whats-it-women-trade-across-borders>

²⁴ TFSP also assisted with TFA needs assessments and reform roadmaps for non-WTO Pacific countries – the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, and Palau.

- In this reporting period, the TFSP-supported WB team re-engaged with government counterparts in Solomon Islands. Government counterparts highlighted the need to further build its analytical basis (in collaboration with development partners including the WB) through a Digitization Gap Assessment and TRS; expressed the desire to strengthen capacity within the government on trade facilitation and the ASYCUDA system; and to increase collaboration among government agencies including Customs and Biosecurity. The WB and government counterparts will jointly develop a timeline for implementation on the following activities in the next reporting period:
 - Undertake a legislative reform review of the new Customs Act and executive regulations
 - Undertake a Digitization Gap Analysis of the border agencies
 - Facilitate a review of TFA Category C notifications

Country-specific Activities: Pacific Islands

Fiji

TFSP support to Fiji

In this reporting period, TFSP provided continued assistance on its digitization and connectivity initiatives and procedures, as well as support for the development of a new risk management framework and second testing regime, implementation of a TRS, production of a virtual reality (VR) video to publicize the successes of the trade facilitation reforms in Fiji, and review and finalization of draft laws and implementing regulations by the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF).

TFSP previously supported the NTFC with the development of the Fiji TFA Roadmap and National TFA Action Plan. Additionally, in the previous reporting periods, TFSP also supported the Trade and Gender Survey in Fiji to identify the main challenges that cross-border traders face related to trade facilitation at the firm level.²⁵

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 6.1** General Disciplines on Fees and Charges Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation
- 7.1** Pre-arrival Processing
- 7.4** Risk Management
- 8** Border Agency Cooperation
- 10.1** Formalities and Documentation Requirements
- 10.2** Acceptance of Copies
- 10.4** Single Window
- 23.2** National Committee on Trade Facilitation

²⁵ Read the report here: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/567101611777105138-0130022021/original/TradeFacilitationChallengesforWomenTradersandFreightForwardersinFijiINTERACTIVE.pdf>

FY23 update on key activities

- While work on ePhyto in Fiji is supported by USAID through a separate program, TFSP provided complementary support to BAF to develop and finalize a plan for connectivity between the Customs ASYUCDA World Cargo Clearance System and the ePhyto system recently established within BAF. TFSP will continue to support this work in the next reporting period, with an aim to improve timely risk management and identification of export and import goods subject to phytosanitary requirements through this reform.
- Initial workshops were conducted with BAF to initiate the development of the new risk management framework and second testing regime. This work will continue in the next reporting period.
- Continued support was provided to develop a sea cargo TRS, including training Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) and related border agencies. The TRS is expected to be undertaken in the next reporting period.
- To publicize the successes of the trade facilitation reforms and the ongoing development border clearance processing in Fiji, the WB led the production of a VR video for government agencies and the industry. The VR will be finalized in the next reporting period.
- In addition, the WB began providing support and technical assistance to BAF to review and finalize the a) draft Biosecurity Authority of Fiji Bill, b) draft Animal Disease Prevention and Control Bill, c) draft Plant Protection Bill, and d) drafting Implementing Regulations for the new law. The new bills will increase the effectiveness of Fiji's biosecurity agency to implement measures in line with international standards and best practices.
- Support was provided to the Ministry of Trade to re-establish primacy of the NTFC after COVID-19 pandemic shifted some priorities, and there were significant changes within the border agency management teams. A series of briefings were held on key implementation activities.
- At the request of the Ministry of Trade, a Digitization Gap Assessment was undertaken, and a report was delivered to quantify current border IT capabilities and gaps. This will assist future decision-making regarding a implementation of a NSW.
- Going forward, there is continued demand for support to the NTFC, particularly to re-engage after the COVID-19 pandemic and brief members on the many updates that are being made (such as on implementation of an integrated risk management framework across all border management agencies, as well as implementation of recommendations²⁶ from the Digitization Gap Assessment to inform the design of the NSW delivered with support from TFSP).

Papua New Guinea

TFSP support to Papua New Guinea

As COVID-19 pandemic-related constraints continued to ease in this reporting period, the TFSP-supported team continued its efforts to re-engage on some activities in the country. Previously, TFSP supported Papua New Guinea (PNG) in (a) improving risk management in Customs and the National Agriculture Quarantine and Inspection Authority (NAQIA); (b) enhancing border coordination between customs and quarantine functions; (c) supporting operations of the NTFC; and (d) developing integrated processes for clearance by the Customs Service and NAQIA.

²⁶ The assessment helped identify critical gaps in connectivity and automation for border agencies to participate and seamlessly integrate into a NSW system. It also contributes to enhancing digitization of border agencies by continuing to prepare for connectivity to NSW, including the implementation of a TIP and providing options for integrated financing.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

7.4 Risk Management

8 Border Agency Cooperation

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY23 update on key activities

- The WB made efforts to re-engage with counterparts in this reporting period, including on the National Trade Portal.

Samoa (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Samoa

TFSP was not able to provide active support to Samoa in this reporting period due to continuing challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The TFSP-supported team, however, is committed to re-invigorating activities in the country as constraints caused by the pandemic are gradually eased and plans to re-engage with government counterparts early in the next reporting period to discuss priorities, including technical assistance and capacity building for 1) re-launching the Working Committee on Trade Arrangements (WCTA), 2) updating the Samoa TFA National Action Plan and roadmap for implementation, 3) undertaking a TRS, 4) undertaking a Digitization Gap Assessment to inform the design and guide the implementation of a NSW, 5) supporting connectivity between ePhyto-ASYCUDA, and 6) supporting Customs manifest sharing via ASYCUDA with other border agencies to improve access to timely data.

In prior years, TFSP did a stock-take of the TFA program in Samoa, which will constitute the basis for the TFA implementation when it is able to resume. The original National TFA Action Plan was developed with TFSP support, including provision of a WTO TFA awareness briefing and strategy and visioning workshop for the private sector and government officials. Activities and priorities identified in the original action plan for implementation included: (a) assistance to harmonize data and multiagency border processes and requirements; (b) support to coordinate border management; (c) support to improve risk management system; and (d) assistance with the assessment of preparedness to implement a national Single Window. The TFSP-funded WB team also assisted Samoa with categorization of the WTO TFA articles and has provided support for its ratification and notification process in the past.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

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

Timor-Leste

TFSP support to Timor-Leste

In this reporting period, the WB provided capacity building and technical assistance to help finalize the new Biosecurity Law (passed by the parliament in March 2023), provided input into ongoing update of TFA Gap Assessment, finalize the TRS, and implement a National TIP.

A former TFSP-supported project in Timor-Leste closed in 2019 and focused on (a) simplifying procedures and enhancing the implementation of risk management; (b) conducting a targeted TRS and implementing key recommendations; and (c) aligning the sanitary and phytosanitary and customs legislation with the TFA and international best practice. Read about the results from this project under “highlights of achievements of prior TFSP funded work” on the following pages.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

7.4 Risk Management

7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times

10.2 Acceptance of Copies

10.3 Use of International Standards

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY23 update on key activities

- In collaboration with the Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs (MCAE) and Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry (MTCI), the WB is providing ongoing support to update the TFA Gap Assessment.
- A TRS was conducted at Dili Port in September 2022 prior to the commencement of operations at the new Tibar Port in November 2022. Information from the Dili Port TRS—which is pending finalization—will serve as a baseline for future TRS measurement at the new port.
- Assistance was provided to Customs to enable an update of the Customs Law to meet ASEAN accession requirements, particularly areas related to valuation. The Law was adopted this reporting period by the Council of Ministers.
- Building on the work of an IFC project, TFSP supported extensive final revisions for a new Biosecurity Law to align with international standards. The new Biosecurity Law was finalized and passed by the parliament on March 15, 2023. The new law is designed to protect plants and animals from pests and diseases, and signals Timor-Leste’s commitment to participate in global trade by adopting international standards.
- Workshops and discussions were undertaken throughout the reporting period with government agencies to identify and establish the future needs and fine-tune the requirements for a National Trade Information Portal (TIP), which is currently under implementation.

Highlights of achievements of prior TFSP funded work

- 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 minimize 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 complemented a USAID-funded customs project.

Tonga

TFSP support to Tonga

With continued assistance from the WB, Tonga has embarked on implementation of trade facilitation reforms consistent with the TFA Roadmap. In previous years, the WB assisted with Tonga's categorization and notification of Categories A, B, C measures and provided support towards Tonga's efforts to submit its instrument of ratification (in progress). Additionally, TFSP supported the delivery of a TRS on import sea cargo at the port of Nuku'alofa, and the NTFC received assistance with the development of the Tonga TFA Roadmap and National TFA Action Plan. Activities and priorities identified for implementation included: (a) assistance to harmonize data and multi-agency border processes and requirements; (b) assistance in preparation to implement a Single Window; and (c) assistance in developing the trusted trader program and related risk profiling.

Critically, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Tonga received support to implement expedited shipments of vaccines, as well as received support for border agency cooperation in its response to the pandemic.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided

7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times

7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators

7.9 Perishable Goods

8 Border Agency Cooperation

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY23 update on key activities

- TFSP provided support to Tonga to submit a revision notification for transparency measures 1.4, 10.4.3, 10.6.2, and 12.2.2.
- The Tonga Customs Secure Export Scheme (AEO-SES) is designed to complement and contribute to Tonga's Trade Policy Framework 2017-2025, specifically related to export development and trade facilitation. The AEO-SES Policy was prepared by a Customs AEO Working Group with support from

the WB and endorsed by the Minister and CEO for implementation. The revised policy, procedure, and self-assessment checklist form the basis and focus for AEO-SES technical assistance. The new AEO-SES program will:

- provide business entities with internationally recognized certification
 - recognize approved business entities as “secure, reliable, and trusted” trading partners
 - incentivize business entities through defined benefits that translate into savings in time and cost
 - secure supply chains from point of pack for export until loaded for export and to the extent practicable to import
 - demonstrate compliance with any mutual recognition arrangements with the importing country’s requirements
 - enhance reciprocal border clearance privileges in mutual recognition agreements (MRA) partner countries
 - minimize non-compliance and security related disruption to the flows of cargo
- An initial Export AEO TRS survey was planned for April-May 2023 but was delayed due to low export trade volumes amid severe cyclonic weather, the pacific volcanic eruption, and COVID-19 pandemic conditions.
 - The WB is consulting with the SES working group to determine a suitable time in late 2023 – early 2024 to conduct the SES TRS when export volumes are at seasonal norms.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support complemented the WB DPO on the adoption and implementation of special regimes for expedited clearance of essential medical goods. It is providing critical input for meeting the triggers for the follow-up second DPO by supporting the implementation of a pilot AO program for exporters and follow-up reform to enhance trade facilitation based on the exports TRS of PACER Plus work (such as adoption of e-Phyto certificates). This work was and continues to be supported and coordinated by the NTFC.

Vanuatu

TFSP support to Vanuatu

During FY23, the WB continued its engagement with Vanuatu to provide support to the NTFC. An in-country mission was conducted to agree on priorities, including options for future efforts to enhance the Vanuatu NSW and preparatory work for the TRS of cargo clearance.

The Vanuatu TFA Roadmap and National TFA Action Plan, developed with TFSP assistance in prior years, identified the following activities and priorities for implementation: (a) assistance to harmonize data and multi-agency border processes and requirements; (b) support to the biosecurity agency to improve its biosecurity risk management system and compliance for imports and exports; (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 NSW, including drafting of a blueprint for implementation.

In the past, TFSP also supported Vanuatu with categorization of the WTO TFA articles and the ratification and notification process.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

7.4 Risk Management

10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

10.4 Single Window

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY23 update on key activities

- The WB team identified the successful elements of the VNSW project and provided suggestions in a “Single Window Gap Analysis Assessment” report that was delivered to the government in this reporting period. The report presents the government of Vanuatu with options to consider regarding its efforts to continue implementing the VNSW (such as including more activities like connectivity with industry port companies and workflow systems for permit agencies).
- Continued assistance was provided to Customs, Biosecurity, and industry to prepare and conduct a TRS at the Port Vila seaport and airport for imported cargo. This TRS will look at the implementation of the Vanuatu SW. The TRS commenced in late June and will continue in the next reporting period.
- Subsequent to the re-launch of the TFSC (Trade Facilitation Steering Committee) in June 2023, there is ongoing demand for TFSP support, including in these priority areas: 1) update of the Vanuatu TFA National Action Plan, roadmap, notifications for implementation, 2) finalization of the TRS, 3) hold discussions around practical ways to incorporate recommendations from the Trade and Gender Survey in Vanuatu into the Vanuatu TFA Action Plan.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

Through the close partnership between the WB and the EIF, the EIF Tier 2 project provided USD 1.5 million funding for the establishment of an electronic Single Window system in Vanuatu, leveraging the work undertaken by the WB that was financed under the TFSP.

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Regional Activities: Western Balkans

In this reporting period, activities were carried out in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, Montenegro (MNE), North Macedonia, and Serbia.²⁷ TFSP-supported activities in the Western Balkans are aligned with the trade facilitation objectives of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA).²⁸ Particularly, TFSP has supported several objectives of the “Common Regional Market” action plan for the Western Balkans, including on establishment of joint border controls, mutual recognition of Authorized Economic Operators (AEO), review of fees and charges, a joint risk management approach, and fully electronic trade (including National Single Window – NSW).²⁹

FY23 update on key activities

- With additional funding through TFSP, support is being provided to food, veterinary, and phytosanitary (SPS) agencies in the Western Balkans region to enhance their border-related risk management practices. The WB team prepared and initiated a survey of SPS agencies in all Western Balkans countries to assess their current state of risk analysis and management practices, identify areas where capacity building may be required, and inform an appropriate technical assistance program that will effectively address the specific needs of SPS agencies for interested agencies in the Western Balkans region. Read more about who participated in the surveys in the respective country-specific updates.
- The WB, WCO, and Customs Administration of North Macedonia co-organized a high-level meeting with a theme of “Towards a New Generation of Regional Cooperation through Digitalization” during the WCO Secretary General’s visit to Skopje, North Macedonia on March 9, 2023. The meeting gathered high-level officials of the customs administrations of “Western Balkan 6”³⁰ plus Bulgaria and Greece, representa-

²⁷ The first phase of TFSP support to the Western Balkans region ended in March 2022. A second allocation of funding was approved for the region near the end of WB fiscal year 2022.

²⁸ CEFTA consists of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. The main objectives of this comprehensive agreement are, inter alia, to expand trade in goods and services and foster investment by means of fair, stable, and predictable rules, as well as eliminating barriers to trade in the CEFTA region (see www.cefta.int). The trade facilitation objectives were enshrined in Additional Protocol 5 on Trade Facilitation in 2018, of which measures are similar to those of the WTO TFA; however, they also go beyond them in their regional harmonization aspirations.

²⁹ The “Common Regional Market” action plan for the Western Balkans (launched in 2020) is another steppingstone towards regional trade integration and harmonization. It was developed as part of the Berlin Process to support stronger integration of the region with the EU Single Market before EU accession (of which all countries in the region aspire).

³⁰ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia

tives from the CEFTA Secretariat, the European delegation in North Macedonia, the Transport Community Treaty Secretariat, and WB representatives.

Key takeaways from the meeting included:

- Developed countries and EU member states are focused on improving customs administration, which can streamline and accelerate the flow of goods,
 - Digitization of border procedures and establishment of one-stop-shops in the Western Balkans is crucial, as well as considerations for possible paper-free cross-border trade in the region,
 - The Western Balkans region is not meeting the full potential that is possible through close integration with global chains,
 - For modern and dynamic cross-border movement of people and goods, constant changes on how services are run for people and businesses are necessary,
 - Digitization, the application of modern technological solutions, and close regional cooperation are key factors in providing an adequate response to the growing needs and demands of citizens and companies.
- Building on an NTFC assessment developed for Africa and the Trade Facilitation Program in Middle Income Countries (TFMICS) program,³¹ the TFSP-supported team adapted the concept of assessing the sustainability of NTFCs for use in the Western Balkans. The assessment (hereafter referred to as the “Sustainability & Capacity Assessment”) reviews the sustainability and capacity of NTFCs and focuses on the fundamental elements and capacity to ensure the sustainability of the mechanism to actively influence the national trade facilitation agenda and policymaking. Specifically, it looks at the NTFC’s: 1) institutional and regulatory framework and capacity, 2) strategic planning, project management, and M&E, and 3) capacity building, communication, and promotion. This was a valuable exercise for the NTFC to understand where it stands and to identify areas where donor partners could provide support. Assessments of nine NTFCs were performed in this reporting period, including the seven CEFTA parties (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia) as well as Ukraine and Georgia.³²
- The WB (through TFSP), USAID (through the Enterprise Development and Growth Enhanced – EDGE – project), and the Swiss Program on Capacities for Trade Policies (C4TP) co-organized a regional NTFC Conference (hereafter referred to as the regional NTFC Conference) in Belgrade in May 2023, where public and private sector representatives from the region were invited to discuss and share experiences and challenges with operating the NTFCs in their countries. Representatives from nine NTFCs (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Ukraine) attended. It served as a platform for regional dialogue on the crucial role of NTFCs and explored possibilities for further regional coordination in trade facilitation reforms. The WB team presented the “Sustainability & Capacity Assessment” results of the participating NTFCs. The conference garnered strong participant feedback, with a 93 percent positive rating. Read more about each country’s participation in the conference in the country-level updates.
- Preparatory activities for a regional SPS risk management conference were started in this reporting period. The objective of the conference will be to share successful approaches in risk management development and implementation, including data collection and analysis approaches.

³¹ TFMICS was jointly implemented by the WB and WCO with support from the UK.

³² TFSP provided support for the Western Balkans countries while USAID EDGE provided funding for Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine.

Country-specific Activities: Europe

Albania

TFSP support to Albania

With refreshed TFSP funding to the Western Balkans region, the WB team is able to continue providing support to Albania to implement trade facilitation reforms. In this reporting period, assistance focused on further enhancing the customs one-stop/joint controls at the Morina/Vermica border crossing point (BCP) between Albania and Kosovo, supporting the Albanian NTFC with the completion of a “Sustainability & Capacity Assessment,” as well as providing advice on SPS risk management.

In previous reporting periods, support was provided to hold trainings on risk management, conduct a preliminary assessment of the customs electronic documents submission reform, advance efforts to establish joint border crossing between Albania and North Macedonia, undertake a study of fees and charges, set up and promote the AEO program,³³ as well as carry out a second Time Release Study (TRS).

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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

FY23 update on key activities

- On March 15, 2023, a WB team visited the Morina/Vermica BCP³⁴ between Albania and Kosovo to review its procedures and infrastructure to determine whether additional measures could be implemented to further enhance the current customs one-stop setup. The mission was highlighted in a media post published on the Albanian Customs website.³⁵ Read more about the visit and findings from the review in the country-level updates for Kosovo.

³³ In past years, TFSP assisted the Albanian General Directorate of Customs Administration with an outreach and awareness-raising initiative for its AEO program. There have been nine AEOs accredited in Albania to date.

³⁴ The Morina/Vermica BCP is on the transit corridor linking the Adriatic Sea Port of Durres in Albania with Kosovo.

³⁵ See <https://dogana.gov.al/d/171/219/0/1081/projekti-i-bankes-boterore-vlereson-pozitivisht-pershpejtimin-e-procedurave-doganore-me-kosoven-publikuar-dt-17-03-2023>

- Following the visit to the BCP, a report was prepared and shared with the relevant counterparts in Albania, incorporating feedback of relevant counterparts from the initial circulated draft. The project team will follow up with the relevant authorities in the next reporting period to identify which proposed measures TFSP may assist with implementation on the ground.
- A “Sustainability & Capacity Assessment” (read more about the assessment in the “Regional Activities: Europe and Central Asia” update) was completed by Albania’s NTFC and General Directorate of Customs. Following the assessment, the NTFC secretary and a representative of Albania Customs, which is a member of the NTFC, participated in the regional NTFC Conference organized by TFSP, USAID EDGE, and C4TP in Belgrade in May 2023. The Albanian representatives shared their NTFC’s experience with the audience and participated in a discussion of priority needs of the regional NTFCs.
- The SPS agencies survey (read more details about this survey in the “Regional Activities: Europe and Central Asia” update) was conducted in Albania and was shared with National Food Authority, which oversees SPS agency and relevant procedures. A report will be prepared and presented in the next reporting period.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support complements the Albania Investment Climate Competitiveness Project and the Western Balkans Trade and Transport Facilitation World Bank lending operation (a regional loan that Albania has signed on to). It also aligns with two regional trade facilitation projects supported by donor partners – the USAID EDGE project and a project implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ).

Bosnia and Herzegovina

TFSP support to Bosnia and Herzegovina

With refreshed TFSP funding to the Western Balkans region, the WB team is able to continue providing support to BiH to implement trade facilitation reforms. In this reporting period, TFSP-supported activities focused on preparations for advance rulings (AR) for tariff classification, development of a NSW blueprint, provision of recommendations to improve cross-border relations at joint BCPs, advise on SPS risk management, and support to the NTFC.

In previous reporting periods, the TFSP-supported WB team engaged with the SPS authorities on a risk management capacity building program. Additionally, in collaboration with USAID, TFSP supported 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) that have been provided over the years

8 Border Agency Cooperation

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY23 update on key activities

- TFSP is supporting the BiH Indirect Taxation Authority (ITA) with a new automation initiative that entails the development of an online tool and database for AR for tariff classification. In this reporting period, the TFSP-supported team helped ITA with reviewing internal capacities for developing and implementing the AR tool, which was followed by the agency’s final acceptance of technical assistance in June 2023.

The WB team put together request for proposals (RFP) and issued a competitive, public tender identify a firm to develop and implement the database tool in BiH.³⁶

- A Single Window (SW) Visioning Workshop was held in Sarajevo in March 2023 with 29 representatives from 20 government institutions at the state, entity, and district levels, along with the private sector of BiH. A workshop report was drafted by the WB team, outlining key conclusions from the discussions and next steps for SW blueprint development, and was shared with participating institutions for their comments and feedback. The TFSP-supported team is maintaining engagement with the BiH Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations and ITA on the status of inter-agency consultations, which is the basis for a final government decision to launch the blueprint work.
- In April 2023, a site visit and factfinding mission was conducted at two BCPs between BiH and MNE that have potential to become joint BCPs.³⁷ The team met with representatives of Customs and border police authorities from both countries and prepared a mission report with recommendations for improving cross-border relations, increasing efficiency, reducing costs, improving security, and simplifying trade. The report will be shared with relevant stakeholders in the next reporting period, including the CEFTA Secretariat, USAID EDGE, and the transport community.
- The SPS agencies survey (read more details about this survey in the “Regional Activities: Europe and Central Asia” update) was conducted in BiH with six SPS agencies on the national and sub-national level. A report will be prepared and presented in the next reporting period.
- The WB team assisted the BiH Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations’ Sector for International Trade Relations,³⁸ with completing a “Sustainability & Capacity Assessment” (read more about this assessment in the “Regional Activities: Europe and Central Asia” update). Following the assessment, two private sector representatives from BiH attended the regional NTFC Conference held in May 2023 co-organized by TFSP, USAID EDGE, and C4TP in Belgrade. A representative of the BiH Foreign Trade Chamber of Commerce participated in a panel discussion and provided an overview of work of the BiH NTFC.
- Earlier, the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed interest in the development of an electronic trade document, specifically the EUR1 Certificate of Preferential CEFTA Origin. The TFSP-supported team will follow up with its government counterpart in the next reporting period to confirm interest for support on this.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support is complementary to the IFC’s Bosnia Investment Climate Project. It also aligns with two regional trade facilitation projects supported by donor partners – the USAID EDGE project and a project implemented by GIZ.

Kosovo

TFSP support to Kosovo

With refreshed TFSP funding to the Western Balkans region, the WB team is able to continue providing trade facilitation advisory and technical assistance to Kosovo. In this reporting period, the NSW blueprint was

³⁶ Similar work is being undertaken in Kosovo, and the RFP aims to support both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo with implementation of advance rulings for tariff classification. The RFP is based on each individual country’s TORs.

³⁷ They were the Deleuša – Vračenovići BCP and the Klobuk – Ilino Brdo BCP. The Deleuša–Vračenovići BCP is a single-country BCP wholly located in MNE. The Klobuk – Ilino Brdo BCP, when implemented, will replicate the model applied at the Deleuša – Vračenovići BCP (i.e., a single-country BCP wholly located in BiH).

³⁸ The Sector for International Trade Relations has the functions of the BiH NTFC Secretariat.

completed, and work was initiated to develop the EUR1 Electronic Certificate of Preferential Origin. Other ongoing activities include: 1) continuing to advise the Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency's (KFVA) Plant Protection Department on the development of a risk-based approach to border controls and 2) revitalizing the Kosovo NTFC.³⁹

To date, other areas of TFSP assistance in Kosovo included implementing the AEO program,⁴⁰ completing two TRS, and developing an inventory of trade related fees and charges.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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

FY23 update on key activities

- The SPS agencies survey (read more details about this survey in the "Regional Activities: Europe and Central Asia" update) was conducted in Kosovo, and the survey was shared with the KFVA. A report will be prepared and presented in the next reporting period.
- Support to KFVA's Plant Protection Department to develop and implement a risk management framework and annual sampling plan resumed during this reporting period after it was put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic. A training on risk-based border inspections for phytosanitary goods was held with agency staff in March 2023, and additional online consultations took place. This work will continue in the next reporting period.
- TFSP is supporting the Kosovo Customs Administration with the development of a new automation initiative that entails the development of an online tool and database for AR for tariff classification.⁴¹ The WB team put together a request for proposal and issued a competitive, public tender to identify a firm to develop and implement the database tool in Kosovo.⁴²
- Assistance was provided to Kosovo Customs for the development of an EUR1 electronic certificate of preferential origin.⁴³ Kosovo started shifting away from requiring the original document during the COVID-19 pandemic and is now ready to move forward with a fully electronic certificate of preferential origin. The WB team worked with Customs to define the requirements for the document, and work in this area will continue in the next reporting period.

³⁹ The COVID-19 pandemic impacted activities in these areas.

⁴⁰ TFSP support was provided to assist the Kosovo Customs Administration with developing its AEO program from scratch, including with legal drafting and outreach to the private sector. The program was formally launched in 2019, and the AEO certificate (AEO-Security) allows eligible companies to participate in the AEO Mutual Recognition Program envisaged in CEFTA. By the end of FY23, 10 companies were awarded AEO certificates.

⁴¹ This tool was successfully developed for the Serbia Customs Administration with TFSP support in previous years, and it garnered strong interest in the region. Read more about it in [section 1.2](#).

⁴² Similar work is being undertaken in BiH, and the RFP aims to support both Kosovo and BiH with implementation of AR for tariff classification. The RFP is based on each individual country's TORs.

⁴³ Based on a prototype developed with TFSP support in Serbia.

- Kosovo continued to develop its NSW blueprint in this reporting period. A compendium of 13 reports was developed and shared with the multi-agency Kosovo NSW Working Group.⁴⁴ A workshop was held in September 2022 focused on the blueprint, and at a final workshop in March 2023, the reports were formally handed over to the Working Group. The government of Kosovo is now committed to implementing a NSW.
- On March 15, 2023, a WB team visited the Vermica/Morina BCP between Kosovo and Albania to review its procedures and infrastructure with a view to determine whether additional measures could be implemented to further enhance the current customs one-stop setup. According to Kosovo's border control authorities, the number of commercial vehicles crossing the border can range from 470-1,000 per day. At this BCP, the authorities operate out of a single "co-located" building and another shared administrative office accommodation adjacent to the border. Vehicle examination facilities, equipment, and scanning images are also shared. The review found that the agreement between the two governments, protocols, and standard operating procedures are working very well at the BCP, and cooperation is at a high level.⁴⁵
- Following the visit to the BCP, a report was prepared and shared with the relevant counterparts in Kosovo, incorporating the feedback of relevant counterparts from the initial circulated draft. The project team is following up with the relevant authorities to identify which proposed measures TFSP may assist with implementation on the ground.
- Work was undertaken with the Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship and Trade to revitalize the NTFC, which had been dormant since the COVID-19 pandemic. Kosovo's ministry representatives completed the "Sustainability & Capacity Assessment" with guidance from the WB team.
- Following the assessment, representatives from Kosovo participated in the regional NTFC Conference organized by TFSP, USAID EDGE, and C4TP in Belgrade in May 2023, to discuss and share experiences and challenges for operation. An additional meeting was held in June 2023, where the WB team briefed the NTFC on the role and significance of the NTFC, the responsibilities of the NTFC Secretariat, regional commitments pertaining to trade facilitation, and the purpose of working groups. An off-site workshop is planned for the next reporting period to discuss and finalize the NTFC terms of reference, rules of procedure, and an action plan for the next year.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support aligns with two regional trade facilitation projects supported by donor partners – the USAID EDGE project and a project implemented by GIZ. There are regular consultations among the project teams, and a number of workshops were organized.

Moldova (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Moldova

TFSP did not provide active support to Moldova during this reporting period.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

7.4 Risk Management

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

⁴⁴ The Working Group is co-chaired by the Customs Administration and the Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers and serves the formal counterpart for the WB team.

⁴⁵ TFSP provided support on the agreement between the two governments in the previous reporting periods.

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- TFSP assisted the government of Moldova with amending its regulations on customs valuation of goods (approved in 2019), updating its Category B and C notifications (the addendums were submitted to the WTO in 2019), as well as assisted the National Food Safety Agency to build capacities on risk assessment.
- TFSP supported the preparation of the NTFC Action Plan, which was approved by government decree in December 2017.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP activities complemented the IFC Moldova Investment Climate Reform Project.

Montenegro

TFSP support to Montenegro

With refreshed TFSP funding to the Western Balkans region, the WB team is able to continue providing support to Montenegro (MNE) to implement trade facilitation reforms. To date, TFSP support to MNE has focused on the development of a service-oriented approach towards trade. Activities included development of a NSW blueprint, refinement of Montenegro Custom's risk management approach, implementation of a simplified procedures and AEO program, drafting of a decree for the implementation of the Customs Law, carrying out two TRSs, supporting the NTFC, and conducting an inventory of all fees and charges imposed on the import and export of goods that are prescribed by regulation or applied in practice.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 1.3 Enquiry Points
- 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
- 10.4 Single Window
- 23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY23 update on key activities

- Technical assistance to MNE for the development of a NSW blueprint continued. A compendium of 13 reports was completed and shared with the NSW Coordination Body during this reporting period.⁴⁶ In a final workshop on March 21, 2023, these reports were formally handed over to the Coordination Body members. The government of Montenegro is committed to implementing a NSW.

⁴⁶ This is a multi-agency body co-chaired by the Customs Administration and the Ministry of Finance.

- In April 2023, a site visit and fact-finding mission was conducted at two BCPs between MNE and BiH that have potential to become joint BCPs. Read more about this mission in the country update for BiH.
- The WB team provided support on a decision to establish a dedicated Steering Committee for the implementation of the NSW, whose responsibilities include coordinating and overseeing the definition, development, implementation, and function of the NSW project requirements, as well as provide accountability to the government. The NTFC will assume the responsibility of the NSW Steering Committee to ensure it operates at a high level and includes representatives from the private sector. The decision was officially adopted in May 2023 and published in the official gazette on June 8, 2023.
- Support was provided to the Ministry of Finance and other key stakeholders to revitalize the NTFC, which was dormant during the COVID-19 pandemic. The WB team worked with NTFC representatives to complete the “Sustainability & Capacity Assessment” (read more about this assessment in the “Regional Activities: Europe and Central Asia” update). Following the assessment, representatives from MNE participated in the regional NTFC Conference organized by TFSP, USAID EDGE, and C4TP in Belgrade in May 2023, to discuss and share experiences and challenges for operation. In follow-up the WB team began preparations for another meeting to take place in FY24.
- Additionally, the team assisted with drafting a decision to establish a new NTFC, which was officially approved by the government during its session on May 18, 2023, and was published in the Official Gazette⁴⁷ on June 8, 2023. Read more about this in **box 4**.
- Based on a request from Customs to develop a new Customs Decree on carrying out customs procedures and customs formalities, the WB team helped to formulate a decree to shift from a traditional paper-based system to a fully digitalized system. Comprehensive digitization streamlines the entire customs clearance process while minimizing administrative burdens and time-consuming manual tasks. The Decree represents a consolidation of three key European regulations,⁴⁸ which pertain to the Union Customs Code (a fundamental legal framework within the EU’s customs domain).⁴⁹ The government of Montenegro officially adopted the Customs Decree in February 2023, and it was published in the Official Gazette on March 6, 2023.⁵⁰

“The NSW Blueprint initiative demonstrates the TFSP-supported project's proactive approach in responding to evolving needs and challenges faced by our government. The WB team's involvement in formulating and implementing such forward-looking measures not only improves the operational landscape for border authorities but also contributes to enhancing the overall business environment and attractiveness for international trade.”

– FINANCE MINISTER OF MONTENEGRO

⁴⁷ Official Gazette no. 57/2023.

⁴⁸ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/2446, Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/2447, and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/341

⁴⁹ At its core, the Decree is an advanced legislative framework that strives to streamline customs administration and pave the way for customs modernization. The main components are: 1) electronic customs clearance/paperless trade between economic entities and customs authorities and 2) simplification of procedures by abolishing certain processes.

⁵⁰ Official Gazette no. 26/2023

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The government of Montenegro joined the Western Balkans Trade and Transport Facilitation Lending Operation, through which development and implementation of the National Single Window may be financed. TFSP support also aligns with two regional trade facilitation projects supported by donor partners – the USAID EDGE project and a project implemented by GIZ. There are regular consultations among the project teams, and a number of workshops were organized jointly.

Republic of North Macedonia

TFSP support to the Republic of North Macedonia

With refreshed TFSP funding to the Western Balkans region, the WB team is able to continue providing support to the Republic of North Macedonia (hereafter referred to as North Macedonia) to implement trade facilitation reforms. In this reporting period, the WB engaged with multiple government agencies and administrations to present the activities that will be supported through the new Western Balkans Trade Facilitation Project, as well as to explore opportunities for cooperation. The WB team received positive feedback and assurances for cooperation from all key stakeholders.

In prior years, support was also provided on coordinated border management through joint border controls with Serbia, introduction of risk-based inspections in the plant protection agency, and implementation of a TRS.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

7.4 Risk Management

7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times⁵¹

8 Border Agency Cooperation

FY23 update on key activities

- Preparations for an additional NSW visioning workshop was started in this reporting period based on a request from Customs. The workshop will take place in the next reporting period.
- The WB, WCO, and Customs Administration of the Republic of North Macedonia co-organized a high-level meeting with a theme of “Towards a New Generation of Regional Cooperation through Digitalization” during the WCO Secretary General’s visit to Skopje, North Macedonia on March 9, 2023. Read more about this event in the “Regional Activities: Europe and Central Asia” update.
- The SPS agencies survey (read more details about this survey in the “Regional Activities: Europe and Central Asia” update) was conducted in North Macedonia with the Food and Veterinary Agency and the State Agricultural Inspectorate, which responsible for border controls of plants and plant products. A report will be prepared in the next reporting period and will be presented in the next reporting period.

⁵¹ The TRS has not been published, though it has been completed and accepted by customs.

- Together with the NTFC, the “Sustainability & Capacity Assessment” was completed to assess its readiness (read more about this assessment in the “Regional Activities: Europe and Central Asia” update).

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support complements the Western Balkans Trade and Transport Facilitation World Bank lending operation (a regional loan that North Macedonia has signed on to, which is now operational including with regard to the NSW). It also aligns with two regional trade facilitation projects supported by donor partners – the USAID EDGE project and a project implemented by GIZ.

Serbia

TFSP support to Serbia

With refreshed TFSP funding to the Western Balkans region, the WB team is able to continue providing support to Serbia to implement trade facilitation reforms. In this reporting period, Serbian Customs, the NTFC, and other regulatory agencies received ongoing assistance to enhance electronic AR on tariff classification as well as for NTFC operations. Additional efforts focused on improving post-clearance audit (PCA) efficiency and ensuring compliance with EU regulations.

In the past, the WB (with TFSP funds) supported the Customs Administration of Serbia with the development of a pilot to electronically issue and sign EUR.1 movement certificates on origin of goods and to enable the online verification and authentication of these certificates; a series of risk management trainings for border agencies; the establishment and operationalization of the NTFC; development and maintenance of the tool for AR on origin and post-clearance verification of origin; promotion of joint controls at the main BCP between Serbia and North Macedonia at Corridor X; compilation of a comprehensive list of foreign trade-related fees and charges to help improve transparency and fulfill mandatory notification requirements to the CEFTA secretariat, and completion of a second TRS.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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
- 10.4** Single Window
- 23.2** National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY23 update on key activities

- The WB (through TFSP) and USAID EDGE co-organized an online workshop in December 2022 on the AR application tool for tariff classification used by the Customs Tariff Department of Serbia's Customs Administration. The tool was launched in the last fiscal year with TFSP support, and it has streamlined AR processing in Serbia, enabled fully electronic issuance of ARs, and reduce turnaround time. The workshop showcased the application tool's benefits, encouraging regional customs authorities to consider digitalizing their AR procedures.
- The SPS agencies survey (read more details about this survey in the "Regional Activities: Europe and Central Asia" update) was conducted in Serbia, and it was shared with the Directorates for Veterinary and Plant Protection Affairs. A report will be prepared and presented in the next reporting period.
- The "Sustainability & Capacity Assessment" (read more about the assessment in the "Regional Activities: Europe and Central Asia" update) was completed with the NTFC in Serbia, and its average readiness score (74 percent) was found to be slightly better compared to the region. Results from the assessment will allow the WB to tailor its TFSP support for Serbia's NTFC.
- High-ranking officials, including the Minister of Trade in Serbia, WB Country Manager for Serbia, and USA and Swiss ambassadors to Serbia participated in the regional NTFC conference co-organized through TFSP, USAID EDGE and C4TP.
- In response to a request from the Serbian Customs Administration to approximate its PCA controls to the EU's standards and requirements and ensure compatibility with Serbia's planned automated export and import systems, the WB coordinated with Austrian customs authorities to deliver peer-to-peer advisory assistance on PCA. Based on ongoing demand, the experts will continue to support work on PCA in Serbia in the next reporting period.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support complements the World Bank's Western Balkans Trade and Transport Facilitation lending operation (a regional loan that Serbia has signed on to, which is now operational including with regard to the national SW). It also aligns with two regional trade facilitation projects supported by donor partners – the USAID EDGE project and a project implemented by the GIZ. It also cooperates with the C4TP operated in Serbia.

Country-specific Activities: Caucuses

Georgia (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Georgia

TFSP support to Georgia concluded in December 2021. As the trade facilitation activities wound down to a close, focus was placed on supporting the implementation of Georgia's AEO program. Previously, TFSP support was centered on assistance to develop a standard operating procedures manual for customs valuation and creation of an NTFC.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

7.4 Risk Management

7.7 Authorized Operators

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- The WB team discussed different options and developed recommendations for the establishment of NTFC, in accordance with the requirements of the TFA.
- TFSP supported the review and finalization of a Customs Valuation Manual in compliance with the Customs Valuation Agreement (CVA), which the government adopted and came into effect in July 2021. The manual introduced six valuation methods. The adoption of this manual brings greater uniformity and consistency in customs valuation control decisions, as well as greater transparency and predictability for traders in customs valuation decisions. Most importantly, the manual introduced (a) advance notification of importers regarding the start of the customs control of the declaration and (b) advance request to submit specific additional information or documents before the customs control, while previously additional information or documents were requested after the customs control. This enables importers to submit missing information and documents before the start of the customs control and, therefore, to speed up the customs clearance process.
- GRS had long-standing cooperation with USAID to develop an AEO program concept, and once the enabling regulatory framework was put in place, TFSP provided complementary assistance related to the operation of the program. In particular, TFSP funded development of the detailed AEO manual, which helps define rules for the AEOs. Though the manual is pending official approval while the overall AEO program undergoes further development, the manual is already in use by the PCA Division for general guidance on AEO evaluation and subsequent monitoring processes and procedures. Initial feedback from the client is that the manual has been a reliable document for the Customs, Tax, and SPS Border Control Administration's PCA team and instrumental in helping grant authorizations to all of the current members of the program.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

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

Country-specific Activities: Central Asia

Kazakhstan (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Kazakhstan

With TFSP support, Kazakhstan's NTFC is now fully operational and has not requested further support. As a result, TFSP did not provide active support to Kazakhstan during this reporting period.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- TFSP supported work with the Ministry of National Economy to set-up the NTFC, which was established in August 2017. Thereafter, TFSP provided guidance on the development and finalization of the NTFC work plan (approved in 2019).
- TFSP also provided guidance on the notification process for Categories A, B, and C of the WTO TFA.

Kyrgyz Republic (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Kyrgyz Republic

Current trade facilitation assistance to the Kyrgyz Republic (and Kyrgyz Customs) by the WB is supported under a World Bank advisory project, which builds upon earlier work supported by TFSP.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- TFSP provided expert assistance for the establishment of an NTFC. Extensive support was provided to the Ministry of Economy and other stakeholders as they deliberated on the modalities of setting up the NTFC (both legal and regulatory framework); and, once it was established, with developing action plans and setting up working groups.
- Missions were undertaken to support Kyrgyz Customs with development of risk criteria and a trusted traders' regime concept. These concepts were accepted by Kyrgyz Customs and incorporated into the new Customs Code, which was approved in mid-2019.
- TFSP financed risk management capacity building at the State Veterinary and Phytosanitary Safety Inspection Service and the Department of Disease Prevention and State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance within the Ministry of Health. The WB team worked with agency staff on the development of risk categorization for products under their jurisdiction, on the development of a monitoring sampling plan, and on the development of a handbook detailing the needed implementing procedures.
- The Kyrgyz Customs Committee updated its IT Processing System ("UAIS") to include the categorization of traders by risk levels (low, medium, and high), as suggested earlier by the WB in connection with the TFSP-supported work in the country. The objective of this change is to speed up controls of goods transported by low-risk traders and focus on goods moved by high-risk traders.
- The WB provided assistance to develop a more informative and user-friendly website for traders based on a request by Kyrgyz Customs. 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.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

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

Tajikistan (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Tajikistan

TFSP did not provide active support to Tajikistan during this reporting period because other sources of funding were available for activities in the country.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- Building on the Trade and Gender Study's survey design and methodology developed with TFSP funding (see **section 1.6A** Trade Facilitation and Gender Work), a similar study was undertaken in Tajikistan with financing from the government of Japan through the Quality Infrastructure Investment Project. The final report was launched in May 2023.⁵²
- In the past, TFSP also provided support to Customs in simplifying procedures for clearing goods, as well as both the Customs Administration and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade/NTFC on the development of an AO scheme and expedited procedures for agricultural exports.
- With TFSP support, the WB also reviewed the situation in Tajikistan related to risk-based border controls carried out by the SPS agencies. For example, WB experts helped to prepare a set of instructions for customs officers and develop risk profiles with the risk management department officers.
- The WB collaborated with the USAID Competitiveness, Trade and Jobs Project on the implementation of a TRS at three border checkpoints and four inland terminals in 2017.
- It also assisted the Customs Administration with the development of its national nomenclature for goods in line with the WCO standards.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

Past activities supported by TFSP informed work undertaken through other channels, including follow-up work performed by the WB under the Central Asia Regional Links Program (CARs-4). TFSP support also complements a transport loan for ASYCUDA World and a Development Policy Operation by the WB, as well as complements projects funded by USAID and GIZ.

⁵² The report can be accessed here: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/trade/publication/gender-dimensions-of-cross-border-trade-in-tajikistan>

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Regional Highlights of Achievements of TFSP Funded Work: Caribbean

With a new allocation of funding in FY23, TFSP provided support in this reporting period to Antigua & Barbuda, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, and St. Lucia.

Previously, another TFSP-supported project in the Caribbean region supported Jamaica, Grenada, and St. Lucia and concluded in December 2019. Highlights of achievements made under this project are presented below.

FY23 update on key activities

- In this reporting period, the WB project team prioritized initiating country-level engagements, including:
 - Support to Jamaica and St. Lucia's NTFCs and border regulatory agencies to align their rules and regulations with the WTO TFA, such as with disciplines on fees and charges in Jamaica and advance rulings in St. Lucia.
 - Support to Antigua & Barbuda, St. Kitt & Nevis, and St. Lucia's NTFCs to prepare updated TFA Reform Roadmaps.

In the next reporting period, the TFSP-funded project will support peer-to-peer learning in the region by hosting knowledge dissemination events in collaboration with OECS and Caricom. These events will focus on TFA articles 3 (advance rulings) and 6 (disciplines on fees and charges).

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

In the Caribbean, TFSP support provided to Jamaica, Grenada, and St. Lucia through the previous project 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 WB 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 days to one day, and in Jamaica, time to trade fell from 7.4 to 1.6 days. An 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: Caribbean

Antigua & Barbuda

TFSP support to Antigua & Barbuda

TFSP began providing support to Antigua & Barbuda in this reporting period to review and update the National TFA Implementation Roadmap and review the operations of the NTFC.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY23 update on key activities

- Existing documents related to the formation, structure, and terms of reference for the NTFC – together with the TFA Roadmap – were reviewed, and feedback was provided to the NTFC Secretariat. The WB team highlighted that the roadmap needs to be updated given the lack of activity over the pandemic period. For example, new dates need to be included in the roadmap and new activities need to be added. The WB team anticipates that government counterparts will request technical assistance for alignment with specific measures as the process of reviewing the roadmap advances.

Grenada (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Grenada

The regional project under which the WB delivered advisory services (including for Grenada) concluded in December 2019, and TFSP did not provide active support to Grenada in this reporting period. Highlights of achievements made under that project are presented below.

Previously, 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) that have been provided over the years

- 4 Procedures for Appeal or Review
- 7.4 Risk Management
- 10.3 Use of International Standards

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- 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

With new funding allocation, TFSP provided support in Jamaica on fees and charges as well as on risk management during this reporting period.

TFSP also supported a prior project in the Caribbean region, which concluded in December 2019. This earlier project included support for implementation of the Jamaica Trade Information Portal (JTIP), implementation of risk management and coordinated border management, and removal of duplicate and burdensome export and import licensing requirements. TFSP has also supported a regulatory gap analysis related to the Customs Code. More highlights of achievements made under that project are presented below.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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

FY23 update on key activities

- Support was provided to the NTFC (Jamaica's Trade Facilitation Taskforce) to improve its alignment with TFA Article 6.1 on general disciplines on fees and charges imposed on or in connection with importation and exportation. As a first step, the WB team helped conduct an inventory of fees and charges (as well as the relevant appeals charges and penalties) along with an overview of the existing methodologies used by border regulatory agencies (BRAs) to establish these fees.

In addition, an assessment of the governance and institutional/regulatory framework for fees and charges was provided, highlighting gaps/weaknesses to be addressed in the new fees and charges framework. Based on the inventory and assessment, work was initiated on a new framework/ methodology that is WTO/GATT compliant. The team expects to finalize the report in the next reporting period.

- The WB team supported the development of risk-based inspection strategies that are aligned with the WTO TFA. This work builds on previous TFSP support in this area, which ended in 2019. A hybrid risk management workshop was held for officials from the project management office (PMO), BRAs, and Customs. Twenty-five officials joined the workshop. The topics covered were:
 1. Risks and risk treatments
 2. A risk-based approach to food inspection – the Australian example
 3. The concept of risk-based compliance management
 4. Implementing risk management
- Going forward, there is continued need to develop risk management capability within the BRAs. The TFSP-supported project team anticipates that there will be continued requests for support on risk management, especially for developing risk profiles. The government has also requested technical assistance

in relation to eliminating import permits and reducing the inspection of low-risk commodities. The project, however, has limited resources assigned to support risk management.

Additionally, the assistance on fees and charges for border-related services only envisages the development of a methodology. Upon approval of the methodology, the government may request support with implementation of the new methodology, including institutional and legislative amendments of existing fees.

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- The JTIP was implemented and launched in 2019 with TFSP support. The Trade Board Limited (TBL) operates the JTIP, and signed MOUs with thirty ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in FY21 to contribute content to the portal.
- At the end of FY20, and following recommendation by the WB, the Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA)⁵³ migrated TBL's services to the Jamaica Single Window for Trade (JSWIFT), mandating the use of these services for the export regime: online applications for licenses as an approved exporter of scrap metal, e-payment, and approval by the TBL. Applications for export permits are now submitted electronically and reviewed and approved by both the Customs Site Inspection Officer and the Trade Board Assessor in a sequential workflow. With effect from August 23, 2021, Certificates of Origin – which are issued by the TBL – are also now being processed through JSWIFT. Effective March 1, 2021, JCA migrated services for the issuance of import permits for the Ministry of Agriculture's Plant Quarantine Branch.
- The WB worked with the JCA to support the passage of the new Customs Bill, which is expected to significantly modernize customs operations in Jamaica.

St. Kitts & Nevis

TFSP support to St. Kitts & Nevis

TFSP began providing support to St. Kitts & Nevis in this reporting period to strengthen the NTFC and support the review and update of National TFA Implementation Roadmap.

FY23 update on key activities

- TFSP support was provided to undertake a review the current TFA Implementation Roadmap and provide feedback to the NTFC Secretariat. The WB team highlighted that the roadmap needs to be updated given the lack of activity over the pandemic period. For example, new dates need to be included in the roadmap and new activities need to be added. The WB team anticipates that government counterparts will request technical assistance for alignment with specific measures (such as on advance rulings) as the process of reviewing the roadmap advances.

St. Lucia

TFSP support to St. Lucia

With new funding allocation, TFSP provided support to St. Lucia in this reporting period to strengthen the capacity of the NTFC to identify, promote, and monitor the implementation of trade facilitation reforms in

⁵³ JCA NOTICE: Mandatory use of JSWIFT for Trade Board Import/Export Licensing and Permit Services commencing July 20, 2020.

alignment to the WTO TFA. Technical assistance was also provided to 1) assess the country's alignment with TFA Article 3 on advance rulings and 2) review a roadmap on advance rulings, including the barriers, actions, time, and identify resources needed to achieve alignment with this article.

TFSP also supported a prior project in the Caribbean region, and the advisory services under that project concluded in December 2019. Activities supported in this prior work included TFA assessments to determine St. Lucia's level of alignment with WTO TFA measures on Single Window, electronic payment systems, and risk management. Highlights of achievements made under that project are presented below.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

3 Advance Rulings

10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

FY23 update on key activities

- The WB team hosted a series of virtual and in-person meetings with the NTFC Secretariat to review the current TFA Implementation Roadmap. Feedback was provided to the NTFC Secretariat on the relevance and adequacy of interventions and their timeline. The main recommendation made is to update the roadmap with new dates and new reforms given the slowdown of activity during the pandemic. While TFSP is supporting implementation of advance rulings (more details in the following bullets), and the WB anticipates the government of St. Lucia will request further technical assistance with other measures, including for Single Window and enquiry points.
- The TFSP-funded project supported St. Lucia's alignment with TFA Article 3 on advance rulings. The WB team conducted a Gap Assessment focused on the advanced rulings on customs classification and origin, and the report was delivered in June 2023.

Additionally, the WB team conducted a workshop for customs officials on advance rulings, which focused on a description and understanding of advance rulings, the advance rulings process, best practices of advance rulings programs, and setting up an advance rulings program. In addition to this workshop, the WB team led another workshop on an effective classification work model, which highlighted the elements of a good classification program, and the organization and infrastructure that needs to be in place to support such a program. Going forward, there is continued demand for support from TFSP on advance rulings—which is one of the TFA measures St. Lucia committed to implement by July 2024.

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- With TFSP support, the WB 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.

Regional Activities: Central America

In this reporting period, the WB helped to deliver a high-level regional event and continued to support work on multimodal transport, expedited shipment, agile border crossings and deep integration (particularly with

advance declarations between countries). Building on the ongoing rich and fluid policy dialogue, the WB engaged with the outgoing and incoming presidency pro-tempore of COMIECO (Costa Rica and Guatemala) respectively, as well as with SIECA, to help craft a set of policy reforms that could be implemented in the short term and can result in tangible improvements for regional trade conditions. After several rounds of discussions and with WB technical support, the two authorities and SIECA prioritized these reforms: 1) e-commerce and air cargo process simplification, 2) pilot plan to ease the process for cargo crossing borders,⁵⁴ 3) facilitation of multi-modal cargo transport and clearance between Costa Rica and El Salvador via a ferry line.

In prior reporting periods, the WB (through TFSP support) assisted the Council of Ministers of Economic Integration (COMIECO) with the review of the regional Customs Code for Central America and its regulations to align them with the WTO TFA to reduce clearance times and required formalities and documentation to trade. In addition, 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.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 1.1 Publication
- 1.2 Information Available through Internet
- 3 Advance Rulings
- 4 Procedures for Appeal or Review
- 7.1 Pre-arrival processing
- 7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
- 7.8 Expedited Shipments
- 8 Border Agency Cooperation
- 10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
- 11 Freedom of Transit

FY23 update on key activities

- With support from TFSP, the WB alongside SIECA co-organized a high-level event in November 2022 in Guatemala. It successfully convened the authorities of the six Central American countries (plus the Dominican Republic). The event was well-attended and also included private sector representatives (from airlines, logistics and manufacturing companies as well as micro, small, and medium enterprises), representatives of multilateral organizations (for example, the deputy chairman of WTO offered a pre-recorded opening), and bilateral institutions (USAID and several embassy representatives). The event provided the opportunity for open dialogue between the private sector representatives and government authorities.

The presentations, keynotes, and government and private sector panels led to the conclusion that there has been significant progress in trade facilitation implementation, but there is more work to be done. Burdensome controls and cross-border logistics impose high costs that negatively affect competitiveness. To take advantage of the opportunities of the current global trade environment, attract invest-

⁵⁴ This refers to the work on advance declaration, customs union, etc. that has been done in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

ment, and develop linkages to global value chains, Central America must accelerate the implementation of effective trade facilitation measures through all border control agencies, modernize infrastructure, and put in place efficient logistics processes. To this end, the ministers and vice ministers of economy expressed their commitment to evaluate the progress of the current trade facilitation strategy, work on the development of a methodology to measure progress, collaborate on joint efforts to attract regional investment, and promote the inclusion of MSMEs in regional trade.

- An assessment was prepared and shared with Central American authorities on expedited shipments in Central America, with the aim to modernize regional regulations for express shipments as well as to ensure the proper use of this trade facilitation measure. The Central American Customs Committee is prioritizing the establishment of a common “de minimis” threshold for expedited small package shipments. As such, the WB team carried out two workshops in August and September 2022 with customs authorities and technical staff from six countries and SIECA to support the negotiations of the legal text that will regulate the implementation of de minimis in Central America within the framework of the meeting of the CAUCA and RECAUCA (Central American Customs Code and its regulation). The countries reached consensus on the modifications to the text of article 566bis; however, the establishment of a common de minimis threshold is still under review by some of the countries.
- Continued support was provided for the deep integration initiative to enable El Salvador to join the existing Honduras-Guatemala customs union. Particular focus was placed on implementing advance declaration in this reporting period. Read more about the technical assistance provided in FY23 to Guatemala and El Salvador on advance declaration in the country-level updates, including the pilot plan to measure import and export times using advance declaration.
- Further progress was made in Costa Rica and El Salvador on the ferry initiative, which is scheduled to start operations in the next reporting period. Read more about the new developments in the country-level updates.

Country-specific Activities: Central America

Costa Rica

TFSP support to Costa Rica

In FY23, TFSP supported Costa Rica’s implementation and promotion of the multimodal ferry service between Costa Rica and El Salvador. Case studies were also prepared on the country’s National Trade Facilitation Committee (CONAFAC) and risk management for phytosanitary products, which outlines best practices and will be used by other countries to implement similar initiatives. Support to Costa in prior reporting periods included: development of risk management procedures for phytosanitary products, the design and operationalization of a Trade Information Portal, the development of an integrated procedure for the operation of a multimodal service between Costa Rica and El Salvador, and the establishment of the Local National Trade Facilitation Committees.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 1.1 Publication
- 1.2 Information Available through Internet
- 3 Advance Rulings
- 7.1 Pre-arrival Processing

8 Border Agency Cooperation

10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY23 update on key activities

- With TFSP support, the WB team continued working on the ferry initiative between Costa Rica and El Salvador. The team delivered a technical workshop in November 2022 in Costa Rica to update the Binational Guide for the operation of the ferry.⁵⁵ It included participation from Customs and ports authorities from the two countries, as well as the vice ministers of economy. During the mission to Costa Rica, a visit was made to Puerto Caldera to update technical aspects in situ, which allowed redefinition of the Binational Guide. The guide was approved during the technical workshop.
- Two documents were produced to showcase Costa Rica's successful implementation of its NTFC and risk management scheme, which will be used as case studies for best practices and will be available to other countries promoting and adopting similar efforts. TFSP provided support for the NTFC reform while the risk-based sampling pilot plan was supported by another funding source.
 - The NTFC (known as the National Trade Facilitation Council or CONAFAC in Costa Rica) document systematizes its experience, best practices, and operations to be used as a reference guide for other countries in their establishment and operation of NTFCs. The WB team consulted with public and private sector to draft the document.
 - The second document on risk-based sampling of phytosanitary products systematizes this experience, in addition to the lessons learned and best practices from the implementation of the pilot plan by the Costa Rican State Phytosanitary Service (SFE) that was supported through another funding source. The team documented risk management at the border.

El Salvador

TFSP support to El Salvador

TFSP continued to provide support to the government of El Salvador on several activities, including: 1) implementation and promotion of multi-modal transport operations between El Salvador and Costa Rica and 2) support for its deep integration process to join the Honduras-Guatemala customs union.

In the past, support was provided to implement an e-signature program for the Ministry of Economy.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 1.1 Publication
- 1.2 Information Available through Internet
- 7.1 Pre-arrival processing
- 7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times

⁵⁵ The ferry is scheduled to start operations in the next reporting period.

7.8 Expedited Shipments

8 Border Agency Cooperation

10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

10.2 Acceptance of Copies

FY23 update on key activities

- Support was provided to improve procedures for importing controlled chemical products. Read more about this activity in **box 3**.
- The WB team continued to support El Salvador on the deep integration initiative with a view to joining the existing Honduras-Guatemala customs union. Particular focus was placed on implementing advance declaration in this reporting period (which has been implemented between both countries as a measure to facilitate border crossing). In particular,
 - The WB team supported the General Directorate of Taxes of El Salvador in developing the IT framework needed to initiate Central American Single Invoice and Declaration (FYDUCA) operations.
 - Technical assistance was provided to the governments of El Salvador and Guatemala for the official launch of advance declaration at the “La Hachadura” land border in August 2022. It included the participation of government authorities from both countries, as well as news outlets.
 - The project team supported the design and publication of training videos on the use of the advance declaration, which were posted on the Trade Single Window for Exports in El Salvador.
- With funding from TFSP, the WB team developed a tool to facilitate the air cargo process for the private sector. A cargo tracker was developed for private sector users to track their cargo once it arrives at the airport. It also provides important information about the cargo, which is required to start the customs clearance process.
- Technical assistance was provided El Salvador to carry out a pilot plan to measure import and export times from using advance declaration.⁵⁶ According to preliminary estimates by La Popular—a company that participated in the pilot—the border crossing time has reduced from 18 to 10 hours for them.
- Further progress was made on the ferry initiative between El Salvador and Costa Rica. Read more about this ongoing work in the Costa Rica updates.

Guatemala

TFSP support to Guatemala

Continued support was provided for the customs union between Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras along with technical support for the implementation of advance customs declaration between Guatemala and El Salvador. During this reporting period, TFSP also provided funding for technical assistance to support Guatemalan Customs with their efforts to reduce wait times at border crossings and make operations more effective through the establishment of a pre-checkpoint at the Corinto land border.

In the past, TFSP provided support on post-clearance audits and an authorized operator program. The team previously also provided support for the USD 500 million DPF “Crisis Response and Recovery in Guatemala Development Policy Loan” in which trade facilitation priority measures are included.

⁵⁶ Guatemala similarly carried out the measurement.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

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

FY23 update on key activities

- Based on a time study⁵⁷ carried out at the Corinto land border in April 2022 that identified the main bottlenecks preventing effective operations and provided recommendations, the WB team drafted the first part of an operational, technological, and procedural proposal for the design and establishment of a pre-checkpoint during this reporting period at the request of Guatemalan Customs Administration (SAT). The pre-checkpoint's main role would be to prevent commercial means of transport from arriving at this border without all the customs documentation ready. It is expected that once the pre-checkpoint is implemented, wait times at the border crossing will be reduced. The baseline time measurement and first operational proposal are currently being studied by SAT.
- The WB team continued to support the deep integration initiative to prepare El Salvador in joining the existing Honduras-Guatemala customs union. This reporting period, support focused on implementing advance declaration between Guatemala and El Salvador.
 - During FY23, the technical assistance was provided to design an informational video on advance declaration to disseminate to exporters in Guatemala.⁵⁸
 - Guatemalan Customs, supported by the TFSP-funded project, carried out a pilot plan to measure import and export times using advance declaration, with select private sector firms.
 - Technical assistance was provided to the governments of Guatemala and El Salvador, for the official launch of advance declaration at the "La Hachadura" land border in August 2022. It included the participation of government authorities from both countries, as well as news outlets.

Honduras (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Honduras

While TFSP did not provide direct technical assistance to Honduras in this reporting period, work for the customs union between Honduras and Guatemala continued.

In the past, the TFSP provided support to 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.

⁵⁷ The time study determined how much time cargo transport takes to cross the border from Guatemala into Honduras and vice versa. It took into account all the steps required by the different authorities with border presence.

⁵⁸ This is in addition to the video tutorial training program that was developed in FY22. The informational video is aimed to create awareness among different guild and industry stakeholders.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

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

FY23 update on key activities

- The TFSP-funded project continued supporting the customs union between Honduras and Guatemala. Though no specific assistance was provided to Honduras in this reporting period, the project did provide assistance to Guatemalan Customs at the Corinto land border (located at the Guatemala-Honduras border) to identify the main bottlenecks preventing effective operations and provided recommendations. Read more about this work in the Guatemala country update.

Nicaragua (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Nicaragua

TFSP did not provide support to Nicaragua in FY23 due to having very little engagement with the government. In the previous reporting period, TFSP provided support to Nicaragua on publication of trade procedures and use of the Trámites Nicaragua website.⁵⁹ TFSP also supported technical assistance at the Puerto of Corinto to enhance transparency as well as reduce clearance times in the past.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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

Panama (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Panama

No trade facilitation-related support was provided to Panama in this reporting period since the government has not requested additional technical assistance. Previously, TFSP provided support for the establishment

⁵⁹ This entailed continued support for the mapping of trade processes to ensure that the private sector has access to complete information on steps and documents required to trade through the website.

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) that have been provided over the years

7.2 Electronic Payment

7.4 Risk Management

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Country-specific Activities: South America

Bolivia (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Bolivia

Support to Bolivia concluded in FY21. The results of earlier assistance materialized when the NTFC was officially launched in the fall of 2021. The creation of the NTFC was supported by TFSP in previous years.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- Over the period of FY19-20, the TFSP-supported WB team worked closely with the government to create the NTFC. To this end, the WB helped the government develop and elaborate Terms of Reference (TORs) to set up the NTFC. A critical element to the success of this support was the ability of the WB to bring all key border stakeholders together around a joint agenda.
- A consistent recommendation to the government was to include the private sector as part of the NTFC. To date, the private sector is represented as observers in the committee. Whereas the private sector was not invited in the past, the dialogue has been strengthened in that the private sector can now at least be in the same room during discussions.
- Despite several delays (including numerous staff and leadership changes in the Bolivian government, difficulties in securing commitment from all the key border agencies and initial challenges in bringing these parties together around a common agenda, and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic), a breakthrough of the establishment of the NTFC finally came in the fall of 2021. Months earlier, the WB had informed the government that no further trade facilitation technical assistance could be provided unless the NTFC was officially established. The Supreme Decree 4600 was approved in October 2021 and officially created the NTFC. The WB participated in the first meeting of the NTFC along with participants from UNCTAD and the Inter-American Development Bank.

⁶⁰ The new technical risk management tool was developed to implement risk management protocols based on a number of criteria jointly established with the sanitary and phytosanitary agencies.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support to Bolivia was complemented by the WCO's support to Customs in aligning border management processes and procedures with the WTO TFA.

Peru

TFSP support to Peru

TFSP began providing support to Peru in this reporting period for the implementation of a risk-based automated border management system as well as for training on the implementation of the second test procedures as recommended by WTO TFA. The TFSP-supported WB team worked in particular with Peru's food safety agency to implement the automated system.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided

7.4 Risk management

FY23 update on key activities

- In follow-up to initial work supported by SECO to create a technical risk management tool,⁶⁰ TFSP-supported experts provided in-person and virtual risk management training sessions to the National Agrarian Health Service, Servicio Nacional de Sanidad Agraria del Perú (SENASA), Directorate of General Environmental Health, Dirección General de Salud Ambiental (DIGESA), and the National Fishery Health Agency, Organismo Nacional de Sanidad Pesquera (SANIPES).

The training sessions focused on automated approaches to risk-based inspection, including technical discussions and case studies. A total of 59 technical staff (24 technical staff from SENASA, 28 technical staff DIGESA, and seven technical personnel SANIPES) were trained and evaluated using a tool developed specifically to assess their understanding of the concepts and technical procedures. The sessions provided the necessary technical training to implement the tool.

- The results from the work on risk management from the automated tool were used to develop a guide to support future implementation in other countries, which is expected to be published in 2023-24 with support from TFSP.
- A workshop was organized from November 7-10, 2022, jointly with Ministry of Trade (MINCETUR), the Swiss Economic Cooperation and Development (SECO), and the WB to present on implementing second test procedures in line with recommendations of the WTO TFA. The workshop included a discussion on a single cross-utilized inspector model, which would replace the current three agency model operating at the border.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The activities conducted by the TFSP-supported WB team leveraged initial diagnostic and software development work undertaken by SECO to create the technical risk management tool. The work complemented and leveraged the resources of both organizations to advance a very productive, modernized trade facilitating solution.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Country-specific Activities: Middle East

Lebanon (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Lebanon

TFSP support to Lebanon ended in October 2020 due to political challenges. Prior to that, TFSP funds enabled the WB to identify priority areas for support, including (a) development of a customs strategy, (b) development of a risk management strategy, (c) development of a national electronic SW vision agreement leading to a holistic NSW framework, and (d) undertaking of a TRS.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

7.4 Risk Management

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- A customs strategy, the first Annual Work Plan for 2019-2020, and a risk management strategy were developed and submitted to Customs for consideration in FY20. The World Bank team also reviewed and provided comments on the draft Customs Law.
- Due to political challenges, which led to a governance vacuum, the planned TRS was postponed, preventing the development of a measurement tool for the effectiveness of border management processes in Lebanon.
- The development of an enabling environment to assist with a future electronic SW was also postponed due to insufficient political support and long-term commitment, as well as the lack of a reliable platform for inter-agency collaboration.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP funds are complementary to financing received under the Umbrella Facility for Trade.

Egypt

TFSP support to Egypt

TFSP began providing support in this reporting period to the government of Egypt to improve the regulatory and procedural environment for export and import activities, including the development of a trade facilitation strategy and risk management policy and framework.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided

8 Border Agency Cooperation

FY23 update on key activities

- The WB team provided assistance to develop the Trade Facilitation Strategy for Egypt 2023-2025. The strategy defines a set of specific trade facilitation reforms that will support Egypt's economic development goals, aid the security of Egypt's borders, as well as fulfil the country's WTO TFA-related commitments. Consultations between the TFSP-supported WB team and the trade facilitation working group helped to finalize the content, goals, objectives, and action plan, and a first draft of the document was shared with government counterparts for consultation.
- Support was provided for the development of the Coordinated Risk Management Policy and Framework. Following a series of consultations, workshops, and one-on-one meetings with Customs and key border regulatory agencies on the adoption of a comprehensive risk management approach and common risk management system, a draft document was developed and shared for feedback with key government counterparts in June 2023. The document sets out Egypt's policy approach to risk management at its borders and outlines the key objectives, strategies, and responsibilities for the management of risk across from a whole-of-government border agency approach.
- A TRS was completed in 2021 at the Port of Alexandria with support from the UK along with supplemental support from TFSP for presentation, discussion, preparation of the TRS. An updated TRS for imports at the Port of Alexandria is planned to take place in the next reporting period.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

This work was leveraged by the WB through two lending operations (the first DPF1, which supported the revision of legislation and review of executive customs regulations, and the second DPF project, which supported enhancing risk management and reduction in inspections).

SOUTH ASIA

Regional Highlights of Achievements of TFSP Funded Work

In prior reporting periods, TFSP provided support to Bangladesh and Nepal through the South Asia Regional Integration in Trade and Investment (SARTI) project. Under this, TFSP worked in Bangladesh and Nepal 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 both fell by 0.4 days each, and time to export was both reduced by 1 and 0.8 days each, 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 refreshed funding for activities in Bangladesh in this reporting period. To start, an assessment of the SPS agencies was undertaken, which helped to identify areas for support going forward.

Support provided to Bangladesh in previous years through the South Asia Regional Integration in Trade and Investment (SARTI) project complemented a larger WB project, which ended in spring 2020. This past 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) that have been provided over the years

- 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

FY23 update on key activities

- An initial assessment of Bangladesh's SPS agencies was conducted, and a few priority areas for support going forward were identified, including 1) support to implement ePhyto at the plant health agency and 2) assistance to establish a coordinated approach to risk-based border management with SPS/TBT agencies.

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

Key activities that were supported through the past SARTI project included:

- Piloting of an OLM in December 2018, which became fully operational in October 2019. It was 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 simplified 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 approximately USD 71,000 in savings in associated fees for the private sector.
- Launching of the National Trade Portal by the Ministry of Commerce to provide access to information in both English and Bangla for traders regarding the import and export processes.
- Completing Time Release Studies at 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.
- Notably, the reform initiatives helped the country prepare for the implementation of a Single Window program, which will be financed by a WB loan.
- Additionally with TFSP support, Bangladesh was also successful in establishing an NTFC, adopting a risk management framework, and undertaking a comprehensive revision of its customs code.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The priority activities that will be supported by TFSP will complement the work undertaken through the ACCESS lending and programmatic ASA, which focuses on advancing trade and transport along the Indian, Nepal, and Bangladesh corridors.

Nepal

TFSP support to Nepal

TFSP refreshed funding for activities in Nepal in this reporting period to provide technical assistance focused on supporting SPS agencies to align with and implement international standards and best practices to improve market access conditions for the country.

In prior years, support was provided to Nepal through the South Asia Regional Integration in Trade and Investment (SARTI) project and complemented a regional WB project that was completed in spring 2020. This past support focused on risk management (to the Department of Customs), post-clearance audit, and transit.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

7.4 Risk Management

7.5 Post-Clearance Audit

11 Freedom of Transit

FY23 update on key activities

- Leveraging the results and recommendations from assessments undertaken through the Trade and Transport Facilitation Program in Eastern South Asia (TTFESA) that is funded by Australia,⁶¹ TFSP began providing technical assistance to implement some of the recommendations. For example, the WB team worked with Plant Quarantine and Pesticide Management Centre (PQPMC) towards the refurbishment of a treatment center in Kathmandu. Though the facility is currently being operated by PQPMC, the facility will be transitioned to a public-private partnership, which will further improve trade performance. The evaluation and subsequent recommendations for refurbishment provides a pathway to facilitating export trade of perishable goods. See **box 7** for more on why this reform was necessary.
- TFSP funding is also being used to target capacity development of the Ministry of Agriculture and Live-stock Development, Plant Quarantine and Pesticide Management Centre (PQPMC), the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control (DFTQC), and the Department of Livestock Services (DoLS) to increase their effective alignment with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

Key activities that were supported through the past SARTI project included:

- Preparing for the establishment of the Nepal National Single Window, which was taken-up under the Nepal-India Regional Trade & Transport Project (NIRTTP). While TFSP support to SARTI concluded in the FY20, the WB continued to provide assistance to the National Single Window in order to further the efforts made under SARTI to streamline and harmonize trade-related processes and documentary requirements.
- Undertaking a stakeholder validation in 2019, which suggested that the following improvements had taken place since the initial assessment was carried out in 2015: 1) increase in Category A measures from 2 to 9, 2) decrease in Category B measures from 15 to 13, and 3) decrease in Category C measures from 19 to 14.

⁶¹ TTFESA funded the completion of three analyses (one for each SPS agency), including: 1) a comprehensive analysis on the technical agencies' performance in meeting their obligations under WTO SPS and TFA Agreements for import, export, and transit commodities; 2) an evaluation to refurbish an existing treatment facility in Kathmandu; and 3) a comprehensive analysis to evaluate the SPS agencies' alignment with international standards and best practices, which identified that the three SPS agencies can benefit from improving their lack implementation of risk-based approaches. TFSP provided some support for these assessments through provision of subject matter expertise, coordination of the assessments, as well as finalizing the reports for publication.

- Providing support on risk management to the Department of Customs in Nepal in 2013. An analysis of 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 was 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).
- Tailoring inland container depot (ICD) operators at the borders in Birgunj and Biratnagar 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.
- The past 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.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The new activities supported by TFSP complements the Nepal Strategic Road Connectivity and Trade Improvement Project (SRCTIP), which is providing financing for improvements in regional connectivity (including improvements in trade facilitation).

Sri Lanka (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Sri Lanka

TFSP did not provide any active support to Sri Lanka in this reporting period given the economic challenges the country was facing. A new allocation of funding for support to Sri Lanka, however, was approved near the end of FY23. The WB team anticipates activities to commence in FY24, including for coordinated risk-based border management and support to the NTFC.

Previously, TFSP provided technical advice on priority reform areas for full and effective implementation of the WTO TFA.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 1.1 Publication
- 1.2 Information Available through Internet
- 7.4 Risk Management
- 10.4 Single Window
- 23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- In FY17, the WB aided in the development of the NTFC, supported by a full-time secretariat housed in Sri Lanka Customs. The NTFC began to function fully in the same year, with strong involvement by the private sector. A priority for the NTFC Secretariat was the development of an interagency action plan to set out priority reforms for full and effective implementation of the TFA. TFSP helped support just-in-time technical advice on elements of the project, especially related to the TFA.
- A TFA Gap Assessment financed by TFSP helped secure additional funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Cargo ship in Namibe, Angola.
© Pexels/Heibby Cris Marvel

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Regional Activities: Southern Africa

In this reporting period, TFSP began providing support to SACU countries through a new Southern Africa trade facilitation regional program, with particular focus on South Africa, Eswatini, and Lesotho. The scope of the TFSP regional program includes supporting end-to-end diagnostic studies on four of the main regional borders and developing collaborative bilateral blueprints for the future borders that will combine harmonized trade procedures, smart technology, and coordinated border management concepts within a OSBP design. In addition, the TFSP-supported program will provide assistance for a TRS, an e-commerce study, support studies of gender in trade in Lesotho and Eswatini, and a study on export supply chain challenges for horticulture sector in Lesotho. In addition, the project will provide technical assistance on priority trade facilitation agendas, including coordinated border management, risk management, AEO, and SW. Where relevant, the TFSP regional program builds upon prior WB projects, including the Eswatini Trade and Competitiveness program, the Lesotho Private Sector Competitiveness and Economic Development program and IFC investment program, as well work in South Africa under the Trade Facilitation Program for Middle Income Countries (TFMICs).⁶²

FY23 update on key activities

- The WB team engaged with the SACU Secretariat to discuss collaboration on potential mutually relevant regional trade facilitation priorities within a SACU-wide agenda. The WB agreed to support SACU with its main initiatives that enable customs-to-customs regional connectivity as well as the development of the regional AEO program.
- The TFSP-funded WB team engaged and helped garner consensus with each of the Commissioners of Customs Administrations towards a high-level vision for key SACU regional borders that will incorporate coordinated border management, one stop border post (OSBP), and smart border design concepts at a national and bilateral level. Consensus was also gained for the project to support the countries with collaborative border designs at the main borders relevant to Eswatini, Lesotho, and South Africa.
- The project team drafted a TOR for a holistic regional border study that will cover the review of four key borders with Eswatini (at Oshoek/Ngwenya), Lesotho (at Maseru), and Mozambique (at Kosi Bay/Punto do Ouro and Lebombo/ Ressano-Garcia). Work on this will continue in the next reporting period. The ambition is to help develop an efficient design for land borders that can be used in the African region and identify the required architectures for implementation and inform the investments required.

⁶² TFMICs was a separate trade facilitation program jointly implemented by the WB and WCO with support from the UK.

- TFSP and TradeMark East Africa provided support to deliver the SACU AEO launch event, which was hosted by the SACU Executive Secretary between May 28 and 31, 2023, in Johannesburg. TFSP sponsored the participation of key national delegates as well as a WB expert to contribute to the agenda and planning. The session included SACU technical working group meetings for both the AEO and exchange-of-information initiatives. The culmination of the event resulted in each of the SACU Commissioner Generals signing the SACU AEO Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA). The Agreement provides reciprocal trade benefits for companies certified as AEOs in their national legislation through the recognition of SACU AEO export consignments and its facilitation on the import side of transactions. Furthermore, the Commissioner Generals made firm commitments to expand the AEO program in each nation and across the region, including setting aggressive targets for private sector involvement.
- The project team drafted a TOR to support the national, bilateral, and SACU regional-level deliverables relevant to implementation of the SACU AEO MRA. Work on this will continue in the next reporting period.
- A TOR was developed for a study to review SACU-wide regulations for international e-commerce and identify future best practices that can support the efficient and effective administration of international e-commerce shipments through the air cargo supply chain and their subsequent movement through the regional express industry supply chain.

Standalone activities were also supported in Eswatini, Lesotho, and South Africa. A summary of these can be found in their respective country-level write-ups on the following pages.

Country-specific Activities

Angola

TFSP support to Angola

TFSP began providing support in this reporting period to Angola to advance the trade digital transformation agenda, particularly with the development of the NSW and coordination of border management operations.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided

10.4 Single Window

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY23 update on key activities

- Assistance was provided to the NTFC's Secretariat in preparing a TOR to establish two priority technical working groups within the NTFC. One is for the simplification and harmonization of import/export/transit procedures and to serve as a working-level forum to continuously monitor current cross-border trade requirements. It will also include an expert level that will be responsible for proposing measures to simplify/eliminate requirements/processes and implement reforms. The second working group will be responsible for SPS issues and technical trade barriers with the intent to promote and facilitate trade in agricultural/pharmaceutical products and provide a forum to discuss and coordinate – to the maximum extent possible – policies and procedures on the protection of human, animal or plant life or health, food safety and other relevant areas, in accordance with national laws and/or international agreements.

- Assistance was also provided to the NTFC in preparing a communication strategy, enabling it to systematically communicate the content and results of the work program and showcase the benefits of NTFC's work. Read more about this work in [box 3](#).
- In preparation to implement a NSW, the WB team assisted the government of Angola in drafting a National Single Window Governance Model, which has been submitted for approval. As the NSW cannot function unsupervised and must be accountable to an authority that represents the highest level of government, a "governance model" outlines the options for organization to perform this overall supervisory role. The governance structure establishes appropriate layers, and it provides a direct chain of accountability to the highest level of government.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

Technical assistance provided through TFSP informed the design and implementation of a broader project to accelerate economic diversification and job creation in Angola, which has a component to invest in the SW and improve coordinated border management.

Botswana (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Botswana

TFSP did not provide any support to Botswana in the reporting period. In prior years, TFSP provided support for the launch of the Trade Information Portal.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

1.1 Publication

1.2 Information Available through Internet

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

Traders in Botswana once faced daunting challenges with accessing comprehensive trade-related information because there was no single point of reference for traders seeking advice on export and import. Traders had to look for information from various agencies, often resulting in an increase in the time required to trade.

Aiming to make trade easier, the Ministry of Trade and Industry requested support from the WB to create the country's TIP on behalf of the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC). TFSP began providing support to Botswana in FY15 to develop a TIP, which would house all relevant information from all agencies involved in the trade supply chain (ranging from tariffs to non-tariff measures, procedures, and legislation related to import and export). The Botswana Trade Portal was launched in 2016, providing access to all relevant information from 16 agencies. 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.

Since 2019, BITC has taken-on hosting, maintenance, and support of TIP themselves, absorbing all the costs and no longer requiring support from TFSP. TFSP was able to foster ownership of the project within the government of Botswana by building a culture of transparency, local capacity, and financial responsibility. This allowed BITC to take the TIP in-house and sustain its operations in the long term. BITC continues to regularly update the portal, providing timely information announcements, news updates, and publications.

Burundi (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Burundi

The TFSP-funded project in Burundi closed several years ago; and thus, no support was provided to Burundi in the reporting period. Previous support complemented a larger investment climate project in the country.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

7.4 Risk Management

7.5 Post-Clearance Audit

7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators (with the WCO)

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- TFSP support focused on risk management capacity building, including identifying risk management gaps, training, and designing an implementation action plan jointly with the WCO around the customs intelligence function.
- The WB and the WCO jointly helped Burundi roll out its AO program. Particularly, the WB and WCO hosted workshops that helped develop a critical mass of Burundi customs officers possessing the necessary consultations skills to not only facilitate the rollout of the regional AO program but also to establish consultative committees in key customs posts (port, airport, border posts).

Eswatini

TFSP support to Eswatini

With a new allocation of funding for Eswatini (as part of the Southern Africa regional program under TFSP), support was provided to review its priorities for alignment with the WTO TFA, support the AEO program, initiate the Trade and Gender Study, and review its TIP in this reporting period.

Eswatini also previously received support from TFSP for project activities that concluded in June 2021. Highlights of achievements made through this prior support is summarized below.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

1.1 Publication

1.2 Information Available through Internet

7.2 Electronic Payment

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

FY23 update on key activities

- Eswatini's trade facilitation priorities were reviewed with the government stakeholders to identify targeted requirements for reform implementation of priority TFA measures.
- ATOR was drafted to help Eswatini meet its commitments to grow the participation of the private sector in the AEO program and to extend the program provisions to include the involvement of all of the supply chain actors.
- Preparations were initiated for the Trade and Gender Study in Eswatini, including refinement of the survey methodology and tools and engagement with government counterparts to obtain necessary information to deploy the study. The study will be completed in the next reporting period.
- The Eswatini Trade Information Portal (TIP) was reviewed to identify requirements for improving the content and impact of the TIP.

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- The Eswatini TIP was launched in September 2020, which brought greater transparency of information for the private sector.
- Eswatini reconfigured the previously non-operational NCTF and its Secretariat following Cabinet's approval and Gazette announcement in November 2019.
- The project laid the foundations to roll out the eSW for trade. Although it is a long and complex initiative that cannot be completed as part of this advisory project and requires extra funding, one of the visible outcomes already achieved under this project was the adoption of the national SW blueprint.
- The project supported two TRS+, one in 2018 and one in 2021, and for the first time included measuring processes in the other border agencies. The reports made many valuable recommendations. For example, one of them advised in 2018 to remove cash payments at the border. Following this recommendation, as of April 2020, the Eswatini Revenue Services Agency mandated that all payments for commercial traffic at the border stations be done electronically. This substituted the mostly manual process of payments and helped to speed-up payment time. The 2021 TRS+ report estimated that the new initiative contributed to 1 hour time reduction at the border during the importing process.
- Support was provided to improve risk management practices throughout the lifetime of the project in the form of workshops, recommendations, and support with implementation of those recommendations. As a result of project interventions, the Customs Risk Committee was established with a mandate to oversee this area of work. Further, SOPs for new customs selectivity rules were implemented, and as a result, release of green lane declarations in the system (which helped to reduce the queue time for about 70 percent of the green lane transactions and freed up two checking officers at the Ngwenya release counter) was automated. Additionally, an Exit Note (which enables the agent to receive an electronic release notification via email from the ERA and for the agent to print exit note at the border) was automated.
- The project team also provided recommendations and inputs into a draft MOU between South Africa and Eswatini on the establishment of a one-stop border post (OSBP) at Oshoek-Ngwenya Border Post.

- Finally, using the trade facilitation model to account for private sector savings (PSS) from observed time reductions, this project is estimated to have generated USD 285,569 in savings to the local importers. More time reductions and savings would materialize once Single Window is fully implemented.

Ethiopia (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Ethiopia

TFSP did not provide support to Ethiopia in the reporting period. TFSP-supported activities in prior years 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.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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 from prior years

- 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.

- TFSP-supported work contributed to the early preparations of the Single Window. Support provided to Ethiopia has resulted in USD 61.4 million in savings for the private sector. Recommendations to roll out 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; improved 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.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

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

Lesotho

TFSP support to Lesotho

With a new allocation of funding to Lesotho (as part of the Southern Africa regional program under TFSP), support was provided to Lesotho to review its priorities alignment with the WTO TFA, support the AEO program, initiate the Trade and Gender Study, and prepare for a horticulture-related study.

Through a prior project, TFSP also provided support to Lesotho to enhance trade-related legislation (including amendments to the Customs, Excise Act No. 10 of 1982), advise on incorporation of modern clauses into the AEO program as well as the legal framework for implementation of the Lesotho National Single Window (LNSW). TFSP additionally supported the development of coordinated border management, enhancement of the implementation of ASYCUDA World and Lesotho National Trade Portal and strengthening of the National Trade Facilitation Committee Secretariat.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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
- 8 Border Agency Cooperation
- 10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
- 10.4 Single Window
- 23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY23 update on key activities

- In the previous reporting period, TFSP supported draft amendments to revamp the AEO program. Subsequently, a Gazette Notice on Customs and Excise Amendment Regulations 2022 was issued on August 5, 2022.
- A TRS was delivered in Lesotho in the fall 2022. It measured export and import processes and covered time taken by such agencies as Revenue Service of Lesotho as well as select cross-border regulatory agencies issuing licenses, certificates, and permits.
- With the new allocation of funding in this reporting period, Lesotho's trade facilitation priorities were reviewed with the government stakeholders to identify reform opportunities for implementation support of priority TFA measures.
- The TFA Gap Assessment report on Lesotho's implementation of the WTO TFA measures was finalized and presented to the Lesotho NTFC. The report assesses Lesotho's implementation of each TFA article across legislative, procedural, and operation aspects across the key border agencies of customs, standards, agriculture, and food safety.
- A TOR was drafted to help Lesotho significantly grow the involvement of the private sector in the AEO program and to extend participation to include all of the supply chain participants.
- A TOR was prepared for a horticulture survey (to be completed in 2024) to assess non-tariff barriers and trade facilitation constraints for exports for the horticulture industry and related sectors. Importantly, the survey will allow for review of the current trade facilitation policies, procedures, and processes for exports at the key border crossings, facilitate dialogue between the relevant private sector and the public sector authorities and agree on a set of recommendations—leveraging the WTO TFA measures—that can be implemented to address these barriers.
- Preparations were initiated for the Trade and Gender Study in Lesotho, including refinement of the survey methodology and tools and engagement with government counterparts to obtain necessary information to deploy the study. The study will be completed in the next reporting period.
- The project plans to support an end-to-end TRS at Maseru Bridge border, bringing together Lesotho stakeholders and South Africa under the joint guidance of WCO capacity building support.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support has complemented funding provided for the LNSW pilot as part of the WB USD 15 million lending program "Second Private Sector Competitiveness and Economic Diversification Project" completed in FY22.

Liberia

TFSP support to Liberia

In this reporting period, the WB team provided assistance to the NTFC to further build its capacity in preparing its notification of Category C measures to the WTO.⁶³ TFSP also provided continued support on simplification of formalities in addition to advisory services to the Customs Department of the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) to improve the enabling environment for the adoption of automated systems for better border management.

⁶³ With TFSP support, Liberia officially submitted its ratification of the WTO TFA to the WTO in FY21.

Previously, TFSP supported work on the modernized Customs Code, NSW vision, 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) that have been provided over the years

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

FY23 update on key activities

- In prior years, TFSP provided support to Liberia to eliminate pre-shipment inspection (PSI), and this work was concluded in FY23. It is estimated that this reform yielded approximately USD 3 million in savings for the private sector between May 1, 2021, and April 30, 2022 (calculated through the PSS methodology). The reform became effective on May 1, 2021, when Liberia eliminated the requirement for all imports to submit a BIVAC Clean Report of Findings (a form of PSI) prior to arrival of imports.
- Further, as a result of the support provided to implement modern customs techniques in prior years, the percentage of cargo subject to physical inspections by border clearance agencies in Liberia reduced by 38 percent (from 65 percent to 27 percent of total number of declarations) by the time support for this reform was concluded. This reform was launched in early 2019 and completed in FY21, with final results data measured in this reporting period.
- In this reporting period, continued technical assistance was provided to the NTFC to prepare its notification to the WTO.
- The WB team continued to work with stakeholders at the Monrovia Port to review, map, and simplify its current export processes. TFSP will continue to provide support for this in the next reporting period, including the delivery of a workshop.
- With support from TFSP, capacity building and advisory services were provided for the adoption of an NSW. Specifically, the team assisted LRA and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) to (a) access lessons learned from best international practices and (b) understand the governance, operational, and funding dimensions of such solutions. The abovementioned activities assisted the Liberian government to decide on the NSW solution that best fits the needs of the trade community. Leveraging this initial work, dialogue was initiated with the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and MOCI for the adoption of a NSW through separate WB lending instruments and financial resources.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support to Liberia is complementary to support from SIDA and USAID, among others, and regional activities under the West Africa Trade Facilitation Program. In addition, activities funded by the TFSP (especially on automation and NTFC) are aligned with existing World Bank lending operations. This approach allows the best use of available financing and the maximization of its developmental impact.

Madagascar (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Madagascar

TFSP did not provide any support to Madagascar in the reporting period. TFSP-supported work in the previous reporting periods were part 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 consisted of technical assistance on the coordination of the execution of the NTFC's roadmap.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

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

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- TFSP supported WB experts to engage with the Director General of Customs to advance the implementation of the NTFC roadmap, as well as held technical discussions with the NTFC to provide guidance on coordinating priority activities.
- 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 duplicated process and averted additional unnecessary fees ranging from 50-80 euro per container.

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 in 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

TFSP provides support to Malawi to improve its cross-border trading environment and align the country's facilitation systems and procedures with the WTO TFA. The WB regularly engages with private sector stakeholders in Malawi to build understanding of and confidence in trade facilitation reforms.

The TFSP-supported work complements a larger World Bank Southern Africa Trade and Transport Facilitation Program (SATCP).

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

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**7.6** Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times**7.7** Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators**8** Border Agency Cooperation**10.4** Single Window**23.2** National Committee on Trade Facilitation**FY23 update on key activities**

- TFSP provided multi-year support to Malawi on risk management, including the implementation of an Inland Examination Center pilot at the Mchinji border post by Malawi Revenue Authority (MRA) in December 2021. Based on a successful pilot, further national roll out is being financed SATCP at the Songwe, Dedza, and Mwanza border posts with continued advice of TFSP-supported experts.
- In the last reporting period, TFSP provided support to prepare for implementation of a pilot on MBS' usage of ASYCUDA World. The pilot was rolled out at Chileka Airport in September 2022, which for the first time enabled inter-connectivity between agencies in goods clearance process. Further, the Central Processing Center was launched at MBS Headquarters in June 2023. Building on this work, SATCP will now support the launch of ASYCUDA for MBS at another six border crossing locations. TFSP-supported experts will continue to advise on this activity.
- In the previous reporting period, support was provided to help draft the One-Stop Border Post Bill to enable operationalization of the Mchinji-Mwami OSBP between Malawi and Zambia. The OSBP Act was passed in Parliament in August 2022 and is now in force. The passing of the Act facilitated the launch of the first OSBP at Mchinji-Mwami in December 2022.
- The TFSP-supported project began the procurement process in FY22 for a firm to support the government with kickstarting preparations for the implementation of a CBM pilot project at the Mwanza border post. The pilot was successfully rolled out in June 2023. The project team commenced drafting of a CBM Bill, which will provide the legal framework for implementation of the reform. Several CBM-related trainings were also delivered in this reporting period.
- The project team continued supporting MRA with review and expansion of its AEO program. Based on recommendations by the TFSP-funded project team, enhancements were made to the ASYCUDA World System, and the program is being expanded further with support through SATCP. Several workshops/trainings on the AEO were held in this reporting period.
- The WB supported the procurement process for the NSW in June 2023. Work will be mobilized in the next reporting period.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support helped to lay the groundwork for reforms in Malawi, all of which complement the larger World Bank Southern Africa Trade and Transport Facilitation Program and the Southern African Trade and Connectivity Project. In particular, an impact evaluation was undertaken to study the trade facilitation interventions taken in Malawi, including CMB and linked reforms. The final report offers a baseline related to the barriers

that importing traders in Malawi face, including—for example—that taxes account for the largest part of import costs followed by transport-related costs. The data collected will inform further policy development.

Mozambique

TFSP support to Mozambique

TFSP initiated work in Mozambique in this reporting period to support implementation of the WTO TFA, with the main focus areas being: coordinated border management, risk management, post-clearance audit, and AEO.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided

8 Border agency coordination

FY23 update on key activities

- The TFA Gap Assessment has been finalized. The results will be discussed during a session of the NTFC in the next reporting period. The NTFC agreed to initiate the process of consultation with the private sector to establish a roadmap, which should address the identified gaps.
- TFSP supports the provision of WB advisory for the design and implementation of a Coordinated Border Management (CBM) Committee, which resulted in the draft and submission of a proposed legislation establishing the CBM committee to the Council of Ministers. The TOR for the committee, including a governance structure and a CBM sub-committee, have been concluded with WB advisory support.
- In November 2022, TFSP supported the facilitation of a workshop with 36 participants from the tax authority, agriculture, health, immigration, and ministry of industry and trade. It covered the following topics: border management interoperability, risk management, post-clearance audit, and AEO. The workshop ended with a visit to the Lebombo/Ressano Garcia border post for *in loco* observations of trade facilitation bottlenecks hindering the flow of trucks on both sides of the border. The visit resulted in a clear set of recommendations.
- The TFSP-supported project team facilitated the initial bilateral engagement between Mozambican and South African border authorities, leading to a high-level workshop planned for November 2023. The event aims to facilitate both countries to reach an agreed vision for both Lebombo/Ressano Garcia and Ponta D'Oro/Kosi Bay borders, which should support the execution of infrastructure investments under the Southern Africa Trade and Connectivity Project. It will also identify immediate and short-term interventions to alleviate the high levels of congestion, prior to the border, at the border, and after the border in Lebombo/Ressano Garcia.
- The TFSP supported Mozambique Customs to extract and analyze data of the National Trade SW and logistic operators to measure average time of the movement of cargo along the Nacala corridor, connecting to Nacala. The study covered import and export time and cost in Nacala and Beira.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support informed the preparation of an Investment Project Financing (IPF) titled Southern Africa Trade and Connectivity Project, which apart from Mozambique also covers Malawi. The operation aims to support both countries in increasing regional trade coordination, reducing trade costs and time, developing regional value chains, and improving access to infrastructure.

São Tomé and Príncipe

TFSP support to São Tomé and Príncipe

With the new government in São Tomé and Príncipe as well as new management in the Customs Administration, the WB team worked side-by-side with its customs counterparts in the day-to-day operation of the NTFC and implementation of the value added tax (VAT).

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 the earlier 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 and a single payment for fees, as well as eliminating the requirements for the port exit note and tax certificate.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

1.3 Enquiry Points

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

FY23 update on key activities

- The TFSP-supported WB team prioritized assisting the NTFC in establishing a regular schedule for NTFC meetings and deliverables. The NTFC now meets regularly, at least once a quarter, with a pre-defined agenda and measurable deliverables.
- In addition, the WB team also assisted the NTFC in drafting the proposal that was adopted to create two priority working groups. One is for the simplification and harmonization of import/export/transit procedures, and the other for further automation and improvements in the use of the NSW for import and export.
- The WB team initiated work with the NTFC to update the multi-annual trade facilitation strategy, which will cover the period of 2024-2026. This strategy is in its final stages of development and is planned to be finalized in the next reporting period.
- The TFSP-supported project team assisted the Customs Administration with setting the processes for collecting VAT at the imports, which started to be collected in June 2023. The team worked with the classification, risk management, and automation units in Customs during this exercise.
- Going forward, the TFSP-supported project team will continue working on establishing coordination mechanisms, as well as providing capacity building and long-term strategies that aid in development of sustainable and country-driven trade facilitation reforms.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The work on VAT implementation links to a DPO, and more generally, to the economic recovery objectives of the World Bank DPO series and provides an entry point for the implementation of an integrated risk approach for border clearance.

Sierra Leone

TFSP support to Sierra Leone

In this reporting period, the WB continued to support border agencies to develop an integrated risk management framework for border clearance and commence the undertaking of a TRS while also continuing dialogue with the National Revenue Authority and MTR to strengthen the NTFC. Previously, TFSP support was provided to undertake a WTO Gap Assessment jointly with the WCO and UNCTAD, evaluate ASYCUDA World reforms, and submit Category B notifications to the WTO.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 7.1 Pre-arrival Processing
- 7.4 Risk Management
- 7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times
- 7.9 Perishable Goods
- 23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY23 update on key activities

- TFSP provided multi-year support to reform processes and procedures related to inspections. The work was completed in FY21, and the results of the reform were measured in this reporting period. It was found that in Sierra Leone, a 14 percent reduction in the percentage of cargo physically inspected by border clearance agencies was achieved (from 100 percent to 86 percent of total number of declarations inspected).
- Between January 23-27, 2023, the WB team met with the government of Sierra Leone to progress the trade facilitation agenda, including: (a) presenting the initial findings of a draft integrated risk management policy framework; (b) discussing concrete steps for the development of a TRS; and (c) agreeing an action plan for the operationalization of the NTFC.
- The WB assisted the government of Sierra Leone to move towards the adoption of an integrated framework for managing risks of imported and exported cargoes. Integrated risk management policies holistically guide the operations of Customs, SPS, and other border agencies responsible for controlling imports and exports. In this context, the TFSP-funded project team drafted and presented an integrated risk management (IRM) policy, which offers a modern, efficient, and effective way of implementing border controls. The TFSP-support project team will follow-up on its implementation in the next reporting period. Other border agencies (such as the standards agencies) have expressed interest in receiving technical assistance on risk management as part of the IRM approach.

- The WB team continued to engage and have dialogue with the NTFC on the development of a coordinated border management framework.
- Ongoing support was provided to complete the TRS at the Port of Freetown. While it was started in this reporting period, completion of the study was delayed and is now expected to be finalized in the next reporting period.
- Trainings were provided to technical control agencies on the use of ASYCUDA as well as on inter-agency coordination.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

TFSP support complements a WB lending project to implement ASYCUDA World in Sierra Leone.

South Africa

TFSP support to South Africa

TFSP began providing support in South Africa in this reporting period as part of the Southern Africa regional program under TFSP. Primary activities included support on coordinated border management and AEO.

FY23 update on key activities

- A review was undertaken with government agencies, including the South African Revenue Services (SARS) and the recently formed Border Management Authority, to assess their respective trade facilitation priorities and identify and develop targeted requirements for diagnostic studies on the borders and technical capacity building support.
- A needs assessment was developed to define the scope for technical support for the South African national AEO program, which will be completed in the next reporting period. Additionally, a TOR was drafted to support both national deliverables and the bilateral engagements with Eswatini, Lesotho, and Mozambique, and in alignment with the SACU regional AEO program scope and deliverables, and implementation of the SACU MRA.
- International best practices and benchmarks on web-based advanced rulings solutions were shared with SARS. Advanced rulings is one of South Africa's two outstanding Category B notifications to WTO TFA.
- The scope for end-to-end TRS was developed at key regional borders, including at the Lebombo-Res-sano Garcia Border between South Africa and Mozambique (to be conducted by the WB in the next reporting period). TRSs will also be conducted at the SACU borders at Oshoek-Ngwenya between South Africa and Eswatini and at Maseru Bridge between South Africa and Lesotho, which will be led by the WCO with technical support from the WB.
- TFSP facilitated the dialogue to develop the high-level coordinated border design and created content for this vision together with the Terms of Reference to launch implementation of this work. This provides a point of departure for the government to implement a collaborative approach at the border that will incorporate best practices, such as coordinated border management, OSBP, and smart border concepts at a national and bilateral level.
- TFSP is also working on facilitating bilateral engagement between South Africa and Mozambique to establish, develop, and design a coordinated border management plan. A border study will be conducted to support this effort.

Togo (inactive in FY23)

TFSP support to Togo

TFSP support to Togo has been completed. The activities funded by TFSP helped to strengthen the NTFC, which is now supported by the Trade Facilitation West Africa (TFWA) Program.

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

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

Highlights of achievements of TFSP funded work from prior years

- The TFSP-funded WB team provided support to the government of Togo in preparing the decree to establish an NTFC, which was approved in October 2016. The WB team subsequently provided capacity building for NTFC members to help them understand their mandate and initiate and implement TFA reforms; support for TFA category updates to enable Togo to be compliant with TFA notification requirements; as well as support to trade operators and customs officers on TFA measures to enable them to coordinate better and implement the reforms that will come from the TFA measures. Through the support of TFSP, the NTFC submitted its categorization of the TFA articles to the WTO in FY18.
- Additionally, TFSP supported efforts by the government of Togo to strengthen the governance of the NTFC, including succession planning for its leadership. It was critical that the NTFC could continue to operate effectively using its workplan to avoid delays due to changes in representation.
- Since TFSP provided support on those activities to establish and strengthen the NTFC, the TFWA Program for which the World Bank is a co-implementer has continued to assist the NTFC. The NTFC is now called Comité Technique chargé de la Facilitation des Echanges (CTFE), which has adopted a revised legal text and enhanced mandate under the AfCFTA.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

Through these activities, TFSP leveraged an advisory project under the IFC on trade facilitation (funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency) and complemented to a larger WB lending project to improve the customs, logistical, and trucking areas.

Zambia

TFSP support to Zambia

TFSP assistance in Zambia aims to provide advisory and analytical support to address trade facilitation constraints and improve the overall enabling environment for trade in the country. This has included support on release and clearance of goods, risk management, coordinated border management (CBM), and SW connectivity among other trade facilitation activities. The activities align with the government's Vision 2030 ("better Zambia for all").

Main areas of technical assistance (TFA work priorities) that have been provided over the years

- 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

FY23 update on key activities

- TFSP meetings with the Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency (ZCSA) beginning in August 2022 confirmed a number of initiatives for which ZCSA would like to seek external support. For example, ZCSA is a long-time ASYCUDA World user and identified the need to 1) improve equipment and connectivity at its offices, 2) make enhancements to functionality, 3) add collection of the remaining two of six fees it collects on behalf of the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) in the ASYCUDA single payment point, 4) implement a back-office information system to automate its operations and complement this with a risk management information system that works with ASYCUDA/risk profiling and mobile inspection reporting, and 5) capacity build/train on risk management and strengthen testing with laboratory and facilities to conduct tests on products.
- A visioning workshop on the Zambia Electronic Single Window (ZESW) was held on November 17, 2022. Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) presented the background and features of ZESW while SMART Zambia Institute (SZI) presented on the Government Service Bus (GSB). Participants identified a need to align and reset the SW initiative through development of a NSW strategy—which is being supported through TFSP—and would guide its implementation, taking into account of the roles of ZRA and SZI and evolving technologies in Zambia, as well as the need for fully funded and finite project implementation.
- The WB worked with agriculture and standards border agencies in FY23 to implement a coordinated approach to risk-based border management. The NTFC approved the risk management guiding strategy in the last reporting period,⁶⁴ and the WB team began working with individual agencies on specific risk-based strategies for each of them. The agencies have established some criteria for prioritizing the risks of commodities being imported and made progress in identifying an initial list of commodities that span agencies in an effort to develop joint intervention strategies. Activities in this area included:
 - In FY22, pronouncements on implementation of a process to reduce border agencies was made. Amendments to the Border Management and Trade Facilitation Act were proposed, and the draft is now with the Ministry of Justice.

⁶⁴ This is the implementation guide on the integrated risk management framework that TFSP supported drafting in the last reporting period. It is pending enactment.

- The TFSP-supported WB team held a meeting on CMB with the Director of Foreign Trade and Ministry of Commerce Trade and Industry (MCTI) officers in November 2022 and provided information on the need for a discussion between MCTI, ZRA, and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) to consider how to implement MoF's directive to reduce the number of government agencies at the borders. The WB team presented a possible approach, which incorporates aspects of the CBM model developed for Zambia, provided a recommendation to pilot reductions at one location (most likely the Kazungula border), and discussed an ongoing legal review of the border management act that has incorporated key CBM elements.
- As a result of these discussions, TFSP supported a study tour on January 30, 2023, with all members of the CBM technical working group to the Kazungula border. The tour was arranged through and managed by ZRA and involved a walkthrough of operations on both the Zambian and Botswanan sides of the border, noting the five-agency model of Botswana. The visit concluded with a two-day workshop at Victoria Falls that led to the determination on the five agencies that will remain at the Zambian borders, complementing the pronouncement to reduce the agencies at the borders.
- In the last reporting period, support was provided on MOUs between several agencies for the expansion of the AEO program. The MOU format was approved by Attorney General's Office. Zambia Metrology Agency used this MOU to sign with ZRA.

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. The risk management strategy being developed will be complemented by financing provided under the ZATP II project.

Annex B

Knowledge Management Activities



I. Knowledge Management Products

A. ONLINE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT TRACKING TOOL

The TFA Tracking Tool [website](#) serves as a mechanism for countries to track their full and effective implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement and report on their progress over time. Data for **32** TFSP-supported countries is currently available for viewing by approved users on the website. The overall average alignment score for these 32 TFSP-supported countries is **47.8 percent**.⁶⁶

B. ONLINE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: TRADE FACILITATION AND BORDER MANAGEMENT

Launched in June 2022, the main purpose of the COP is to facilitate knowledge sharing across the WB and provide a forum to discuss trends and issues, seek advice, and support WB staff in the delivery of projects. It also serves as a collaboration tool and knowledge-sharing platform. Read more about the COP and an event it hosted in this reporting period in [section 1.3B](#).

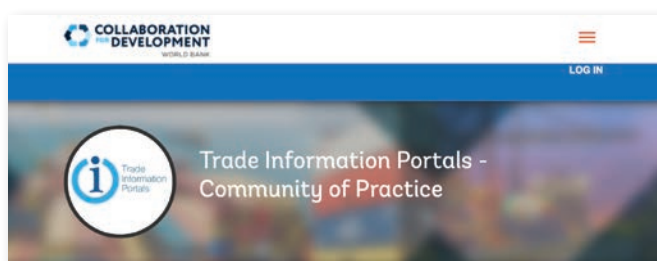


⁶⁶ This overall alignment score is based on 32 countries with completed assessments—whether it is a baseline or an updated assessment.

C. ONLINE COLLABORATION PORTAL: TRADE INFORMATION PORTALS

The online collaboration website was launched for client countries to share experiences about TIPs. Over 46 members from client countries, WB staff, and TIP experts use the platform, which leverages the WB Collaboration for Development (C4D) online tool. During the reporting period, the following posts were made on the platform:

- “TK3 is coming!” (October 2022)
- “TIP and Single Window” (November 2022)
- “Welcome to Timor-Leste” (June 2023)



II. Select Events Supported by the Trade Facilitation Support Program (Peer-to-Peer Learning, Policy Dialogue)

A. AID FOR TRADE: CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT TO INCREASE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN TRADE — GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, JULY 2022

On July 27, the WB, ITC and the UK government jointly hosted an event at the Aid for Trade Global Review 2022. The panel discussion, “Creating an Enabling Environment to Increase Women’s Participation in Trade,” focused on how to enable the trade environment to encourage and empower women entrepreneurs to better connect to regional and global markets. The panelists discussed recent research and offered different perspectives on the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs engaged in cross-border trade. Panelists were also asked to offer recommendations on how to address these challenges to create gender-inclusive border environments. The Director for Trade, Investment and Competitiveness represented the WB and spoke about findings from the TFSP-supported Trade and Gender Surveys. The



session was well attended by a truly global audience with over 326 participants from 59 countries—many of which are from TFSP client countries.

Event webpage:

https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/a4t_e/gr22_e/gr22ext_session_e.htm?session=014&deliveryName=DM152615

Social media coverage:

WB:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1550149547518730243?s=20&t=5KMGasoMkyCMbK3X4aSvtQ

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1552338487113916416?s=20&t=qMaZ2uCl0f7C39M6Zt1Q2Q

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1552685301314764806?s=20&t=Dd7v2HemvmqXVG343sSjiw

FCDO (UK Mission in Geneva):

https://twitter.com/SimonManleyFCDO/status/1552295100453191680?s=20&t=YNRnbz3ojsApMGf0Kpsv_A

B. AID FOR TRADE: WTO GENDER RESEARCH HUB SESSION ON DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES AND STATISTICAL GAPS ON WOMEN IN TRADE — GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, JULY 2022

On July 27, the WB participated in a session organized by the [WTO Gender Research Hub](#). The event brought together government, development agencies, and statistical experts to discuss the lack of data on women in trade. Discussants highlighted that collaboration between stakeholders, particularly government agencies and statistical experts, is essential for filling this gap, and that this statistical need would help governments

better target their trade policies that support gender equality. The WB presented learnings and findings from the TFSP-supported Trade and Gender Surveys.

Event webpage:

https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news22_e/women_27jul22_e.htm

Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS0kbqKeBAs>

C. AID FOR TRADE: ENHANCING TFA IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PACIFIC THROUGH CONNECTIVITY AND INCLUSIVENESS — GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, JULY 2022

The WB co-organized a session on “Enhancing TFA implementation in the Pacific through connectivity and inclusiveness” at the WTO Global Aid for Trade Review, which took place in July 2022. The session showcased the recent experience of Fiji and Tonga and offered perspectives from Timor-Leste on TFA implementation, focusing on how implementation can enhance connectivity and inclusiveness across public and private sector dimensions. The roundtable panel discussion included distinguished country representatives and trade facilitation experts who were instrumental in enhancing TFA implementation in the three countries.

D. LAUNCH EVENT: GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTS ADVANCE CUSTOMS DECLARATIONS — GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA, AUGUST 2023

On August 24, the governments of El Salvador and Guatemala announced the launch of advance declarations for exports and imports at the border bridge between Pedro de Alvarado (Guatemala) and La Hachadura (El Salvador). The new measure was made mandatory on August 24 and aims to reduce response times, operating costs, generating greater competitiveness and trade facilitation between both countries. With the implementation of



the advance declaration, business operators will benefit from: 24 hours a day, seven days a week operation; decongestion of cargo transportation on both borders; decreased dispatch times; reduction of logistic costs; faster distribution of products in the market; and better information exchange of information between customs authorities in both countries. La Hachadura deals with the largest number of exports to Guatemala. In 2022, almost 45 percent of exports were made through that border. The WB supported the government to virtually train a total of 1,861 people to use the new system including: importers, exporters, Customs, and chambers of commerce from both countries.

Event recording (YouTube):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sX9Gg2Rmsh4&t=2557s>

E. ISO ANNUAL MEETING — ABU DHABI, UAE, SEPTEMBER 2022

Between September 19–22, the WB attended the International Standards Organization (ISO) Annual Meeting themed: “Collaboration for Good”. The WB participated in the session: “Building Trust: trade in the age of digitization”. A panel of experts discussed how digitalization will impact world trade, and the standards and conformity assessment that support it, particularly in developing countries. The WB presented on trade facilitation, standards, and emerging technologies in developing countries.



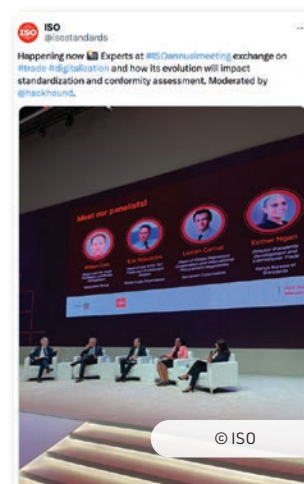
Event website:

<https://www.iso.org/contents/news/2022/09/live-iso-AM-2022.html>

Social media:

https://twitter.com/isostandards/status/1572552435352338435?s=20&t=EY9CsyLmdunGXl9WeM6_Cw

https://twitter.com/WB_Finance/status/1572959840707944448?s=20&t=5BVvErcbAagMPUrTJGr_jw



<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6977962340428193792?updateEntityUrn=urn%3A%3A%3AfeedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3A%3A%3Aactivity%3A6977962340428193792%29>

F. WTO PUBLIC FORUM AND ANNEX D MEETING — GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, SEPTEMBER 2022

Between September 27–30, the WB participated in the 2022 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 theme of the forum was: "Towards a sustainable and inclusive recovery: Ambition to action". Over 3,200 participants attended the forum. The WB also participated in the meeting of the Committee on Trade Facilitation with Annex D countries, which meets regularly to review the implementation and application of the WTO TFA.

Event webpage:

https://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum22_e/public_forum22_e.htm



G. ASIA PACIFIC TRADE FACILITATION FORUM — SINGAPORE, AUGUST 2022

Between August 29–September 1, the WB participated in the 10th Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum co-organized by the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in collaboration with Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry. The theme was "Next Generation Trade Facilitation for Sustainable Development". Over 250 participants from over 30 countries attended the event.



The event focused on how trade facilitation could evolve to enhance the resilience of international supply chains in times of pandemic and to better support sustainable economic recovery and development in the Asia-Pacific region. The forum explored how trade digitalization and emerging technologies can be used to ensure that new generation trade facilitation measures are inclusive and sustainable, enabling effective participation of SMEs and less developed economies in international trade. The WB presented on country needs and current support available in implementing sustainable trade facilitation reforms.

Event website:

<https://www.unescap.org/events/2022/asia-pacific-trade-facilitation-forum-2022>

H. IPHC 2022: FACILITATING SAFE TRADE: WHY IS A GENDER LENSE IMPORTANT? — LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, SEPTEMBER 2022

From September 21–23, the First International Plant Health Conference (IPHC) was held in London. The event aimed to address new and emerging plant health challenges, including climate change impacts, the significant increase in international trade, the rapid loss of biological diversity, and new pest pathways such as e-commerce by exploring more efficient national, regional and global policies, structures and mechanisms. The conference was co-organized by the [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#) of the United Nations, the [Secretariat of](#)



[the International Plant Protection Convention](#) and the [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#) of the United Kingdom.

The WB participated in a session organized by the WTO's Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) to bring together representatives of the public and private sectors to explore why gender matters in all aspects of safe plant trade. These discussions focused on standard setting, pest and disease management to improve compliance with International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), and building trust among trading partners. The session highlighted why in designing sustainable phytosanitary capacity building programs and initiatives, gender-related considerations must be factored in. What role can development partners and international organizations play? What impact does gender have in the control and management of pests and plant diseases?

Press release:

<https://www.ippc.int/en/news/press-release-the-first-international-plant-health-conference/>

Social media:

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6979104175741657088?updateEntityUrn=urn%3Aali%3Afs_feedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3Aali%3Aactivity%3A6979104175741657088%29

I. WTO TF COMMITTEE MEETING — GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, NOVEMBER 2022

Between November 28–December 1, WTO Members met under the Trade Facilitation Committee to share experiences and information. The status of ratification and notification was shared, along with experience sharing from various countries.

TF Committee Meetings:

https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tradfa_e/comm_tradfa_e.htm

**J. CENTRAL AMERICA REGIONAL TRADE
FACILITATION EVENT —
GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA, NOVEMBER 2022**

The WB work in Central America focuses on trade facilitation as a top priority to accelerate economic recovery in the region. On November 10, the WB launched a report entitled “Unleashing the growth potential of Central America”. The WB hosted a high-level event to advance the trade facilitation agenda in the region. To ensure the trade facilitation agenda has the highest support at the political level, the WB has been working with the Council of Ministers for Economic Integration and the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration. Discussions focused on the results of the report and these key areas of focus for trade facilitation: expediting the passage of goods at land border crossings; and expediting shipments in the context of electronic commerce.

Event webpage and live stream (in Spanish):

<https://www.bancomundial.org/es/events/2022/10/17/centroamerica-en-movimiento-la-ruta-de-la-reactivacion#1>

Report:

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/432601619499836724/pdf/Synthesis-Report.pdf>

Social media:

https://twitter.com/WB_Finance/status/1590724613528772610?s=20&t=S-muaFko6kizvWLULyHleA

<https://www.facebook.com/BancoMundialCentroamerica/posts/pfbid038Ba6keaWwYfJTMfuWMFF7pVBJe7UBqdYEQQ8sewcmkH9DivyYdKuRsAVYA3qFMJpl>



<https://www.facebook.com/BancoMundialCentroamerica/photos/a.981591488710416/1938621566340732/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BancoMundialCentroamerica/photos/a.981591488710416/1939644569571765/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BancoMundialCentroamerica/photos/a.981591488710416/1940336942835861/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BancoMundialCentroamerica/photos/a.981591488710416/1941139612755594/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BancoMundialCentroamerica/photos/a.981591488710416/1941861409350081/>

Select media articles (Spanish):

Op-Ed:

<https://www.prensalibre.com/opinion/columnasdiarias/agilizacion-del-comercio-en-la-region-clave-para-el-desarrollo/>

Bloomberg:

[Estos son los retos de Centroamérica para facilitar el comercio](#)

[¿Por qué es tan caro volar en Centroamérica y cuál es la vía para abaratar costos?](#)

TV and radio coverage: (Spanish):

TN23 TV:

[Banco Mundial busca mejorar el comercio regional](#)

Chapin TV:

[Banco Mundial: El objetivo es mejorar el comercio regional](#)

TVN Noticias:

[Panamá participó en foro de incremento económico](#)

K. MOZAMBIQUE: CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP — MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE, NOVEMBER 2022

From November 14–18, the WB hosted a workshop on trade facilitation in Maputo. Topics included: the AEO scheme, risk management, coordinated border management, and a simplified trade regime. Over 30 officials from Customs, immigration, and other border agencies attended the sessions.

During the same mission, the WB visited the Ressano Garcia/Lebombo border (Mozambique/South Africa) to assess the challenges encountered by traders



Participants at Capacity Building Workshop in Mozambique
© World Bank

and border authorities. A new agreement between both countries will build a one stop border post, to be implemented with WB support.

L. CEFTA: CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR NTFCs — SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA, NOVEMBER 2022

From November 22–23, the WB attended the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) 13th meeting of the Regional Trade Facilitation Committee. CEFTA is an international trade agreement between countries mostly located in Southeastern Europe. The Committee addresses issues related to the facilitation of trade in CEFTA, with a view to reducing costs caused by inefficient clearance procedures, while balancing trade facilitation with the continuous increasing requirements for safety and security measures in international and regional supply chains.

The WB presented the planned activities under the new World Bank Trade Facilitation Advisory Project, including proposed support to the NTFCs. The objective was to kickstart the NTFC support component under the project, leverage the opportunity to present to the Regional Committee, agree on how work at the national level will feed into the regional implementation of common TFA measures, and identify and agree on next steps to support the development of work plans and trade facilitation strategies to align with national and CEFTA priorities. The meeting was attended by representatives from Customs, border agencies, trade and quality infrastructure from all the CEFTA parties, which include all six Western Balkan countries, as well as representatives from the European Commission, GIZ, and other key stakeholders.

M. STDF WORKING GROUP MEETING — VIRTUAL, NOVEMBER 2022

On November 29–December 1, the WB participated in the STDF working group meeting, which brings together partners and donors to share experiences and take stock of the facility's reach and results. At the meeting, the STDF 2023 Work Plan was presented and a report of existing work to date. Members reviewed applications for new projects to be funded by the STDF.

Meeting notes:

https://standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_WG_Summary_Report_Nov-22_FINAL.pdf

N. VIRTUAL MEETING: E-TOOL FOR ADVANCE RULINGS – BELGRADE, SERBIA (VIRTUAL), DECEMBER 2022

On December 14, the WB hosted a virtual meeting with Customs Administrations in the Western Balkans. The aim was to share a new tool/database for advance rulings on tariff classifications (binding tariff classification (BTI)) that were recently implemented by the Serbian Customs Administration, with WB support.

O. WTO FIRST WORLD CONGRESS ON GENDER – GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, DECEMBER 2022

The WB participated in the World Trade Congress on Gender in Geneva from December 5-7. The Congress is the first international research conference on trade and gender. It was held for the first time in 2022, and subsequent editions will take place on a biennial basis. The theme of the event was "Gender Equality for Sustainable Trade and Recovery". The objective was to release research work conducted by trade and gender experts. Thirty researchers from all over the world presented their latest findings on trade and gender.

On December 7, the WB participated in session 6: “Facilitating Trade for Women” and presented WB research from the TFSP-supported Trade and Gender Study undertaken in the Pacific region: “Ending the Invisibility of Women Traders: Lessons Learned from Collecting Data on Women-Led Cross-Border Traders”

Event webpage:

https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/womenandtrade_e/women_05122022_e/women_05122022_e.htm



Research Session:

https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/womenandtrade_e/women_05122022_e/women_05122022_session_e.htm?id=23

Social media:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1601236633117855745?s=20&t=Ay9GGN7ejwTWZXrk8E1mDQ

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6998646655835070464?updateEntityUrn=urn%3Aali%3Afs_feedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3Aali%3Aactivity%3A6998646655835070464%29



**P. PACIFIC REGIONAL TRADE
FACILITATION WORKSHOP —
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA,
DECEMBER 2022**

From December 13-16, the WB co-hosted a peer-to-peer learning event in partnership with the WTO TFAF and PIFS in Sydney. The event focused on TFA implementation and the design of a draft Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy implementation roadmap. An additional objective and outcome was updating the Pacific Island WTO members status of alignment with the TFA to inform national country reform maps and support being provided by the WB to help identify possible prior actions and triggers in upcoming DPOs (Fiji, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, and Solomon Islands).

Event webpage:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2022/12/>



13/supporting-the-effective-implementation-of-the-wto-trade-facilitation-agreement-in-the-pacific

Social media:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1602725802625343493?s=20

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7008930678968836096?updateEntityUrn=urn%3A%3A%3AfeedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3A%3A%3Aactivity%3A7008930678968836096%29>

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7007458693512331264?updateEntityUrn=urn%3A%3A%3AfeedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3A%3A%3Aactivity%3A7007458693512331264%29>

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7010851070260244480?updateEntityUrn=urn%3A%3A%3AfeedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3A%3A%3Aactivity%3A7010851070260244480%29>

Q. KOSOVO: NATIONAL SINGLE WINDOW BLUEPRINT PRESENTATION — PRISTINA, KOSOVO, DECEMBER 2022

The WB held meetings with the government of Kosovo to discuss the blueprint for the implementation of NSW, including the Digitalization Advisor to the Prime Minister of Kosovo. The Blueprint is a roadmap that reviews the national conditions and discusses adjustments to be addressed as pre-requisites to the establishment of a National Single Window. The NSW Blueprint for Kosovo will enable stakeholders charged with the introduction of the National Single Window to make informed decisions in preparation for, and proceed in a systematic manner with, the development of a NSW in accordance with international standards.



Kosovo NSW Blueprint workshop_WB presentation
© World Bank

R. SIERRA LEONE: TRADE FACILITATION MEETING — FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE, JANUARY 2023

Between January 23–27, the WB met with the government of Sierra Leone to progress the trade facilitation agenda, including: (a) presenting the initial findings of a draft integrated risk management policy framework; (b) discussing concrete steps for the development of a TRS; and (c) agreeing an action plan for the operationalization of the NTFC.

S. ZAMBIA: RISK MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP — LUSAKA, ZAMBIA, FEBRUARY 2023

Between February 13–17, the WB hosted various workshops with representatives from sanitary and phytosanitary agencies (Plant Quarantine and Food Safety) to develop a comprehensive risk-based approach to border management. Overlapping mandates amongst border agencies have been identified as significant barrier to trade. Furthermore, excessive and unnecessary documents, inspections, sampling/testing impact quality by increasing delays in transport and consumer prices. Twenty-seven representatives from 11 institutions participated.

Social media:

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7031638631148650496?updateEntityUrn=urn%3A%3A%3AfeedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3A%3A%3Aactivity%3A7031638631148650496%29>

T. WCO TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING — BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, FEBRUARY 2023

Between February 20–25, the WB participated in the World Customs Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement Working Group and Capacity Building Committee.

U. WTO TF COMMITTEE MEETING — GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, FEBRUARY 2023

Between February 27–March 1, the WB participated in the Annex Group retreat to develop the 2023 work plan of joint activities to assist LDCs to implement the TFA. The retreat was hosted by the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility and joined by representatives from ITC, UNCTAD, WCO, and OECD.

V. TECHNICAL DISCUSSION MEETINGS WITH NTFC — CAIRO, EGYPT, FEBRUARY 2023

From February 26 to March 2, the WB held technical discussions with the NTFC around joint activities,

including the National Trade Facilitation Strategy, the results of the recent Time Release Study for exports, and the Integrated Risk Management Framework. The team also held a briefing with the new Trade Facilitation Unit at the Trade Ministry on the trade facilitation commitments and activities.

W. REGIONAL CUSTOMS MEETING: TOWARDS A NEW GENERATION OF REGIONAL COOPERATION THROUGH DIGITIZATION — SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA, MARCH 2023

On March 9, a high-level meeting was held on the digitization of cross-border trade in the Western Balkans. The event was co-organized with the WCO and Customs Administration of North Macedonia in conjunction with the visit of the Secretary General of the World Customs Organization to Skopje, North Macedonia. In attendance were customs officials from six Western Balkans countries and two European Union states: Bulgaria and Greece, the CEFTA Secretariat, the European Union Delegation in North Macedonia, the Transport Community Treaty Secretariat, and the WB.

The aim was to take stock of the development of National Single Windows in the Western Balkans with the support of the WB and the WCO, and to share best practice experiences by Bulgaria and Greece. Discussions also focused on opportunities to further harmonize and streamline regional cross-border paperless trade to enable the free flow of goods and faster EU integration.

News articles:

<https://civilmedia.mk/besimi-tsarinskata-uprava-gi-sledi-najnovite-tehnoloski-tekovi-i-sproveduva-us-peshna-digitalizatsija/>

<https://makpress.mk/Home/PostDetails?PostId=528842>



<https://nezavisen.mk/digitalizacijata-na-carinskoto-rabotenje-go-olesnuva-i-zabrzuva-protokot-na-stokite/>

<https://24info.mk/2023/03/09/македонската-царина-лидер-во-спровед/>

<https://mkd.mk/node/511071>

Social media:

<https://www.facebook.com/WorldBankRepublicOfNorthMacedonia>

<https://www.facebook.com/FatmirBesimiMinFin/posts/pfbid02YzbTR7dSTdgQXxzFsQLLkiZRevpgquMr1kyMd5CUQAUYeZ2aGA1AqcAXh7xb6RpUl>

<https://www.facebook.com/MinistryOfFinanceMK/posts/pfbid023BgxEgRKScmVkbfbwmQAynYvfTzh9nLgwwnn8LErgKBK7jfQmxvxSPPupy6xaV7bl>





Presentation at Western Balkans digitization event
© Government of North Macedonia

<https://www.facebook.com/FatmirBytyqiOfficial/posts/pfbid02ZGkv57L5rhgSfBywUfAPoeTTAfZWANKCNLsjM1Ro9J2NHBSyF2AhWm3KNqSGGspDI>

<https://www.facebook.com/slavica.kutirov/posts/pfbid0FvAnELqWWUQjWdEpNHyxCX8RXZzGFeLJ3s8D47XCEsyAueYH3mZcb6mMUDTRRbYrI>

Customs website:

<https://www.customs.gov.mk/ns-newsarticle-regionalna-konferencija-na-visoko-nivo-preku-digitalizacija-kon-nova-generacija-na-regionalna-sorabotka-makedonskata-carina-lider-vo-sproveduvane-na-konceptot-za-noviot-nacionalen-ednosalterski-sistem-nsp>

CEFTA website:

<https://cefta.int/news/cefta-at-the-towards-a-new-generation-of-regional-cooperation-through-digitalization-high-level-meeting/>

X. BLUEPRINT HANDOVER WORKSHOPS FOR NATIONAL SINGLE WINDOWS FOR TRADE IN MONTENEGRO AND KOSOVO — WESTERN BALKANS, MARCH 2023

The WB held events with the governments of Kosovo (March 20) and Montenegro (March 21) to handover roadmaps for the implementation of National Single Windows in their respective countries. The Single Window will automate all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements and enable traders to fulfill all trade procedures online. It is expected to significantly enhance the efficiency, speed, and transparency of trade-related procedures and documentation, thereby fostering the competitiveness of private sector firms. The Single Window initiative aligns with the vision of a common regional market across the Western Balkans.



Presentation
© World Bank

News articles:

<https://www.gov.me/clanak/odrzana-zavrsta-radionica-povodom-izrade-mape-puta-za-uspostavljanje-jedinstvenog-saltera-u-prekogranicnoj-trgovini>

<https://dogana.rks-gov.net/prezantohet-udherrefyesi-i-dritares-te-vetme-kombetare/>

<https://www.vijesti.me/vijesti/ekonomija/648716/cairnsko-poslovanje-uskladiti-sa-modernizovanim-procesima-rada-razvijenih-zemalja>

<https://www.standard.co.me/ekonomija/damjanovic-uvodjenje-jedinstvenog-saltera-pojednostavice-usluge-u-prekogranicnoj-trgovini/>

<https://www.dan.co.me/vijesti/ekonomija/cairnsko-poslovanje-uskladiti-sa-modernizovanim-procesima-rada-razvijenih-zemalja-5168076>

<https://gradski.me/damjanovic-uvodjenje-jedinstvenog-saltera-pojednostavice-usluge-u-prekogranicnoj-trgovini/>

<https://www.cdm.me/ekonomija/damjanovic-uvodjenje-jedinstvenog-saltera-pojednostavice-usluge-u-prekogranicnoj-trgovini/>

Social media:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064594213735>

Y. WTO TF COMMITTEE MEETING — GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, MARCH 2023

Between March 21–22, WTO Members met under the Trade Facilitation Committee to share experiences and information. The status of ratification and notification was shared, along with experience sharing from various countries.

TF Committee Meetings:

https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tradfa_e/comm_tradfa_e.htm



Blueprint Handover,
Agron Viole
© World Bank

Z. BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA: VISIONING WORKSHOP FOR ROADMAP FOR NATIONAL SINGLE WINDOW FOR TRADE — SARAJEVO, BOSNIA, MARCH 2023



On March 22–23, the WB held a visioning workshop with the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to develop a roadmap for the implementation of a National Single Window. The roadmap is a critical first step on the development of

a Single Window. It guides implementation and procurement, and includes decisions on funding, operations, features, legal requirements, and change management. The document is aligned with international standards, including the WCO Data Model, UNECE/UNCEFACT recommendations, and European requirements—all important in the Western Balkans.

AA. TIMOR-LESTE: SIGNING CEREMONY FOR NEW TRADE INFORMATION PORTAL — DILI, TIMOR-LESTE, MARCH 2023

On March 30, the WB and the Ministry of Tourism and Trade signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a Trade Information Portal in Timor-Leste. The WB will provide advisory support to the government for the development and implementation of the portal, which is expected to launch during the next reporting period.



News article:

<https://en.tatoli.tl/2023/03/30/world-bank-and-mtct-sign-mou-to-provide-tip-to-support-export-and-import-activities/11/>



DILI, 30 march 2023 (TATOLI)- World Bank and the Minister of Tourism Trade and Industry (MoTTI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish Trade Informative Portal (TIP), aiming to provide business information on trade and import activities.

Deputy Minister of MoTTI, Domingos Lopes Antunes said MTCTI plans to create an informative trade portal, aiming to share information on import and export activities to the public, especially for business persons.

"We request support from the World Bank to help establish a trade informative platform. It is the initial step that we are in the coordination process for establishing this portal," Deputy



BB. WESTERN BALKANS NTFC CONFERENCE — BELGRADE, SERBIA, MAY 2023

On May 17, a conference was held on deepening trade integration in the Western Balkans. The event was held in Belgrade and was convened by the WB (through TFSP), USAID (through the EDGE project), and the Swiss government (through C4TP), which together are supporting Western Balkan economies in strengthening their institutional capacity, protocols, and procedures to make the flow of goods across borders easier, faster, and safer.

Press release:

https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/05/16/western-balkan-economies-explore-easier-faster-and-safer-trade-together?utm_source=mirage-news&utm_medium=miragenews&utm_campaign=news

News articles:

<https://www.miragenews.com/western-balkan-economies-look-faster-safer-1007512/>

<https://eba.md/eng/news/conferinta-trade-facilitation-regional-maturity-and-capacity-building-din-belgrad-serbia>

CC. LAUNCH EVENT: TRADE FACILITATION AND GENDER SURVEY: GENDER DIMENSIONS IN TAJIKISTAN — DUNSHABE, TAJIKISTAN, MAY 2023

Building on the TFSP-supported Trade and Gender Study methodology undertaken in the Pacific region, the survey tool was leveraged by the Quality Infrastructure Investment Partnership (financed by the government of Japan) to complete a Trade Facilitation and Gender Study in Tajikistan. The report was launched in Dunshabe on May 23. This survey aimed to quantify the exact nature of

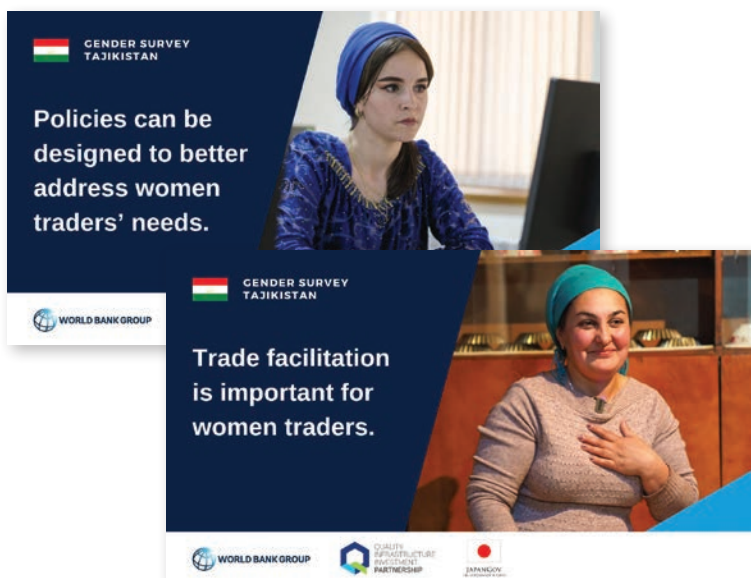


Tajikistan Gender Survey launch event
© World Bank

challenges women cross-border traders face at the firm-level in Tajikistan. The WB undertook a survey of 430 cross-border trade firms and customs brokers between March and November 2022. The research largely focused on areas related to the WTO TFA, while also researching the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts in the region, transport issues, and safety and security at the borders.

Publications (English and Russian):

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/trade/publication/gender-dimensions-of-cross-border-trade-in-tajikistan>



Blog:

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/tajikistan-empowering-women-trade>

Social media:

<https://twitter.com/WorldBankECA/status/1666490740413718544?s=20>

https://twitter.com/WB_Finance/status/1661406763084546051?s=20

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7072401654892949504?updateEntityUrn=urn%3Ali%3Afs_feedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3Ali%3Aactivity%3A7072401654892949504%29

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7066746888854622209?updateEntityUrn=urn%3Ali%3Afs_feedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3Ali%3Aactivity%3A7066746888854622209%29

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7072372976104419328?updateEntityUrn=urn%3Ali%3Afs_feedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3Ali%3Aactivity%3A7072372976104419328%29

DD. 3RD MEETING OF LATIN AMERICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEES OF TRADE FACILITATION — MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY, MAY 2023

Through TFSP, the WB participated and contributed to the 3rd Meeting of Latin American National Committees of Trade Facilitation between May 23 and 26, co-organized by the World Trade Organization and the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI). The event promoted an exchange of experiences among the NTFC members and identified areas of mutual learning and possible areas of collaboration. It provided an opportunity for exchange of experiences in trade digitalization, risk management of express shipments, implementation monitoring, cooperation with donors, and private sector participation. The meeting also built the capacity of NTFC Secretariats to track trade facilitation reforms, monitor different initiatives, and assess their impact.

News article:

<https://www.tfafacility.org/news/2023/06/third-latin-american-meeting-national-trade-facilitation-committees-aladi>

Workshop report (Spanish):

https://www.tfafacility.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/MAD_Informe_del_Tercer_Encuentro_Latinoamericano_de_los_CNFC_2150.pdf

Between June 3-7, the International Seed Federation (ISF) held its Annual Congress in Cape Town. The focus of the meeting was to bring together industry, regulators and international organizations in a series of workshops and panels to discuss the implications of increasing climate change on seed trade and the impacts on sustainable development goals. Given the role of seed in improving agricultural production, the ISF is seeking to strengthen global partnerships in advancing safe seed trade.

Event webpage:
<https://worldseed.org/event/world-seed-congress-2023/>

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7072805226667196417?updateEntityUrn=urn%3Aali%3Afs_feedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3Aali%3Aactivity%3A7072805226667196417%29



Shane Sela · 1st
Senior Trade Facilitation Specialist at World Bank Group
2mo · 🌐

Yesterday my colleague Naim Huruglica and I met with colleagues at the Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency to further discuss implementing strategies for risk-based border management for plant product trade. Applying risk-based strategies can facilitate trade while allowing the Agency to focus its resources on risky consignments... win-win.



https://www.linkedin.
com/feed/update/
urn:li:activity:7073262776781029376?updateEntityUrn=
urn%3Ali%3Afs_feedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%
3Ali%3Aactivity%3A7073262776781029376%29

Between June 14-18, the WB participated in the STDF working group meeting, which brings together partners and donors to share experiences and take stock of the facility's reach and results. The Working Group (of which the WB is a founding partner) approved a number of grants including: harmonizing phytosanitary legislation in Central Africa; digitalizing accreditation systems in West Africa; reducing pesticide residue levels in sesame and cowpea in Nigeria; identifying SPS issues affecting Ghana's spice value chain; prioritizing SPS Investments for market access in the Gambia to improve SPS planning and decision-making and developing a proposal to strengthen the production and export capacity of the apiculture industry in the Pacific. The discussion focused on collaboration and leveraging each organizations efforts to bring maximum impacts, which was particularly relevant given the WB's ongoing engagements and investments in many of the countries. Additionally, a number of other topics including digitalization of SPS agencies and the use of A.I. to facilitate risk-based decision-making by SPS border agencies was also discussed and agreement was reached to further collaborate on these topics. A proposed meeting of a number of

development partners in developing a joint publication to support SPS agencies in evaluating their readiness to implement digital tools is planned for the upcoming months.

Meeting report:

https://standardsfacility.org/sites/default/files/STDF_WG_Summary_Report_Jun_23.pdf

**HH. WTO TF COMMITTEE MEETING —
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, JUNE 2023**

Between June 15–16, WTO Members met under the Trade Facilitation Committee to share experiences and information. The status of ratification and notification was shared, along with experience sharing from various countries. The WB updated members on the TFA support and made the following presentations: dedicated session on capacity building on WB work on formalities, special session for LLDCs to identify constraints to implementation, and work with Annex D partners to agree support for solutions.

TF Committee Meetings:

https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tradfa_e/comm_tradfa_e.htm

**II. ZAMBIA: WORKSHOP ON RISK MANAGEMENT —
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA, JUNE 2023**

Between June 17–24, the WB hosted various workshops with representatives from sanitary and phytosanitary agencies (Plant Quarantine and Food Safety). The workshop advanced the development of an integrated risk management framework. Outcomes of the workshop included: agreement by the agencies to develop a joint risk-based border intervention strategy for two commodities: maize and fertilizers which could be used as a pilot under a coordinated intervention strategy; agreement to



Participants at Risk Management workshop in Zambia
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continue to work on prioritizing the commodities under their jurisdiction, so that the prioritized listing could be used to stratify interventions on the basis of risk; and identification of needs to support trade under the current WB project, which included increased IT tools, capacity building and tools for effective regulatory operations, improved information dissemination and capacity building for traders, and increased support to joint coordination between agencies and between countries.

**JJ. ANNUAL MEETING OF DIRECTOR GENERALS
OF CUSTOMS —
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, JUNE 2023**

From June 22–23, the WB participated in the WCO Annual Meeting of Director Generals (DGs). The WB team met with client country Customs DGs and representatives to advance dialogue and discuss opportunities for increasing project activities including investment lending and aligning project activities to upcoming development policy lending. Meetings were also held with WCO senior management to agree on next steps to advance the enhancements to the Time Release Study baseline tool being jointly developed by the WB and the WCO.

Annex C

Communications



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 ensure that the results reach target audiences. TFSP leveraged the following communications channels in FY23 (July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023):

I. 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, resources, reform news, and blogs/stories of interest to stakeholders and other users. The number of website visitors has continued to grow steadily since the launch of the website: from 1,500 page visitors at the end of FY17 to **16,544 on June 30, 2023**.



Stakeholders are transported to TFSP project locations via virtual reality
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II. TRADE POST BLOG & FEATURE STORIES

The WB team has written a number of blog posts about the work and experiences of TFSP-funded activities. The posts have been published on the [WB Trade Post blog](#), a global platform to bring together observations from the field and reflections on research by the WB's experts on international trade. Other posts are promoted on regional blog platforms, such as [East Asia & Pacific on the Rise](#), [Eurasian Perspectives](#), and WB country office webpages. All blogs and stories are cross promoted on the TFSP website.

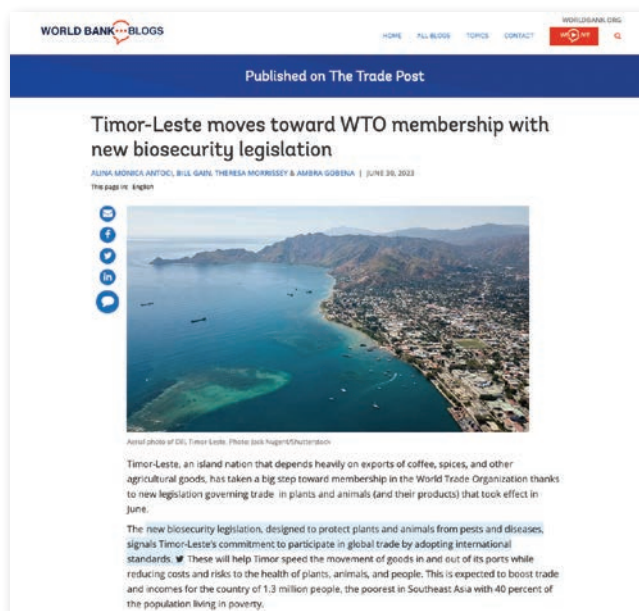
The following blog posts and stories were developed during the reporting period (*page views are from the date published up to June 30, 2023*):

A. TIMOR-LESTE MOVES TOWARD WTO MEMBERSHIP WITH NEW BIOSECURITY LEGISLATION (51 page views on the first day of publishing—published on June 30, 2023):

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/trade/timor-leste-moves-toward-wto-membership-new-biosecurity-legislation>

This blog highlighted how Timor-Leste has taken a big step toward membership in the World Trade Organization thanks to new legislation governing trade in plants and animals (and their products) that took effect in June. The new biosecurity legislation, designed to protect plants and animals from pests and diseases, signals Timor-Leste's commitment to participate in global trade by adopting international standards. They provide the legal foundation for effective, modernized import controls and export certification for a range of agricultural products and establish a framework for domestic surveillance and other animal health and plant health measures.

Since 2016, the WB has provided technical support and capacity development for a strengthened biosecurity regulatory framework to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. In addition to the new legislation on animal health and plant health, texts to help implement the new framework are also being developed, including subsidiary regulations focused on import and export and a range of standard operating procedures. This support by the WB builds on and is complementary to the technical assistance of various development partners in previous years.



This blog was promoted on the [TFSP website](#), the [World Bank Timor-Leste page](#), the [World Bank Trade page](#), and on social media:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1678374065889845250?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1677287085911203842?s=20

B. GENDER DIMENSIONS IN TAJIKISTAN (838 page views—published in May 2023):

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/tajikistan-empowering-women-trade>

This blog highlighted the findings of the Trade Facilitation and Gender Study in Tajikistan (supported by the Quality Infrastructure Investment Partnership (financed by the government of Japan)), which built upon the TFSP-supported Trade and Gender Study undertaken in the Pacific region. It focuses on the challenges women traders face at the borders and offers recommendations for addressing them. This study—a first of its kind in Central Asia—involved a survey of over 430 cross-border trade firms and customs brokers between March and November 2022, complemented by border visits, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews. The survey is a collaborative effort between World Bank [Transport](#) and [Trade teams](#).

This blog was promoted on [Eurasian Perspectives](#)—the WB blog for Europe and Central Asia, the [World Bank Tajikistan country webpage](#), and on social media:

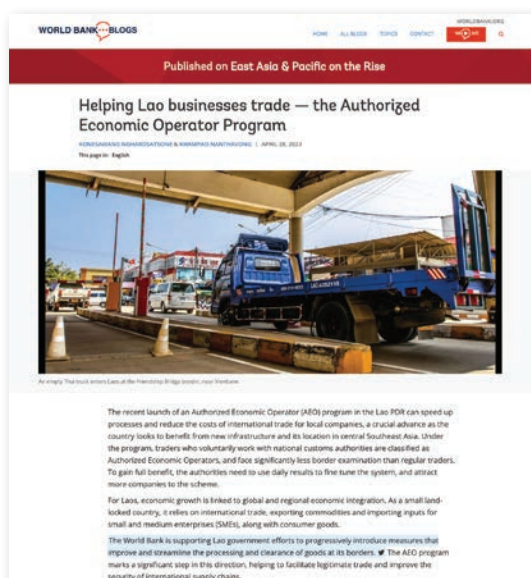


<https://twitter.com/WorldBankECA/status/1666490740413718544?s=20>

https://twitter.com/WB_Finance/status/1661406763084546051?s=20

C. HELPING LAO PDR BUSINESSES TRADE — THE AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATOR PROGRAM (383 page views—published in April 2023):

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/helping-lao-businesses-trade-authorized-economic-operator-program>



This blog highlighted how the recent launch of an AEO program in the Lao PDR—supported by TFSP—can speed up processes and reduce the costs of international trade for local companies, a crucial advance as the country looks to benefit from new infrastructure and its location in central Southeast Asia. Under the program, traders who voluntarily work with national customs authorities are classified as AEOs, and face significantly less border examination than regular traders. To gain full benefit, the authorities need to use daily results to fine tune the system, and attract more companies to the scheme.

This blog was promoted on the [TFSP website](#), the [World Bank Lao webpage](#), the [World Bank Trade page](#), and on social media:

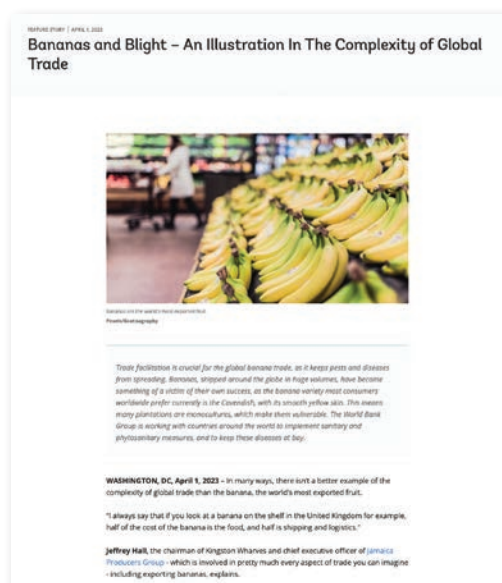
https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1653640536207552513?s=20

https://twitter.com/WB_AsiaPacific/status/1652130727054524416?s=20

D. BANANAS AND BLIGHT — AN ILLUSTRATION IN THE COMPLEXITY OF GLOBAL TRADE (610 page views—published in April 2023):

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2023/01/30/bananas-and-blight-an-illustration-in-the-complexity-of-global-trade>

This story highlighted how trade facilitation is crucial for the global banana trade, as it keeps pests and diseases from spreading. Bananas, shipped around the globe in huge volumes, have become something of a victim of their own success, as the banana variety most consumers worldwide prefer currently is the Cavendish, with its smooth yellow skin. This means many plantations are monocultures, which make them vulnerable. The World Bank group is working with stakeholders around the world to implement sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and to keep these diseases at bay.



Promoting gender equality and empowering women are critical to achieving the WB's twin goals of reducing extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. Research on trade facilitation and gender funded by TFSP was spotlighted.

This blog was promoted on the [TFSP website](#), the [World Bank Trade page](#), and on social media:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1633528845554040833

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7039610112415551489?updateEntityUrn=urn%3Ali%3AFs_feedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3Ali%3Aactivity%3A7039610112415551489%29

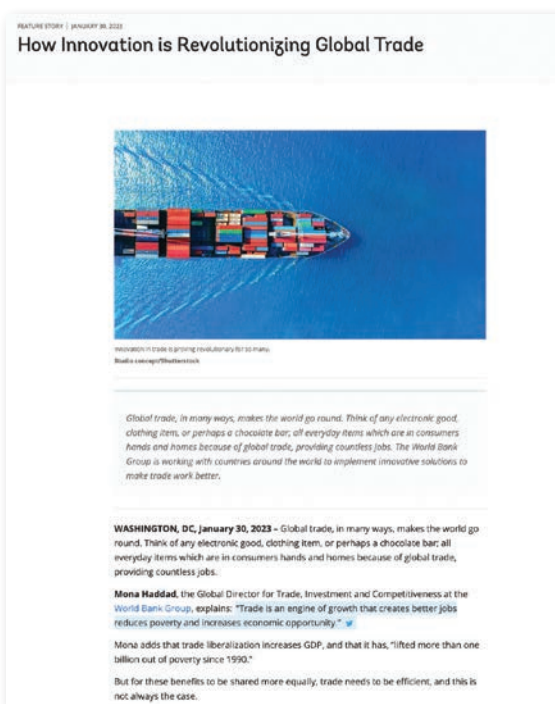
3Afs_feedUpdate%3A%28V2%2Curn%3Aali%3Aactivity%3A7039610112415551489%29

F. HOW INNOVATION IS REVOLUTIONIZING GLOBAL TRADE

(4,839 page views—published in January 2023):

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2023/01/30/how-innovation-is-revolutionizing-global-trade>

This story highlighted how global trade, in many ways, makes the world go round. Think of any electronic good, clothing item, or perhaps a chocolate bar; all everyday items which are in consumers hands and homes because of global trade, providing countless jobs. The WB is working with countries around the world to implement



innovative solutions to make trade work better. Trade facilitation—through work supported via TFSP—is at the core of this work.

This story was promoted on the [TFSP website](#) and the [World Bank Trade page](#). It was also promoted on social media:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1624106791926726656?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1620150454616203300?s=20

G. PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION FACILITATES THE IMPORT OF VACCINES IN TONGA (618 page views—published in August 2022):

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/trade/public-private-collaboration-facilitates-import-vaccines-tonga>

This blog highlighted Tonga's focus on trade facilitation during the COVID-19 pandemic. It showcases how trade facilitation helped maintain trade flows during the pandemic and has been crucial in providing access to essential food and medical items, including vaccines for its citizens. The WB supported a small multi-agency team established to lead the import of vaccines,

comprised of government—Ministries of Trade, Customs, Health, Quarantine (Plant & Animal), Transport, and border organizations—port, airport, air cargo operators, customs brokers, freight forwarders.

This blog was promoted on the [TFSP website](#), the [World Bank Trade page](#), and on social media:

https://twitter.com/WB_Finance/status/1560054307856211968?s=20&t=gqGxie087of78711p3f6og

https://twitter.com/WB_Finance/status/1558332704114069504?s=20&t=gqGxie087of78711p3f6og

https://twitter.com/WB_Finance/status/1557790351406104577?s=20&t=gqGxie087of78711p3f6og

https://twitter.com/WB_Finance/status/1557517604239163398?s=20&t=gqGxie087of78711p3f6og

III. TRADE PUBLICATIONS

A. NATIONAL SINGLE WINDOW BLUEPRINT DOCUMENTS: KOSOVO AND MONTENEGRO

TFSP supported the governments of Kosovo and Montenegro to produce NSW Blueprint Documents. The Blueprint sets out all the key decisions to be made by the stakeholders in relation to the establishment of an NSW and provides guidelines as to how to implement them. It comprises an illustration of the components for an NSW implementation program as applicable to the unique circumstances in each country. The components are based on key decisions elaborated through consultation with the stakeholders and are in line with their vision for the NSW, which is for a paperless, electronic, online facility that will facilitate trade by reducing the cost, time and effort of fulfilling regulatory requirements for import and export.

The Blueprints were provided to the NSW Working Groups in each country. Executive summaries were also produced in local languages for dissemination to a



larger audience (Albanian and Serbian for Kosovo and in Montenegrin for Montenegro).

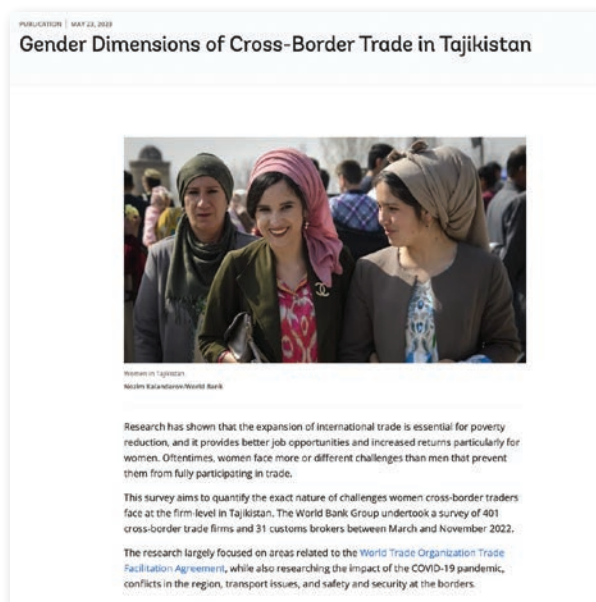
B. GENDER DIMENSIONS IN TAJIKISTAN



Building on the methodology of the TFSP-supported Trade and Gender Study undertaken in the Pacific region, the WB has now developed a series of studies in nine countries. The latest survey took place in Tajikistan supported by the Quality Infrastructure Investment Partnership (financed by the government of Japan), which builds on the highlights the challenges women traders face at the borders and offers recommendations for addressing them.

Publications (English and Russian):

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/trade/publication/gender-dimensions-of-cross-border-trade-in-tajikistan>



IV. SOCIAL MEDIA

The program supports updates widely on the WB social media platforms, including on **Instagram** (World Bank: 1M+ followers); **Facebook** (www.facebook.com/worldbank: 2M followers; World Bank Pacific: 267K followers; IFC Africa: 71K followers; IFC Europe and

Central Asia: 17K followers); and on **Twitter** @World-Bank: 3.8M followers; @WB_Finance: 105K followers; @WB_AsiaPacific: 106.3K followers; @WorldBankECA: 29.2K followers; @IFCAfrica: 158.2K followers; @IFC_ECA: 4.8K followers). Due to the uncertainty around Twitter (now X) during the reporting period, the team strengthened efforts on **LinkedIn** via the corporate channels (World Bank: 2M followers; IFC–International Finance Corporation: 674K followers) and individual team member's accounts to promote project activities.



V. BROCHURE AND BANNERS

The TFSP brochure (<https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/5bbf6a2cf673541f8a9f78c59f9bb13b-0430012022/related/TFSPBrochure2023web.pdf>) was updated to increase the visibility of the program and donor support at key events. The brochures continue to be shared virtually at events, missions, and meetings and can also be downloaded from the TFSP website. Two program-wide banners with donor attribution are also at the team's disposal for use at key events.

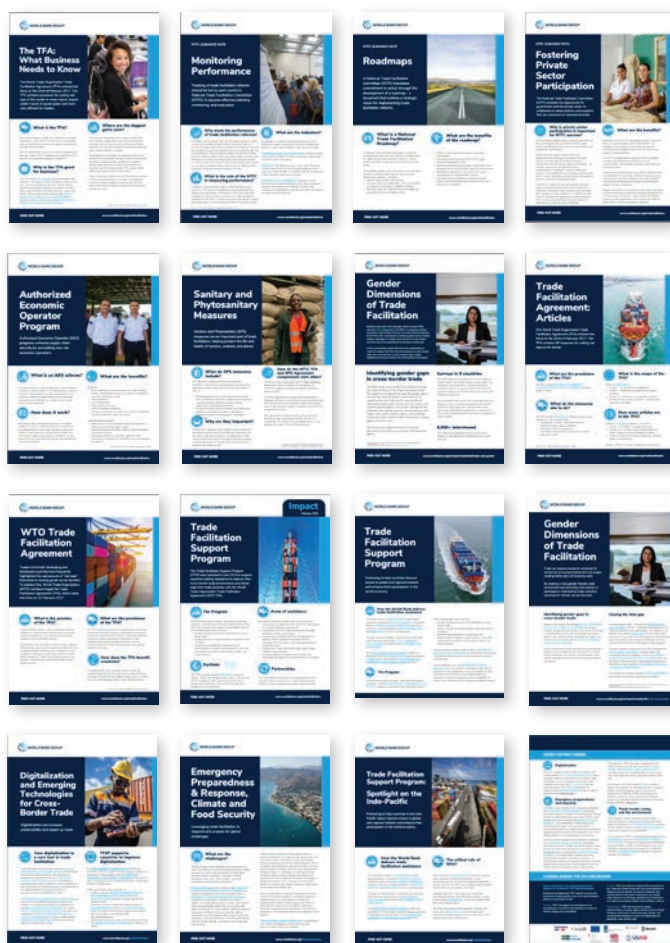


VI. FACTSHEETS

The program factsheets developed in the previous reporting periods have been updated. They provide a short summary of the program as well as an outline of its mandate, activities, and results. Regional-specific factsheets also have been created to provide more specific information about TFSP supported activities in the regions.

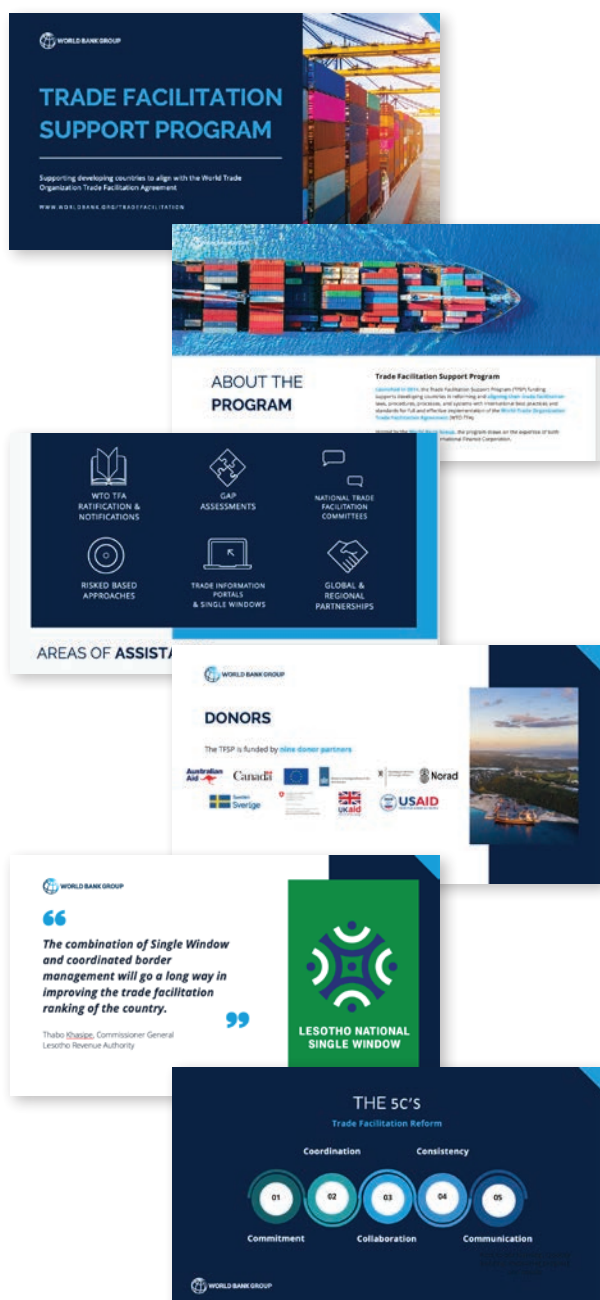
In addition, during this reporting period thematic factsheets were developed to promote key project areas and highlight specific TFSP country examples, including: *WTO TFA: What is it?*; *WTO TFA for Business*; *WTO TFA Articles*; *Trade and Gender Surveys*; *TFSP Impact*; *TRS*; *TIP*; *National Single Window*; *NTFC*; *SPS*; and *AEO*. Several guidance notes have also been created on *NTFC areas of focus*, such as: *Fostering Private Sector Participation*, *Monitoring Performance*, and *Roadmaps*.

All have the logos of TFSP's donors. The factsheets were distributed to participants in virtual events and government clients.



VII. PRESENTATIONS

The TFSP PowerPoint template was updated during the reporting period. The new template is to be used for key events and is organized according to the specific thematic areas of focus. The aim is that the template—with the latest program information and donor attribution—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.



VIII. MEDIA ENGAGEMENT/ OUTREACH

The program works in close consultation with the WB global communications network to leverage greater coverage for TFSP activities. At the country level, this involves working closely with WB 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 NTFC, and others—in TFSP-supported countries to assist in media engagement.

Some recent examples published on the work TFSP directly supported or informed include the blueprint development for the National Single Window for trade in Kosovo and Montenegro; the regional NTFC event in the Western Balkans; risk management activities in Peru and Zambia; regional trade facilitation events in Central America, the Pacific and the Western Balkans; and the passing of biosecurity laws in Timor-Leste. 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 other articles/media mentions throughout the reporting period:

May 17, 2023: [Western Balkan Economies Seek Faster, Safer Trade Together](#)

May 16, 2023: Press Release: [Western Balkan Economies Seek Faster, Safer Trade Together](#)

May 16, 2023: [Trade Facilitation Regional Maturity and Capacity Building Conference taking place in Belgrade Serbia](#)

■ Examples of other news articles (Serbian):

- <https://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2023/may/wco-continues-to-support-its-members-in-their-tfa-implementation-journey-including-the-ntfs-topic.aspx>
- <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/4162718/americki-ambasador-hil-dogadja-se-istorijska-promena-jer-albanija-i-srbija-rade-zajedno-kao-nikada-pre>
- <https://www.ktv.rs/2023/05/16/momirovic-olaksati-trgovinu-u-regionu/>

- <https://www.vesti.rs/Evropska-Unija/Vise-od-70-odsto-izvoza-iz-ovog-regiona-Zapadnog-Balkana-odlazi-u-drzave-clanice-EU.html>
- <https://naslovi.net/2023-05-16/beta/momirovic-regionalne-ekonomske-integracije-medju-prioritetima-vlade-srbije/33488891>
- <https://naslovi.net/2023-05-16/danas/momirovic-zemlje-cefta-su-nakon-eu-najznacajnji-spoljnotrgovinski-partneri-srbije/33488973>
- <http://www.nspm.rs/hronika/tomislav-momirovic-regionalna-ekonomska-integracija-jedan-od-najvaznijih-ciljeva-vlade-srbije.-kristofer-hil-veliki-sam-pristalica-otvorenog-balkana.html>
- <https://magazinbiznis.rs/konferencija-o-saradnji-ekonomija-zapadnog-balkana/>
- <https://24sedam.rs/biznis/privreda/217245/privrede-zapadnog-balkana-do-lakse-i-brze-trgovine/vest>

April 23, 2023: [Peru: Government announces new measures to improve the competitiveness of exporting companies](#) (Spanish)

March 30, 2023: [Timor-Leste: World Bank and MTCI sign MOU to provide TIP to support import and export activities](#)

March 21, 2023: [Montenegro: Final workshop held on the creation of a roadmap for the establishment of a national single window for cross-border trade](#) (Montenegrin)

■ *Examples of other news articles (Montenegrin):*

- <https://www.vijesti.me/vijesti/ekonomija/648716/cairnsko-poslovanje-uskladiti-sa-modernizovanim-procesima-rada-razvijenih-zemalja>
- <https://www.portalanalitika.me/clanak/odrzana-zavrсна-radionica-povodom-izrade-mape-puta-za-uspostavljanje-jedinstvenog-saltera-u-prekograničnoj-trgovini>
- <https://www.standard.co.me/ekonomija/damjanovic-uvodjenje-jedinstvenog-saltera-pojednostavice-usluge-u-prekograničnoj-trgovini/>
- [modernizovanim-procesima-rada-razvijenih-zemalja-5168076](https://www.dan.co.me/vijesti/ekonomija/cairnsko-poslovanje-uskladiti-sa-

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- <https://gradski.me/damjanovic-uvodjenje-jedinstvenog-saltera-pojednostavice-usluge-u-prekograničnoj-trgovini/>
- <https://www.cdm.me/ekonomija/damjanovic-uvodjenje-jedinstvenog-saltera-pojednostavice-usluge-u-prekograničnoj-trgovini/>

March 20, 2023: [Kosovo: Introducing the National Single Window Guide](#) (Albanian)

March 15, 2023: [Timor-Leste Passes New Biosecurity Laws](#)

March 9, 2023: Western Balkans: [Towards a New Generation of Regional Cooperation through Digitalization](#) (Macedonian)

■ *Examples of other news articles (Macedonian):*

- <https://civilmedia.mk/besimi-tsarinskata-uprava-gi-sledi-najnovite-tehnoloski-tekovi-i-sproveduva-uspeshna-digitalizatsija/>
- <https://makpress.mk/Home/PostDetails?PostId=528842>
- <https://nezavisen.mk/digitalizacijata-na-carinskoto-rabotenje-go-olesnuva-i-zabrzuva-protokot-na-stokite/>
- <https://24info.mk/2023/03/09/македонската-царина-лидер-во-спровед/>

December 16, 2022: [Supporting the Effective Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in the Pacific](#)

December 8, 2022: [First World Trade Congress on Gender](#)

October 2022: [North Macedonia: Digitization of Customs with the aim of more efficient services for economic operators](#) (Macedonian)

September 19, 2022: [Building trust: Trade in the age of digitalization](#)

August 24, 2022: Guatemala: [The implementation of the advance declaration will reduce times and costs for exporters](#) (Spanish); YouTube: [Government implements advance customs declaration](#)

July 27, 2022: [Creating an Enabling Environment to Increase Women's Participation in Trade](#)

IX. COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS

In some cases, deeper communications support is required to ensure that the technical assistance provided and results supported by 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 the **Pacific**, the TFSP is working with the PIFS Secretariat to raise awareness of the progress related to the development of a Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy, including the hosting of a regional peer-to-peer event.

In **Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, North Macedonia, and Montenegro**, the WB continued to help the government to raise awareness and endorse the NSW roadmap and the associated benefits. During this reporting period, blueprints were adopted and promoted in **Kosovo** and **Montenegro**.

In **Lao PDR**, TFSP supported the development of a publicity campaign to support the launch of the new AEO program.

The team has continued to raise awareness of the findings and recommendations from the Trade and Gender Studies with governments, business associations, and traders and agents (customs brokers, freight forwarders, etc.), and other international organizations. Since the TFSP-supported surveys were undertaken in the Pacific region, the survey design and methodology has been replicated in several other countries. The results contribute to the body of knowledge that is shared with TFSP countries.

X. MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTS

The program has produced a number of videos, which are showcased on the TFSP website and hosted on the WB YouTube channel. During this reporting period, the program embarked on some new and innovative approaches to reach audiences.

NEW

Animation: Single Window—A Path to Paperless Trade:
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2022/10/>



30/single-window-a-path-to-paperless-trade (1.6K views)

The automation and digitization of border procedures has become increasingly relevant, especially during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. There is an increased focus and demand from clients for digitization initiatives, like the Single Window. In order to manage client expectations and provide optimal technical assistance, the team sought ways to “educate” TFSP clients (governments, customs administrations, border agencies, NTFCs, etc.) about how to prepare for digitization initiatives and to better understand the requirements.

The team developed a short **animation** to introduce TFSP client countries to the benefits of digitization and the steps required for the implementation of a Single Window. The animation does not intend to be too technical and academic in nature but provides a “lighter touch” in layperson’s terms. The animation has been disseminated on social media, in communities of practice, on country client missions, at technical workshops, and events.

Social media:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1653097534422761476?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1587555007288721408?s=20&t=iu1yexFSv2ggWODsgHMG7A

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1587807726364672000?s=20&t=iu1yexFSv2ggWODsghMG7A

Trade Tips Podcast

The TFSP-supported team launched a **podcast** series named “Trade Tips”. Listeners are invited to subscribe for free on their favorite platform: [Apple](#) and [Spotify](#).



The podcast generated over **3,127 listeners** and **1,700 subscribers**. TFSP donor partners are referenced in all podcast pages and on all platforms.

Podcast page:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/series/trade-tips-podcast>

World Bank Multimedia page:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/who-we-are/news/multimedia>

Take A Listen To What You Can Expect | Trade Tips Podcast

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/podcast/2023/01/30/trade-tips-podcast-take-a-listen-to-what-you-can-expect>

This short trailer welcomed listeners to the podcast and highlighted what to expect in the series. It introduced the concept of the podcast: guiding listeners around the world of trade—exploring the big issues and the solutions; and hearing from people who are on the front lines of trade—from Vanuatu to Ghana, Jamaica to Nepal, and Washington, DC.

Social media:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1620483029985525760?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1620034140744687616?s=20

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CpLp43ovnyb/?igshid=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==>

Around the World of Trade | Trade Tips Podcast

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/podcast/2023/01/13/around-the-world-of-trade-trade-tips-podcast>

In this first episode of the [Trade Tips podcast](#), we explored why trade matters and how it benefits economies all over the globe. We learned about the big picture when

it comes to trade and how it can be made more efficient for traders. We heard from traders in Nepal and Tonga about their challenges, and from the WB's Mona Haddad, Director of Trade, Investment, and Competitiveness, on possible solutions.



Social media:

<https://m.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=569591271875187&id=100064729564556&set=a.224950713005913>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=572787894888858&set=pb.100064729564556.-2207520000.&type=3>

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1620035680427724801?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1620815466582233092?s=20

<https://twitter.com/WorldBank/status/1621238183961714691?s=20>

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1620815466582233092?s=20&t=NQJp2FpZRvaZzEegYxHZpg

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1620034140744687616?s=20&t=NQJp2FpZRvaZzEegYxHZpg

<https://twitter.com/WorldBank/status/1621238183961714691?s=20&t=U7xl8WMja6QuRZJNFpPsQQ>

What Caribbean Rum Cake Can Tell Us About Trade | Trade Tips Podcast

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/podcast/2023/01/13/what-caribbean-um-cake-can-tell-us-about-trade-trade-tips-podcast>

In this episode, we found out what Caribbean rum cake can tell us about trade. We learned about the WTO's [Trade Facilitation Agreement](#) and why National Trade Facilitation Committees—made up of both the private and public sectors—are essential for cutting red tape and making trade work better. We heard from a trader in Jamaica about the challenges and opportunities, and from the WB's Bill Gain, on possible solutions.



Social media:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1664301870741856258?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1670944739909066754?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1668196788497514496?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1664723991804641280?s=20

A (Digital) Window to the World | Trade Tips Podcast

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/podcast/2023/01/13/a-digital-window-to-the-world-of-trade-trade-tips-podcast>



In this episode, we explored how technology can transform global trade. We learned how digitization can make trade faster, easier, more transparent and predictable. We heard from traders in Ghana and Vanuatu about their challenges, and from the WB's Alina Antoci about possible solutions.

Social media:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1680938607744253953?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1654577168083480576?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1654124098371588096?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1653015736351174657?s=20

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=627007969466850&set=pb.100064729564556.-2207520000.&type=3>

Invisible Women | Trade Tips Podcast

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/podcast/2023/01/13/invisible-women-trade-tips-podcast>

In this episode, we explored why women are so invisible when it comes to trade, and why gender-inclusive policies and practices matter. We heard from traders in Rwanda

and the Solomon Islands about their challenges, and from the WB's Heidi Stensland, on possible solutions.



Social media:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1641848589042188303?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1634239010380890134?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1633407762968240131?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1631172639925444608?s=20

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=569591271875187&set=pb.100064729564556.-2207520000.&type=3>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=589767156524265&set=pb.100064729564556.-2207520000.&type=3>

Bananas and Blight | Trade Tips Podcast

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/podcast/2023/01/13/bananas-and-blight-trade-tips-podcast>

In this episode, we learned why the world's most popular fruit is facing a devastating disease, and how diseases can be prevented from spreading across borders. We heard from a trader in Mozambique and academics in South Africa about the challenges, and from the WB's Shane Sela, on possible solutions.

Social media:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1642150307256758273?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1646091133955579914?s=20



https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1643045898841206785?s=20

The Climate Conundrum | Trade Tips Podcast

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/podcast/2023/01/30/the-climate-conundrum-trade-tips-podcast>

In this episode, we explored the relationship between trade and climate change, and how shipping can tackle its huge carbon emissions. We heard from [Maersk](#)—the

world's largest container shipping firm—about how a new and greener future is needed for the industry, and from the WB's Vicky Chemutai on the challenges and opportunities ahead.



Social media:

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1630641456598663179?s=20

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1628152984608690177?s=20

<https://twitter.com/WorldBank/status/1628213154911031301?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/WorldBank/status/1629979728533659651?s=20>

https://twitter.com/WBG_Finance/status/1625888638620864514

PODCAST PROMOTION

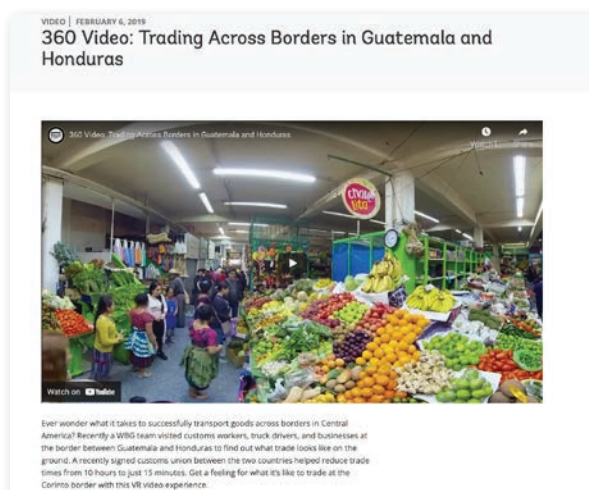
One podcast episode was promoted per month on the WB's social media channels (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter) and websites (World Bank Trade and Trade Facilitation Support Program). For example, the women episode was promoted in March to coincide with International Women's Day. The podcast was also promoted within the Trade Facilitation and Border Management Community of Practice (167 staff), the World Bank Trade Unit's [Trade Watch](#) newsletter; and at various World Bank events, including Events: Driving Global Trade for Development, with the former WB President (<https://live.worldbank.org/events/driving-global-trade-development>). The team also collaborated on promotion with regional teams in the Pacific and Africa since traders from their regions feature widely; and with partner organizations such as STDF, the WTO TFAF, and the United Nations.

ONGOING

In previous reporting periods, TFSP produced two 360° virtual reality films aimed at transporting stakeholders to client countries to witness the effect of the program's projects. The videos continue to be shared widely and watched (*views are from the date published up to June 30, 2023*):

■ Trading across borders in Guatemala and Honduras:

- **English (1600K+ views)**: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2019/02/06/360-video-trading-across-borders-in-guatemala-and-honduras>
- **Spanish (1.8+ views)**: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/es/latinamerica/uni-n-aduanera-entre-guatemala-y-honduras-de-10-horas-15-minutos>



■ Making Trade Faster, Cheaper and Easier in Sierra Leone (1.051 million+ views): <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2019/06/27/making-trade-faster-cheaper-and-easier-in-sierra-leone>



Both videos were among the top 40 videos with the most views on the WB YouTube channel, which has hundreds of videos (if not more). The videos are also showcased on partner websites, including the [WTO TFAF](#).

A third 360° virtual reality films was initiated during this reporting period and will focus on recent trade facilitation improvements in [Fiji](#). The film will launch in the next reporting period.

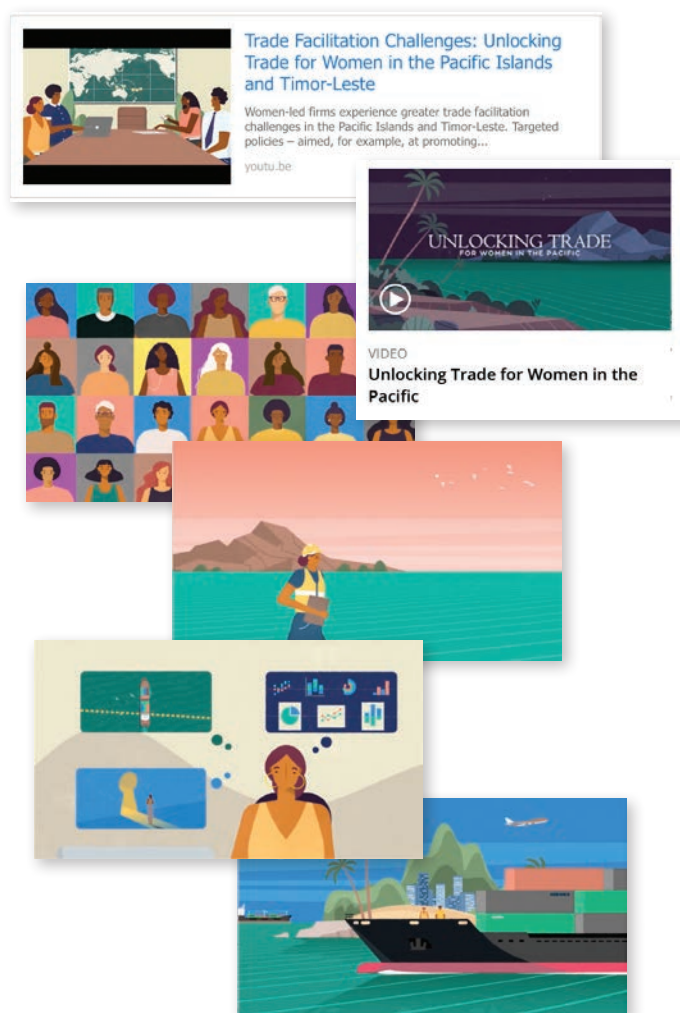
The team continued to share the short [video](#) that was produced during the last reporting period, which enabled our experts to virtually connect with clients and share best practice on managing risk and facilitating trade during COVID-19 ([840 views](#)):

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2020/06/22/managing-risk-and-facilitating-trade-during-covid-19>



The team continued to share a short [animation](#) about the Pacific trade and gender surveys, which produced during the last reporting period ([1,051 views](#)):

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2021/02/25/unlocking-trade-for-women-in-the-pacific>





Annex D

Financial Overview



Port of Suva in Fiji
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

All amounts are in USD thousands and as of end June 2023.

CASH RECEIPTS

Donor	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	Total cash receipts by donor
Australia		1,745	1,472	1,500	1,559			1,523	1,202		9,001
Canada	1,821										1,821
EU			4,388		3,554	1,869	2,156	1,181	2,238		15,386
The Netherlands					444	444	444	444	473		2,248
Norway		5,504			750	1,538	409	1,064	2,305		11,570
Sweden					594	1,651	1,041	581	1,075		4,942
Switzerland		300	1,000	200	813	410	402	439			3,563
UK			754	3,217	1,350	2,539		1,335	41		9,237
US*	950			650	965	190	238	95	195	333	3,615
Total by year:	2,771	7,549	7,614	5,567	10,028	8,640	4,689	6,662	7,530	333	61,384
Cumulative:		10,320	17,934	23,501	33,529	42,170	46,859	53,521	61,051	61,384	

* US values reflect cash receipts after a 5% administrative fee is deducted. For all other donor receipts, the values include the 5% administrative fee.

OUTSTANDING DONOR PAYMENTS (in USD thousands)

Donor	\$
Australia	—
Canada	—
EU	—
The Netherlands	—
Norway	—
Sweden	—
Switzerland	—
UK	—
US	213
	213

CASH RECEIPTS AS PERCENTAGE OF OVERALL DONOR COMMITMENTS (in USD thousands)

Total receipts and outstanding commitments	61,596
Percentage receipts	99.7

DISBURSEMENTS

	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	TOTAL
Total	224	2,191	5,307	7,467	6,867	7,367	6,237	4,358	4,211	6,692	50,928
Cumulative	224	2,415	7,722	15,189	22,056	29,423	35,660	40,018	44,229	50,928	

DISBURSEMENTS RATES

	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Total	8%	25%	45%	68%	69%	73%	80%	78%	76%	87%
Including commitments										89%

Shipped docked at the Port of Suva
© World Bank/Chris Morgan





CONTSHIP TEN

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DEEP TUG

For more information:

www.worldbank.org/tradefacilitation

TFSP@worldbankgroup.org

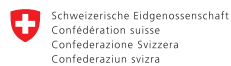
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