

TRADE FACILITATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

Semi- Annual Report

PHASE 2

JANUARY 2025–JUNE 2025



WORLD BANK GROUP

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TFSP PARTNERS

TFSP has been financed by these development partners: Australia, Canada, the European Commission, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.



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ABOUT THE PROGRAM — TFSP PHASE 2

The Trade Facilitation Support Program (TFSP), launched by the World Bank Group (WBG) in June 2014, aims to assist developing countries in enhancing their cross-border trade environments and aligning their trade practices with the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade Facilitation (WTO TFA).¹ TFSP 2 is a separate window under the **Umbrella Facility for Trade Multi-Donor Trust Fund 2.0 (UFT 2)**, which facilitates integration across all trade activities and common reporting. The WBG is the largest development partner providing technical assistance for trade facilitation reforms. Following the successful completion of the project's Phase 1 in December 2024, this report signals the launch of Phase 2 of the TFSP, which will run from December 2024 through December 2034. The move into Phase 2 reflects both the achievements to date and the substantial ongoing demand for support in implementing WTO TFA measures and related trade facilitation reforms, particularly in developing countries. This transition is taking place within a new trade context, marked by increased demand for securing trade flows and resilience, accelerating digitalization, and a growing recognition of the importance of Trade Facilitation to reduce trade costs and remain competitive in an increasingly fragmented global environment.

TFSP funding continues to be instrumental in helping countries advance toward full and effective implementation

¹ 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.

of trade facilitation measures. The program's core activities remain focused on:

- Identifying persistent constraints and bottlenecks to cross-border trade
- Designing and planning practical reform strategies, with careful prioritization and sequencing
- Enhancing the predictability, transparency, and harmonization of systems and procedures in accordance with international standards for import, export, and transit

By refining its approach and scaling up efforts for even more robust delivery of programmatic and project-level activities, TFSP is committed to delivering even greater impact in TFSP Phase 2—helping more countries streamline trade, reduce costs, and drive economic growth. TFSP is intensifying its collaboration with governments to accelerate reform efforts, improve trade efficiency, and unlock the economic benefits of more seamless and predictable trade flows. Building on the foundation established in Phase 1, TFSP has expanded its technical assistance and knowledge management to address cross-cutting priorities such as gender, digitalization, public health, food security, environmental sustainability, and emergency response. This broader scope reflects the growing recognition of the interconnectedness between trade facilitation and these critical development challenges. TFSP's ability to leverage WB lending can strongly magnify its impact on the above-mentioned development objectives.

Despite the progress made, many WTO TFA Category C measures remain to be implemented, and demand for TFSP's expertise and support continues to be strong. As Phase 2 begins, TFSP remains a key partner for countries striving to realize the full potential of trade facilitation reforms, driving inclusive and sustainable economic growth for the decade ahead.

VISION, MISSION, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, AND THE WBG CORPORATE SCORECARD

VISION

Faster, fairer, greener trade through modernization, coordination, and digitalization across borders.

MISSION

TFSP aims to help developing countries meet their development objectives by providing practical and demand-driven trade facilitation support to help them establish solid foundations and effective border processes and procedures that deepen their integration into the world economy through trade. Technical assistance and capacity building activities are implemented through drawing on the expertise from the World Bank Group, 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.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Technical assistance: Advise, design, and/or help implement customs reform, border management, and trade facilitation initiatives that reduce time and costs to trade, as well as enhance transparency, foster predictability, and strengthen the global trading system.

Knowledge management and learning activities: Create knowledge, facilitate knowledge sharing, support peer-to-peer learning, and assist WBG teams and client countries in measuring activity progress and results. TFSP aims to better measure the impact of TFSP activities on development outcomes.

Whole-of-government approach: Ground and implement activities in a “whole-of-government” approach to ensure all border agencies (for example, standards, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS), food safety, animal health, and human health along with customs) are involved and invested in implementing trade facilitation reforms.

Inclusivity: Contribute to the increasingly important dialogue on how to mainstream gender and inclusivity issues into trade by supporting data collection and knowledge sharing on the nexus between trade facilitation and gender, as well as leveraging this information to recommend gender-sensitive interventions where relevant. Gender equality is central to the WBG’s goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity in a sustainable manner.

Digitalization: Helping client countries improve their digitalization and automation efforts to increase predictability and transparency. A base level of digitalization and automation across border agencies is needed given the exponential development of technology today. Ensuring an adequate level of digitalization will enable deployment of assistance to be more effective as all border agencies will be better positioned to implement reforms.

Coordination: Draw on the WBG’s 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.

ALIGNMENT WITH WORLD BANK GROUP CORPORATE SCORECARD

The new World Bank Group Corporate Scorecard aims to track progress in meeting the WBG's goal of creating a world free of poverty on a livable planet. It comprises 15 outcome areas, and TFSP activities contribute to and align with:

- **Outcome 3 on Healthier Lives: Improving health outcomes, responding to epidemics and other emergencies, and providing the full range of preventative, curative or palliative services, aiming to strengthen human capital and allow people to reach their full potential.**

Contributing to this, TFSP supports countries in developing and implementing emergency preparedness measures to help keep goods flowing during emergencies and natural disasters. This work began during the COVID-19 pandemic, and TFSP is leveraging the experiences and lessons learned from the pandemic to help countries strengthen their capacity to respond to emergencies going forward. Relevant measures include expedited clearance of imported cargo (for example, vaccines, medical supplies, perishable products), modernized customs legislation, institutional policy reform to increase the resilience of the trade environment, a whole-of-government approach to border clearance, improved communication mechanisms including contingency planning.

- **Outcome 7 on Sustainable Food Systems: The world's food systems are under pressure from climate change, droughts, floods, unsustainable practices, and international conflict.**

TFSP champions reforms that advance healthy food systems. Inefficient border procedures and processes can disrupt cold chains and delay delivery to consumers, resulting in food waste, diminished quality, and increased safety risks for perishable goods. Within trade facilitation, TFSP emphasizes risk-based clearance for SPS-related products and the expedited treatment of perishables where appropriate. Given climate-driven shifts in production environments and pest and disease distribution, robust risk management frameworks are critical for countries to identify emerging threats and ensure the safe trade of food and agricultural imports. This includes supporting the e-phyto system for customs and ensuring customs system connectivity at all border points.



Scorecard presentation at the World Bank Group/IMF 2025 Spring Meetings
© World Bank/Simone McCourtie

- **Outcome 11 on Digital Services: Reliable and responsive digital services, whether from the public or private sector, help people more efficiently get the information they need.**

Trade facilitation and digitalization are closely linked. The adoption of emerging technologies and digitalization in customs and border clearance processes provide transparent access to information for traders, reduce the need for in-person presence at borders, and subsequently reduce the amount of time spent on meeting requirements to import and/or export. It also enables greater coordination and collaboration between government agencies and the private sector. TFSP support helps client countries to digitalize and automate cross-border trade that benefit both the public and private sectors, including on paperless trade, electronic transactions frameworks, electronic invoicing, the UNCITRAL Model law of electronic transferable records, express shipments, and e-payments. This includes support to the creation of National Single Windows that streamline & digitalize trader interactions with multiple agencies through a single digital entry point, reducing clearance times and improving transparency (for example, TFSP assistance has helped countries design NSW roadmaps and implement early single window reforms).



World Bank Scorecard communications
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Data playground at the World Bank Group/IMF 2025 Spring Meetings
© World Bank/Paul Blake



Data playground at the World Bank Group/IMF 2025 Spring Meetings
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- **Outcome 13 on More and Better Jobs (job creation, particularly for women and young people, is a central component of all World Bank Group activities).**

According to Beverelli, et al., implementation of the WTO TFA led to an USD 231 billion increase in trade globally between 2017 and 2019 alone (a total trade increase of 1.17 percent globally).² This increase in trade is important because higher trade exposure correlates with increased employment and labor income.³ Evidence shows that trade facilitation reforms disproportionately benefit manufacturing and import-dependent sectors, which tend to be more labor-intensive. Preferential customs treatment and improved border processes enable firms to grow, hire more workers, and pay higher wages. For example, in Tunisia, firms in import-dependent sectors saw larger impacts on employment and wage bills following trade facilitation reforms⁴ and trade reforms in Indonesia increased Foreign Direct Investment by 23 percent in liberalized sectors, potentially generating 3.2 million new jobs by 2026.⁵

² Beverelli, Cosimo, Gourevitch, Isabella, Heiland, Inga, Keck, Alexander, Larch, Mario, & Yotov, Yoto V. (2023). "Trade and Welfare Effects of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement." Staff Working Paper ERSD-2023-04. Geneva: World Trade Organization.

³ Maliszewska, Maryla & Winkler, Deborah Elisabeth. Leveraging Trade for More and Better Jobs. Prosperity Insight Series. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

⁴ Ali, Nadia, Cali, Massimiliano, & Rijkers, Bob. (2025). Promoting Innovative Startups: Quasi-Experimental Evidence from Tunisia. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

⁵ World Bank Group. (2025, May 9). Creating Jobs, Improving Lives: EAP Success Stories. Up Front. Retrieved from <https://worldbankgroup.sharepoint.com/sites/newshub/SitePages/UpFront/Creating-Jobs-Improving-Lives-EAP-Success-Stories-08052025-152140.aspx>

Focused on supporting the full and effective implementation of trade facilitation reforms, TFSP is designed to provide practical and demand-driven assistance to countries for them to benefit from increased trade and private sector competitiveness, which in turn is associated with job creation.

- **Outcome 15: More Private Investment—predictability, transparency, and harmonization attract private investment (by creating conditions that are conducive to private investment, countries can help create new opportunities for businesses and individuals and lay the groundwork for a brighter economic future).**

Growing evidence base shows that lowering trade costs is associated with higher FDI inflows. For example, a 1% reduction in international trade costs is linked to roughly a 0.8% increase in FDI, and in Asia, a 10% drop in bilateral trade costs corresponded to about an 8% rise in FDI inflows.^{6,7} TFSP contributes to "More Private Investment" by making cross-border trade more predictable, transparent, and harmonized—key conditions investors look for when assessing market-entry risk. TFSP helps countries implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement through practical reforms such as establishing National Trade Facilitation Committees for whole-of-border coordination; deploying Trade Information Portals that centralize and simplify access to laws, fees, forms, and procedures; and conducting Time Release Studies to target and cut clearance delays. These measures have produced tangible improvements—such as significant reductions in clearance times and streamlined, risk-based processes—while boosting transparency through publicly available, searchable regulatory information. By lowering uncertainty and logistics costs and aligning procedures across agencies and with international standards, TFSP de-risks trade operations for firms, strengthens investor confidence, and supports follow-on private investment in supply chains, logistics, and export-oriented production.

⁶ World Bank.2025. Action Plan : Trade Facilitation. Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group.

⁷ Ohnsorge, Franziska Lieselotte & Quaglietti, Lucia. (2023). Trade as an Engine of Growth: Sputtering but Fixable. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

ACRONYMS

AEO	Authorized Economic Operator	ICT	Information and communication technology
ANPR	Automated Number Plate Recognition	IDA	International Development Association
AR	Advance ruling	IFC	International Finance Corporation
AU-IBAR	African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources	IMF	International Monetary Fund
BAF	Biosecurity Authority of Fiji	IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
BCP	Border crossing point	ISO	International Standards Organization
BMA	Border Management Authority	ITC	International Trade Centre
CBM	Coordinated border management	ITTL	Integrated Trade and Transport Logistics
CPPO	Chief Plant Protection Officer	JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer	LDCs	Least Developed Countries
CTSB	Customs Technical Services Bureau	LPCO	License, Permit, Certificate, or Other
DFAT	Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	MCAE	Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs
DFTQC	Department of Food Technology and Quality Control	MIDAS	Migration Information and Data Analysis System
DLS	Department of Livestock Services	MOU	Memorandum of understanding
EC	European Commission	MRA	Malawi Revenue Authority
e-Phyto	Electronic phytosanitary certification	NSW	National Single Window
ERS	Eswatini Revenue Service	NTFC	National Trade Facilitation Committee
EU	European Union	OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
FCDO	UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
FCS	Fragile and conflicted-affected situations	PQPMC	Plant Quarantine and Pesticide Management Center
FRCS	Fiji Customs and Revenue Service	PPRSD	Police, Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Directorate
FY	Fiscal year	PSS	Private sector savings
GATF	Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation	RKC	Revised Kyoto Convention
GETP	Ghana Economic Transformation Project	RSL	Lesotho Revenue Services
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	SARS	South African Revenue Service
GRA	Ghana Revenue Authority	SACU	Southern African Customs Union
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	SDTF	Standards Trade Development Facility

SECO	The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (Switzerland)	TIP	Trade Information Portal
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	TRS	Time Release Study
SPS	Sanitary and phytosanitary	UFT	Umbrella Facility for Trade
SRCTIP	Nepal Strategic Road Connectivity and Trade Improvement Project	UK	United Kingdom
SUEI	Strategic Unit for Economic Integration	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
SW	Single Window	UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreements	USA	United States of America
TFAF	WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
TFWC	Trade Facilitation Working Committee	WB	World Bank
TFSP	Trade Facilitation Support Program	WBG	World Bank Group
TFWA	Trade Facilitation West Africa program	WCO	World Customs Organization
		WTO	World Trade Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JANUARY TO JUNE 2025



Accelerating Trade Facilitation for Inclusive Growth

Advancing Global Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

During January–June 2025⁸, the World Bank Group (WBG) continued to advance the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) through the **Trade Facilitation Support Program (TFSP)**. Building on the success of Phase 1, TFSP entered **Phase 2** under the new **Umbrella Facility for Trade 2.0**, expanding its reach and deepening its impact.

Expanding Reach and Impact

TFSP extended support to **five additional Pacific Island countries**—Palau, Tuvalu, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Federated States of Micronesia, and Kiribati—bringing the total number of client countries that have been supported since phase 1 to **69**⁹. This expansion reflects the growing global demand for support in strengthening border processes, reducing trade costs, and enhancing connectivity. During this reporting period—the first 6 months of Phase 2—**14 countries had active engagements**.

⁸ FY25 classification is for the period of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025. In FY25, activities undertaken from July 1 to December 31, 2024 fell under TFSP Phase 1. To close Phase 1, a final six-month update covering the first half of FY25 has already been provided to donors.

⁹ The total portfolio count includes all countries, including Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries that received TFSP support in Phase 1 and have confirmed funding for Phase 2, regardless of current activity status or the availability of updates for the period. Since 2024, TFSP has produced a separate, Sweden-funded report—TFSP MENA—and, from 2024 onward, all updates from MENA countries are included in that report.



Measurable Progress on Trade Facilitation Reform

Leveraging the TFSP-developed TFA Tracking Tool, alignment with WTO TFA measures across 25 countries with both baseline and updated assessments increased significantly—from **41% to 55%**—demonstrating clear impact from TFSP-supported reforms. Of the **14 active Phase 2 country engagements**, **10 have been assessed**, with an average alignment score of **43.6%**.

This tool goes beyond traditional reporting by measuring not only commitments but also the full implementation of trade facilitation measures—spanning legal frameworks, operational procedures, and real-world practices.

Country Highlights: Phase 2

Building on a decade of TFSP support, early Phase 2 results are already showing **trade facilitation and regional collaboration**:

- **South Africa–Lesotho – Cross-Border Cooperation:** Joint Action Plan operationalized, improving efficiency and coordination at shared borders.
- **Pacific Islands – Regional Reform:** Building on the **Pacific Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy**, TFSP supported PIFS in establishing the **Regional Trade Facilitation Committee**—a key mechanism to oversee and implement the strategy.

These milestones demonstrate how Phase 2 is **building on past successes to accelerate trade, digitalization, and regional connectivity**.

Partnerships and Resources Mobilized

Between the launch of Phase 2 in December 2024 and June 2025, TFSP received **USD 4.36 million** in new contributions from the **European Union, Sweden, and the United Kingdom**, with a disbursement rate of **16.5 percent**. These resources are helping countries accelerate reform implementation and strengthen institutional capacity.

Looking Ahead: Deepening Impact Through Collaboration

As TFSP moves forward, it will build on lessons from Phase 1 to:

- **Scale up technical assistance** and capacity building where reform momentum is strong;
- **Support least developed and developing countries** in meeting outstanding Category B and C commitments;
- **Strengthen partnerships** with WBG country teams and development partners to embed trade facilitation reforms in broader development strategies;
- **Invest in knowledge and innovation**, fostering a global community of practice in trade facilitation and border management; and
- **Mobilize additional resources** to sustain impact and respond flexibly to evolving challenges.

Through this next phase, TFSP remains committed to helping countries unlock the benefits of trade—driving **job creation, food and health security, and environmental sustainability** in line with the World Bank Group’s mission to create a world free of poverty on a livable planet.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

1



1.1 Program Administration

TFSP-supported interventions are implemented together with field-based staff, which are also complemented by consultants worldwide. With the institutional re-organization effective July 1, 2020, all trade facilitation work has since been led by the World Bank.

1.2 Donor Engagement

For this period, there was one consultative committee meeting, held virtually on March 12, 2025. TFSP donor reps from DFAT, EC, the Netherlands, SIDA, SECO, and FCDO were present. 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.

In addition to the semi-annual Consultative Committee meetings, the TFSP Secretariat held periodic meetings in donor capitals and at the WTO during Trade Facilitation Committee (TFC) sessions. Throughout the reporting period, the Secretariat also provided regular virtual updates and distributed communication materials to keep stakeholders informed.

1.3 Communications and Outreach

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

1. Raising awareness of program activities, results, and impacts
2. Increasing the visibility of the program and donor partners
3. Sharing useful trade facilitation resources with stakeholders

EMBEDDING COMMUNICATIONS IN PROGRAM DELIVERY

During the reporting period, TFSP continued to strengthen its communications efforts and to embed them within project activities. The communications plan for FY25 guided the program's strategic approach to communications, and was supported by internal guidance for team members on how to incorporate communications into their work—including by meeting donor visibility requirements.

LEVERAGING WBG COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

The WBG team has written a number of blogs and stories about the work and experiences of TFSP-funded activities. These posts have been published on the WBG's established communications channels with a dedicated global audience—including the [Trade Post blog](#), a global platform that brings together observations from the field and reflections on research by the WB's experts on international trade. During this reporting period, the team also leveraged the WBG's new [Immersive Story platform](#), which offers in-depth stories on global development across a number of topic areas. These blogs and stories are also promoted on the WB's main [Trade page](#), the [TFSP website](#), and WBG social media (1M+ followers). Team members are also encouraged to further promote these initiatives on LinkedIn.

SHOWCASING 10 YEARS OF IMPACT

In FY24, TFSP focused on expanding its library of project results and impact videos¹⁰. In FY25, the goal shifted to compiling these materials—data, stories, and videos—into a comprehensive suite of products highlighting a decade of TFSP achievements (Phase 1). These communications products tell stories of change, showcase results, and illustrate how TFSP-supported trade facilitation reforms have impacted beneficiaries. They are available on the TFSP website and have been widely promoted through the WBG's digital platforms, including:

- New [Immersive Stories Platform](#)
- Social Media Channels ([X](#): 3.8M+ followers, [Facebook](#): 2.8M+ followers, [LinkedIn](#): 2.5M+ followers, [Instagram](#): 1M followers)



FEATURED COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCTS

TFSP 10 Year Summary:
[Immersive Story \(English, French, Spanish, Arabic\)](#) | [Interactive Flipbook](#) | [Full publication](#) | [Factsheet](#)



10 Videos produced in FY24. Watch them here:

TFSP: This short [video](#) highlights how TFSP works with countries around the world to improve their cross-border trade environments, better align their trade practices with global standards, and help them reap the rewards of accessing bigger markets.

Zambia: A [2D](#) and [360°](#) film highlight how—with TFSP support—trade facilitation is improving border processes and helping Zambian agri-businesses reach international and regional markets.

Tonga: Three 2D videos and one [360°](#) film highlight how—with TFSP support—Tonga is preparing for and responding to emergencies through trade facilitation. It features how border agencies like customs, the National Emergency Management Office, and traders are benefiting from the TFSP-supported "Emergency Preparedness and Response Framework" for cross-border trade in times of crisis. Watch them here: (1) [Tonga: Resilience in Action: Building Emergency Response and Preparedness](#), (2) [Trade as a Lifeline: Lessons from Tonga During Times of Crisis](#), and (3) [From Catch to Commerce: Growing the Economy through Trade Facilitation](#).

Fiji: A [2D](#) and [360°](#) film highlight how—with TFSP support—automation is making trade work better in Fiji.

UPDATED MATERIALS FOR PHASE 2

TFSP also refreshed its core communications materials to reflect the transition to Phase 2. These updates included:

- Master presentation



- TFSP factsheet ([English](#) | [French](#))



- Thematic factsheets that reflect the program's results in key areas¹¹

¹¹ List of thematic factsheets: trade and gender; WTO TFA explainer; border management; emergency response and preparedness; harnessing leverage; risk management; single windows; trade information portals; advance rulings; donor focused factsheets for Japan and Australia, etc.



Participants at the launch of the Fiji Trade Information Portal in Suva.
© Fiji Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives and Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications

LOCALIZED COMMUNICATIONS 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.

Example—Fiji

TFSP supported preparations for the launch of the [Trade Information Portal](#) with the development of a publicity campaign, which included:

- A high-profile [launch event](#) (held in July 2025)



The Australian High Commissioner to Fiji, H.E. Peter Roberts, at the launch of the Fiji Trade Information Portal in Suva.
© Fiji Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives and Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications

- [Promotional videos](#)
- [Social](#) media graphics
- Flyers/brochures
- Regular progress updates (e-newsletters) to stakeholders



Participants at the launch of the Fiji Trade Information Portal in Suva.
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Example—Ghana

TFSP supported the development of communication tools on the Advance Ruling regime. The reader-friendly and accessible 'explainers' highlighted the key concept of the regime, how it works, and the anticipated benefits. The tools included:

- Infographic
- Factsheet



The communication tools developed in Ghana will be leveraged in other TFSP countries to help with sensitization and adoption across relevant agencies.

FY25 COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS¹²



1.4 Program Stocktaking

Building on the mid-term stocktaking exercise that was previously undertaken in FY18 (covering June 2014–June 2018), a second “Stocktaking/ Assessment & Learning Review” was carried out by contracted firm International Economics Consulting Ltd (IEC). The second stocktaking covered July 2018 – June 2023 with the main objectives of 1) providing an independent, updated assessment of TFSP’s performance and results achieved from July 2018 to date; 2) identifying lessons learned and areas to improve the TFSP’s effectiveness, and 3) assessing how TFSP has complemented other trade facilitation programs particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, including building partnerships and coordinating with other organizations/ donors in-country as well as at the global level.

Overall, the stocktaking exercise positively assessed TFSP across the six criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. A few areas were identified for improvement, primarily related to enhancing M&E, further utilization of digital tools, and establishing more formal channels of communications with stakeholders. A new stocktaking is planned to take place in three years.

12 Read the blogs/stories:

- Unlocking Trade, Boosting Economic Growth: [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#)
- [Trade's hidden barriers: Navigating non-tariff measures](#)
- [Nepal's exports of fruits and spices may rise with new domestic inspections](#)

Download the factsheets: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/trade-facilitation-support-program#5>

Watch the videos:

- <https://youtu.be/tptAzkxQck0?feature=shared>
- <https://youtu.be/dTARLj6GX4?feature=shared>



World Bank film crew in Tonga
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

PROGRAM UPDATES AND HIGHLIGHTS

2



Containers at a port in South Africa
© Pexels/Frans van Heerden

2.1 Portfolio At-A-Glance

TFSP is currently supporting 27 countries in Phase 2, of which 85% are IDA and Blend countries, and 33% are Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations (FCS). Additional Least Developed Countries (LDCs) may be included in the future, depending on demand:

27
Countries to
kick off
Phase 2¹³

Within the portfolio (Phase 2 countries):

85%
International
Development
Association
(IDA) and Blend
Countries¹⁴

33%
Fragile and
Conflict-Affected
Situations
(FCS)¹⁵

¹³ This number does not include MENA countries as TFSP dedicates a separate report for the region (TFSP MENA) which is funded by the government of Sweden. For this reporting period, 14 of the 27 countries had updates. The 27 phase 2 countries are: Armenia, Bangladesh, Eswatini, Micronesia, Fed. Sts., Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Kiribati, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Africa, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Zambia.

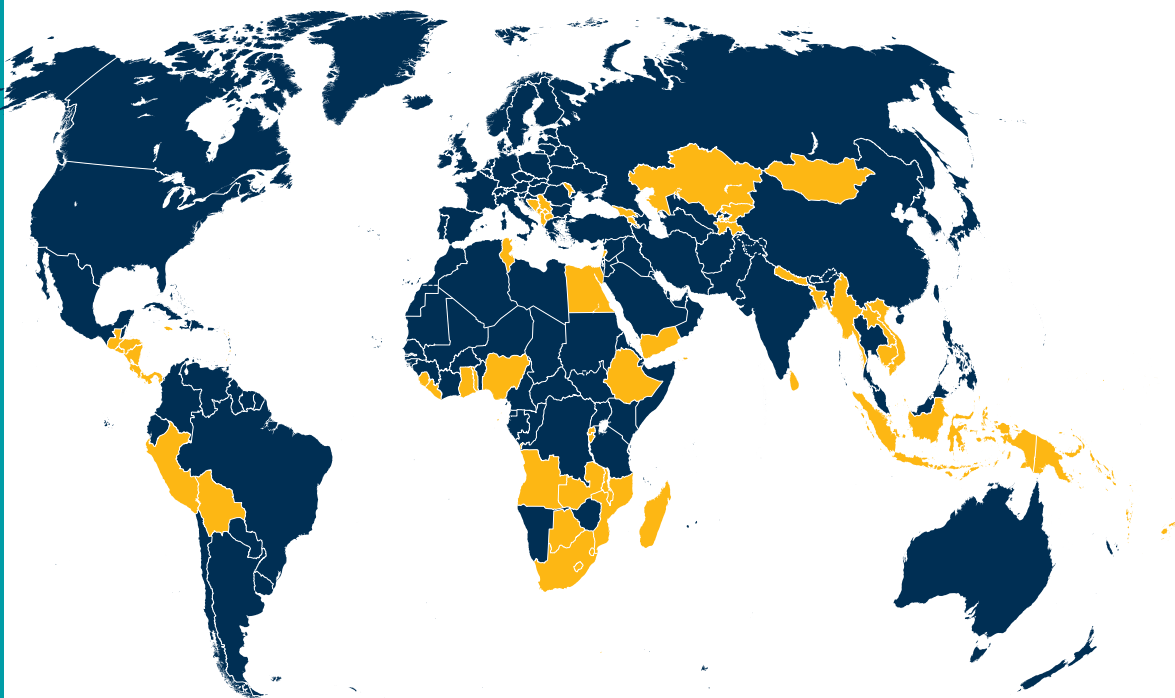
¹⁴ IDA countries are those with gross national income (GNI) per capita below an established threshold (USD 1,335 in the FY25) or lack the creditworthiness to borrow from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). Blend countries are eligible for IDA loans and are also eligible for IBRD loans because they are financially creditworthy.

¹⁵ The WBG 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, Kiribati, Kosovo, Lebanon, Micronesia, Fed. Sts., Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Yemen are on the WBG's FY25 FCS list. FY25 classification is for the period of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.

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

FIGURE 1

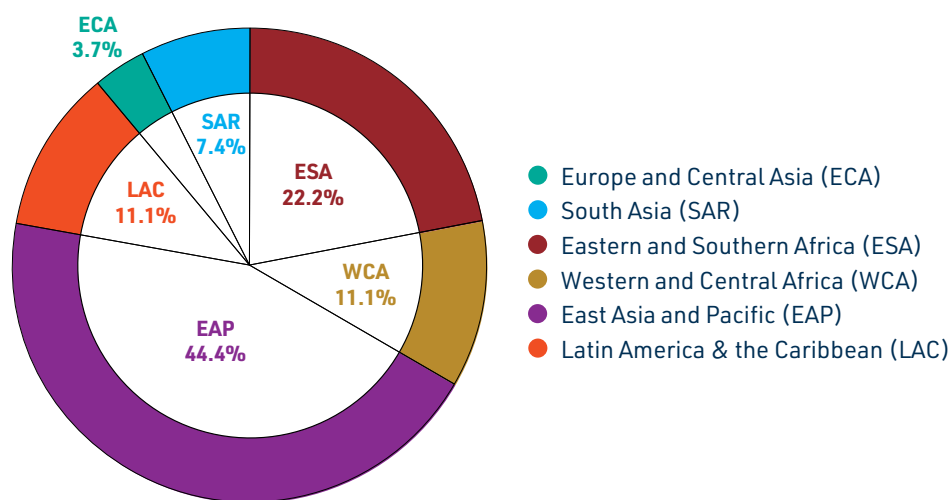
Map of Where TFSP has/is/will Provide Multi-Year Implementation Assistance



Source: World Bank

FIGURE 2

Breakdown of Phase 2 Countries by Region (based on the number of countries as of end-FY25)



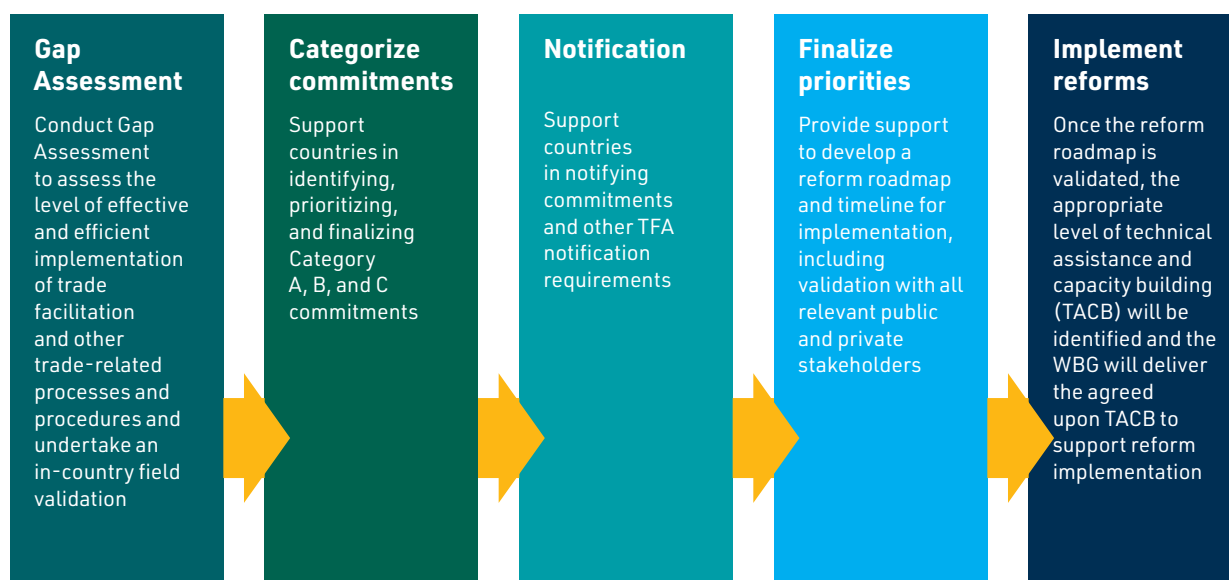


2.2 Technical Assistance & Capacity Building: Tools and Modes of Delivery

TFSP support is divided into two main components: (a) **technical assistance** and (b) **knowledge management and learning** activities. Generally, technical assistance activities funded by the TFSP progress along the following building blocks:



FIGURE 3
Trade Facilitation Reform Building Blocks



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). TFSP-supported technical assistance and capacity building can include:

Preparatory Activities

- Preparing for ratification of the WTO TFA
- Meeting categorization and notification requirements / scheduling commitments and implementation timelines
- Revising and validating self-assessments to identify reform gaps
- Undertaking diagnostic studies (WTO TFA Gap Assessments, Digitalization Gap Analysis, Time Release Studies (TRS), and/or other relevant diagnostics to identify needs and inform reform action plans)

Country-Level Technical Assistance

- Reviewing, revising, and/or drafting trade laws and implementing regulations
- Improving transparency and accountability measures of trade practices, including establishment and publication of average release times
- Integrating risk-based management systems and other modern border management approaches into border inspections and clearance processes
- Increasing digitalization and automation through implementation of Trade Information Portals (TIP) and/or preparations for Single Windows (SW)
- Building resilience and emergency preparedness for crisis situations, including aligning to international standards and practices for expediting shipments across borders (for vaccines, perishables, and emergency provisions)

Regional-Level Activities

- Fostering regional and external border agency coordination, collaboration, and cooperation
- Implementing policies and practices and support regional solutions to facilitate the recognition of agreed-upon standards for goods crossing borders

Country-Level Capacity Building

- Supporting and strengthening National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs)
- Fostering partnerships between the public and private sectors to catalyze reforms / facilitating reforms through intense engagement and lobbying
- Revising inter-agency coordination and design of institutional capacity building plans
- Assisting client countries in tracking and reporting their progress in WTO TFA implementation

Global-Level Activities

- Production of knowledge products (guides, notes, trainings)
- Delivering peer-to-peer learning opportunities at global events, workshops, conferences
- Leveraging global and regional partnerships and knowledge sharing to ensure optimal and complementary delivery of support



TFSP funding and supported activities are grounded in **whole-of-government approach** that promotes collaboration in developing solutions and improving capacity so that no key border agency is left behind. This is because effectively improving border processes and procedures requires that every relevant agency (for example, standards, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS),

food safety, animal health, and human health along with customs) 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. The whole-of-government approach is summarized in **figure 4**.

FIGURE 4
Whole-of-Government Approach





Customs officer at the Kazungula border, Zambia
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

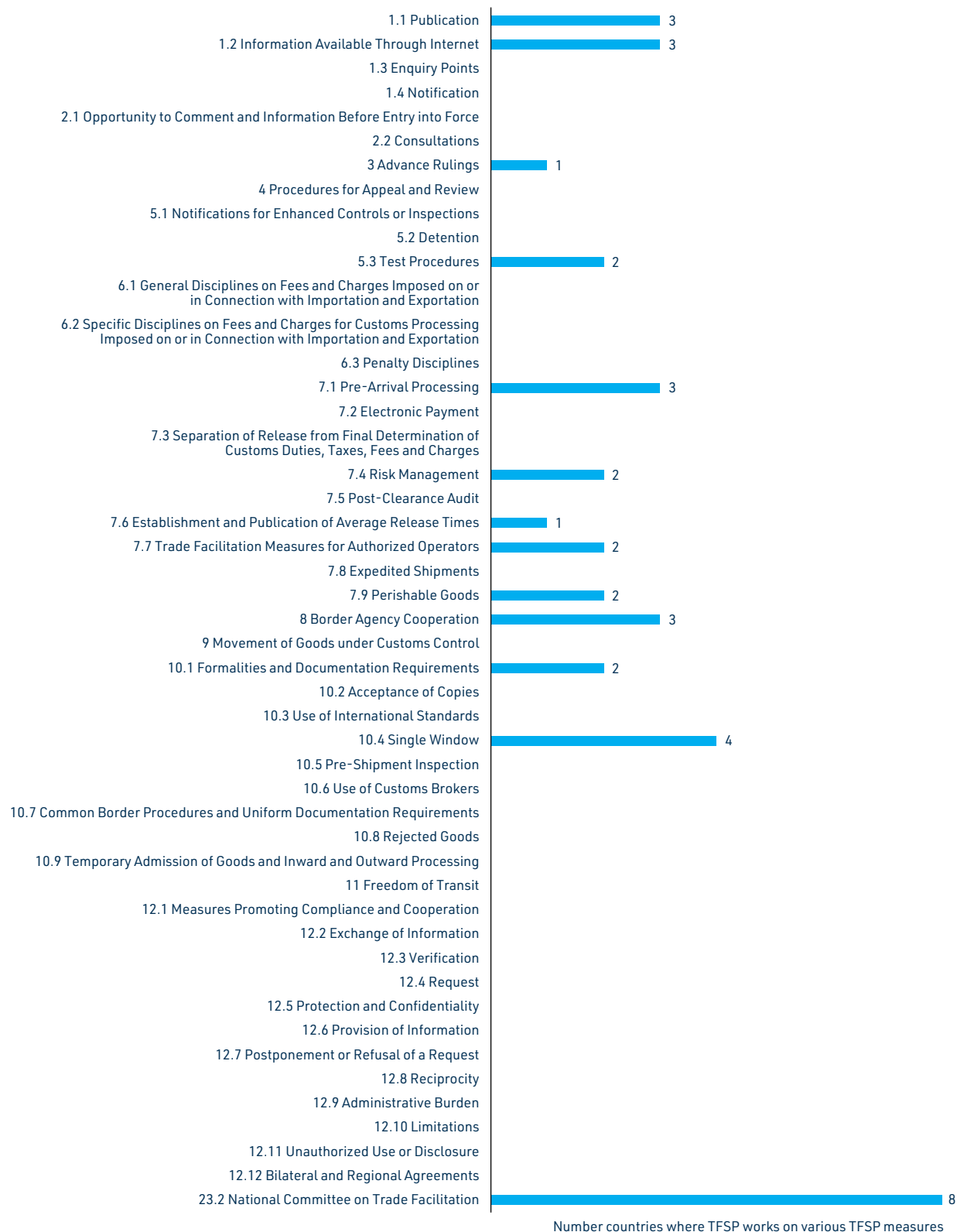
2.3 Key Trade Facilitation Measures Supported

Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of TFSP support across various TFA measures during the current reporting period. In certain countries, implementing a measure fully and effectively may require multi-year assistance. During this period, TFSP has been active in 14 countries, providing support for the following measures.

- **Article 1.1 (Publication) and Article 1.2 (Information Available through Internet):** Fiji, Ghana, and Papua New Guinea have advanced on measures to ensure the publication of trade-related information and its availability online.
- **Article 3 (Advance Rulings):** Ghana has established procedures for issuing advance rulings to traders.
- **Article 5.3 (Test Procedures):** Fiji and Ghana have adopted test procedures in accordance with Article 5.3.
- **Article 7.1 (Pre-arrival Processing):** Eswatini, Lesotho, and South Africa have implemented pre-arrival processing systems to facilitate faster clearance of goods.
- **Article 7.4 (Risk Management):** Fiji and Nepal have introduced risk management practices to streamline border procedures.
- **Article 7.6 (Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times):** Fiji has established and published average release times for goods at the border.
- **Article 7.7 (Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators):** Eswatini and South Africa have put in place trade facilitation measures specifically for authorized operators.
- **Article 7.9 (Perishable Goods):** Bangladesh and Nepal have adopted procedures for the expedited clearance of perishable goods.
- **Article 8 (Border Agency Cooperation):** Eswatini, Lesotho, and South Africa have enhanced cooperation among border agencies to improve efficiency.
- **Article 10.1 (Formalities and Documentation Requirements):** Bangladesh and the Marshall Islands have taken steps to simplify formalities and documentation requirements.
- **Article 10.4 (Single Window):** Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu have advanced on establishing single window systems to streamline trade processes.
- **Article 23.2 (National Trade Facilitation Committees - NTFCs):** Eight countries—Fiji, Ghana, Eswatini, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Timor-Leste—have set up National Trade Facilitation Committees in line with Article 23.2.

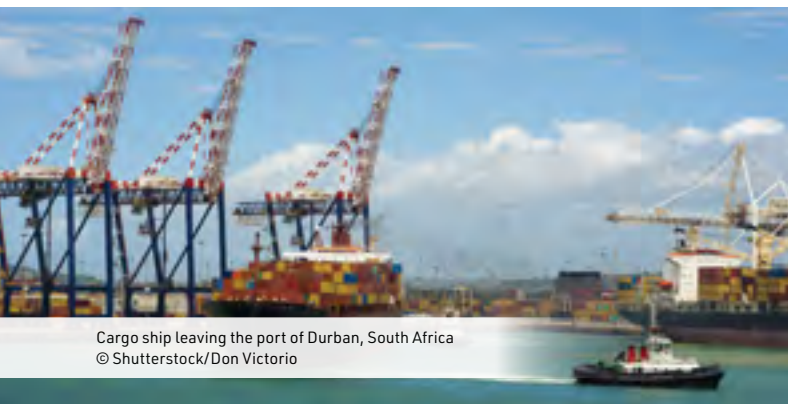


FIGURE 5
Number of Countries Supported by TFSP, by Measure



2.4 Achievements Made at the Country Level and Regionally

During this reporting period, major outcomes were accomplished, alongside significant regional developments (see **box 1** and **2**):



Cargo ship leaving the port of Durban, South Africa
© Shutterstock/Don Victorio

BOX 1

Boosting South Africa–Lesotho Border Cooperation

South Africa and Lesotho took an important step toward smoother cross-border trade. With TFSP support, the two countries **signed and launched a new Joint Action Plan in June 2025** to guide closer cooperation at their shared borders. The launch event in **Ladybrand** brought together **55 participants—half of them women—including senior customs and border officials** from both governments.

The plan lays the groundwork for **more efficient, coordinated border management**, aligned with regional and global best practices. This milestone is strengthening **bilateral collaboration and cross-border efficiency**.



Central business district, Maseru City, Lesotho
© World Bank/John Hogg

BOX 2

Advancing Regional Cooperation in the Pacific and Southern Africa

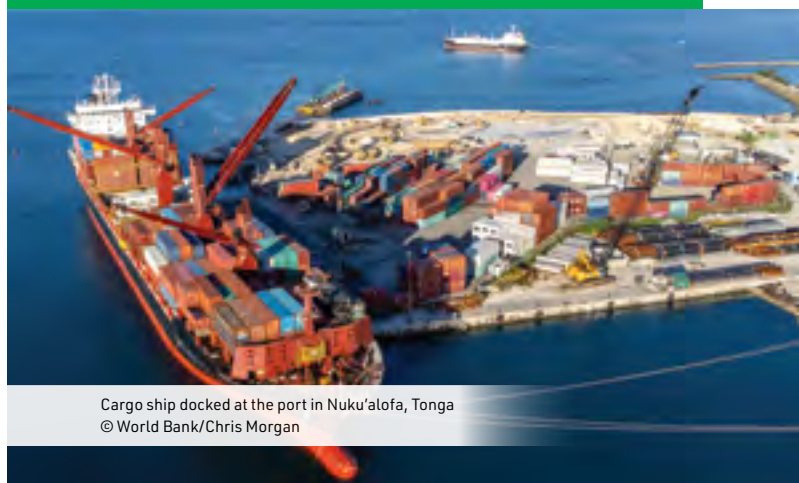
TFSP continued to strengthen regional cooperation to make trade across borders simpler, faster, and more consistent in the Pacific Islands and Southern Africa.

- **Pacific:** TFSP helped set up a **regional Trade Facilitation Committee**, supported the first regional meeting of national trade committees, and backed the rollout of a new **regional trade strategy**. These steps are helping Pacific Island countries coordinate reforms and share solutions.
- **Southern Africa:** TFSP worked with partners to align border reforms and investment priorities, while promoting **peer learning among SACU members** to strengthen cooperation and harmonize practices.



Sign at the Kazungula Border, Zambia
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

Together, these efforts are creating a stronger foundation for seamless regional trade and future integration.



Cargo ship docked at the port in Nuku'alofa, Tonga
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

2.5 Ensuring Reforms Can Be Sustained and Replicated

TFSP-supported interventions are designed with long term sustainability in mind, seeking to ensure that clients continue to use and update trade facilitation measures put in place with TFSP support as needed even after project closure. Sustainability can be fostered in many ways, including through proper training and prioritization and embedding procedures. **Box 3** provides select examples of how TFSP supported sustainable reforms.

BOX 3

Empowering Countries to Sustain and Replicate Trade Facilitation Reforms

TFSP continued to invest in people and institutions to ensure that trade facilitation reforms last and can be replicated elsewhere. By strengthening local capacity and promoting knowledge sharing, countries are better equipped to manage their own modernization efforts.

- **Empowering National Teams:** TFSP supported trade officials from several countries to take part in **resource mobilization training** in Geneva, helping them engage more effectively with development partners and secure support for future reforms.
- **Building Local Expertise in Fiji:** TFSP delivered **Time Release Study training** for border agencies and industry, followed by refresher sessions, to strengthen ongoing skills development.



Biosecurity officials at the port of Suva, Fiji
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

- **Promoting Local Ownership:** Agencies updated the **Trade Information Portal** content and training plans, ensuring information remains accurate and sustainable over time.

These initiatives help countries build **lasting capacity**, strengthen local ownership, and replicate success beyond national borders.

Border agents inspecting containers at the port of Suva, Fiji
© World Bank/Chris Morgan





Participants at regional event in Colombo
© World Bank

2.6 Knowledge Management and Learning Activities

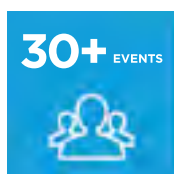
TFSP supports knowledge management by generating and sharing insights, promoting peer-to-peer learning, and helping WBG teams and client countries measure progress and results.

PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, AND CONFERENCES

Active participation in trade facilitation events is central to TFSP's goals—enhancing reform impact, increasing visibility, and staying engaged with the evolving TFA agenda.

In this reporting period, TFSP co-organized a regional workshop in Colombo on **"Strengthening Food Security and Safety through Smarter Trade in South Asia."** The event convened government officials, trade experts, private sector representatives, and development partners to explore how smarter, more collaborative trade practices can enhance food security and safety in the region.

FY25 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



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

2.7 Private Sector Engagement

The World Bank Group works closely with both governments and the private sector to build capacity and provide technical assistance. Involving the private sector is key to successful trade facilitation reforms, as their support helps drive progress. The TFSP encourages private sector participation—directly, through national committees, or via industry groups—to gather valuable feedback and ensure strong support. Their insights help confirm information from public sector partners. **Box 4** shares examples of how the WBG partnered with the private sector during this reporting period.

BOX 4

Partnering with the Private Sector to Improve Cross-Border Trade

TFSP is working with the private sector to make borders **faster, safer, and more coordinated** across Southern Africa. By combining expertise from logistics leaders with evidence-based analysis, these collaborations are helping countries adopt modern technologies and streamline processes.

- **Industry Insights:** Maersk provided a **regional border management blueprint** and studies of key crossings, recommending improvements in truck lanes, inspections, and real-time data sharing.
- **Piloting Modern Solutions:** South Africa tested **Automated Number Plate Recognition** at the Mozambique border, supporting the **One-Stop Border Post** concept.
- **Expanding Digital Improvements:** TFSP analyses in Eswatini, Lesotho, and South Africa identified ways to **use digital tools and improve coordination**, strengthening both national and regional border management.

These partnerships are helping governments and businesses work together to create **smarter, faster and more connected borders**.





STDF Working Group Meeting, June 2025
© WTO/STDF

2.8 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 WBG has worked on knowledge products and technical assistance jointly with the following organizations:

- Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT): collaboration in Vietnam on the Free Trade Agreement Portal, on the Pacific Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy, TIP in Timor-Leste
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ of Germany): collaboration in the Western Balkans region, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan
- 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 National Single Window (NSW) implementation jointly with TAXUD
- HM's Revenue and Customs (UK), UNCTAD, and 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: 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 WBG projects and that WTO TFA objectives are included in the projects, as well as participating in webinars on SPS and trade-related issues
- TradeMark East Africa: Burundi assessment
- United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT): Presentation at virtual forum

- 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
 - UNECE: Participation in TFA workshops in Tajikistan, Ukraine, and North Macedonia and participation in the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) forums; development of the UN on Recommendation 38 on TIPs.
 - United States Agency for International Development (USAID): Joint TFA assessments in Bangladesh, Moldova, Montenegro, and Serbia and subsequent collaboration in the Western Balkans region, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan; participation in TFA workshops in Central America; cooperation on AEO in Georgia; complementary customs project in Timor-Leste
 - WCO: Joint activities in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burundi, Lao PDR, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Tonga, and in the Western Balkans; close partnership on implementing and updating the TRSs
 - WTO: Partnership on multiple fronts
- Box 5** provides additional examples of coordination and collaboration that took place at the country level during this reporting period.

BOX 5

Coordinating with Partners for Sustainable Reform

TFSP supports countries by working closely with other development partners to make trade facilitation reforms **more effective and sustainable**. Collaboration helps governments maximize resources, avoid overloading staff, and achieve better results.

For example, the inaugural **Development Partners Roundtable in Accra**, hosted by GIZ, gathered the World Bank, EU, JICA, TradeMark Africa, and UNDP representatives. Participants shared **progress, lessons, and best practices**, strengthening coordination and promoting a unified approach. These partnerships help create **more effective, harmonized, and sustainable trade reforms** at the country level.



IMPACT METRICS

3

The TFSP was designed not only to support countries in aligning with the WTO TFA but also to generate measurable improvements in trade performance and employment. The program's theory of change is grounded in the expectation that reducing trade costs and streamlining border procedures will lead to increased trade volumes, greater export diversification, and ultimately, more and better jobs. To help estimate these impacts, TFSP relies on the following:

TFSP Results Framework: Focuses on outcomes such as improved alignment with TFA provisions, reductions in time and cost to trade, increased transparency, and enhanced inter-agency coordination. Key indicators include the percentage of TFA measures implemented, reductions in customs inspection rates, and the establishment of single windows and trade portals showing linkages to impact and the nexus to job and growth creation.

To gauge progress in meeting the program's vision of assisting TFSP-supported countries to align their trade facilitation practices with the WTO TFA, TFSP utilizes metrics such as the TFA Gap Assessments and TFA Tracking Tool alignment scores, private sector saving and creation of leverage as described in the following sections.

3.1 TFA Gap Assessments

Since 2014, TFSP has supported the delivery of 50 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). The assessments are useful to help governments identify potential technical assistance and capacity building needs and priorities, inform implementation strategies, and develop action plans. Data from the Gap Assessment is also used to update the TFA Tracking Tool¹⁶ developed by the WBG 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.

3.2 TFA Tracking Tool

The WBG uses the TFA Tracking Tool to monitor and demonstrate progress toward the TFSP's goal of supporting countries in fully implementing WTO TFA trade facilitation reforms. Countries with validated assessments can view their overall and agency-specific alignment scores on the portal to assess their implementation status for each WTO TFA measure. Access to country scores is restricted to designated



Phytosanitary officer in Zambia
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

¹⁶ World Bank Group. (2025). Trade Facilitation Agreement Country Tracking Tool. <https://www.tfacountrytrackingtool.org/>

users, with each country's NTFC or equivalent assigning representatives to their profile.¹⁷

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 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.

¹⁷ 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.

During this reporting period, 10 out of the 14 countries supported have received a TFA score, with an average alignment of 43.66 percent to the TFA. This establishes a baseline for measuring future progress, as TFSP will track increases in alignment during Phase 2. Additionally, an updated alignment score for Zambia—one of the countries supported in TFSP Phase 1—was validated and shared with the client during this period.¹⁸

Since the website's inception, 25 TFSP-supported countries¹⁹ have completed both baseline and at least one updated assessment, allowing TFSP to track changes in their alignment with the WTO TFA over time (see **Figures 6–7**). For these countries, the average alignment score has risen from 41 percent at baseline to 55 percent in the most recent assessments, reflecting significant progress during phase 1.

3.3 Leverage

TFSP creates “leverage” 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. The TFSP-supported WBG team can also play a critical role in helping to scope lending operations.

The multi-donor structure of TFSP enhances value for money for each donor, as individual contributions are pooled with those of other donors. This collective funding amplifies the impact of each donor's support, extending its reach beyond the original dollar value and enabling participation in larger lending and advisory projects.

The following activities supported by TFSP continued to achieve leverage throughout this period. This consists of active development policy loans (DPLs),²⁰ investment project financing (IPFs),²¹ and commitments²².

¹⁸ As TFSP funds have not yet been distributed to Zambia in this reporting period, this score is not yet included into the calculation of the baseline score and will be added in the next reporting period, once new Phase 2 TFSP funds are disbursed.

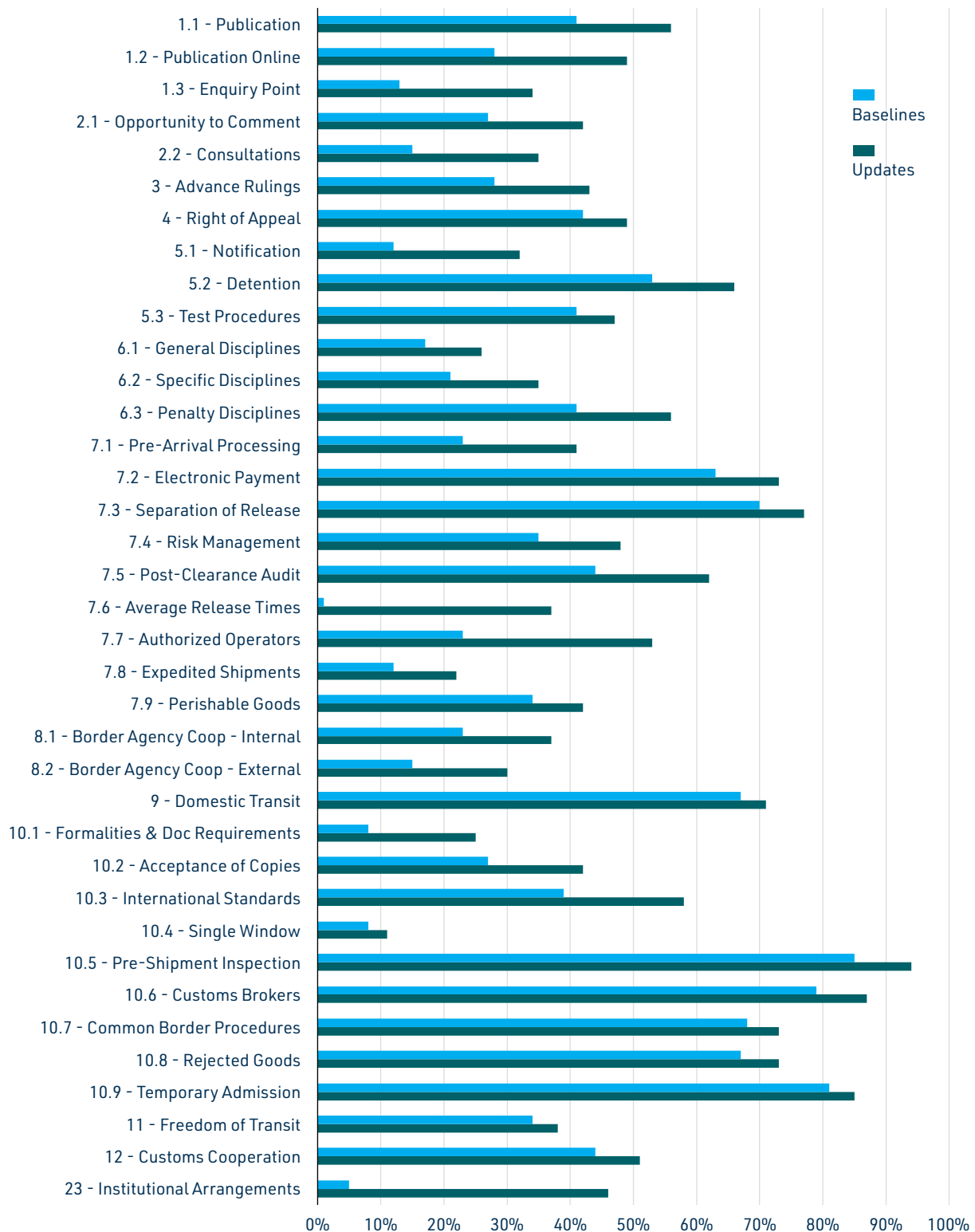
¹⁹ This includes phase 1 countries.

²⁰ Development Policy Loans (DPLs) are programmatic loans that largely fund policy reform often through rapidly-disbursed budgetary support rather than project-based physical investments.

²¹ Investment Project Financing (IPFs) are investment loans, credits, and grants provide financing for a wide range of activities aimed at creating the physical and social infrastructure necessary to reduce poverty and create sustainable development.

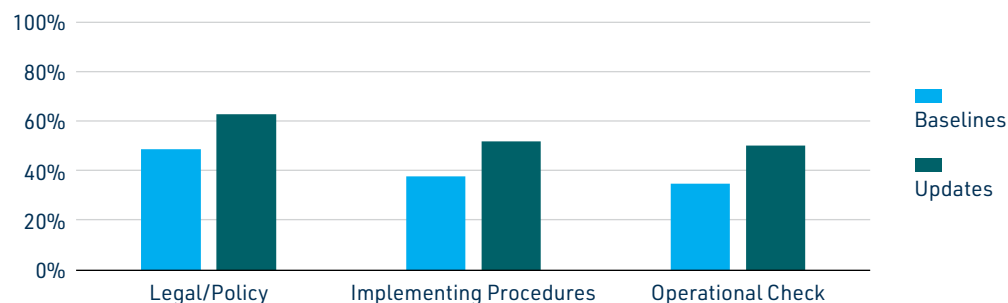
²² A financial liability created based on approval of funding.

FIGURE 6
Overall Alignment by Measure



Note: This graph includes 25 TFSP countries with baseline and update scores. Baselines are 2015-18; updates are 2018-25.

FIGURE 7
Changes in Overall Dimension Score



Note: This graph includes 25 TFSP countries with baseline and update scores. Baselines are 2015–18; updates are 2018–25.

TABLE 1
TFSP Leverage

ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY TFSP IN LED/ CONTRIBUTED TO	WITH TRADE FACILITATION COMPONENT WORTH (IN MILLIONS USD)	RELEVANT BUDGET SUPPORT/ ACTIVITY
Ghana	IPF	2.50	TFA Implementation, specifically NTFC, TIP, e-Phyto automation, port efficiency
Lesotho	IPF	2.18	Upgrade to the UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) and development of NSW
Tonga	DPL	4.88	Budget support, Trade Facilitation Prior Action
Tuvalu as part of TFSP rapid response support	DPL	1.92	Budget support, Trade Facilitation Prior Action
Samoa	DPL	1.43	Budget support, Trade Facilitation Prior Action
Bangladesh	IPF	77.10	NTFC, Bangladesh Trade Portal and enquiry points, NSW, Customs Modernization Plan
Nepal	IPF	8.75	Electronic automated border management system, priority actions under WTO TFA, risk management approaches, SPS support for plant pest surveillance and food safety testing procedures
Zambia (1)	IPF	4.40	National logistic strategy; national quality infrastructure (SPS, food safety)
Zambia (2)	IPF	54.00	Implementation of TFA, support for the NTFC, risk management, customs border management, automation, including SW connection and e-Phyto
TOTAL		157.16	

UNDERTAKING ACTIVITIES IN CROSS-CUTTING AREAS

4

The WBG recognizes that there are more opportunities now than ever to further explore and strengthen the linkages between trade facilitation and cross-cutting areas such as gender, digitalization, food safety and security, the environment, and emergency response. More attention to and engagement on these complementary cross-cutting areas are required to move the trade and trade facilitation agenda forward as the 21st century evolves, especially as they contribute to the WBG Scorecard outcomes, including those on More and Better Jobs and More Private Investment. TFSP is responding to these cross-cutting emerging issues in addition to accelerating support to aid countries in implementing their Category C commitments.



4.1 Trade Facilitation and Gender Work

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

Updated from this reporting period include:

Implementing recommendations from phase 1:

- **Fiji:** During the NTFC meeting/WTO TFA Notification Workshop, TFSP representatives discussed with the NTFC the gender and trade facilitation report findings, and initiated data gathering for the Fiji pilot on the Climate and TF Indicators.
- **Study on Egypt²³:** A survey study on gender dimensions of trade facilitation is planned to be undertaken in Egypt with the objective of identifying gender-specific constraints to trade facilitation at the firm-level and to provide recommendations on how to address them.
- **The Gender Dimensions in Trade Studies in Eswatini and Lesotho:** During the last reporting period, TFSP financed comprehensive studies in both Eswatini and Lesotho. In Lesotho, between October and December 2023, surveys were conducted with 620 traders and 38 customs brokers. In Eswatini, interviews were held with 456 traders and 43 customs brokers between February 19 and April 3, 2024. The Gender Dimensions in Trade Study Reports for both countries have been completed and presented to the respective clients. The reports have been submitted to the National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) for approval, and publication is currently pending.

²³ More on this in the separate TFSP MENA report.



Maria Moi of Ben Trading Limited, exporter of agricultural products, Fiji
© World Bank/Jason Chute



Litia Marie Kirwin of Loving Islands social enterprise, Fiji
© World Bank/Jason Chute

After the survey: Using the information collected from the Trade and Gender Studies, the TFSP-supported WBG teams are working with relevant client countries to validate and disseminate the findings with the public and private sectors, as well as working with the government to begin integrating the recommendations into their work, particularly through the NTFC and relevant working group. The goal is to identify ways to better publicize the activities of the NTFC to reach the private sector and women traders in particular.



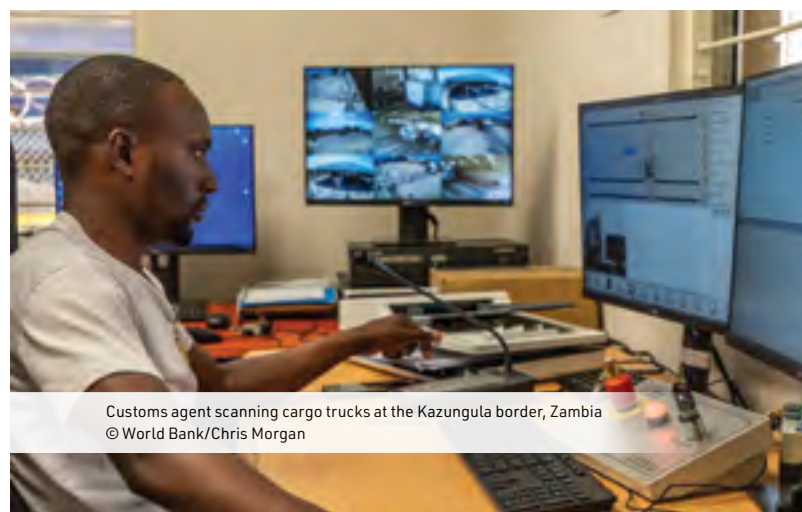
Farmworker in Zambia picking citrus for export
© World Bank/Chris Morgan



4.2 Digitalization

Digitalization and automation can increase predictability and transparency and reduce time to trade. Adoption of emerging technologies and digitalization of cross-border trade is a core tool to provide transparent, predictable, and efficient access to trade processes and procedures for traders. 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 border agencies 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; integrating digital solutions to risk management
- 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 other border agencies



Customs agent scanning cargo trucks at the Kazungula border, Zambia
© World Bank/Chris Morgan



Employee with tablet at the port of Suva, Fiji
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

BOX 6

Driving Digital Trade and Border Modernization in the Pacific

TFSP is helping Pacific Island countries use **digital tools** to make trade faster, simpler, and more resilient. By supporting the creation of **National Single Window (NSW)** systems and modernizing border processes, TFSP is strengthening government coordination and digital service delivery.

- **Digital Foundations:** Countries are adopting **digital strategies** and **platforms** to streamline trade across border agencies (customs, biosecurity, and others).
- **Economic Benefits:** Digital trade facilitation measures, including the NSWs, have the potential to **reduce trade costs by up to 26%**, generate **US\$750 million over 20 years**, and deliver an **internal rate of return above 120%** as this [World Bank analysis](#) shows.
- **Sustaining Progress:** Continued TFSP support will help countries **maximize NSW benefits, boost competitiveness, and secure lasting gains** for businesses and communities.

These efforts are helping governments, businesses, and communities **unlock lasting economic and social gains** across the Pacific.



4.3 Food Safety and Security and the Environment

TFSP continues to play a pivotal role in strengthening food security by helping countries implement risk-based clearance procedures for sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) products, with a particular focus on perishable goods. Inefficient border processes can disrupt cold chains and delay food shipments, leading to increased food waste, reduced quality, and greater safety risks.

During this reporting period, TFSP achieved notable progress in Bangladesh by supporting the Plant Quarantine Wing in advancing the adoption of electronic phytosanitary certification (ePhyto) and initiated discussions with border agencies to reinforce ongoing support for the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

TFSP's commitment to food security was further highlighted at a regional workshop in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in June 2025. The event brought together policymakers, trade experts, and private sector leaders from across South Asia to explore innovative trade solutions aimed at improving the movement of food products in the region.

In Ghana, the World Bank team engaged with the Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Directorate (PPRSD) to assess the country's readiness for ePhyto implementation. These discussions led to an agreement to conduct a digital gap assessment under the Ghana Economic Transformation Project (GETP), paving the way for future modernization of SPS procedures.

These recent initiatives build on TFSP's earlier work to establish robust systems and methodologies, demonstrating the program's comprehensive and sustainable approach to enhancing food safety and security through smarter, more efficient trade practices.



Fruit for sale at a market in Nuku'alofa, Tonga
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4.4 Emergency Preparation & Response in a Time of Crisis

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 hinder countries from being able to rely on trade during times of crises, as well as increases time and costs for traders. 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



Tsunami damage in Tonga
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

of technical assistance and capacity building that embed efficient and effective trade facilitation measures and solutions. The WBG 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



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

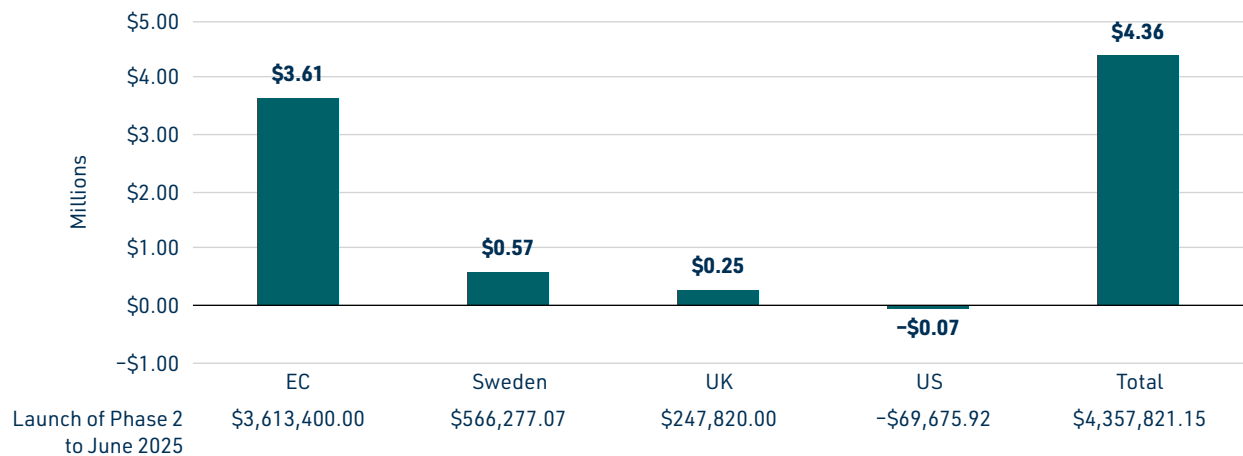
5

Between December 2024 and June 2025, gross **USD 4.36 million** had been received from TFSP development partners, with contributions from the EU, Sweden, and the UK through the new Umbrella Facility for Trade 2.0. A refund of approximately USD 70 thousand was issued to the U.S. by the donor's request. **Figure 8** shows gross contributions received from donors.

TFSP expects to receive more donor contributions in the upcoming fiscal years, including from Sweden and the EU (**Table 2**).

A total of approximately USD 6.6 million in allocations have been made to fund projects in the regions. The largest share of funds has been allocated to the Sub-Saharan Africa region at 44.8 percent of total regional

FIGURE 8
Gross Contributions Received (in USD)



Note: The U.S. made a contribution to TFSP in early FY25; however, the negative U.S. value is because a refund was paid to the donor.

TABLE 2
Outstanding Donor Payment Installments (in contribution currency)

DONOR	GROSS UNPAID CONTRIBUTION TO TFSP	ARRANGEMENTS
EU	EUR 4,500,000	Based on 100% of the contribution being preferenced to TFSP
Sweden	SEK ~ 12,500,000	Based on 25% of the total contribution of SEK 50 million being preferenced to TFSP

allocations, comprising 33.4 percent to Eastern and Southern Africa and 11.4 percent to Western and Central Africa. (figure 9)

The program disbursed approximately USD 586 thousand between the launch of Phase 2 and June 2025. The disbursement-only percentage rate (for global and regional activities) was 16.5 percent (figure 10). The disbursement rate is calculated as the total disbursements made at the project level out of the net cash balance for TFSP. The net cash balance deducts the following from the gross donor contributions received: 12 percent for the Bank’s Trust Fund Fee/Admin Fee as well as 7 percent for program management and TFSP Secretariat.

FIGURE 9
Breakdown of funding allocations to regions

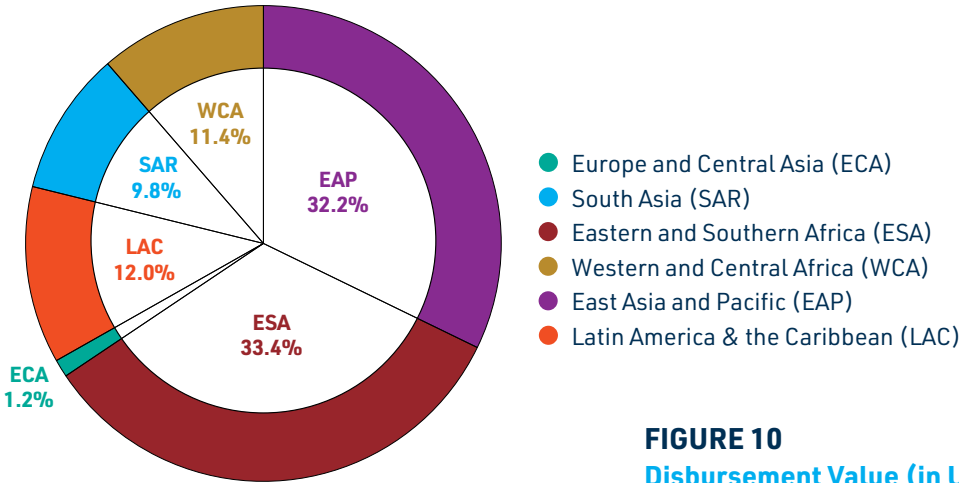
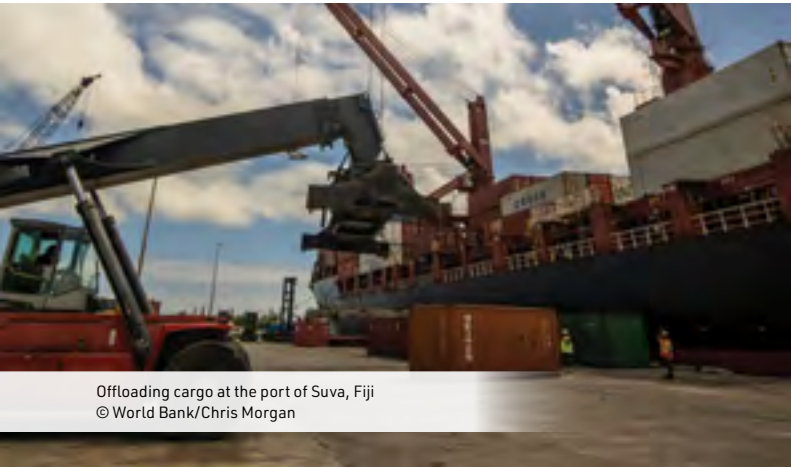
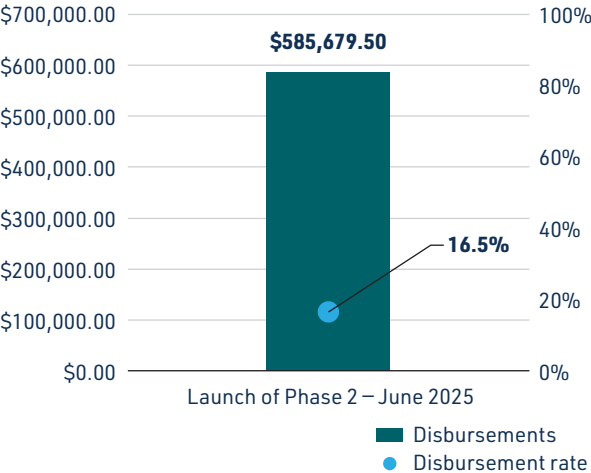


FIGURE 10
Disbursement Value (in USD) and Disbursement Rate



LESSONS LEARNED

6

Through provision of technical assistance and capacity building support since 2014, many valuable insights have been gained in design and execution of trade facilitation activities. Below are some of the core lessons learned in delivery of support:

DESCRIPTION	LESSON LEARNED
<i>At the Project Level</i>	
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.	<p>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. Critical success factors for sustaining NTFCs depend on having a legal framework, clear mandate and structure, political support, sufficient resources, a clear work plan with indicators, and celebrating success to build momentum around reform implementation.</p> <p>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 an implementation plan that will take into account specific issues and capacities.</p>
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 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.
A lack of commitment can cause delays, leading to frustration with implementation goals that hampers trust among stakeholders.	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.

(table continues on next page)



Ship docked at the port in Nuku'alofa in Tonga
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

DESCRIPTION	LESSON LEARNED
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>
At the Program Level	
Monitoring and measuring progress over time is important to show improved alignment with the TFA over time, along with any broader impacts on the economy. Existing M&E provides a comprehensive overview of what the program has achieved, but improvements can be made to enhance measurement of impact.	<p>The WBG recognizes the importance of showing results and improved alignment with the TFA by monitoring and measuring progress over time. Current tools for monitoring and measuring progress should be strengthened, modified, and improved, including updating of the program level results framework and theory of change and indicators to reflect accurate reporting and new areas of activity as well as aligning the program and project indicators where relevant. Where possible, targets should be set and updated periodically for outputs and outcomes. Given the demand driven nature of TFSP support, special care must be given to set targets that take into account the fluidity of program support as countries are added and/or completed through the life of the program.</p> <p>Additionally, to better show the extent of TFSP's achievements and progress in meeting its objectives, the program should ensure a TRS and baseline is undertaken pre- and post-implementation to clearly measure the difference in outcomes.</p>
Trade facilitation is interconnected with other cross-cutting areas and warrants deeper exploration	Taking a whole-of-government approach ensures 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. Enhancing the trade facilitation environment can help boost transparency, predictability, and cut the costs and time to trade, and reforms could have even greater country-wide economic impact when coupled with complementary improvements in other policy areas (such as those related to governance at the border). When implementing projects, a holistic approach should be used to identify these complementary areas and coordinate with any development partners working on those complementary areas to ensure synergies in the design of interventions.
Leverage of TFSP support is achieved either by directly informing World Bank lending and IFC operations or by complementing ongoing operations through support for the trade facilitation components of larger lending and advisory projects.	Fostering complementarity with other WBG interventions is important to ensure efficient allocation of resources and optimal delivery of assistance. Leveraging into the lending (IPF and DPO) created momentum and client commitment to create sustainability of reform over time.

LOOKING AHEAD

7



A significant number of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) Category B and C measures²⁴ remain to be implemented globally, particularly among developing and least-developed countries. Without TFSP and similar programs, many countries would struggle to move beyond basic reforms, leaving critical bottlenecks unresolved and missing out on the full benefits of trade facilitation. In the first 10 years²⁵ of the program, TFSP delivered measurable results such as:

- reduced the time for TFSP-supported countries to comply with import and export clearance / control requirements by **21 percent**²⁶
- TFSP-funded activities have been leveraged into 25 different lending instruments across 23 countries, totaling **USD 825.47 million** in leverage

These improvements directly address the bottlenecks associated with Category Band C measures, demonstrating TFSP's effectiveness.

²⁴ Category B: provisions that the member will implement after a transitional period following the entry into force of the Agreement

Category C: provisions that the member will implement on a date after a transitional period following the entry into force of the Agreement and requiring the acquisition of assistance and support for capacity building.

As of October 2025, 64 Members have committed to implement 274 Category C measures and 30 Members have committed to implement 104 Category B measures in the 2025–2026 period. See more at: <https://tfadatabase.org/en>

²⁵ TFSP 10 Year Summary [Full publication](#)

²⁶ Calculated as the total average import and export time post-reform in comparison to the total average baseline time. This is based on projects where TFSP's technical assistance has led to a reduction in time. There were some projects where TFSP support was focused on capacity building and did not have a time reduction element.



SUSTAINABILITY AND WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT REFORM

Sustainable trade facilitation requires comprehensive reform, not isolated fixes. TFSP helps countries:

- Establish and operationalize NTFCs for ongoing coordination
- Foster public-private dialogue, ensuring reforms meet business needs
- Build capacity across all border agencies, not just customs
- Develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track progress and sustain momentum

Without such support, reforms risk stalling due to lack of coordination, technical know-how, or political will.

THE COST OF INACTION: LOST TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Failure to implement Category B and C measures means:

- Persistently high trade costs—sometimes estimated to be equivalent to tariffs of over 200% in certain countries—remain a significant barrier.²⁷
- Missed opportunities for export diversification and integration into global value chains
- Reduced competitiveness and slower economic growth, especially for small and vulnerable economies

²⁷ World Bank (2023). *Evaluating, Benchmarking, and Implementing Deep Trade Agreements: A Comprehensive Toolkit for Policymakers and Practitioners*. See page 122 for the specific data and methodology <https://documentsinternal.worldbank.org/search/34099599>

During the next reporting period, TFSP will prioritize the following areas across participating countries:

- **Consolidation of Reform Outcomes:** Building on recent achievements, TFSP will support countries in institutionalizing reforms, with a focus on scaling up investment-ready Coordinated Border Management (CBM) proposals and preparing for cross-border implementation of pilot projects, particularly under regional frameworks such as SACU.
- **Technical and Advisory Support:** Continued assistance will be provided for the rollout of priority reforms, including the expansion of National Trade Single Windows, piloting of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) mutual recognition agreements, and implementation of joint action plans for CBM.
- **Private Sector Engagement:** TFSP will facilitate workshops and consultations to increase awareness of ongoing customs modernization initiatives, such as the AEO program and electronic sea cargo manifest systems. Special attention will be given to sessions for women-led businesses, in line with TFSP's commitment to inclusive trade facilitation and gender empowerment.

TFSP is responding to significant and sustained demand for TFA implementation support. The program is well-positioned to deliver practical, country-driven solutions for Category C measures, with clear next steps identified in priority countries. Donor support remains critical to meeting these needs and sustaining momentum for trade facilitation reforms.

SUMMARY OF COUNTRY-SPECIFIC AND REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Annex A



During this reporting period, the TFSP extended its support to the following countries and regions:

- Pacific Islands, which included Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Republic of Marshall Islands;
- Southern Africa, with primary activities in Eswatini, Lesotho, and South Africa;
- Ghana;
- Bangladesh and
- Nepal.

Updates from Malawi and Zambia are results from Phase 1.

Farm workers offloading citrus for export, Zambia
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

Customs officer at the port of Suva, Fiji
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Regional Activities: Pacific Islands

During the reporting period, TFSP supported the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) in advancing the implementation of the *Pacific Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy*—a key framework guiding regional efforts to streamline trade procedures and strengthen economic integration. As part of this work, TFSP assisted PIFS in developing the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Regional Trade Facilitation Committee, which will serve as the coordinating mechanism for overseeing and monitoring progress under the Strategy. Consultations with PIFS members were conducted to ensure broad ownership and alignment with national priorities.

To operationalize these regional coordination efforts, TFSP facilitated the inaugural meeting of the Regional NTFC, held virtually on March 19, 2025, where the TFSP team delivered a presentation on ongoing regional initiatives. TFSP also presented the scope of the forthcoming *Investment Project Financing (IPF) for Trade Facilitation*—which supported implementation of activities under the Pacific Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy—at the Forum Trade Officials Meeting in Suva in May 2025.

Country-specific Activities: Pacific Islands

Fiji

TFSP support to Fiji

TFSP has played a central role in supporting Fiji's trade facilitation and border modernization efforts through targeted technical assistance, capacity building, and collaborative initiatives. Building up on support provided on Phase 1, the program has helped strengthen border management, risk-based border clearance, legislative reforms, and digitalization.

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

- 1.1** Publication
- 1.2** Information Available Through Internet
- 5.3** Test Procedures

7.4 Risk management

7.6 Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times

10.4 Single Window

FY25 update on key activities

Time Release Study (TRS) – The TFSP Team worked closely with the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) to set priorities and define the scope for an upcoming Air Cargo Time Release Study (TRS) at Nadi Airport. This included exploring ways to use electronic data, in collaboration with the ASYCUDA team, to improve data collection and analysis. To build local capacity, the TFSP Team delivered training and provided an overview of the TRS methodology to Fiji's border agencies and industry representatives at Nadi Airport. Additionally, refresher training was conducted for members of the Fiji Border Agency TRS Working Group in Nadi, strengthening their technical expertise and supporting the nomination of officials to engage with key stakeholders. In preparation for the 2025 TRS, the TFSP technical team reviewed and validated the air cargo clearance process. The team also discussed the timeline for the TRS, preliminary planned for Summer, 2025, and options for future remote support.

Risk Management (RM) – In February, the TFSP team continued to work closely with government partners to strengthen Fiji's risk management capabilities. Together, they developed draft criteria for identifying and responding to high-risk and medium-risk cargo shipments. These criteria will be tested within a new, integrated risk management framework, aiming to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of border controls while facilitating legitimate trade.

Legislative Reforms – Biosecurity Legislation and test procedures – Progress continued steadily through remote collaboration and virtual meetings with the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF). Key achievements included the development of a government policy for test procedures and significant advances in biosecurity legislation, specifically:

- TFSP-supported team helped draft a Biosecurity Law, which contains three parts: the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji Bill, the Animal Health Bill, and the Plant Health Bill.
- Drafting of five supporting regulations to facilitate implementation.
- Supported understanding and decision-making, explanatory notes were provided to the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as tailored briefings for the Chief Plant Protection Officer (CPPO) and the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO).

In January 2025, the Cabinet decided to restructure BAF, moving it under the Ministry of Agriculture. This restructuring will determine whether BAF operates as a statutory body within the Ministry or as a department, as outlined in the Cabinet's directive.

Trade Information Portal (TIP) – Significant progress was made on the Trade Information Portal (TIP) during this reporting cycle. All content for the Portal was prepared and finalized through a validation workshop co-hosted with the Ministry of Trade. The TIP will be launched in the next reporting period. TFSP has played a key role by supporting several meetings of the TIP Steering Committee working group and leading the development of a comprehensive publicity campaign. This included newsletters, videos, brochures, banners, and detailed plans for the launch event.

To ensure sustainability, the TFSP technical team reviewed and enhanced training plans for the Ministry of Trade and other participating agencies, such as the BAF. Responsibilities for uploading and maintaining content were distributed among agencies, empowering them to manage their own information on the Portal.



Swire Shipping employee at the port of Suva, Fiji
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

In May 2025, TFSP organized a workshop to validate Portal content, finalize agency contributions, and secure agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize ongoing cooperation among agencies.

Art 16.4 WTO TFA Notifications Progress Update – In February 2025, progress on Article 16.4 of the WTO TFA was presented at the NTFC meeting and the WTO TFA Notification Workshop in Suva. During this reporting period, the TFA Roadmap for Implementation and the Action Plan were updated, and a progress update notification for Article 16 was submitted by the GoF to the WTO. In the same meeting, TFSP shared findings from the Gender and Trade Facilitation report (prepared during TFSP Phase 1) with NTFC members, highlighting the importance of inclusive trade policies. Additionally, TFSP informed NTFC that data collection was initiated for the Fiji pilot on Climate and Trade Facilitation Indicators, marking an important step towards integrating climate considerations into trade facilitation efforts.

Digitalization – The TFSP team played a pivotal role in advancing dialogue with the NTFC regarding the implementation of an integrated NSW solution to digitalize border processes and procedures in collaboration with FRCS and the BAF. During the NTFC meeting, TFSP presented a comprehensive Digitalization gap analysis report, which was prepared in earlier reporting periods and highlighted key areas for modernization and efficiency gains.

Papua New Guinea (PNG)

TFSP support to PNG

TFSP supported Papua New Guinea in establishing the PNG Biosecurity Authority through the Biosecurity Bill and improved the Trade Information Portal to enhance transparency and SME access.

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

1.1 Publication

1.2 Information Available through Internet

FY25 update on key activities

Legislative Reforms – Biosecurity Legislation – TFSP supported the parliamentary submission of the Biosecurity Bill 2025, developed under Phase 1. The Bill establishes the PNG Biosecurity Authority and aligns import controls, export certification, and surveillance with international standards, reducing compliance risks and facilitating access to higher-value markets.

Trade Information Portal (TIP) – TFSP prepared an assessment report on the existing Trade Information Portal (TIP), providing targeted recommendations to strengthen its alignment with UNECE Recommendation 38¹ and WTO TFA transparency standards. By consolidating rules, procedures, and forms from multiple agencies into a single authoritative platform, the TIP enhances transparency, predictability, and efficiency in cross-border trade—particularly benefiting SMEs.

Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)

TFSP support to RMI

TFSP helped RMI by suggesting changes to the Import Duties Act, enabling the Customs Department to adopt updated procedures for handling imports.

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

10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

FY25 update on key activities

Legislative Reforms – Customs Bill – TFSP recommended revisions to the RMI Import Duties Act to enable the Customs Department to adopt modernized procedures for processing and controlling imported goods. These updates will help align RMI's customs operations with the principles of the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, supporting more efficient, transparent, and internationally compliant trade processes.

Solomon Islands

TFSP support to Solomon Islands

During this reporting period, TFSP has played a pivotal role in advancing trade facilitation reforms in Solomon Islands. Through targeted technical assistance, TFSP supported the NTFC and border agencies in strengthening compliance with WTO TFA requirements, modernizing border procedures, and enhancing resource mobilization

¹ UNECE 38 recommendation refers to Trade Information Portals, which guides governments on creating single, accessible online portals for all import/export regulatory information to facilitate international trade.

capacity. Key interventions included conducting a comprehensive digitization gap analysis, facilitating capacity-building opportunities, guiding the design of an integrated National Single Window system, and providing expert review of legislative reforms to align customs practices with international standards.

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

10.4 Single Window

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY25 update on key activities

Support to NTFC and WTO TFA Article 16.4 Notifications – Progress Update – TFSP supported the NTFC and border agencies in implementing priority actions from the “National Trade Facilitation Roadmap 2024,” strengthening WTO TFA compliance and notification processes. TFSP also provided support to NTFC to notify all B and C categories, pending submission to the WTO in the next reporting period.

Capacity Building for Resource Mobilization – TFSP sponsored an NTFC member to attend a resource mobilization training in Geneva (June 2025), held alongside the Trade Facilitation Committee. This training enhanced the NTFC’s ability to adopt comprehensive capacity-building strategies and strengthened their engagement with development partners under Technical Assistance and Capacity Building (TACB) arrangements, supporting more effective mobilization of resources for trade facilitation reforms.

Digitalization and National Single Window (NSW) – In May 2025, TFSP finalized and delivered a comprehensive NSW Digitalization Gap Analysis report to the NTFC, presenting key findings during a dedicated workshop with NTFC members held in May. The workshop was widely attended by both NTFC representatives and the private sector, accounting a total of 25 attendees, 5 of which were female. The NSW Digitalization Gap Analysis report provides a critical foundation for designing an integrated NSW system that will streamline processes across all border agencies. Additionally, upon request from the client, TFSP reviewed the ToR for upgrading the ASYCUDA system, ensuring alignment with international best practices and supporting more efficient cross-border trade.

Legislative Reforms – Customs Law – TFSP conducted a technical review of the Draft Customs and Excise Bill 2025, supporting Solomon Customs in advancing legislative reforms. The revised bill will enable the adoption of modernized customs procedures for the processing and control of imported goods, ensuring compliance with the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. This intervention strengthens the legal framework for trade facilitation, promotes transparency, and aligns Solomon Islands’ customs practices with international standards.

Samoa

TFSP support to Samoa

TFSP prioritized digitalization of Samoa’s border processes, outlined next steps for reform, and accelerated progress toward international trade facilitation standards.

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

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY25 update on key activities

Digitalization – The TFSP team provided the Trade Facilitation Working Committee (TFWC) with an update on ongoing trade facilitation activities and led a discussion on implementation priorities. Central to the session was the advancement of digitalization in border processes and procedures, with TFSP presenting concrete next steps to support these reforms. This engagement is fostering greater coordination among stakeholders and accelerating Samoa's progress toward meeting international trade facilitation standards. By focusing on digital solutions, the initiative aims to streamline border operations and enhance the country's integration into global trade systems.

Timor-Leste

TFSP support to Timor-Leste

TFSP supported Timor-Leste's WTO accession by finalizing the TFA Gap Assessment and developing a Trade Facilitation Roadmap and Action Plan. It provided expert input on biosecurity legislation and delivered legal training to strengthen institutional capacity. TFSP also funded resource mobilization training for national stakeholders to advance sustainable trade reforms.

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

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY25 update on key activities

TFA Gap Assessment, Roadmap and Action Plan – In the previous reporting cycle a workshop was convened in October 2024 to validate the draft TFA Gap Assessment and initiate the development of the TFA Roadmap and Action Plan. Following the country's accession to the WTO, the updated draft TFA Gap Assessment was



finalized and presented to the Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs (MCAE) in May 2025. The Strategic Unit for Economic Integration (SUEI) serves as the Public-Private Sector Leadership Mechanism, leading and coordinating the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and reporting progress to the WTO, under the guidance of MCAE.

Legislative Reforms – Biosecurity Legislation – TFSP contributed expert input and technical comments to three key Ministerial Diplomas² governing the import of live animals and animal products, import of plant products, and export of plant products. In close coordination with the Australian Department of Agriculture and Forestry for the Pacific Islands, TFSP supported the finalization, updating, and translation of these legislative texts to ensure alignment with international best practices.

To build institutional capacity, TFSP developed and delivered comprehensive briefs and legal training materials covering two Decree-Laws and three Ministerial Diplomas³. These resources were provided to a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials, inspectors, enforcement and prosecution staff, border agents, and policy makers, as well as representatives from the private sector.

Capacity building for resource mobilization training – TFSP supported targeted capacity building by funding the participation of NTFC members in a specialized training program held in June 2025 in Geneva, alongside the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee (TFC) meeting. The specialized training was designed to strengthen NTFCs' ability to adopt a comprehensive approach to capacity building and enhance their effectiveness in engaging with development partners under TACB arrangements.

By investing in this initiative, TFSP is helping to empower national stakeholders with the skills and knowledge needed to mobilize resources, foster strategic partnerships, and drive sustainable trade facilitation reforms. This targeted support contributes directly to building institutional resilience and advancing national development priorities.

Tonga

TFSP support to Tonga

During this reporting cycle, TFSP assisted Tonga by supporting the revision and adoption of the country's TFA Roadmap and Action Plan, providing key inputs for WTO notifications. TFSP also facilitated preparations for an integrated National Single Window solution, helping to digitalize and streamline border processes for greater efficiency and coordination.

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

10.4 Single Window

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

² Ministerial Diplomas are internal regulations.

³ The three sets of regulations were submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval in October 2025, marking a critical milestone in advancing national biosecurity and facilitating safe trade.

FY25 update on key activities

Art 16.4 WTO TFA Notifications Progress Update and support with ratification – During this reporting cycle, TFSP supported the NTFC in revising and adopting Tonga’s TFA Roadmap and Action Plan in March 2025. These updates build on previous action plans and provide key inputs for Tonga’s progress with notification to the WTO to inform update of categories B and C. TFSP is also contributing to the ongoing WTO TFA ratification process.

Digitalization and National Single Window (NSW) – In May–June 2025 TFSP convened strategic discussions with NTFC, Customs, Biosecurity, and other key border agencies to advance preparations for implementing an integrated National Single Window solution. This initiative will streamline and digitalize border processes and procedures, enhancing efficiency and inter-agency coordination.

Vanuatu

TFSP support to Vanuatu

TFSP supported updates to the national TFA implementation plan, facilitated a WTO notification, and advanced digitalization, including enhancements to the National Single Window, to strengthen trade facilitation and meet WTO standards.

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

10.4 Single Window

23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY25 update on key activities

Art 16.4 WTO TFA Notifications Progress Update – During this reporting period, the TFSP team provided targeted assistance to the Trade Facilitation Steering Committee (TFSC) and all border agencies to advance priority actions outlined in the “National Trade Facilitation Roadmap 2024.” TFSP supported the update of Vanuatu’s national TFA implementation plan, thereby strengthening the country’s alignment with WTO TFA requirements. Notably, with TFSP’s support, Vanuatu submitted a notification to the WTO in February 2025 regarding donor arrangements and progress in the provision of technical assistance.

TFSP’s engagement has enhanced coordination among stakeholders and reinforced Vanuatu’s commitment to meeting international trade facilitation standards. This period also saw TFSP secure the client’s commitment to prioritize digitalization and further develop the NSW, a key step toward compliance with WTO TFA Article 10.4 and the streamlining of trade processes. This work builds on the findings and recommendations of the Digitalization Gap Analysis Report (2023) and the Time Release Study (2024), both of which underscored the importance of digitalization and the implementation of the NSW.



People walk down a street of shops in Kathmandu, Nepal
© World Bank/Peter Kapuscinski

SOUTH ASIA

Country-specific Activities: South Asia

Bangladesh

TFSP support to Bangladesh

TFSP continued to support Bangladesh in adopting the ePhyto system for electronic phytosanitary certificates, while also assisting in identifying gaps and advancing the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

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

7.9 Perishable Goods

10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements

FY25 update on key activities

Capacity Building – The TFSP-supported WBG team supported Bangladesh's participation in the regional South Asian Policy Workshop, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka (June 18–19). The workshop focused on strengthening regional integration and cooperation among regulatory officials to reduce border interventions. Attendees included representatives from the Plant Quarantine Wing of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution, and the Ministry of Commerce.

e-Phyto, Digitalization and Art 16.4 WTO TFA Notifications Progress Update – A World Bank mission to Dhaka (June 22–26, 2025) aimed to advance the adoption of ePhyto by the Plant Quarantine Wing, and to initiate discussions with border agencies regarding ongoing support for the TFA following the conclusion of a USAID project. Key outcomes of the mission included identifying gaps in TFA implementation, recommending an Article 16 Notification Workshop, and highlighting unfinished IT systems such as e-Applications and risk profiling tools.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The current activity supported by TFSP 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. The activities are also complemented by the Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project, which seeks to improve conditions for trade by enhancing connectivity, reducing logistics bottlenecks, and supporting the adoption of modern approaches to border management and trade facilitation.

Nepal

TFSP support to Nepal

During this reporting period, TFSP continued to support Nepal's Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) border agencies on risk management policy.

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

7.4 Risk Management

7.9 Perishable Goods

FY25 update on key activities

Risk Management—On March 24, 2025, a joint WB/IFC/African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) webinar featured the Department of Livestock Services (DLS) presenting Nepal's approach to risk profiling and automation. The team has continued collaborating with all three border agencies—Plant Quarantine and Pesticide Management Center (PQPMC), Department of Food Technology and Quality Control (DFTQC), and DLS—to implement risk-based border management. Each agency is actively collecting data on border interventions to better characterize the risks associated with traded commodities. The agencies now require support to complete their risk analysis and to adopt a comprehensive risk management policy.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The current activities supported by TFSP complement the lending provided to the government under the Nepal Strategic Road Connectivity and Trade Improvement Project (SRCTIP) for border infrastructure. TFSP support combined with improvements under SRCTIP should enable: (i) reduction in the time taken for goods transit at selected border crossing points; (ii) improve the capacity and effectiveness of SPS management at selected locations and for targeted products; and (iii) enhance capacity for managing trade. 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 NSW and the Nepal Trade Portal.



Small business in Lalitpur, Nepal
© World Bank/Peter Kapuscinski

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Regional Activities: Southern Africa

TFSP continued to provide strategic regional coordination and technical support for the Southern Africa Coordinated Border Management (CBM) agenda. During this period, the program focused on aligning border management reforms and investment priorities across key countries, supporting evidence-based reforms, and facilitating peer learning among SACU member states. These efforts contributed to greater coherence in customs and trade facilitation practices across the region.

Country-specific Activities: Sub-Saharan Africa

Eswatini

TFSP support to Eswatini

This reporting period, TFSP worked closely with Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS) and border stakeholders to advance WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and CBM efforts. Key achievements included a high-level workshop identifying priorities like risk management, automation, and information and communication technology (ICT) upgrades. Technical discussions drew on recent CBM-related reports funded by TFSP highlighting border bottlenecks and recommending digitization and single-window solutions.

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

- 7.1** Pre-arrival Processing
- 7.7** Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators
- 8** Border Agency Cooperation
- 23.2** National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY25 update on key activities

Risk Management and ICT upgrades – A significant milestone was reached with the high-level workshop jointly organized by the TFSP and the Executive Management team of the ERS on June 12, 2025. The

event convened 16 senior participants, including the Commissioner General of the ERS, with 6 women in attendance. During the workshop, participants assessed the progress of customs modernization and identified priority investments, focusing on risk management automation, infrastructure upgrades, and enhanced ICT connectivity.

Coordinated border management

- “Smart and Coordinated Border Management in Southern Africa: The Oshoek-Ngwenya Border Post” Report, funded by TFSP and delivered by Maersk, was completed and shared with the client. The report’s analytical findings informed TFSP’s technical discussions by highlighting critical bottlenecks in cargo clearance, inspection procedures, and lane design at the border. Additionally, the study identified opportunities to enhance efficiency through digitalized documentation and integrated single-window systems. These recommendations guided the prioritization of investments for Eswatini’s border facilities and supported the development of future CBM pilot initiatives.
- The above-mentioned report, alongside “Southern Africa CBM Infrastructure Study,” an additional Maersk report funded by TFSP and completed in the previous reporting quarter, were presented to government counterparts from Eswatini and South Africa during a virtual Joint CBM Working Group meeting held on May 21, 2025. The event convened 29 participants, with approximately 24 percent female representation.
- Pre-arrival processing: One of the concepts recommended in the report on pre-arrival processing and synchronization of the timing between Eswatini and South Africa for the submission of the information was agreed upon by the Eswatini counterparts. Once implemented, it will help to align risk and compliance management of the two countries and speed up process at the border.

Authorized Economic Operators – TFSP has provided targeted technical assistance to harmonize the management of the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) certification process in Eswatini, including advising on the identification of companies likely to benefit from and participate in the AEO program. This support



Maseru border post
© World Bank

has ensured that safety and security considerations are fully integrated into the process. TFSP's guidance is directly informing the draft Eswatini Customs Bill—currently being developed by the ERS—which will institutionalize the AEO program. Additionally, TFSP's assistance is enabling Eswatini's active participation in negotiations for the SACU Regional Mutual Recognition Agreement for AEOs, further strengthening regional cooperation and alignment.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

[Fiscal Management and Competitiveness Development Policy Loan \(P508225\)](#) with one of the triggers being the submission to Parliament of a Customs and Excise Amendment Bill that, *inter alia*, expedites the establishment of Authorized Economic Operators and enhances market access, which is expected to be completed by the reporting period.

Ghana

TFSP support to Ghana

FY25 builds on the groundwork laid in FY24, moving from planning and gap analysis to active implementation, institutional development, and technical capacity building. There is a stronger emphasis on stakeholder engagement, donor coordination, and the operationalization of key trade facilitation measures, with new initiatives targeting both policy and practice.

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

- 1.1 Publication
- 1.2 Information Available through Internet
- 3 Advance Rulings
- 5.3 Test Procedures
- 23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

FY25 update on key activities

February 2025: Strengthening Trade Policy and Facilitation

- The TFSP team conducted a support mission in Ghana, engaging closely with the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MOTI), including the incoming MOTI Trade Facilitation Lead and the Chair of the NTFC. The mission focused on reviewing ongoing trade policy and trade facilitation efforts, outlining the World Bank's support to date, and discussing future priorities. This engagement set the stage for continued collaboration on Ghana's trade agenda.
- A dedicated meeting with the NTFC Chair addressed several operational priorities:
 - The pending procurement of a Trade Information Portal (TIP) and a Trade Advisor, both critical for advancing the TFA Implementation Plan.
 - The development of ToR for establishing a NTFC Secretariat, which will provide institutional support for TFA implementation.



Cargo loaded on airplane in Accra, Ghana
© World Bank/Arne Hoel

- The TFSP team also deepened its engagement with the Ghana Economic Transformation Project (GETP) Project Coordination Unit (PCU), focusing on recruiting a consulting firm to develop a web-based Trade Information Portal. This portal aims to provide accessible trade information and facilitate engagement with the broader trade community.
- TFSP representatives attended the inaugural Development Partners Roundtable, hosted by GIZ in Accra and involving key donors such as the World Bank, EU, JICA, TradeMark Africa, and UNDP. This event fostered effective donor coordination and updates on progress, strengthening the collaborative environment for trade facilitation reforms.
- TFSP representatives participated in the GETP Implementation Support Mission from February 16–21, with a focus on WTO TFA Article 5.3 (confirmatory testing) and plant e-certification. A TFSP-organized workshop in Accra convened key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Finance, GETP Project Coordination Unit, Ghana Accreditation Service, Ghana Standards Authority, Customs, Police, Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Directorate (PPRS), Food and Drug Authority, and Veterinary Services Department. During the mission, participants reviewed current confirmatory testing practices and began developing a joint, cross-agency protocol for confirmatory testing. The World Bank team also held separate discussions with PPRS to assess its readiness for implementing electronic phytosanitary certification (ePhytos). As a result, it was agreed to initiate a digital gap assessment for PPRS under the GETP to evaluate the feasibility of integrating existing systems in Ghana for ePhyto exchange.

April 2025: Advancing Policy and Customs Reform

- The TFSP team accompanied the visiting World Bank Trade Policy Team to meet the newly appointed MOTI Chief Director and colleagues. Discussions centered on the development of a new Trade Policy Strategy and the growing importance of the agricultural business sector in Ghana's trade landscape.
- An introductory meeting with the new Customs Sector Commander at Tema Port emphasized the pivotal role of Customs in implementing the WTO TFA. The team visited the port, met with Customs officials, and reviewed operational procedures, including the work of the "Green Team," which is an inspection team tasked with reviewing high risk shipments. With the IT Systems Team, the importance of recording all activities to measure "hit-rates" (rather than just outcomes) was highlighted, aiming to improve data-driven decision-making.

- The TFSP team met the new Head of the Customs Laboratory to discuss testing policies and procedures, including inter-agency testing. The need for a multi-agency Second Testing Policy Framework was reinforced.
- A meeting with the Customs Technical Services Bureau (CTSB) team from the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA)-Customs focused on the Advance Rulings (AR) regime. The World Bank's support was prioritized to ensure that Ghana's AR system meets international standards, specifically the requirements of TFA Article 3. This support was integrated into the NTFC TFA Implementation Plan.

May 2025: Focused Support for Advance Rulings

May 2025 saw a targeted TFSP mission dedicated to Advance Rulings. The team conducted a workshop for the Customs Technical Service Bureau (CTSB) Team of GRA-Customs to assess the alignment of the current AR regime with TFA Article 3 requirements. The assessment led to recommendations for enhancing AR procedures, including the development of updated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and process guidelines. The need for specialized technical training in AR drafting was identified and subsequently delivered in the port of Tema. This productive meeting with private sector representatives underscored the importance of sensitizing the trade community about AR procedures and benefits.

Advance Ruling development remains an ongoing area of World Bank support, with several additional missions planned. These efforts are expected to culminate in the formal launch of an AR regime fully compliant with international standards, such as the WTO TFA.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The Ghana Economic Transformation Project (GETP), project ID P166539, is an active World Bank-financed initiative in Ghana, approved in 2019 with a total commitment of US\$200 million. The project's main objective is to promote private investments and firm growth in non-resource-based sectors, aiming to diversify Ghana's economy beyond its traditional reliance on natural resources.

Lesotho

TFSP support to Lesotho

During this reporting period, TFSP made significant progress in advancing Lesotho's trade facilitation agenda. Efforts focused on promoting coordinated border management (CBM) and facilitating the adoption of key trade facilitation concepts, such as pre-arrival processing. A major milestone was achieved with the formal signing and public launch of the bilateral CBM Joint Action Plan (JAP).

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

7.1 Pre-arrival processing

8 Border Agency Cooperation

FY25 update on key activities

Coordinated border management (CBM) – In this reporting period, TFSP deepened its technical engagement with Lesotho to advance implementation of the Lesotho–South Africa CBM agenda under the SACU framework.

Building on prior analytical work, the program supported institutional coordination, joint planning, and investment scoping that culminated in:

- The formal signing and public launch of the bilateral CBM Joint Action Plan (JAP) on 17 June 2025 in Ladybrand (see more details of this significant achievement on box 2).
- TFSP's facilitation of the Joint Working Group (JWG) meetings on 18 June 2025, covering legal, process, AEO and risk streams, where participants validated priority actions and timelines for each thematic area. These discussions drew on recommendations from the Maersk Smart and Coordinated Border Management Blueprint (Feb 2025), which advocates risk-based decision-making, centralized clearance, integrated License, Permit, Certificate, or Other (LPCO) management, and the relocation of joint inspection facilities away from congested border zones and the joint Time Release Study for the Maseru Bridge corridor. The JWG is now tasked with preparing detailed procedures for the Maseru Border Post operations following recommendations from the reports.
- TFSP facilitation of a discussion on how the analysis and recommendations developed for Maseru could be adapted and implemented at another major border crossing with South Africa—Maputsoe-Ficksburg. Building on the insights from the Maersk's Maseru Border Post report, the Working Group will develop a similar procedures plan tailored for Maputsoe-Ficksburg, leveraging best practices and lessons learned to enhance border management at both locations.

Technical Assistance – TFSP provided technical assistance to design standardized operating procedures for the Integrated Trade and Transport Logistics (ITTL) investment program. This included Migration Information and Data Analysis Systems (MIDAS), establishing new inspection facilities at Maseru and Maputsoe, and implementing digital SPS/e-phyto platforms to support future infrastructure investments. These initiatives aim to enhance the collection and management of border information, thereby strengthening border security. In addition, TFSP developed ToRs for a feasibility study on constructing inspection facilities near the Maseru and Maputsoe border crossings, which will help streamline clearance processes.

Time Release Study – Building on TFSP's earlier recommendation to conduct periodic time studies in alignment with TFA Article 7.6, and leveraging the operational Steering Committee and CBM mechanisms established during TFSP Phase 1, TFSP successfully engaged the Customs administrations of Lesotho's Revenue Service (RSL) and South Africa's South African Revenue Service (SARS) to undertake the first joint end-to-end TRS at the Maseru Border Post, using the WCO methodology. This study established a baseline for the time required to cross the Maseru border on both the Lesotho and South African sides, identified process bottlenecks, and provided actionable recommendations.

Conducting this joint study for the first time significantly strengthened bilateral coordination, enhanced policy coherence between RSL and SARS, and led to an agreement to sustain data-driven performance monitoring. Furthermore, it resulted in the establishment of a permanent technical secretariat to guide the multi-agency reform agenda.

Leverage or complementarity of funds

The regional TFSP technical assistance program is informing ongoing investments through World Bank operations:

- [Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project \(P175783\)](#), which includes a component on digitalization of Customs and Trade (National Trade Single Window and Customs management system); and
- [Lesotho Integrated Transport, Trade and Logistics Project \(P502125\)](#) with a component to implement an inland inspection facility and targeted reforms at the border's posts, in accordance with the diagnostic and action plan produced by the regional Blueprint and infrastructure assessment.

South Africa

TFSP support to South Africa

TFSP is supporting South Africa on coordinated border management with neighboring Mozambique, Eswatini and Lesotho as well as South Africa's AEO program and its recognition by the SACU.

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

- 7.1 Pre-arrival Processing
- 7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators
- 8 Border Agency Coordination

FY25 update on key activities

Coordinated Border Management – TFSP delivered targeted technical assistance to South Africa as part of the regional Southern Africa CBM agenda. Efforts centered on strengthening bilateral cooperation with neighboring SACU countries—particularly Mozambique, Lesotho, and Eswatini—and accelerating the implementation of WTO TFA commitments.

South Africa-Mozambique border:

Two TFSP-funded reports prepared by Maersk were shared with South African counterparts: a regional CBM Blueprint, which outlines strategies for establishing Smart and Coordinated Border Management systems at key Southern African border posts, and a Study Report on the Lebombo-Ressano Garcia Border Post



Market stall, Western Cape, South Africa
© World Bank/John Hogg

between South Africa and Mozambique, offering a comprehensive review of end-to-end processes and recommendations for process re-engineering. Alongside the regional CBM Infrastructure Report delivered in TFSP Phase 1, these studies provide a robust analytical foundation for developing efficient, coordinated borders. The reports emphasize the need to streamline truck processing lanes, optimize inspection facility layouts, and expand ICT infrastructure to enable real-time data sharing among the Border Management Authority (BMA), SARS, and Mozambique Customs.

The reports were presented in a virtual Mozambique-South Africa Joint CBM WG meeting on May 28th. The event on bilateral activities and engagements showcased significant progress in border management collaboration, highlighted by Maersk's presentation of its Border Management Study and active participant feedback. The event featured breakout working groups that initiated discussions on operational processes, joint border controls, system interoperability, biometrics, and regulatory frameworks, as well as border procedures, data exchange, and legal gaps. The event also set the stage for further bilateral meetings and technical discussions in June (more details below on AEO portion) underscoring a strong commitment to advancing cooperation and innovation in border management.

Following recommendations from the TFSP-funded Maersk border reports, South Africa has piloted Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology on its side of the border with Mozambique. This system enables enforcement of the "proceed to border notice," which grants truck drivers approval from Customs to approach the border only after electronically submitting their Customs declaration and supporting documents. By implementing ANPR, South Africa aims to reduce border congestion and prevent non-compliant drivers from reaching Customs before receiving the required notice. This initiative also supports the implementation of the Lebombo One-Stop Border Post (OSBP) concept.

South Africa – Eswatini border:

On May 21, 2025, TFSP organized a virtual Joint South Africa-Eswatini CBM WG meeting to present and discuss findings from the TFSP-funded Maersk reports related to the Oshoek-Ngwenya Border Post. More details are provided in the Eswatini country write-up.

South Africa – Lesotho border:

On June 18, 2025, the TFSP team organized a Joint Lesotho-South Africa CBM Working Group (WG) meeting to present and discuss TFSP-funded Maersk reports related to the Maseru Bridge Border Post. More details are provided in the Lesotho country write-up.

Authorized Economic Operators (AEO)

- TFSP organized a two-day strategic workshop in May 2025 for representatives of SARS and SACU to discuss South Africa's AEO Strategy and Implementation Plan. The plan was developed by SARS and SACU in alignment with the international best practices and using recommendations from the TFSP-funded Maersk CBM Blueprint report with the aim to align South Africa's AEO program to the SACU requirements and achieve its recognition by SACU. The workshop was attended by 10 participants.
- On June 9–11, 2025, TFSP has facilitated a first bilateral South Africa – Mozambique Joint AEO Working Group (WG) meeting held at Komatipoort/Lebombo, attended by 34 participants, nearly 30 percent of whom were female. The workshop enabled both countries to discuss operational arrangements for implementing the South Africa-Mozambique CBM Joint Action Plan signed in February 2024, review progress on integrated border processes, establish protocols for information exchange, and advance frameworks for mutual recognition of AEOs.

Phase 1 Countries that Achieved Outcomes during January – June 2025

Malawi

BOX 7

Strengthening Malawi's Trade and Border Management through Digital Innovation

Malawi advanced its trade and border modernization with TFSP support, building on work started under TFSP Phase 1. Three key milestones achieved during this reporting:

- **Smarter Border Management:** With TFSP's technical support, Malawi introduced the **Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS)**—a digital tool that enables real-time collection and analysis of border data. The system was piloted at ten key border posts, with plans to expand to five more posts and a mobile unit in late 2025.
- **Faster Customs Operations:** The **Malawi Revenue Authority** upgraded its **ASYCUDA World** system, speeding up customs processing and boosting coordination among border agencies.
- **Simplified Trade Processes:** TFSP's technical and advisory support enabled the launch of the **Malawi National Single Window** across six government agencies. This one-stop digital platform allows traders and agencies to exchange information seamlessly, aligning Malawi with international trade standards (including the **WTO TFA measure 10.4**).
- **Better Access to Information:** The **Malawi Trade Information Portal** was upgraded for easier access to trade rules and procedures.

These innovations are helping Malawi make cross-border trade **faster, more efficient, and more inclusive**.



Kazungula border, Zambia
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

Zambia

In Phase 1, the TFSP team completed the validation of the TFA Gap Assessment, initially prepared earlier in the phase. Since 2015, Zambia has made substantial progress in aligning with WTO TFA provisions. Key achievements include the full implementation of the National Trade Facilitation Committee, passage of regulatory reforms to enhance transparency, predictability, and consistency in trade, and commitments to coordinated border management (CBM). A pilot CBM model at Kazungula has reduced the number of border agencies, streamlining border operations. Many of these reforms and initiatives were supported by TFSP during Phase 1.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Annex B



I. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRODUCTS

**SELECT EVENTS SUPPORTED BY AND/OR WITH
PARTICIPATION FROM TFSP**

**Fiji Trade Information Portal Stakeholder Steering
Committee—Suva, Fiji, January 2025**

In Suva, the WBG hosted a Trade Information Portal (TIP) Stakeholder Steering Committee meeting on January 23. More than 20 representatives from key ministries and the private sector gathered to validate data collection, monitor upload progress, and prepare for the official launch later in the year.



Ghana: Development Partners Roundtable—Accra, Ghana, February 2025

On February 20, TFSP representatives attended the inaugural Development Partners Roundtable, hosted by GIZ in Accra. The meeting included key donors working on trade facilitation reforms in the country such as the World Bank, EU, JICA, TradeMark Africa, and the UNDP. This event fostered effective donor coordination and updates on progress, strengthening the collaborative environment for trade facilitation reforms.

Pacific Island Forum Island Trade Officials Meeting—Suva, Fiji, February 2025

From February 24 to March 5, the WBG participated in the Pacific Islands Forum Trade Officials Meeting in Suva, Fiji. The team presented the upcoming WBG regional program, monitored progress of the Pacific Trade Facilitation Strategy, and discussed the creation of a regional public-private dialogue mechanism. Bilateral discussions with countries and coordination with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) helped shape the next steps for regional engagement.⁴



Nepal: Webinar on Risk Management—Virtual, March 2025

On March 24, a webinar was jointly hosted by the WB, IFC, the African Union, and the InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources on risk management. Nepal's Department of Livestock Services (DLS) was invited to present country's approach to risk profiling and automation. The WB is working with Nepal's three border agencies—Plant Quarantine and Pesticide Management Center (PQPMC), Department of Food Technology and Quality Control (DFTQC), and DLS—to support the implementation of risk-based border management.

⁴ [Event website](#) | [Social media](#).

Jordan and Yemen: Workshop to finalize the TFA Gap Analysis and TFA Roadmap and Action Plan Workshop—Amman, Jordan, April 2025

From April 12–19, the WBG facilitated a TFA Gap Analysis and Action Plan workshop in Amman with officials from Jordan and Yemen. The event finalized gap assessments and roadmaps to support Jordan's WTO ratification and Yemen's re-engagement, helping both countries advance their trade facilitation agendas.

Timor-Leste: Workshop on the TFA Gap Analysis—Dili, Timor-Leste, May 2025

From May 7–13, TFSP held a workshop in Dili to validate the country's TFA Gap Analysis and co-develop a National Trade Facilitation Roadmap and Action Plan. The event engaged the government's new Strategic Unit for Economic Integration to support commitments made during Timor-Leste's WTO accession (MC13). Discussions formalized the unit's leadership of the country's trade facilitation reform agenda.

Solomon Islands: Workshop on the TFA Digitalization Gap Analysis—Honiara, Solomon Island, May 2025

From May 15–20, the WBG facilitated a Digitalization Gap Analysis workshop with government counterparts in Honiara. The analysis supported the design of an integrated National Single Window to improve coordination across border agencies.

OECD Forum on Resilient Agri-Food Supply Chains—Paris, France, May 2025

From May 16, the WBG joined the OECD Forum on Resilient Agri-Food Supply Chains in Paris. The event explored how trade can reduce supply chain risks. The WBG presented on its work supporting agri-food resilience through its trade facilitation work via TFSP, including digital tools, regulatory reform, and public-private collaboration.⁵



⁵ [Event website](#) | [Social media](#).

International Plant Protection Convention Implementation and Capacity Development Committee Meeting—Rome, Italy, May 2025

On May 19–20, the WBG participated in the IPPC Implementation and Capacity Development Committee meeting in Rome. Discussions focused on tools and financing mechanisms to help countries implement phytosanitary measures. The WBG shared its technical assistance experience supporting SPS reforms, including ePhyto, and border coordination.⁶

Oceania Annual Meeting of Directors General of Customs for the Pacific—Guam, Micronesia, May 2025

From May 22–28, the WBG joined the Annual Meeting of Directors General of Customs for the Pacific in Guam. The event, themed “Driving Efficiency, Security and Sustainability,” featured WBG presentations on the implementation of the Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy in the Pacific.⁷

Asia-Pacific: Regional Biosecurity Regulators Meeting—Manila, Philippines, May 2025

From May 1 to 2, the WBG participated in the Asia-Pacific Regional Biosecurity Regulators Meeting in Manila. Discussions covered business-friendly legislation, the challenges of digital trade, and the benefits of e-certification. The WBG shared lessons from its support in Bangladesh, Fiji, PNG, and Timor-Leste, particularly around the use of international standards and good regulatory practices.⁸

WTO Trade Facilitation Committee Meeting—Geneva, Switzerland, June 2025

From June 2–5, the WBG joined the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee meetings in Geneva. Alongside the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the WTO’s Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF), the team co-organized a session on Time Release Study methodologies. An in-person training on technical assistance and donor coordination brought together 15 capital-based delegates from LDCs and developing countries.⁹

⁶ [Social media](#) | [IPPC Plant Health Campus](#).

⁷ [Event website](#) | [Social media](#).

⁸ [LinkedIn](#).

⁹ [Event News](#) | [TF Committee Meeting Minutes](#).

Fiji Trade Information Portal Stakeholder Steering Committee—Suva, Fiji, June 2025

On June 4, the WBG convened the fifth Fiji TIP Stakeholder Steering Committee in Suva. With over 30 participants, the meeting focused on final content adjustments, preparations for the upcoming launch event, shared ideas for supporting small-scale traders, and agreed to continue regular stakeholder engagement leading up to the portal’s July launch.

UNESCAP Paperless Trade Week 2025—Bangkok, Thailand, June 2025

From June 9–13, TFSP participated in the UNESCAP Paperless Trade Week in Bangkok, where the team shared experiences from TFSP work in the Pacific. Presentations covered digitalization efforts and the implementation of the Framework Agreement on Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific.¹⁰



¹⁰ [Event website](#) | [Social media](#).

Signing Event: Bilateral Joint Action Plan to Implement Smart Borders—Maseru Bridge and Ficksburg, South Africa, June 2025

On June 17, the WBG supported a signing event for the Bilateral Joint Action Plan between South Africa and Lesotho at Maseru Bridge and Ficksburg. The agreement outlines smart border reforms, including joint processing, digital upgrades, and governance mechanisms. It builds on earlier agreements with Mozambique and Eswatini, and was informed by technical work supported by TFSP.¹¹

“We’ve already piloted joint immigration processing, completed a bilateral time-release study, and are investing in e-Phyto systems and smart border upgrades with World Bank support.”

PRINCIPLE SECRETARY, LESOTHO’S MINISTRY OF TRADE

Regional Workshop: Strengthening Food Security and Safety through Smarter Trade in South Asia—Colombo, Sri Lanka, June 2025

From June 18–19, TFSP supported a regional workshop in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on “Strengthening Food Security and Safety through Smarter Trade in South Asia.” The workshop brought together policymakers, trade experts, and private sector leaders. Discussions focused on harmonizing standards, digital trade tools, and regional coordination. It concluded with a call to establish a regional platform under the SAPLING initiative (supported by TFSP and the Gates Foundation).¹²



¹¹ [Local media](#)

¹² [Social media](#) | [Social media](#) | [Social media](#)



Employee inspecting plants at Scimitar Farms, Zambia
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

WTO STDF Working Group Meeting—Geneva, Switzerland, June 2025

On June 24–25, the WBG attended the WTO STDF Working Group Meeting in Geneva. The group reviewed the 2025–2030 strategy and work plan. The WBG contributed to discussions on SPS projects and how innovation and scaling can be better integrated into global food trade support.¹³



World Customs Organization Annual Council—Brussels, Belgium, June 2025

From June 24–28, the WBG joined the World Customs Organization Annual Council in Brussels, where Directors Generals from around the world gathered to share experiences and shape global customs reform agendas. The WBG informed participants on its trade facilitation work under TFSP, and how customs authorities play an important role in the reform process.

¹³ [Social media](#)



Offloading cargo at the port of Suva, Fiji
© World Bank/Chris Morgan

For more information:

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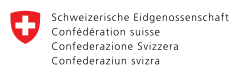
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