

The Trade Facilitation Support Program

Partnering to help countries improve access to global and regional markets and enhance their participation in the world economy.



How the World Bank delivers trade facilitation assistance

The World Bank is a **major provider** of trade-related assistance, ranging from **technical assistance**, integrated delivery of **advisory, advocacy** and **financial** services, to provision of multi-disciplinary **analyses and diagnostics**, and **global advocacy** for the trading system.

Through its trade facilitation workstream, the World Bank helps client countries improve their **access to developed country markets** and enhance their **participation in the world economy**.

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

TFSP's funding helps countries—particularly developing countries—achieve **full and effective implementation of the WTO TFA** measures and related trade facilitation reforms.



The Program

TFSP supports client countries to:

- Identify **existing constraints and bottlenecks** to cross-border trade
- Design and plan for implementation of **practical reform strategies**
- Increase the **predictability, transparency, and harmonization of systems and procedures** in line with international standards covering import, export, and transit activities

Trade facilitation initiatives help countries **reduce the time and cost for cross-border trade** by streamlining the technical and legal procedures and processes for products moving across borders.

Trade facilitation covers the **full spectrum of border procedures**, from the electronic exchange of data about a shipment, to the simplification and harmonization of trade documents and processes, to the implementation of measures to enhance transparency and predictability for traders (e.g. Trade Information Portals and Single Windows).



Working with development partners

In the first phase of TFSP (July 2014–December 2024), the program was financed by nine development partners: Australia, Canada, the European Union, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The second phase of TFSP was launched in December 2025 and has received contributions from the European Commission, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

The multi-donor contributions from our development partners provide each donor with **value for money** as the individual donor contribution reaches beyond its actual dollar value when added to other donor contributions.

Beyond direct technical assistance and capacity building, TFSP has also helped mobilize financing for a greater scope of trade facilitation reforms. To date, TFSP-funded activities have been leveraged into 25 different lending instruments across 23 countries, totaling **USD 825.47 million in leverage**. This support has strengthened the foundation for trade facilitation reforms, ensuring countries have the resources needed to implement measures fully and effectively.

The World Bank also works very **closely with the WTO, and other partners and donors** in supporting developing countries in improving border processes and procedures.

Through its networks and partnerships, the WB is able to deliver a robust program that **facilitates trade**, as well as promotes trade flows and economic gains.



Areas of assistance

Key areas of assistance include (but are not limited to):

- Supporting the **ratification of the WTO TFA** and related notification requirements
- Undertaking **WTO TFA Gap Assessments** and implementing **reform action plans** and **indicators**, including climate-specific indicators at ports and borders points
- Supporting the establishment and strengthening of **National Trade Facilitation Committees** (NTFCs)
- Assisting with the design of **risk-based approaches** for border clearance
- Preparing for digitalization including **Trade Information Portal** and **Single Window** implementation
- **Emergency preparedness and response** in times of crisis, including climate events
- Leveraging **global and regional partnerships** and knowledge sharing to ensure optimal delivery of support



Portfolio

58

TFSP Phase 1 Countries (2014–2024)

(28% in Sub Saharan Africa, 22% in Latin America & the Caribbean, 22% in East Asia Pacific, 19% in Europe & Central Asia, 3% in South Asia, and 4% in Middle East & North Africa)

27

TFSP Phase 2 Countries (from December 2024)

(22% in Eastern & Southern Africa, 7.1% in South Asia, 4% in Europe & Central Asia, 44.4% in East Asia Pacific, 11.1% in Latin America & the Caribbean, and 11.1% in Western & Central Africa)

Within the portfolio (Phase 2 Countries):

85%

International Development Association (IDA) and Blend Countries

17%

Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations (FCS)

TFSP IN NUMBERS

Cumulative Results: 2014-2024



SELECT ACHIEVEMENTS

Since 2014, TFSP has been the largest provider of trade facilitation technical assistance, as identified in WTO donor arrangement notifications. By the end of 2024, it supported the implementation of [283 WTO TFA measures across 58 countries](#), reinforcing its role as a key partner in advancing global trade.

In Phase of 1 of TFSP, supported reforms have significantly [reduced the time to comply with import and export clearance/control requirements by 21 percent](#) across its portfolio. Furthermore, efficiency gains from time reduced in the cargo clearance process, combined with reductions in trade-related fees and charges, have resulted in an estimated [USD 110 million in private sector savings](#).

The World Bank developed the [TFA Tracking Tool](#) portal to help track a country's alignment with the TFA and enable them to benchmark and report on progress over time. The most recent data indicates that TFSP-funded activities have helped improve TFSP client countries' alignment with the WTO TFA measures from 41 percent to 54 percent.

For example,

In [Lao PDR](#), the customs department certified its first AEO company in February 2023. This certification was the fruition of multi-year support from TFSP to both help set up the AEO program framework and to raise awareness of it. A ceremony was held to celebrate the first certification and was well-attended by high-level officials from the government of Lao PDR, the Ambassador of Japan ([the first AEO company being a Japanese company](#)), representatives of IFC, and some members of the business community. The AEO program offers many benefits to certified firms, including exemption from inspection of customs declaration documents and product inspection during customs procedures, that will expedite the trade process.

In [Guatemala](#) and [Honduras](#), TFSP support helped [cut the time for traders to cross the border](#) from 10 hours to 7 minutes by helping both countries integrate their trade procedures and removing duplicative processes with a single online instrument.

At the global-level, TFSP has also developed many innovative products ([videos](#), [podcast](#), [stories](#), [blogs](#)) to promote [best practices](#), [knowledge sharing](#), and [peer-to-peer learning](#). More information about the achievements made through TFSP can be found at: www.worldbank.org/tradefacilitation

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES



Gender

TFSP funded the design of a [Trade Facilitation and Gender Study](#) methodology with the objective of identifying and quantifying gender gaps in cross-border trade by collecting and comparing data on the specific trade facilitation challenges faced by women and men traders and customs clearing agents. TFSP funded the survey in [eight countries](#). The data collected contributes to the field of literature on trade facilitation and gender, as well as provides quantifiable country-level data for the increasingly important dialogue on how to mainstream gender and inclusivity issues into trade policy.



Digitalization

Since its inception in 2014, TFSP has assisted in the implementation of [13 Trade Information Portals](#), which are digital platforms that make all cross-border trade information (such as regulatory information) easily available online. More than [14 countries](#) have also received support from TFSP in preparation for implementation of [Single Windows](#), which is a path to paperless trade. [Find out more](#)



Emergency preparedness and response

The recent series of global crises especially highlighted the [vulnerability of trade and logistics](#) worldwide to unforeseen situations. While over time the global trading system has rebounded and proven to be resilient, these emergencies have underlined the [importance of trade facilitation](#) – the simplification, modernization and harmonization of export and import processes – in minimizing disruptions by supporting business continuity, supporting recovery efforts, and ensuring the swift and efficient delivery of essential goods across borders. TFSP was able to quickly pivot and rapidly respond to assist client countries to increase resilience and emergency response and recovery (including support to mitigate pandemic-related trade risks and to align the country's practices with the WTO TFA).

For example, with TFSP support, [Tonga](#) was able to design and implement an expedited clearance regime to quickly mobilize expedited clearance for the first consignment of 20,000 COVID-19 vaccines for its citizens in only three hours and implement efficient clearance of emergency shipments during the aftermath of the earthquake. [Read more](#)

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are essential for the optimal delivery of the program and a coordinated roll-out of technical assistance in participating countries. Where multiple development partners are present in a country, TFSP seeks to coordinate development assistance to increase aid effectiveness and to avoid duplication of work.

For example:

In **Cambodia**, development partners were well coordinated through formal coordination meetings hosted by the National Committee for Trade Facilitation (NTFC). The meetings were held every two to three months, and participants included the World Bank, JICA (Japan), GIZ (Germany), the EU, DFAT (Australia), Swiss contact, and the IMF. The TFSP-supported World Bank team also met bilaterally with other development partners (including JICA, GIZ, the EU, and DFAT) on where and how to create synergies.

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

In **Tajikistan** — building on the Trade and Gender Study's survey design and methodology developed with TFSP funding — a similar study was undertaken in Tajikistan with financing from the government of Japan through the Quality Infrastructure Investment Project. The final report was launched in May 2023.

In addition, over the years, TFSP also **worked closely with other international organizations** to deliver technical assistance, host workshops, undertake missions, and develop knowledge products. TFSP, for example, worked closely with the **World Customs Organization** (WCO) on customs modernization, Authorized Economic Operators, and Time Release Studies.

LOOKING AHEAD: THE TFA AND BEYOND

There continues to be strong demand for support to accelerate TFA implementation.

Extending and deepening TFSP support to ensure the momentum already gained to carry out trade facilitation reforms is sustained is critical.

Climate: TFSP will support the development of a methodology to measure trade facilitation's impact on climate change and sustainability.

Gender: TFSP will continue to disseminate and advise on the Trade and Gender Study with the overall objective of helping countries identify and quantify data on obstacles that women-led firms face when conducting cross-border trade. Based on the findings, targeted recommendations are made by leveraging suitable trade facilitation reforms.

Digitalization: TFSP will continue to support implementation of robust digital solutions (such as Single Windows, ASYCUDA, Trade Information Portals, and emerging technologies) to ensure the digitalization of paperless cross-border trade.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



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