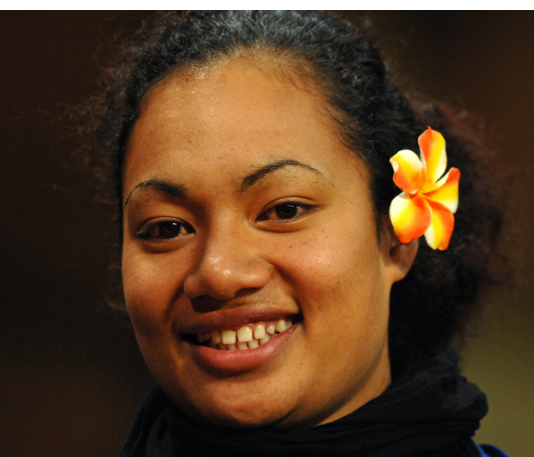




Samoa



Trade Facilitation Challenges for Women Traders and Freight Forwarders

Survey findings and recommendations



WORLD BANK GROUP

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This report presents the results of a survey undertaken in Samoa from February to April 2020 with the intention to identify specific challenges cross-border traders are facing related to trade facilitation at the firm level.

This survey work was led by the World Bank Group (WBG) and funded by the Trade Facilitation Support Program.¹ Tebbutt Research was selected through a competitive process to support the team with the implementation of the survey on the ground in Samoa.

The WBG team would like to recognize the Government of Samoa for its invaluable contribution to the project, including through the provision of trader data.

¹ The Trade Facilitation Support Program is funded by Australia, Canada, the European Union, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

Samoa

Number of active cross-border trading firms (2018) qualified for survey: 638²

Capital city: Apia

Region: East Asia & Pacific

Income category: Upper-middle income³

Population (2018): 196,130

GDP (current US\$ millions, 2018): 820.49⁴

Est. GNI per capita women/men (2018 based on 2011 PPP\$):
\$3,955 / \$7,685⁵

Labor force participation rate (% ages 15 and older, 2018) women/men:
33.6 / 58.3

Merchandise exports and imports (% of GDP, 2018): 49.8

Main exports:

Re-exports, fresh fish, taro, nonu juice, coconut-based products⁶

Main imports:

Petroleum oils and oils from bituminous minerals, meat and edible offal of fowls, vehicles, wood/co-niferous, cereals, fish preparations, wheat or meslin four, telephones for cellular networks, medicaments⁷

WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement ratification date: April 21, 2016

² This number is based on a list of firms provided by the Ministry for Customs and Revenue and reflects initial efforts to exclude duplicates, government entities, etc. that would not be eligible for the survey. Some ineligible firms may still be included in this number, which further remediation work subsequently identified.

³ Based on WBG fiscal year 2020 (calendar year 2018) data calculation: GNI per capita between \$3,996 and \$12,375.

⁴ World Development Indicators database.

⁵ Human Development Report, UNDP.

⁶ 2018 data from the Central Bank of Samoa.

⁷ 2018 data from UN Comtrade.

Key recommendations based on survey findings:

Initial findings demonstrate an **opportunity for the Government of Samoa** to improve the design of trade facilitation interventions to better address traders' needs (women in particular), e.g. by:



Strengthening the role of the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) to better address bottlenecks in trade facilitation



Improving awareness of the NTFC and promoting membership in trade/industry associations



Reducing time to release goods, especially goods traded



Improving access to information on border processes and procedures



Strengthening consultation mechanisms, especially with micro and small firms



Increasing awareness of electronic declaration systems



Enhancing electronic payment systems for official fees and duties

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Women traders are more likely to operate medium-size businesses in Samoa © Joseph Sohm/Shutterstock

1 Executive summary

Trade is widely recognized to be an engine of growth that creates jobs, reduces poverty, and increases economic opportunity. Generally speaking, trade facilitation measures are non-discriminatory and apply to all traders in their design; however, these measures may not necessarily impact or benefit all traders in similar ways. There is a global lack of data on how trade facilitation interventions impact traders by gender at the firm level.^{8,9} There is also a global vacuum of knowledge of the exact proportion of cross-border traders that are women. Few countries, if any, can easily confirm the number of women that undertake cross-border trade in their respective countries.

Designing interventions that are inclusive—benefiting women as well as men—is difficult without accurate data on the gender of those who participate actively in cross-border trade. Without this knowledge and that of the exact challenges faced by both genders, it is also hard to tell how much any subset of the economy would be impacted by any intervention. This lack of data may also reinforce the bias against women in trade policy making.

To help fill the data gap with an aim to better inform future design and implementation of trade facilitation projects, the World Bank Group (WBG) has collected data – through a survey – on cross-border trade challenges faced by both women and men at the firm level in the Pacific Islands region.^{10,11}

Countries in the Pacific Islands region face unique development challenges: they are physically detached from major markets, have small populations spread across many islands and time zones, tend to have high levels of inequality in many areas, and confront the worst impacts of climate change, making them some of the most vulnerable countries

⁸ Higgins, Gender Dimensions of Trade Facilitation and Logistics: A Guidance Note, 2012.

⁹ In this note, “traders” is used interchangeably with “firms” but should be understood to represent registered firms undertaking cross-border trade and not individual, private traders. Women-led versus men-led is used when a firm is either owned and/or managed by a woman or man. A firm is “woman owned” if (1a) $\geq 51\%$ of the shares are owned by a woman or (1b) $\geq 20\%$ is owned by a woman; (2) it has ≥ 1 woman as CEO/COO/President/Vice President; and, (3) has $\geq 30\%$ of the board of directors composed of women (where a board exists). “Managed” refers to the highest management individual in the firm. In addition, the World Bank Enterprise Survey’s definition of firm sizes is used: micro (1–4 employees), small (5–19 employees), medium (20–99 employees), and large (100 employees and above).

¹⁰ Target countries for the project in the Pacific region are Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu.

to natural disasters in the world.¹² These challenges increase trade costs and make it difficult for the Pacific Island countries to trade effectively and competitively. To overcome the challenges of size and isolation, trade capacity should be increased so that the countries can more effectively integrate into the global trading system and thus improve their economic opportunities.¹³ One way to do this is through the implementation of trade facilitation measures to lower time and costs to trade.

Survey respondents include:

- Firms that engage in cross-border trade of goods (disaggregated by the gender of the firms’ owner or manager)
- Freight forwarders (not disaggregated by gender due to the small sample population)

This note presents findings of the survey work in Samoa. Samoa is a small archipelago, and the Apia seaport serves as the international gateway for almost 100 percent of all freight imports and exports for the country. Inter-island freight transport also depends on access to Apia Port.¹⁴

The survey in Samoa was launched prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the region. The pandemic has demonstrated that women are particularly vulnerable and disproportionately affected during a pandemic due to their multiple roles in society.¹⁵ Maintaining trade flows as much as possible during a pandemic is crucial as trade has a direct impact on public health through the finance, provision, and distribution of health-related goods, services, and people.¹⁶ Continued ac-

¹¹ The survey questionnaire focuses on main areas of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The WTO TFA came into force on February 22, 2017, and contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. It also sets out measures for effective cooperation between customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues.

¹² World Bank, 2019.

¹³ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, A strategy to support development in the Pacific, 2013.

¹⁴ Asian Development Bank, Enhancing Safety, Security, and Sustainability of Apia Port Project: Report and Recommendation of the President, 2019.

¹⁵ WBG, Policy Note: Gender dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020; Tralac, Blog: COVID-19 and its implications for women, 2020.

¹⁶ Smith R. D., Trade and public health: facing the challenges of globalization. Journal of epidemiology and community health, 2006.

cess to essential food and medical items through trade will limit the negative impacts of the pandemic both in the short term and in the recovery process. The pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for trade facilitation reforms, such as paperless and automated systems, to keep critical goods flowing through borders. The survey findings, though studied prior to the pandemic, should be viewed in this context and used to raise awareness around the importance of trade facilitation in expediting the movement, release, and clearance of goods.

Some key findings on the trade facilitation challenges that surveyed traders at the firm level face in Samoa, regardless of the gender, include:

- Inspection rates are high among all firms that import.
- Awareness of the National Trade Facilitation Committee's (NTFC) existence is extremely low in Samoa, though, it is slightly higher among freight forwarders. Less than half of the firms are members of trade/industry associations.
- Around one-third of traders do not know that formal grievance procedures exist when consignments are withheld.
- Around half the traders and freight forwarders need to go to more than one source to obtain information on official border regulations and procedures.
- Around a quarter of traders are not regularly consulted on changes to official trade processes and procedures, and smaller-sized firms are consulted less compared to larger-sized firms.
- Most traders do not pay official fees and charges electronically; rather, they pay using check, money order, or cash.

In addition, the women-led firms surveyed experience greater challenges in their cross-border trade activities compared to their men-led counterparts in some areas, including:

- Women traders, on average, experience longer release times than men for their imported goods.
- Fewer women traders think information on border regulations and procedures is easy to find.
- Fewer women know that it is possible to submit import/export declarations online.
- Fewer women know that pre-declarations can be submitted.

The survey has highlighted several areas that could be addressed by the Government of Samoa to improve the trade facilitation environment in the country. While the differences between men and women survey respondents in Samoa does not appear to be significant, the streamlining of procedures that are outlined in the recommendations will help further reduce disparities and potentially bring more traders into the field (see recommendations in [section 4](#) of this report).



Female traders at the Fugalei fresh produce market in Apia © Corners/Shutterstock



In Samoa, the most dominant method to move goods is by sea © Peacefoo/Shutterstock

2 Description of the sample and methodology

Efforts to identify the universe of traders in Samoa preceded the survey. Based on data from the ASYCUDA system provided by the Ministry of Customs and Revenue in Samoa and initial filtering of the list to remove duplicative entries, there were about 638 active trading firms in Samoa in 2018¹⁷. Information provided by the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour (MCIL) helped the team to determine a portion of the gender make-up of the Customs-provided list. Remediation of the list reduced the number of firms eligible to participate because some of the entries are either (1) agents and not traders, (2) further duplicates, or (3) missing valid contact information for the survey. Various directory tools and on-the-ground field visits were used to identify additional possible candidates for the survey, bringing the total number of eligible firms for the survey to 630.¹⁸ A list of 24 freight forwarding firms¹⁹ was compiled using the Ministry of Customs and Revenue's website.

Using a survey questionnaire designed to collect data in the Pacific Islands region, all 630 active cross-border trading firms with valid contact information were contacted to participate in the survey. A total of 185 women and men traders were interviewed in Samoa from 20 February to 1 April 2020.²⁰ Based on the total number of traders with eligibility to participate and with valid contact information, a 35 percent re-

sponse rate was achieved.²¹ One hundred and five men and 80 women traders working with different sized firms and sectors in Samoa were interviewed.²² Eleven percent of traders are involved in exporting goods only, 75 percent in importing goods only, and 14 percent both export and import goods.

Ten out of 24 freight forwarders in Samoa were surveyed in the same time frame using a simplified version of the trader questionnaire. The remaining 14 consisted of state-owned businesses ineligible to participate in this survey, no answers, and refusals. Based on the number of freight forwarders that are eligible to participate, a response rate of 50 percent was achieved. Given the small sample sizes for women and men freight forwarders, the gender analysis provided for freight forwarders in this report is limited, and freight forwarder responses are reported as-a-whole rather than disaggregated by gender.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of traders and freight forwarders surveyed by gender and size of firms.

Traders are largely spread across micro, small, and medium firms. Women traders (43 percent) are more likely to operate medium-sized businesses than men traders (30 percent); however, more men traders operate large firms (8 percent) than women traders (3 percent). Five of the 10 freight forwarders surveyed are operating medium-sized firms. Only three of the 10 freight forwarders surveyed are led by women.

Table 1. Breakdown of Trader and Freight Forwarders Survey Respondents by Gender and Size of Firms

	Traders			Freight forwarders		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Micro (1-5 employees)	19	24	43	1	1	2
Small (6-19 employees)	25	41	66	1	1	2
Medium (20-99 employees)	34	32	66	1	4	5
Large (100 employees and above)	2	8	10	0	1	1
Total	80	105	185	3	7	10

¹⁷ Work to compile the population list for the sample frame began in 2019, and at that time, 2018 data was the latest available.

¹⁸ Tools used to identify additional trading and freight forwarding firms are www.yellowpagessamoa.ws; www.freightnet.com/directory; www.cargoyellowpages.com; blanket email asking for contact details; hard copies of Samoan white pages; and door-to-door visits on the ground.

¹⁹ In this note, a freight forwarder is a firm that arranges the imports and exports of goods for other companies.

²⁰ Interviews were administered by phone and responses recorded via a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system in English.

²¹ The response rate excludes from the denominator phone numbers that

have been disconnected. Because the numbers are disconnected, it is not possible to determine whether these firms are still an operation; and thus, whether they were eligible to participate in the survey.

²² The eligibility criteria for the survey included firms of any size engaged in cross-border trade (import and/or export), as well as whether the respondent owns/manages the firm. State-owned enterprises are excluded. In addition to gender, sectors are analyzed using the Harmonized Schedule as such: HS Sections 1-4 (animal, vegetable products, beverages, tobacco), HS sections 5-10 (minerals, chemicals, rubber, leather, wood, paper products), HS sections 11-12 (textile, footwear), HS sections 13-15 (stone, glass, precious stones, metals), HS sections 16-19 (machinery, transport equipment, medical instruments, ammunitions), and HS sections 20-21 (artwork/collectors' pieces/antiques and miscellaneous manufactured articles). Annex 1 provides additional details on the survey methodology and roll out.

The survey was limited to identifying constraints that existing cross-border traders face. Therefore, it may suffer from a selection bias in that it does not explore obstacles to engaging in trade among women firms who currently only trade domestically. In fact, the finding of low engagement of women firms in trading could be caused by constraints that prevent them from trading across borders. Exploring the reasons of non-engagement in cross-border trade would require a deeper assessment of why non-trading women firms do not trade, which goes beyond the scope of this survey and likely also the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (additional details of the sampling strategy and survey methodology are provided in **Annex 1**).

Given that 75 percent of survey respondents exclusively import, the survey findings in Samoa do not distinguish between importers and exporters unless otherwise specified.²³ This, however, may be possible in other countries and could provide additional insights once the survey is rolled out in other regions.

²³ The survey results have been analysed and synthesized to identify key takeaways. Survey participants are not identified in the report in order to preserve confidentiality.



Exports are concentrated in the agricultural sector in Samoa © Jonathan Ernst/World Bank



Bus station in Apia
© Corners/Shutterstock

3 Survey findings

General trader and freight forwarder findings

■ **There are slightly less women led firms than men led firms that undertake cross-border trade in Samoa.** Forty-three percent of firms surveyed are led by women and the rest led by men. Of the 10 freight forwarders surveyed in Samoa, three are led by women and the rest by men.

■ **The majority of both women and men traders have university level education and above.** All traders have undertaken a minimum of secondary school level education. A higher proportion of women traders (86 percent) than men traders (77 percent) reported having university level education and above. The traders with only secondary school education are operating micro, small, and medium-sized businesses. The percentages of traders having university level and above education are similarly high across different firm sizes (77 percent for micro firms, 77 percent for small firms, 85 percent for medium firms, and 100 percent for large firms). Women and men traders are of similar age, with around 60 percent under the age of 46 years. Fourteen percent of men traders are over 55 years old compared to a slightly fewer 9 percent of women that are over 55.

■ **Over half of the traders in Samoa (over 60 percent) have been engaged in cross-border trade for at least a decade,** with 37 percent of those having been engaged in cross-border trade for more than 15 years. Eighteen percent of traders are relatively new traders that have been active in cross-border trade for four years or less, and a further 21 percent have been active for 5–9 years. Minimal gender differences are reported. More traders that have been engaged in cross-border trade for at least a decade lead medium to large firms while more traders that have been engaged in cross-border trade for less than a decade lead micro to small firms.

Imports and Exports

■ **Most firms in Samoa import goods rather than export.** Eighty-five percent of women and 92 percent of men traders stated that they import goods. In comparison, 26 percent of women and 24 percent of men traders reported that they export goods respectively. This aligns with national merchandise trade data wherein Samoa has had a trade deficit since 2003.²⁴

■ **More women traders import products from the light industry while more men import products from the heavy industry.**²⁵ More women than men traders import products within HS sections 5–10 (mineral, plastics, and rubber products), HS sections 11–12 (textiles and footwear), HS sections 13–15 (stone, glass and metals), and HS sections 20–21 (artwork and miscellaneous manufactured products). In contrast, men importers are more prominent in importing products within HS sections 16–19 (machinery, vehicles, arms).²⁶ This aligns with the national data in which the main imports include petroleum oils and oils from bituminous minerals, meat and edible offal of fowls, vehicles, wood/coniferous, cereals, fish preparations, wheat or meslin four, telephones for cellular networks, medicaments.

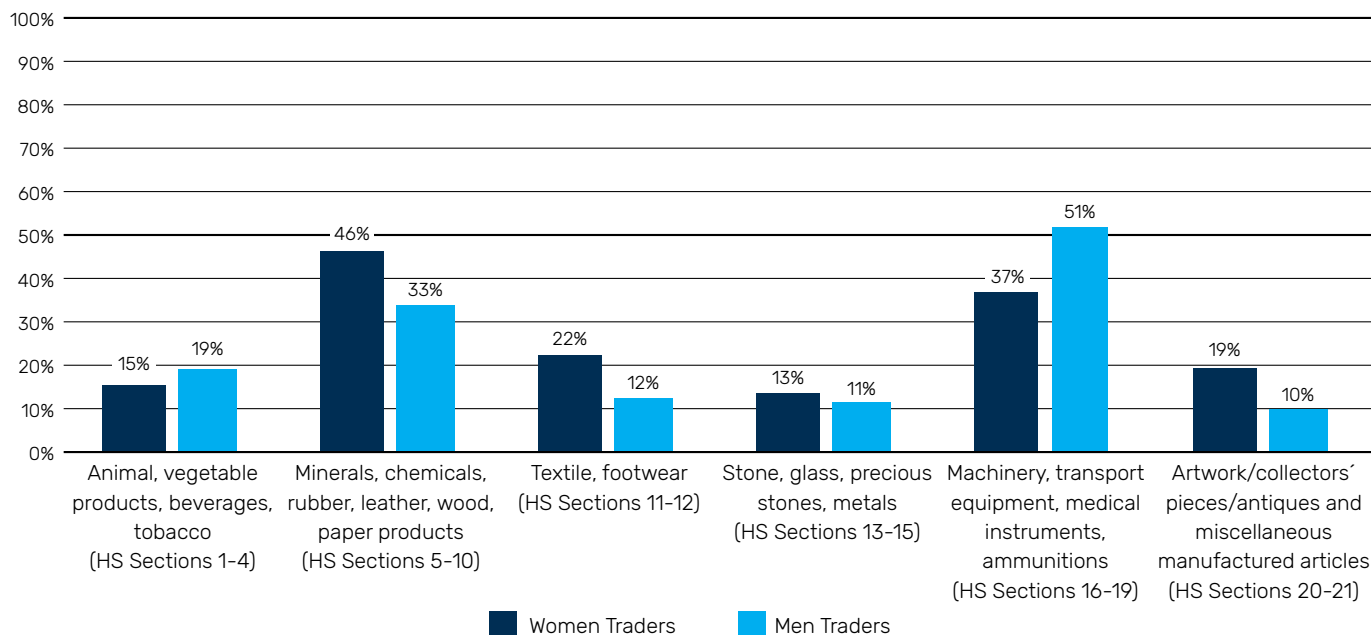
■ **Exports are concentrated in the agricultural sector.** Both women and men traders' main exports are within HS sections 1–4 (animal and vegetable products, beverages). This aligns with the national data in which main exports include fresh fish, taro, nonu juice, and coconut-based products. Notably, with the exception of agriculture products, more women export more in all other product categories.

²⁴ Central Bank of Samoa, Foreign Trade Report: Merchandise Trade, 2020.

²⁵ Heavy industry: shipbuilding, chemicals, chemical fertilizers, internal combustion engines and vehicles, finished iron and steel products, aluminium products, electrical appliances, petroleum products. Light industry: food processing, textiles, building and construction materials, wood products, rubber products, plastics, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products.

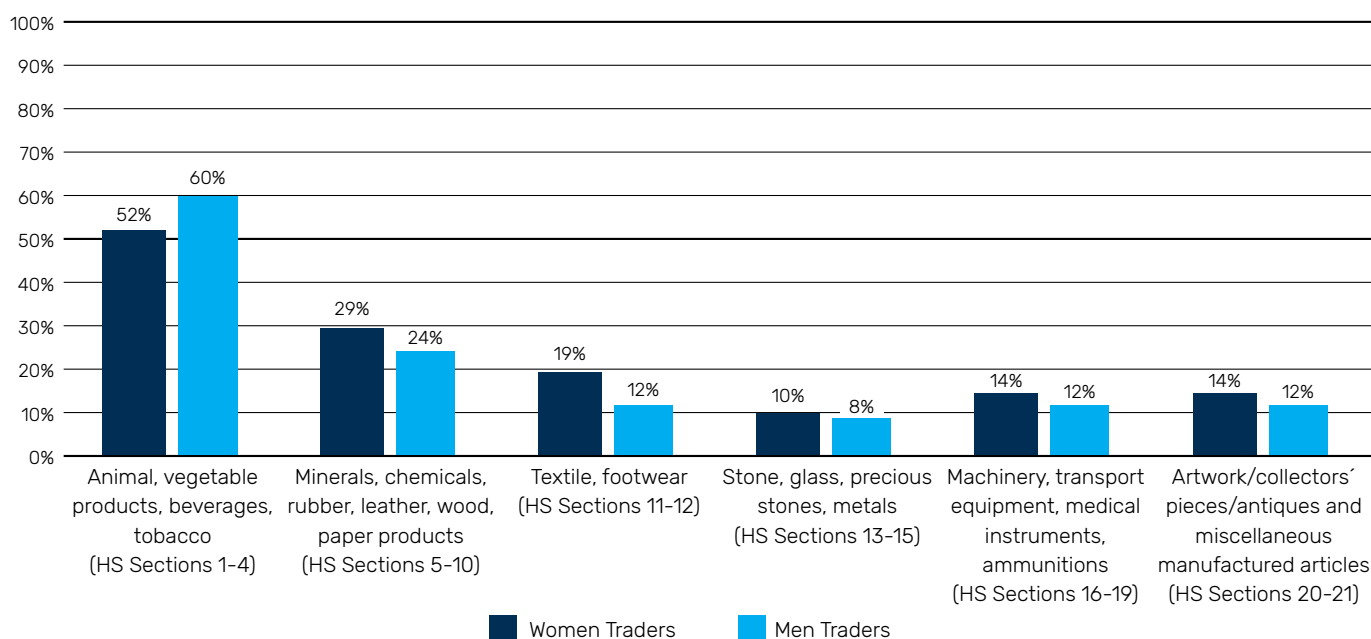
²⁶ See HS Nomenclature 2017 edition for details on the types of products that fall into each HS category (Online: <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/nomenclature/instrument-and-tools/hs-nomenclature-2017-edition/hs-nomenclature-2017-edition.aspx>).

Figure 1. Main Products Imported by Gender



Note: Traders can nominate more than one import category, so totals add to more than 100 percent.

Figure 2. Main Products Exported by Gender



Note: Traders can nominate more than one import category, so totals add to more than 100 percent.

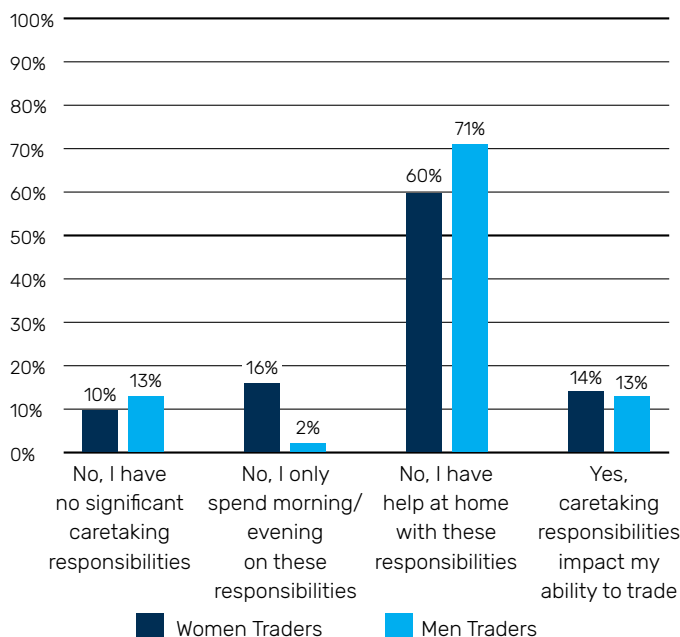
Frequency of Trade

■ **Cross-border trade is infrequent in Samoa with the exception of large firms.** Both men and women traders' frequency of trading in Samoa is similar. Eleven percent of women trade more than once a month compared to 15 percent for men, 39 percent of women trade once every month compared to 35 percent of men, and 50 percent of women and men respectively trade once every three months or less. The frequency of trading differs by firm size. More than half of micro firms (65 percent) and small firms (52 percent) stated they trade four times a year or less. Medium to large-sized firms generally trade more frequently, with 49 percent of medium firms and 50 percent of large firms trading once a month and another 11 percent of medium and 20 percent of large firms trading more than once a month.

■ Ninety-three percent of women traders indicated that they work full-time in the business whereas almost all men traders (98 percent) stated they work full-time.

Caretaking

Figure 3. Time Spent on Family Care Obligations



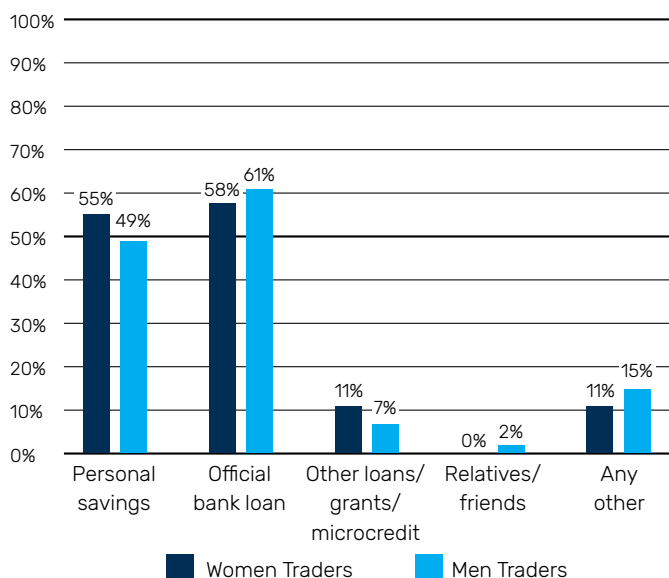
■ **Households in Samoa typically consist of multiple adults that share caretaking responsibilities.** Nonetheless, there are traders that have the burden of double duty (responsibility of both caretaking work and professional work). Fourteen percent of women and 13 percent of men traders stated that they have caretaking responsibilities that affect

their ability to trade across borders. More traders that lead micro and small firms than medium and large firms stated caretaking responsibilities affect their ability to trade.

Financing

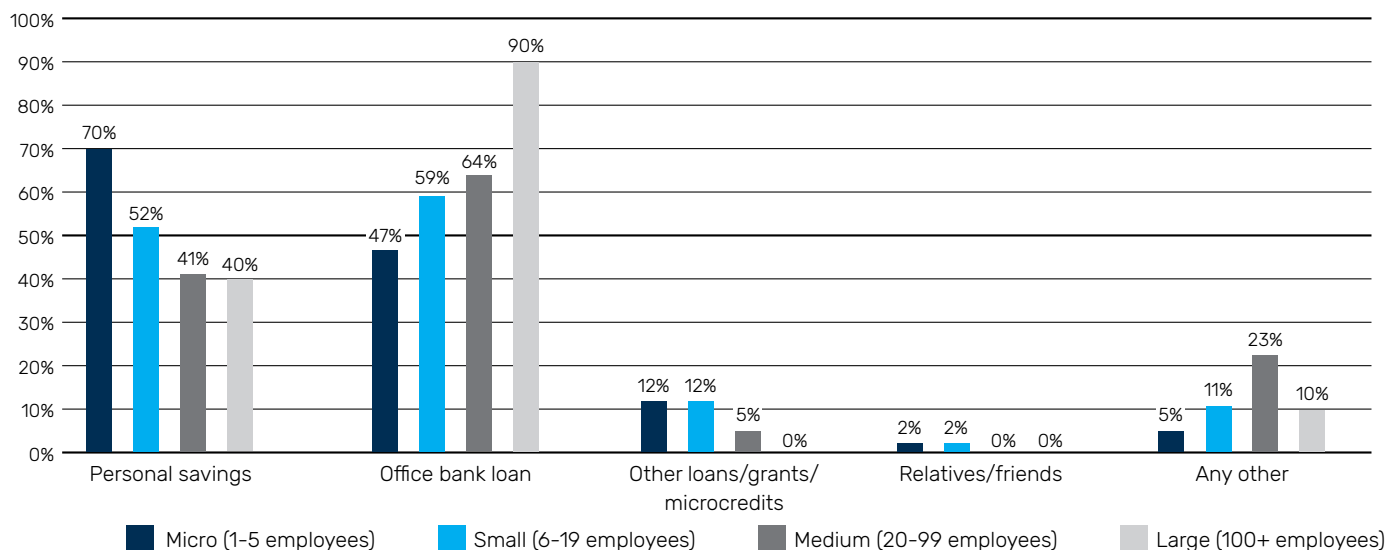
■ **Traders, and more so women traders, tend to use personal savings and official bank loans to finance their businesses.** More women traders (55 percent) reported they use personal savings to finance their business compared to men traders (49 percent). The use of official bank loans for financing is similar for women (58 percent) and men traders (61 percent).

Figure 4. Sources for Financing Business



■ **Larger firms finance their businesses with official bank loans.** Firms of medium (64 percent) and large (90 percent) size have a higher use of official bank loans to finance their business than firms of micro (47 percent) and small size (59 percent).

Figure 5. Sources for Financing Business by Firm Size



Moving Goods and Use of Intermediaries

(Note: In the island country context, “border” refers to the seaport or the airport.)

■ **Women traders in Samoa stated they visit the border to undertake trade processes and procedures on a less regular basis than men**, with 31 percent of women visiting regularly compared to 46 percent for men. However, women operating micro firms visit the border more frequently compared to men traders.

■ **The majority of traders in Samoa use freight forwarders and/or customs brokers/agents to handle shipping and paperwork.** Over 80 percent of both men and women traders use freight forwarders or customs brokers/agents for their imports or exports. Freight forwarders handle paperwork (95 percent), shipping (90 percent), and transport (67 percent). Sixty-four percent of traders using freight forwarders also use them to handle warehousing. Fewer women (59 percent) than men (66 percent) traders reported that a benefit of using a freight forwarder is to avoid safety issues at the border.

■ **Freight forwarders offer services that cater to the needs of trading firms.** Of the freight forwarders surveyed, the key services they offer are customs documentation (90 percent), transport services (80 percent), warehousing (60 percent), and payments (70 percent).

■ **Firms with in-house expertise see no need to hire freight forwarders and/or customs brokers/agents.** Of the 16 percent of traders that indicated that they do not use a freight forwarder, almost three-quarters stated that they have the expertise in-house. More women (80 percent) than men (64 percent) traders that do not use freight forwarders reported they have in-house expertise.

Figure 6. Reasons for Using Freight Forwarder/ Customs Broker/Agent

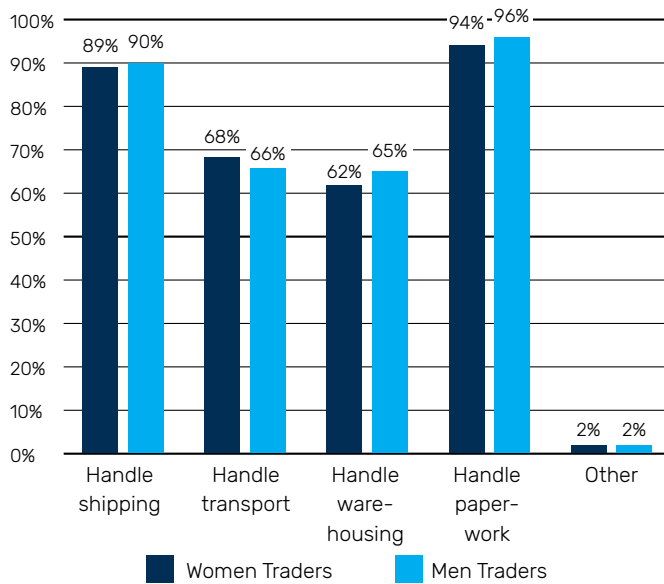
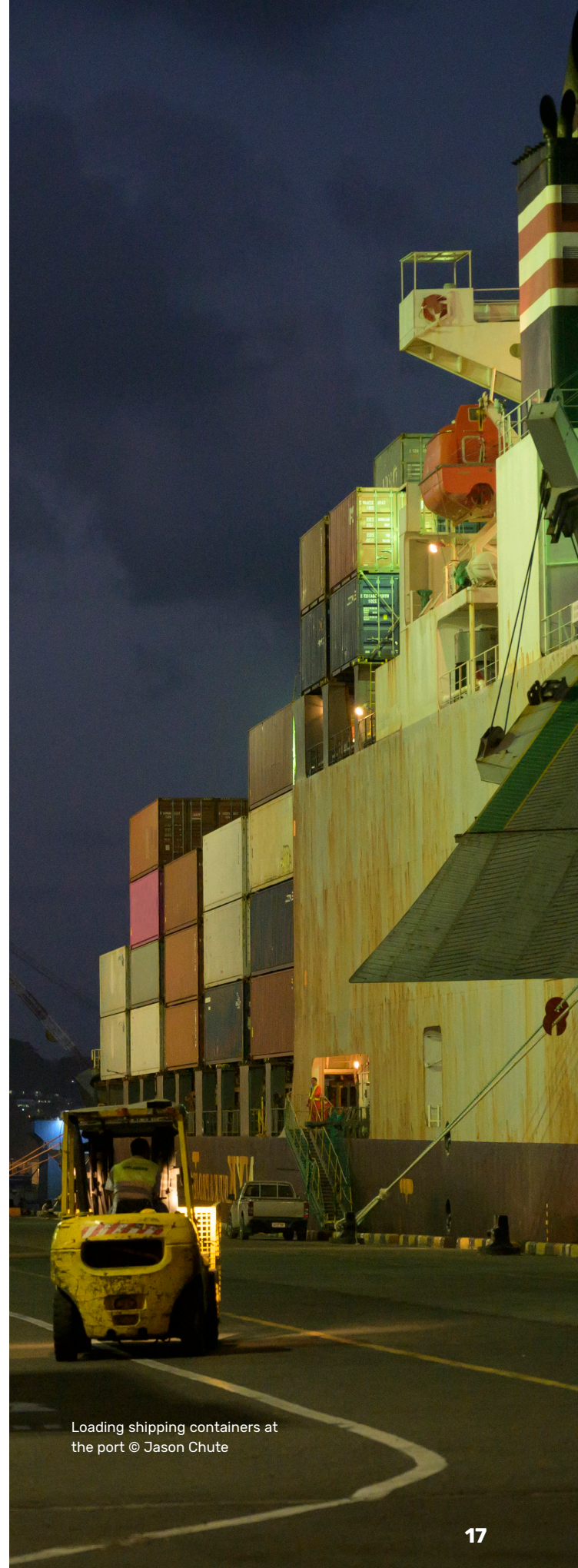
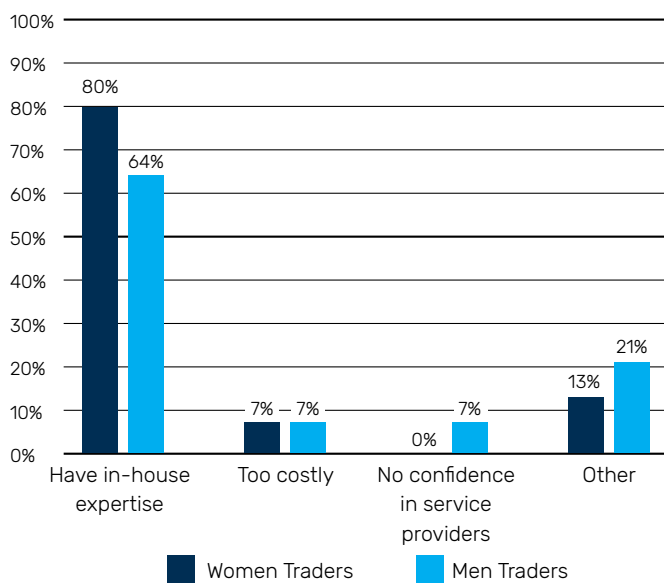


Figure 7. Reasons for Not Using Freight Forwarder/ Customs Broker/Agent



Loading shipping containers at the port © Jason Chute



Samoan woman
© Paolo Bona/Shutterstock

Trade facilitation-specific findings

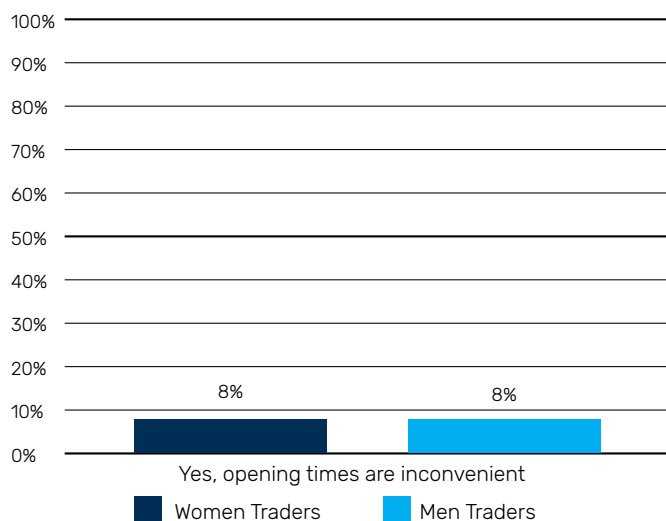
i. Port Opening Hours

Restrictive port opening hours can have a negative impact on international trade and on supply chains. If goods are delayed at ports awaiting physical inspection and clearance, the increased time to clear goods at ports will adversely affect the cost of doing business and increase trade costs. Longer clearance times, as a result of restrictive hours or inefficient border processes, have been found to significantly increase the cost of trading, and therefore, reduce international trade. Global supply chains can be affected when restrictive port opening hours delay the intermediate goods required as inputs for production. Additionally, there can be an increased risk of theft and spoilage if goods are not adequately secured or stored while waiting for border clearance.

Related survey finding(s):

■ **Port opening hours are sufficient for traders to conduct their cross-border trade activities.** Ninety-two percent of traders do not see airport or seaport opening hours as restrictive to their ability to trade. Of those that find hours restrictive are traders of micro, small, and medium-sized firms. Fifty percent (7 out of 14) of traders that indicated opening hours restrict their ability to trade also stated caretaking responsibilities affect their ability to trade across borders. Ninety percent (9 out of 10) of freight forwarders also stated that they did not find opening hours to be restrictive.

Figure 8. Perception that Air/Port Opening Hours are Restrictive to Trade



■ Inspection rates are high among all firms that import.

Seventy-four percent of women and 83 percent of men traders reported that their goods are inspected 100 percent of the time. Inspections are more frequent among traders that import animal, vegetable products and beverages (HS sections 1-4) and stone, glass, and metals (HS sections 13-15). Inspection rates are similarly high across all firm sizes. Only 8 percent of men and 18 percent of women firms reported that their goods have never been inspected.

ii. Consistency in Implementation of Border Procedures

The consistent application of border procedures provides predictability and certainty for businesses engaging in cross-border trade. If border procedures are inconsistently implemented, traders may face additional costs of complying with regulations and thereby contributing to increased time and costs of international trade.

Related survey finding(s):

■ Implementation of border procedures is viewed favorably among a majority of traders and freight forwarders.

Regardless of gender, the majority (83 percent) of traders that interact with border officials reported that official regulations and procedures are consistently implemented by border officials. Ninety percent (9 out of 10) of freight forwarders reported that official regulations and procedures are consistently implemented by border officials.

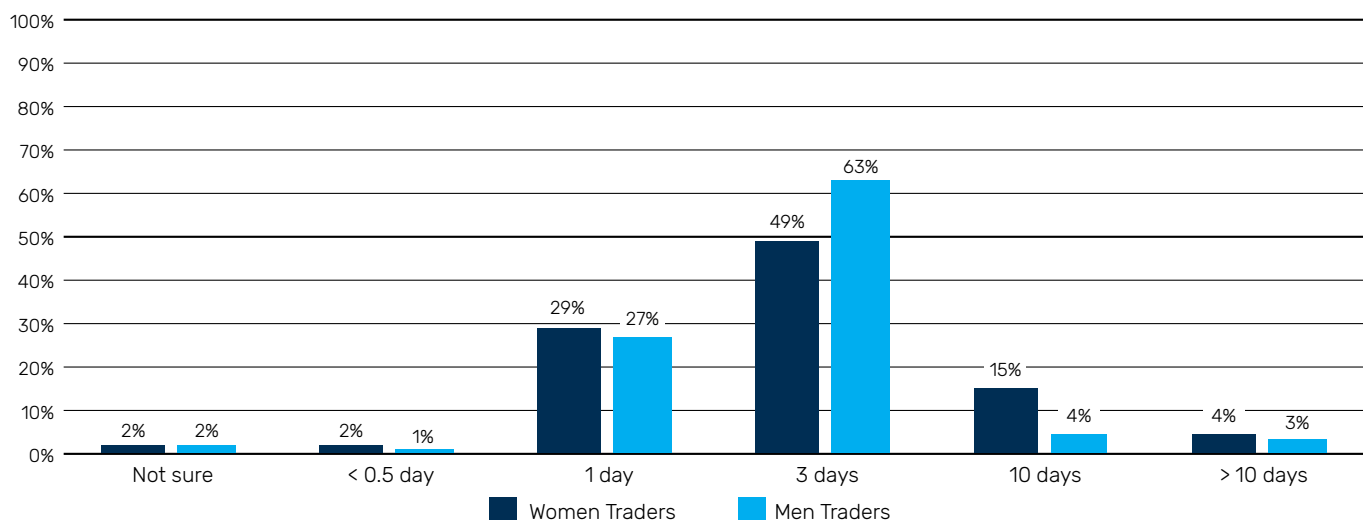
iii. Time to Release Goods

Unnecessary delays at borders – including long wait times to release goods by border officials – increase trade costs and can also erode the competitiveness of traders.²⁷ Transparent, efficient, and predictable trade can lead to significant reduction in trade costs, particularly allowing traders the benefit of just-in-time services and reduced inventory costs.²⁸ Knowing the average time it takes to clear goods at the border helps businesses make important decisions such as planning stock levels.

²⁷ World Customs Organization, *World Customs Organization and Management System Handbook: strategic and practical information*, 2007.

²⁸ International Trade Centre, *Faster customs, faster trade: Using technology for trade facilitation*, 2018; World Bank Group, *Contribution and Effectiveness of Trade Facilitation Measures*, 2018.

Figure 9. Time to Release Imported Goods



Related survey finding(s):

■ **Women traders, on average, experience longer release times than men traders for their imported goods.** Seventy-nine percent of woman traders compared with 91 percent of men traders reported that imported goods are released in three days or less. Nineteen percent of women and 7 percent of men traders stated that imported goods are released in 10 days or more. Imported goods within HS sections 1-4 (animal, vegetable products, beverages) are released in the shortest period of time. No correlation was found between release times and firm size. Seventy-five percent (3 out of 4 that import goods) of freight forwarders reported that imported goods are released in three days or less.

iv. Access to and Understanding of Official Border Regulations and Procedures

Accessing and understanding official regulations and procedures is important for transparency, compliance, and predictability of the trading environment. The publication and dissemination of changes to relevant laws and regulations must be done with sufficient advance notice and in easy-to-understand language. If traders are unaware of new customs rules and regulations, or if they cannot understand them, they may face additional compliance burdens and costs, or even face penalties for not properly meeting requirements.

Related survey finding(s):

■ **The majority of traders believe that information on official border regulations and procedures is easy to find.** Ninety-seven percent of men and 92 percent of women traders that need to find information on official border regulations and procedures believe it is easy to find. Only 5 percent of traders stated it is difficult to find information. Seven percent of the traders in the survey sample stated they do not have to search for information, mainly leaving the task to their freight forwarder or agent. All freight forwarders (10 out of 10) surveyed stated it easy to find information on official border regulations and procedures.

■ **Both women and men traders' reliance on specific sources of information is similar.** Traders' main sources for information on border regulations and procedures are border officials (71 percent) and online, including websites and trade portals, (59 percent). Similarly, online sources (70 percent) and border officials (50 percent) are the main sources for freight forwarders for information on border regulations and procedures. Albeit a small sample, all three women freight forwarders surveyed (100 percent) reported the use of the internet to locate information compared to only four out of seven (57 percent) men freight forwarders that use online sources.

■ **Regardless of gender, the majority of traders and freight forwarders have no trouble understanding information on border processes and procedures.** Ninety-six percent of both women and men traders, as well as 90 per-

cent of freight forwarders, that need to look for information say it is easy to understand.

■ **Around half of all traders and freight forwarders surveyed use multiple sources for information on *changes to border processes and procedures*.** Fifty-four percent of women and 59 percent of men traders that need to look for information on changes to official border regulations and procedures generally have to go to more than one source. Fifty percent (5 out of 10) of freight forwarders stated that they generally have to go to more than one source for information on changes to official border regulations and procedures.

■ **Official government sources are more widely used than other sources for information on changes to regulations and procedures.** For the traders that need to look for information on changes to official regulations and procedures relating to their cross-border trade activities, the main sources are official government offices (e.g. gazette/email) (68 percent), internet (47 percent), and government officials at the border/ enquiry points (42 percent). More men (49 percent) use government officials at the border/ enquiry points than women traders (32 percent).

For freight forwarders, the most popular sources are government officials not at the border/ enquiry points (e.g. gazette/ email) (70 percent) and government officials at the border/ enquiry points (60 percent). More women freight forwarders use the internet (67 percent) (2 out of 3), while more men freight forwarders use government officials at the border/ enquiry points (71 percent) (5 out of 7).

Figure 10. Sources of Information on Official Border Regulations and Procedures

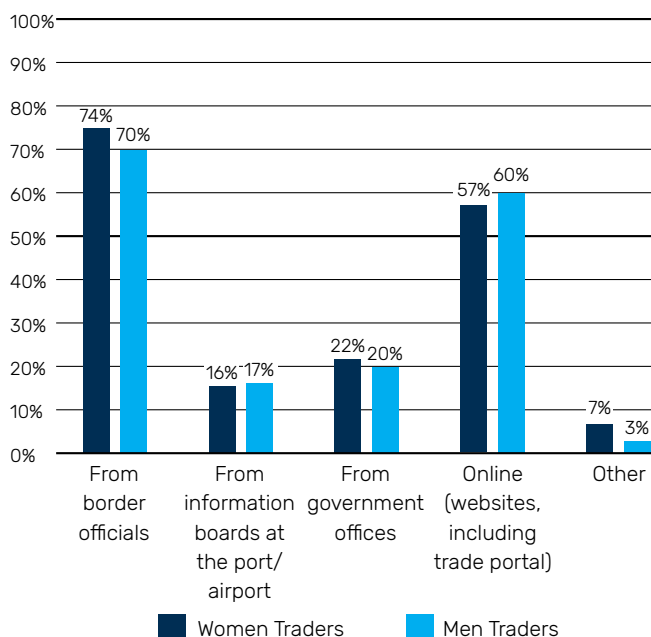
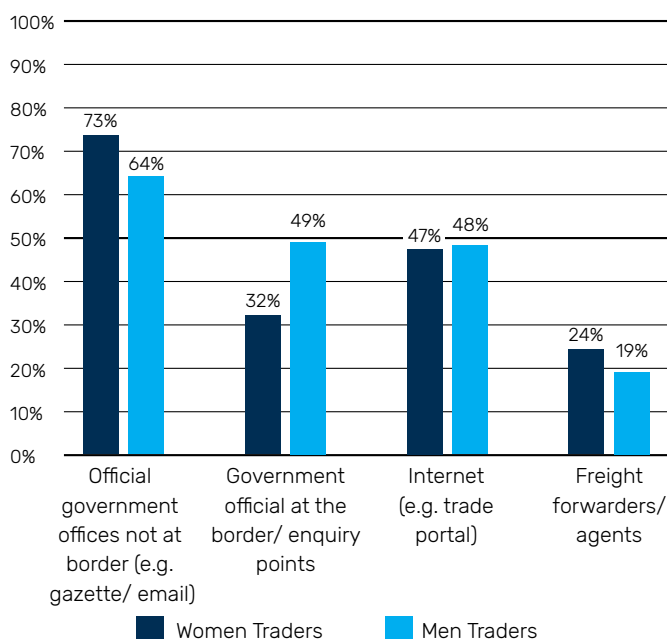


Figure 11. Top 4 Sources of Information on Changes to Official Border Regulations and Procedures



v. The National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) and Membership in Trade/Industry Associations

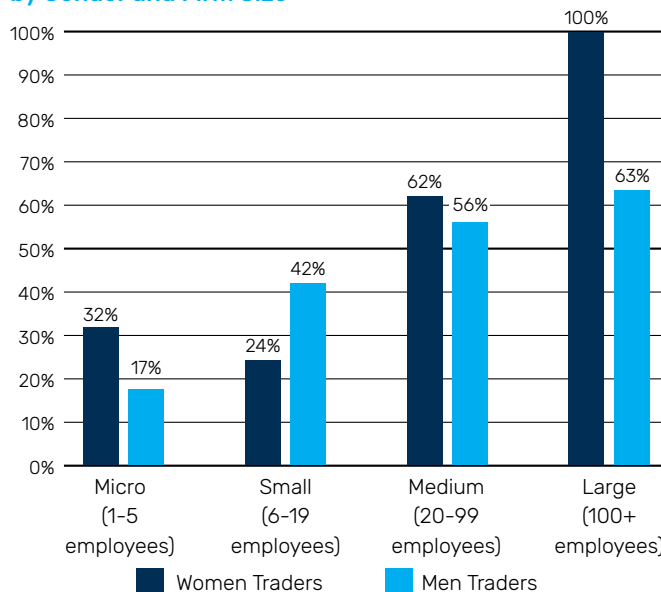
The NTFC's role is to streamline procedures and implement trade facilitation measures at the national level. It is also an important mechanism for domestic coordination and stakeholder (public and private) engagement. Samoa has a de facto²⁹ NTFC that is coordinated by The Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Ministry for Revenue (Customs).³⁰

Related survey finding(s):

■ **Awareness of the NTFC's existence is very low in Samoa.** Only 17 percent of traders are aware of the NTFC, with no gender differences identified. For freight forwarders, 40 percent (4 out of 10) of freight forwarders stated that they are aware of the NTFC. Regardless of gender, 55 percent of traders and 75 percent (3 out of 4) of freight forwarders that are aware of the existence of NTFC also know the committee has women members.

■ **Overall membership in trade/industry associations is low among traders and freight forwarders.** Forty-three percent of traders reported that they are members of a business or trade/industry association, with minimal gender difference. Larger firms are more likely to be a member of a business or trade/industry association, especially among women led large firms. For micro firms, more women than men are members of an industry/trade association. However, for small firms, more men than women are a member of industry/trade association. Fifty percent (5 out of 10) of freight forwarders reported that they are a member of a business or trade/industry association. Two of the three women freight forwarders surveyed stated they are a member of a trade/industry association.

Figure 12. Membership in Industry/Trade Association by Gender and Firm Size



vi. Consultation Mechanisms

A mechanism whereby stakeholders are consulted on any changes to official border processes and procedures can alleviate misinformation regarding planned changes related to their cross-border trade activities and can improve compliance. Equally important is a consultation mechanism that takes into consideration the feedback provided by stakeholders before any changes are implemented.

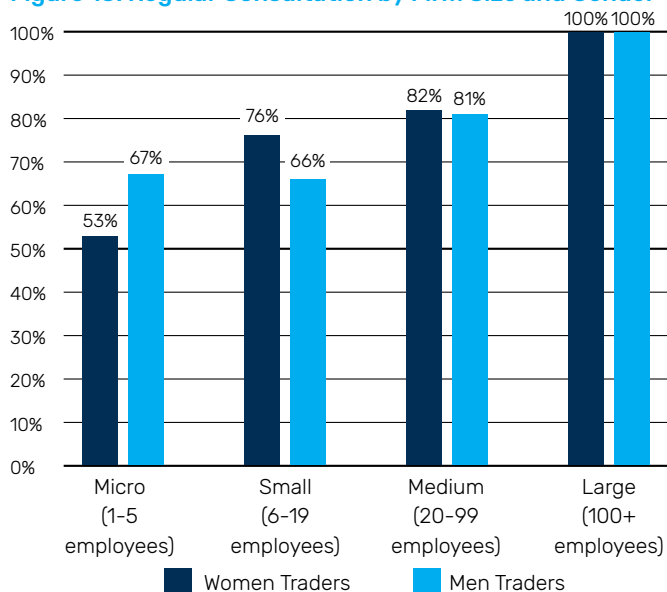
Related survey finding(s):

■ **Around 74 percent of both women and men traders say that their business is regularly consulted on changes to official trade processes and procedures.** More traders operating large (100 percent) and medium-sized (82 percent) firms reported their businesses are regularly consulted on changes compared to traders operating small (70 percent) and micro (61 percent) firms. For micro firms, women stated a lower incidence of being consulted than men. The reverse is found for small firms, where women stated a higher incidence of being consulted. Traders that have been engaged in cross-border trade for 15 years or more (81 percent) reported a higher incidence of regular consultation compared to traders that have engaged in cross-border trade for 10-14 years (76 percent), 5-9 years (64 percent), and less than four years (67 percent).

²⁹ De facto Committee: existing committee, although not created by a legal instrument.

³⁰ UNCTAD, Trade Facilitation Committees around the World (Online: <https://unctad.org/en/DTL/TLB/Pages/TF/Committees/default.aspx>).

Figure 13. Regular Consultation by Firm Size and Gender



■ **Of the traders consulted, government entities are identified as the main source of consultation (82 percent),** followed by trade/industry associations (24 percent), and trade facilitation committees (12 percent). Eighty-eight percent of traders that stated they are consulted by trade/industry association are members of a trade/industry association, revealing that trade associations can be important tools for consultation.

■ **All freight forwarders surveyed stated that they are regularly consulted on changes to official trade process and procedures.** Government entities (70 percent) (7 out of 10) and trade/industry association (40 percent) (4 out of 10) are identified as the main sources of consultation.

■ **Around three-quarters of traders and all of the freight forwarders believe their feedback is taken into consideration.** Of traders reporting that they are consulted on changes to official trade processes and procedures, 75 percent and 78 percent of men and women traders respectively believe their feedback is taken into consideration. There is no correlation to firm size. All freight forwarders (10) consulted stated that their feedback is taken into consideration.

³¹ Partial implementation means a measure is considered to be partially implemented if at least one of the following is true: (1) the trade facilitation measure is in partial - but not in full - compliance with commonly-accepted international standards, recommendations and conventions; (2) the country is still in the process of rolling out the implementation of the measure; (3) the measure is being used but on an unsustainable, short-term or ad-hoc basis; (4) the measure is implemented in some - but not all - targeted locations (such as key border crossing stations); or (5) some - but not all - targeted stakeholders are fully involved.

vii. Electronic Import/Export Declarations

Aimed at facilitating and reducing the cost of trade, the ability to submit import and export declarations through a Single Window, or other electronic systems, reduces time to comply with documentary requirements by functioning as a single point of entry/exit for all regulatory documentation for internationally traded goods. Benefits to traders include faster clearance times, transparent and predictable processes, and less bureaucracy. As of 2019, Samoa has partially³¹ implemented electronic import and export declarations³² and still relies on physical import/export forms.³³ Studies have shown that in the presence of Single Windows, bilateral trade increases by about 37 percent.³⁴

Related survey finding(s):

■ **Fewer women know whether it is possible to submit declarations electronically.** Sixty-two percent of men and 55 percent of women traders reported that it is possible to submit declarations electronically (i.e. through electronic Single Window systems or other electronic systems). Twenty-one percent of men traders and 29 percent of women reported it is not possible to submit declarations electronically. The rest reported not knowing if it is possible at all. More large firms (80 percent) reported it is possible to submit declarations electronically than micro firms (42 percent), small firms (58 percent), and medium firms (68 percent).

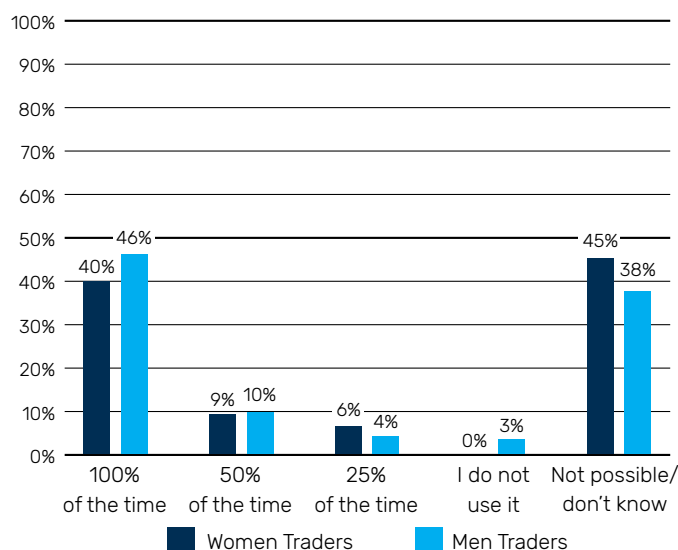
■ **Women submit declarations electronically with somewhat less frequency than men traders.** Forty percent of women traders and 46 percent of men traders reported that they submit declarations electronically 100 percent of the time and a further 9 percent of women and 10 percent of men traders do it 50 percent of the time. Larger (60 percent) and medium (50 percent) size firms compared to micro (33 percent) and small (41 percent) size firms stated that they submit declarations electronically all the time. For freight forwarders, 90 percent (9 out of 10) reported that it is possible to submit import/export declarations electronically (i.e. through electronic Single Window systems or other electronic systems), with 50 percent (5 out of 10) using the system 100 percent of the time and 30 percent (3 out of 10) half the time.

³² UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation (Online: <https://untfsurvey.org/economy?id=WSM>).

³³ For example, see direct importation guidance from the Ministry of Customs and Revenue (Online: https://revenue.gov.ws/images/2015/Customs_Procedures/2020/GEN0014---Direct-Importation.pdf).

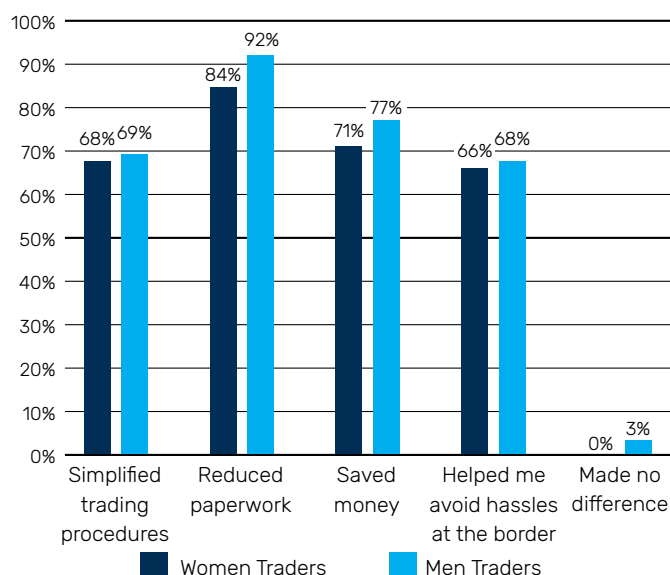
³⁴ Martinez-Zarzoso and Chelala, *The impact of single windows on trade*, 2020 (Online: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/twec.12945>).

Figure 14. Usage of Electronic Import/Export Declarations System



■ **Women and men traders rank the benefits of electronic declarations similarly.** Women traders that use the electronic declaration system reported that it assists their firm by reducing paperwork (84 percent), saving money (71 percent), and simplifying trading procedures (68 percent). Men traders that submit electronic declarations report it assists with reducing paper (92 percent), saving money (77 percent), and simplifying trading procedures (69 percent). Sixty-eight percent of men and 66 percent of women traders reported that using the electronic declaration system helps them avoid hassles at the border. More micro (89 percent) and small (83 percent) size firms than medium (67 percent) and large (50 percent) stated that use of electronic declaration system helps save money, indicating that the relative benefit of electronic declaration increases as firm size decreases – possibly to do with firm profitability and economies of scale.

Figure 15. Benefits of Submitting Declarations Electronically



viii. Pre-Declaration of Goods

Pre-declaration of goods allows traders to notify border authorities of future arrival of goods and enables traders to save time if done correctly. The pre-declaration of goods is partially implemented in Samoa.³⁵

Related survey finding(s):

■ **The awareness that pre-declarations can be submitted is relatively high among both men and women traders, though slightly fewer women traders know the procedure is available.** Eighty-one percent of men and 76 percent of women traders stated that Samoan Customs allows pre-declaration of shipments prior to arrival at the seaport or airport, with a further 12 percent of men and 13 percent of women stating they do not know whether customs allows pre-declaration and the rest believing it is not allowed.

■ **Slightly fewer women pre-declare their shipments and do so less frequently than men traders.** Eighty-one percent of men and 74 percent of women traders stated that their business pre-declares shipments to customs prior to arrival at the seaport or airport. More firms of large size (90 percent) make pre-declaration than firms of micro size (72 percent), small size (77 percent), and medium size (80 percent). Sixty-eight percent of women traders make pre-declarations 100 percent of the time compared to 75 percent of men traders.

³⁵ As of 2019 and according to the UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation.

■ All (10 out of 10) women and men freight forwarders reported that Samoan Customs allows pre-declaration of shipments prior to arrival at the seaport or airport, with 60 percent (6 out of 10) submitting pre-declarations all the time and a further 30 percent (3 out of 10) submitting it half the time.

ix. Electronic Payments and Other Payments

Since 2017, Samoan Customs has provided for payment of customs duties and fees through electronic funds transfer at point of sale (EFTPOS). Electronic payment was notified by the Government of Samoa as Category C under the WTO TFA with a definitive date for implementation in December 2027.³⁶

Generally speaking, using cash for payment may carry risks such as theft and threats to personal safety and may increase the likelihood of corruption and the payment of “speed money”. In addition, clearance times for checks and money orders may tie up working capital, which can pose constraints on smaller firms.

Related survey finding(s):

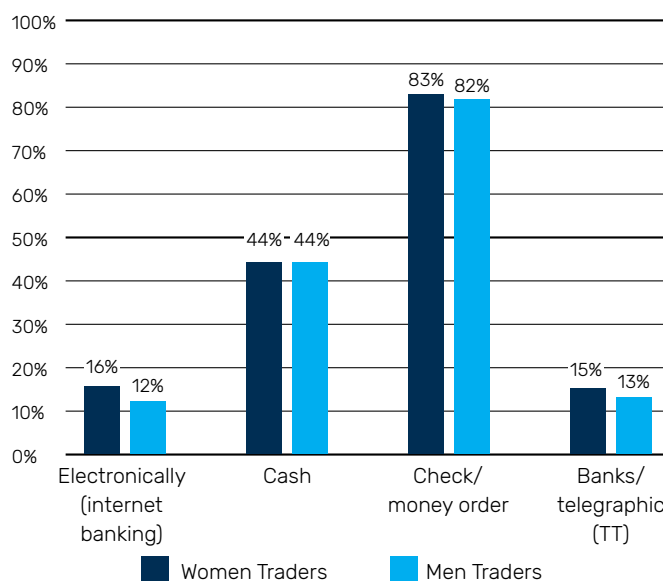
■ **More women traders report that official fees associated with cross-border trade can be paid electronically than men traders.** Fifty-three percent of women traders stated that either all or some official fees can be paid electronically compared to 38 percent of men traders. By firm size, 28 percent of micro and 23 percent of small firms are not sure whether official fees can be paid electronically while 12 percent of medium firms and zero large firms report that they do not know.

■ **The most frequently used methods of payment for official fees and charges are checks/money order (82 percent) and cash (44 percent).** Internet banking is used by 14 percent of traders. Minimal gender differences are identified in payment methods for official fees and charges. Check/money order or cash are also the top methods of payment regardless of firm size.

■ **Freight forwarders are mixed in their opinions of whether official fees associated with cross-border trade can be paid electronically,** with 40 percent (4 out of 10) indicating all official fees can be paid electronically, 10 percent (1 out of 10) believing some fees can be paid electronically, 40 percent (4 out of 10) reporting no official fees can be

paid electronically, 10 percent (1 out of 10) not sure. Freight forwarders’ most frequent methods of payment for official fees and charges relating to goods is check/money order (90 percent) (9 out of 10) and cash (60 percent) (6 out of 10). None of the three women freight forwarders surveyed pays cash, preferring to use check/money order.

Figure 16. Methods of Payment for Official Fee and Charges



■ **All women and men traders and freight forwarders reported that they receive receipts for all fees and charges that are paid.** The majority of traders and freight forwarders receive receipts 100 percent of the time. Two percent of traders receive receipts either half the time or some time.

■ **Very few traders and no freight forwarders have paid unofficial fees.** Only 2 percent of men and 3 percent of women traders reported that they paid speed money or unofficial fees to facilitate the processing of shipments in the last year, though, not every time that they traded. For those that paid unofficial fees, it ranged from less than 5 percent to greater than 10 percent of the value of their business’ goods. No freight forwarder reported that they paid speed money or unofficial fees to facilitate the processing of shipments.

x. Detention of Goods

Customs has the power to search imports and exports and exclude, detain and/or seize, and destroy counterfeit and infringing products. To avoid time and financial loss to traders, best practice is for customs to promptly inform traders that goods have been detained for inspection.

³⁶ WTO Notification of Category Commitments Under the Agreement on Trade Facilitation: Communication from Samoa: Addendum (G/TFA/N/WSM/1/Add.1), 2019.

Related survey finding(s):

- **Detention rates are relatively low in Samoa.** Nine percent of women and men traders respectively have had their goods detained without being promptly informed. Seven percent of small firms, 5 percent of small firms, and 15 percent of medium firms have had their goods detained while no large firms reported having had their goods detained. Overall, 3 percent of all traders reported that they had goods detained every time and 5 percent have had goods detained up to 25 percent of the time.

- Slightly more traders (12 percent) importing goods within HS sections 16–19 (machinery, vehicles, and arms) reported having their goods detained. Similarly, 12 percent of traders exporting goods within HS sections 1–4 (animal, vegetable products and beverages) stated they have had their goods detained.

- Twenty percent (2 out of 10) of freight forwarders reported that they have had goods detained at least 25 percent of the time while the others have not had their goods detained at all.

xi. Official Grievance Procedures

An official grievances mechanism is important to enable traders to contest and appeal against border agencies' decisions

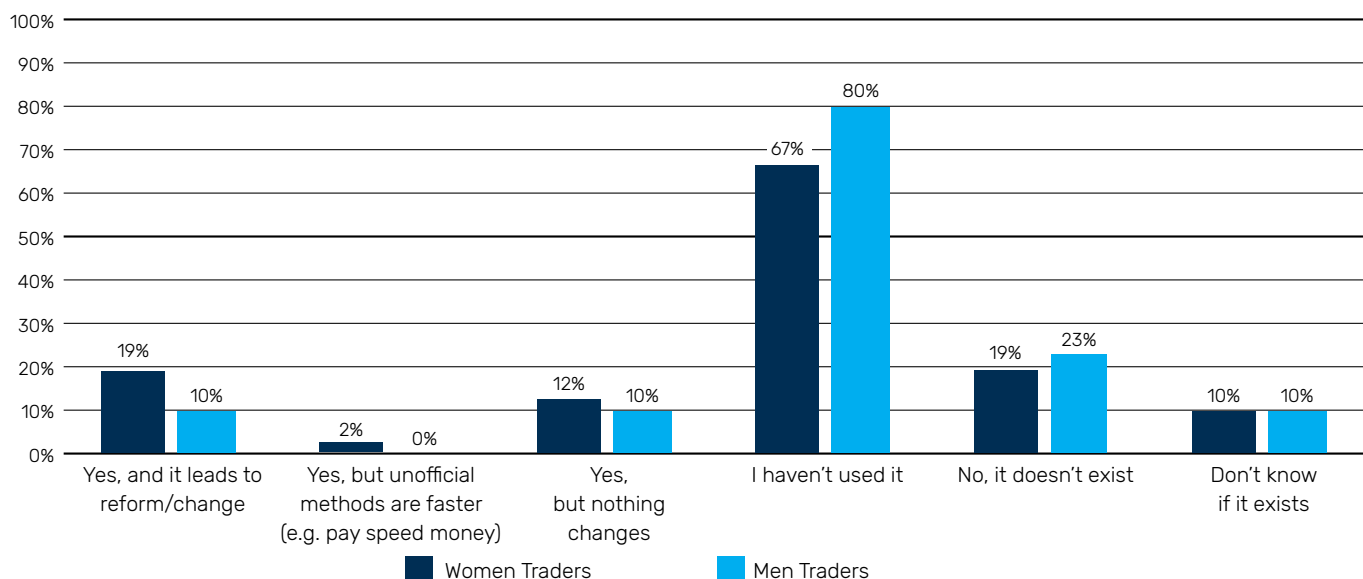
regarding a detained shipment or non-compliance. The Samoa Ministry of Customs and Revenue has a published appeal process, which outlines the steps involved in appealing against a decision by customs.³⁷

Related survey finding(s):

- **More than half (69 percent) of traders reported that a formal grievance procedure is in place if consignments are withheld, with minimal gender difference.** Traders of larger size firms are more likely to state that a formal grievance procedure is available. Of the traders that are aware of the existence of a grievance procedure, 19 percent of women traders indicated that the grievance procedure leads to reform and change while 10 percent of men traders feel the same way. Furthermore, around three-quarters (74 percent) of traders are aware of the procedure but have not used it, with more men (80 percent) having never used it than women (67 percent). Traders may not have needed to use grievance procedures because detention rates are low in Samoa (see preceding section x).

- Seventy percent (7 out of 10) of freight forwarders reported that a formal grievance procedure is available if consignments are withheld. Three of the seven freight forwarders that are aware of the grievance procedure also reported that it leads to reform and change while the remaining have not used it.

Figure 17. Traders' Awareness and Opinion of the Existence of Official Grievance Procedures



Note: The percentages for the first four categories are based on the sample population subset that responded "yes, there are formal complaint/grievance procedures in place" (i.e. N=71 for men traders and N=57 for women traders). The percentages for the remaining two categories are based on the overall sample population (i.e. N=105 for men traders and N=80 for women traders) as a proportion of all traders that either believe the procedures do not exist or do not know whether they exist.

³⁷ See guidance on the initial appeal process by the Ministry for Revenue at https://revenue.gov.ws/images/2015/Customs_Procedures/GEN009---Initial-Appeal-to-Customs.pdf for full details on the appeal process.

xii. Safety and Security at the Border

Safety and security issues at the border can arise from unwelcome attention, requests for favors, and other verbal or physical conduct by both officials and non-officials. These behaviors create and foster hostile or offensive environments that may impact a trader's ability or desire to undertake trade.

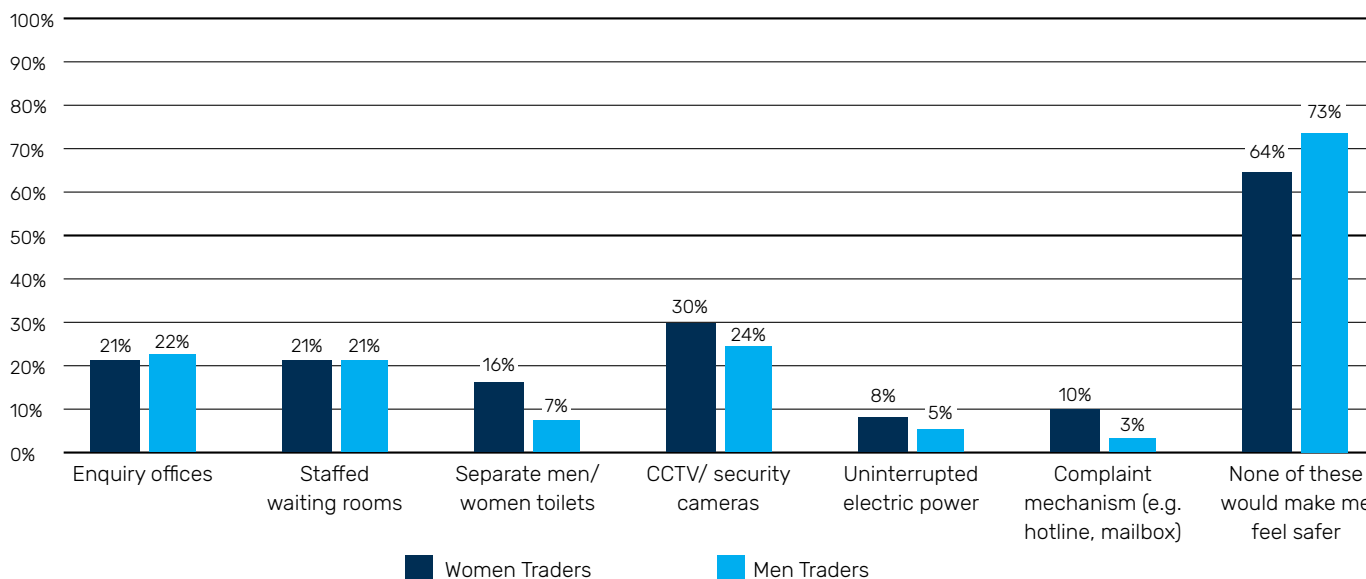
■ **Almost all traders and freight forwarders that go to the seaport/airport feel safe at the port/airport they visit most frequently.** Only 3 percent of traders feel at times unsafe when visiting borders. In undertaking processes at the seaport and airport, two traders surveyed reported that they experienced verbal harassment or threats at the border. One reported experiencing theft. The rest of the traders

interviewed reported no harassment. All freight forwarders that visit the airport or seaport reported that they feel safe. Almost all the traders and freight forwarders stated that officials at the seaport or airport they visit most frequently are identifiable by uniform and/or visible ID.

■ The majority of traders reported that the seaport/airport they most frequently visit has enquiry offices, CCTV/security cameras, separate male/female toilets, staff waiting rooms, complaint mechanisms, and uninterrupted electric power.

■ Thirty percent and 24 percent of women and men traders that go to the seaport/airport respectively stated that an improvement in CCTV/security cameras would make them feel safer and more comfortable.

Figure 18. Traders Would Feel Safer/More Comfortable if the Seaport/Airport Had More





Container ship crossing
Pacific waters © Lee Yiu Tung/
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4 Recommendations based on survey responses

The survey has highlighted several areas that need addressing to improve the design of trade facilitation interventions in order to better address traders' needs in Samoa, especially with particular attention placed on the needs of women traders. Recommendations are aimed at areas found in need of improvement and at addressing any significant information asymmetries that women traders face in their cross-border activities.

The following recommendations relate to the importing and exporting experiences of traders and freight forwarders identified through this survey.

1. Strengthen the role of the NTFC and improve knowledge about the Committee. Encourage membership in trade/industry associations.

Despite the fact that Samoa has an NTFC, the survey results revealed that awareness of its existence among traders is low, albeit a larger proportion of freight forwarders are aware of the NTFC's existence. Given the importance of the NTFC for planning and implementing trade facilitation reforms, as well as for public-private consultations, increased awareness of the body among private sector stakeholders is critical. At the same time, it would be beneficial to increase trader and freight forwarder membership in trade/industry associations as these entities often serve as hubs for trade related information.

Specific recommendations include the following:

- Strengthen the role of the NTFC to improve trade facilitation in the country. Ensure that trade/industry associations will be represented in the NTFC as well as strong representation of women, so that the needs of all traders and freight forwarders will be taken into consideration when reforms or new regulations are proposed.
- Ensure that trade and industry associations are provided latest information related to cross-border trade to be able to better provide guidance to their members.
- Support a marketing drive by trade/industry associations and local chambers of commerce to increase membership so that trading firms may gain access to associations' collective power, resources, and expertise.

³⁸ See WCO Immediate Release Guidelines (Online: <http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/facilitation/instruments-and-tools/tools/immediate-release-guidelines/immediate-release-guidelines.pdf?b=web>).

- Private sector representatives in the NTFC must be encouraged to consult widely with their members to ensure all are informed and can contribute to the government dialogue. Encourage industry associations and trade organizations to promote the existence of the NTFC to its members to increase awareness of the NTFC and strengthen the NTFC's role in trade facilitation.

2. Reduce time to release goods.

Time to release imported goods is found to be three days or less for most traders. Of concern, however, is the significant delay (10 days or more) for the release of goods experienced by some traders, with women again experiencing longer delays than men. Clearing goods at customs efficiently and expediting the release of goods at the border reduces time and trade costs for businesses.

Specific recommendations for reducing the time required to release goods include:

- Investigate why women traders are experiencing longer release times of goods.
- Remove import/export paper declarations and ensuring traders can submit documentation via electronic platforms.
- Expedite and publicize the roll-out of customs automation and pursue implementation of a National Single Window.
- Improve risk management practices to reduce the number of shipments requiring inspection. Currently, inspection rates were found to be quite high among all firms that import, with 74 percent of women and 83 percent of men traders reporting that their goods are inspected 100 percent of the time.
- Coordinate any physical inspection of goods between customs, health, agriculture, trade, and environment authorities (simultaneous inspections).
- Provide information and training for border officials on the WCO guidelines on expediting the release of certain small and low value consignments using Immediate Release Guidelines and applying de minimis regimes.³⁸
- Use Time Release Studies to measure actual time from arrival to the physical release of goods. This assists in identifying where the bottlenecks and inefficiencies

lie in the border processes; and resultantly, where reforms can be made to address bottlenecks.³⁹

- Provide regular training and capacity building for customs and other border agency staff to ensure border agents are up-to-date on operating processes and procedures to efficiently and consistently adhere to guidelines and minimize processing times at the border.⁴⁰

3. Improve access to information on official border regulations and procedures.

Around half of the traders and freight forwarders surveyed go to more than one source to obtain information on official border regulations and procedures, with many relying on border officials. To reduce this inefficiency, it is recommended that a one-stop service via a website – potentially linked to the Samoa Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI)⁴¹ – and a physical office are established to provide all the information required to import and/or export goods. Smaller traders that are not associated with the SCCI, the Samoa Association of Manufacturers & Exporters, or the Samoa Women in Business Inc. can be assisted through the Small Business Hub (SBH) through their information sharing.

4. Strengthen formal trade consultations between relevant border agencies and representatives of trading communities to consider the needs of the business community.

Around a quarter of traders surveyed are not regularly consulted (or do not know if they are regularly consulted) on changes to official trade processes and procedures, and these are mainly traders operating small and micro firms. This points to a need for strengthening or introducing formal trade consultations between relevant border agencies and small/micro traders directly through meetings with representatives via trade/industry associations. Eighty-eight percent of traders surveyed who stated they are consulted by trade/industry association are members of a trade/industry association. This demonstrates that trade/industry associations are important platforms for consultation. This can be achieved through the formation of a formal consultative committee representing all parties involved in cross-border trade.⁴²

³⁹ See *WCO Guide to Measure the Time Required for the Release of Goods* (Online: http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/facilitation/instruments-and-tools/tools/time-release-study/time_release_study%20pdf?db=web).

⁴⁰ See *Doing Business 2019: Trading Across Borders* (Online: <https://www.doingbusiness.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/media/Annual-Reports/English/DB19-Chapters/DB19-Trading.pdf>).

5. Enhance electronic tools and promote usage of these tools.

Despite Samoa having partially implemented electronic import/export declarations, many are still unaware that it is possible to do so. General awareness and submission of electronic declarations is also slightly lower among women traders compared to men. In addition, with only EFTPOS available, both traders and freight forwarders use cash/check to pay official fees and charges more frequently than other types of payment methods. For many small and micro traders, the use of cash is common. Using cash for payment may carry risks such as theft and threats to personal safety and may increase the likelihood of corruption and the payment of “speed money”. Clearance times for checks and money orders may tie up working capital, which can pose constraints on smaller traders.

Adoption of electronic tools can help to save costs and improve efficiency. Specific recommendations include:

- Increase awareness of and communicate the time saving benefits of electronic declarations to the trading community. This can be achieved through industry representatives in trade associations and through the NTFC, as well as targeting women-focused trade associations to reduce the information gap that women traders face.
- Continue improving electronic payments systems.

⁴¹ The Samoa Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) is the country's umbrella body that has strong relations with the Government of Samoa. Its members include groups such as the Samoa Association of Manufacturers & Exporters (SAME), Samoa Women in Business Inc. (WIBI), among others.

⁴² See the *Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide* for further details (Online: <http://tfig.unece.org/contents/formal-trade-consultation.htm>).



Fresh bananas for export
© Josef Hader/World Bank



Container ship outside of Samoa
© Jose Matheus/Shutterstock

Annex 1

Methodology

Questionnaire

Feedback from Focus Group Discussions in Malawi, Zambia, Fiji, and Vietnam with women and men traders, and meetings with government stakeholders, civil society organizations and private sectors representatives helped the team in developing the survey questionnaire. The trader survey rolled out in the Pacific Island region contains 52 questions, is divided into eight sections, and is largely focused on areas related to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, including, but not limited to access to information, electronic payments, seizure of goods, pre-declaration, and the National Trade Facilitation Committee. Some questions outside the scope of the WTO TFA – such as on safety at border posts – are included in the survey to better understand the cross-border trading environment in each of the countries. A simplified questionnaire (with 46 questions) is used for freight forwarders.

Master List

An initial list of 638 active trading firms was derived for the survey using lists provided by the Ministry of Customs and Revenue and Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour (MCIL) in Samoa. Any individuals importing/exporting, NGOs, and diplomats were removed from the list. The lists provided included company names and descriptions of products traded along with their respective HS product codes. Not included were the names of owners, ownership shares, or the gender of owners.

Remediation work was undertaken to verify firm information and identify valid telephone details. Where possible, telephone numbers of firm were validated using online searches. The master list was supplemented by the Tebbutt Research field team on the ground in Samoa who used hard copies of telephone directories and conducted door-to-door visits to identify additional firms eligible for the survey.

From the initial list, 142 contacts were removed, leaving a balance of 496. The reasons for the removal of contacts from the initial list are shown in **table 2**. The addition of 134 traders identified by the local field team provided a final field list of 630 traders to contact for participation in the survey.

The initial master list of 25 freight forwarders was provided by the World Bank Group. The list contained two duplicate contacts, which were removed. Using the website www.cargoyellowpages.com, the field team supplemented the list by one additional firm. The final list of 24 freight forwarders was used for the survey's sample frame.

Table 2. Usable Listings for Survey

Initial list supplied	638
Less removals through remediation work	
Agents / not traders	8
Duplicates	104
No valid contact (no email)	30
Total removals	142
Usable listings for field survey	496
Supplemental list exercise to identify additional participants	134
Final field list	630

Sampling Strategy

All active cross-border traders with valid contact information were contacted to participate in the survey in Samoa. Interviews were undertaken using computer aided telephone interviewing (CATI) technology, where respondents were contacted on a random basis by enumerators. The enumerators used a call schedule protocol that enabled a wide range of times of day and days of week to call firms, maximizing the chances of reaching respondents. Each phone number was attempted three times a day for the period of the survey before treating the number as “not available”. These protocols are automated by the CATI software.

All firms (630) from the master list that were identified to have valid contact information were contacted by phone for interviews, with 185 firms successfully interviewed (105 men and 80 women led firms). Interviews were conducted in English by telephone. There were 57 interview refusals and 388 no call answers, wrong phone numbers, or transfers that were unsuccessful. **Table 1** provides a breakdown of trader interviewees by gender and size.

All 24 freight forwarders contained on the list were contacted, and 10 were interviewed. There was one interview refusal, four state owned firms (not eligible), and nine no call answers.

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