The Trade Facilitation Support Program (TFSP), managed by the World Bank Group’s Trade and Competitiveness Global Practice, provides support for countries seeking assistance in aligning their trade practices with the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Benefits of Trade Facilitation

- Recent studies and empirical evidence point to the significant impact of trade facilitation reforms on GDP, trade flows, and welfare.
- Trade facilitation boosts trade by reducing costs and delays for traders through measures that provide for predictability, simplicity, transparency, and uniformity in border clearance.
- The OECD predicts that, for every 1 percent reduction in global trade costs, global income goes up by $40 billion.
- The WTO estimates that a full implementation of the TFA reforms could reduce trade costs by 14.5 percent on average for member countries or more than 16 percent for Least Developed Countries.
- Full implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement is estimated to result in global gains of approximately $101–$210 billion per year through reductions in time spent at customs. (Hillberry and Zhang 2015)

Over 60 countries have requested assistance and implementation support has begun in more than 34 countries.

Over 40 countries have reported assistance and implementation support has begun in more than 34 countries.

Countries requiring assistance per region:

- MENA: 5%
- S. Asia: 2%
- EAP: 25%
- LAC: 22%
- ECA: 18%
- Africa: 28%

Donor partners:
- Australia: Department of Foreign Aid and Trade (DFAT)
- Canada: Global Affairs Canada
- European Commission
- Norway: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Switzerland: State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)
- USA: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
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- World Trade Organization
- Asian Development Bank
- IATA
- Inter-American Development Bank
- International Monetary Fund
- International Trade Centre
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- World Customs Organization
- World Bank Group

Our Partners

Seven partners have committed US$32 million to the program. We coordinate closely on the ground with international financial institutions, multilateral organizations, and other partners.

Over 60 countries have requested assistance and implementation support has begun in more than 34 countries.

Find out more:

The Trade Facilitation Support Program, managed by the World Bank Group, provides support for countries seeking assistance in aligning their trade practices with the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Making International Trade Work for Developing Countries

"Trade facilitation plays an important role in development. It enhances countries’ competitiveness, allowing trade in goods on time and with lower transaction costs."
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Find out more:
We support countries to learn from their experiences, monitor and measure success. Tools include:

- Review and validate self-assessments and identify reform gaps.
- Support to improved risk management practices.
- Facilitating inter-agency cooperation.
- Advance Cargo Declaration.
- National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) to strengthen inter-agency coordination and enhance public-private sector dialogue on trade facilitation.
- Tools for implementation.

The WBG can provide support to develop a reform roadmap and timeline for implementation, including validation with all relevant public and private stakeholders. Once the reform roadmap is validated, the appropriate level of technical assistance can be offered by the WBG.

Program Activities

Variable self-assessment: The WBG will support countries in updating the TFA self-assessment and undertaking an in-country field validation.

Identify category commitments: The WBG can support countries in finalizing category A, B, and C commitments.

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“Wealthy inform, readily available and clear instructions and flowcharts on how to export or import, traders should find it quicker and easier to comply and discharge all their formalities with fewer time-consuming interactions.”

—Vincent Seretse, Botswana Minister for Trade and Industry

The World Bank Group played a significant role in establishing the National Trade Facilitation Committee. Their assistance included conducting a self-assessment and drafting the NTFC’s terms of reference, work plan and rules of procedures. Thanks to this project, the framework governing the establishment and mode of operation of the NTFC has been fully introduced and put in place.”

—Novo Radovic, Montenegro Deputy-Minister of Finance and Co-Chair of the NTFC

We use a rapid-response approach to providing reform technical assistance.

Knowledge, Learning and Measurement

We support countries to learn from their experiences, monitor and measure success. Tools include:

- A validation assessment guide to help client countries conduct in-country assessments and determine alignment with the TFA.
- Technical assistance and capacity building support needed, and priorities in implementing the TFA.
- The guide is based on the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation Articles and builds on the WTO Self-Assessment Guide prepared by the World Bank.

A tracking tool is under development to assess TFA alignment, trade facilitation improvement, identify reforms priorities and gaps and opportunities, and report and track on progress.

Tools include:

- Early Results

We help developing countries reform trade facilitation laws, procedures, processes and obligations to align with the WTO TFA.

We assist countries to design practical reform strategies, including the development of detailed reform sequencing plans that accord with country priorities, available resources and local implementation capacities. We focus on rapid response interventions that will create and sustain reform momentum.

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Selection Criteria

To receive support, countries are expected to have demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing trade facilitation reforms in the areas covered by the WTO TFA. The TFSP provides assistance to countries with limited access to other donor support, particularly, LMI-eligible, low income, fragile and conflict affected countries; and middle-income countries that act as gateways to least developed countries (LDC) and/or whose performance significantly impacts the performance of regional LDCs. Requests for technical assistance can be made directly to the Trade Facilitation Support Program or through World Bank Group offices and donor partners.

Technical Assistance Activities

- Assist with scheduling of commitments and implementation timelines.
- Review and validate self-assessments and identify reform gaps.
- Support and strengthen National Trade Facilitation Committees.
- Review national trade laws and implement reforms to ensure alignment with the TFA.
- Simplify, streamline and harmonize trade procedures and documents to reduce time and cost to trade.
- Improve transparency and accountability measures of trade practiced.
- Foster partnerships between public and private sectors to catalyze trade.
- Facilitate reforms.
- Integrate risk-based management systems and other contemporary border management approaches into border inspections and clearance processes.
- Review inter-agency coordination and design institutional capacity building plans.
- Implement policies and systems and support regional solutions to facilitate the recognition of agreed upon standards for goods crossing borders.
- Support the design and implementation of automated systems and innovative technologies to facilitate trade.

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- Integrate risk-based management systems and other contemporary border management approaches into border inspections and clearance processes.
- Review inter-agency coordination and design institutional capacity building plans.
- Implement policies and systems and support regional solutions to facilitate the recognition of agreed upon standards for goods crossing borders.
- Support the design and implementation of automated systems and innovative technologies to facilitate trade.
We help developing countries reform trade facilitation laws, procedures, processes and gateways to align with the WTO TFA. We assist countries to design practical reform strategies, including the development of detailed sequencing plans that accord with country priorities, available resources and local implementation capacities. We focus on rapid response interventions that will create and sustain reform momentum.

Our Approach

Technical Assistance

We use a rapid-response approach to providing reform technical assistance.

Knowledge, Learning and Measurement

We support countries to learn from their experiences, monitor and measure success. Tools include:

- A validation assessment guide to help client countries conduct in-country assessments and determine alignment with the WTO TFA.
- A technical assistance and capacity-building support needs and priorities in implementing the TFA.
- The Guide is based on the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation Articles and builds on the WTO Self-Assessment Guide prepared by the World Bank.

Facilitating inter-agency cooperation: Support to Zambia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Kosovo, Atlantic Montenegrin and Moldova in establishing National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) to strengthen inter-agency coordination and enhance public-private sector dialogue on trade facilitation.

Foster partnerships between public and private sectors to catalyze trade

We use a rapid-response approach to providing reform technical assistance.

Program Activities

- Validate self-assessment: The WBG will support countries in updating the TFA self-assessment and undertaking in-country field validations.
- Identify category commitments: The WBG can support countries in finalizing category A, B, and C commitments.
- Finalize reform priorities: The WBG can provide assistance to develop a reform roadmap and timeline commitments.
- Facilitate reform: The WBG can provide assistance to develop a reform roadmap and timeline commitments.
- Support countries to undertake Time Release Studies (TRS) to help identify key bottlenecks that impact the time it takes for goods to move across borders. As a result of data obtained through TRS studies, Bangladesh has slashed the time to trade at the Port of Chittagong by 23 percent. Timor Leste has reduced clearance times by 40 percent, and this was not part of a TRS, rather an outcome of our work to facilitate public-private dialogue (PPD) through the WTO, Advance Cargo Declaration.

Early Results

- Improving trade transparency and accountability through the development of National Trade Portals.
- For example, in Bangladesh, Botswana, Malawi, Lesotho and Cambodia.
- To assess, pilot and implement risk-based systems such as the Advance Cargo Declaration.
- Through World Bank Group offices and Donor Partners.

Selection Criteria

To receive support, countries are expected to have demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing trade facilitation reforms in the areas covered by the WTO TFA. The TFSP prioritizes assistance to countries with limited access to other donor support, particularly, LDCs, eligible low-income, fragile and conflict-affected countries, and middle-income countries that act as gateways to least developed countries (LDCs) and whose performance significantly impacts the performance of regional LDCs. Requests for technical assistance can be made directly to the Trade Facilitation Support Program or through World Bank Group offices and Donor Partners.

The World Bank Group played a significant role in establishing the National Trade Facilitation Committee. Their assistance included conducting a self-assessment and drafting the NTFC term of reference, work plan and rules of procedures. Thanks to this project, the framework governing the establishment and mode of operation of the NTFC has been fully introduced and put in place. —Novo Radovic, Montenegro Deputy Minister of Finance and Co-Chair of the NTFC

With all this information readily available and clear instructions and flowcharts on how to export or import, traders should find it quicker and easier to be compliant and discharge all their formalities with fewer time-consuming interactions.” —Vincent Seretse, Botswana Minister for Trade and Industry

Requests for technical assistance can be made directly to the Trade Facilitation Support Program or through World Bank Group offices and Donor Partners.
We support countries to learn from their experiences, monitor and measure success. Tools include:

- A validation assessment guide to help client countries conduct in-country assessments and determine alignment with the TITA, its technical assistance and capacity building support needs, and priorities in implementing the TFA. The guide is based on the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation Articles and builds on the WTO Self-Assessment Guide prepared by the World Bank.

- A tracking tool is under development to assess TFA alignment, trade facilitation reform progress, identify reform priorities and quick win opportunities, and report and benchmark on reform progress.

- The guide is based on the WTO Self-Assessment Guide, builds on the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation Articles and is part of a TRS, rather than an outcome of our support to facilitate public-private dialogue (PPD) in the NTFC.

- Finalize reform priorities: The WBG will support countries in finalizing category A, B, and C commitments.

- Identify category commitments: The WBG can support countries in finalizing category A, B, and C commitments.

- Conducting an in-country field validation: The WBG will support countries in updating the TFA self-assessment and undertaking an in-country field validation.

- Knowledge, Learning and Measurement:

  - Review and validate self-assessments and identify reform gaps.
  - Support and strengthen National Trade Facilitation Committees.
  - Review/microscope trade laws and implement reform measures to ensure alignment with the TFA.
  - Facilitate reforms.
  - Foster partnerships between public and private sectors to catalyze trade facilitation.
  - Support policies/practices and support regional solutions to facilitate the recognition of agreed upon standards for goods crossing borders.

- Program Activities:

  - Variable self-assessment: The WBG will support countries in updating the TFA self-assessment and undertaking an in-country field validation.
  - Identify category commitments: The WBG can support countries in finalizing category A, B, and C commitments.
  - Finalize reform priorities: The WBG will use its experience to develop a reform roadmap and timeline for implementation, ensuring validation with relevant public and private stakeholders. Once the reform roadmap is validated, the appropriate level of technical assistance can be offered by the WBG.

**Early Results**

- Improving trade transparency and accountability: Through the development of National Trade Portals. For example, in Bangladesh, Botswana, Malawi, Lesotho and Cambodia.

- Reducing the time and cost to trade: Support countries to undertake Time Release Studies (TRS), which help identify key bottlenecks that impact the time it takes for goods to move across borders. As a result of data obtained through TRS studies, Bangladesh has reduced the time to trade at the Port of Chittagong by 25 percent. Tunisia has reduced clearance times by 40 percent and, this was not part of a TRS, rather an outcome of our support to facilitate public-private dialogue (PPD) in the WTO, Advance Cargo Declaration.

- Integrating risk-based management systems and other contemporary border management approaches into border inspections and clearance procedures.

- Support to Zambia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Kosovo, Atlantic Montenegro and Morocco is building on the WTO Self-Assessment Guide to help client countries conduct in-country assessments and determine alignment with the TFA. The guide is based on the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation Articles and builds on the WTO Self-Assessment Guide prepared by the World Bank.

- Support to improved risk management practices in Nepal, Bangladesh, Gia Tigong and Tanzania.

- Challenges faced by public agencies: “With all this information readily available and clear instructions and flowcharts on how to export or import, traders should find it quicker and easier to be compliant and discharge all their formalities with fewer time-consuming interactions.” — Haim Ramon, Executive Manager, Ministry of Finance and Co-Chair of the NTFC

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Knowledge, Learning and Measurement

We support countries to learn from their experiences, monitor and measure success. Tools include:

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- A tracking tool is under development to assess TFA alignment, trade facilitation implementation, identify reform priorities and quick wins and opportunities, and report and benchmark on progress.
- Tools include:
  - Early results: With all this information readily available and clear instructions and flowcharts on how to use the information, traders should find it quicker and easier to be compliant and discharge all formalities with fewer time-consuming interactions. “With all this information readily available and clear instructions and flowcharts on how to use the information, traders should find it quicker and easier to be compliant and discharge all formalities with fewer time-consuming interactions.” —Vincent Seretse, Botswana Minister for Trade and Industry
  - Finalize reform priorities: The WBG can provide support to develop a reform roadmap and timeline commitments.
  - Identify category commitments: The WBG can support countries in finalizing category A, B, and C commitments.
  - Validate self-assessment: Undertaking an in-country field validation.

Program Activities

- Variable self-assessment: The WBG can support countries in updating the TFA self-assessment and undertaking an in-country field validation.
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- Facilitating inter-agency coordination: Support to Zambia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Kosovo, Atlantic Montenegro, and Moldova in establishing National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) to strengthen inter-agency coordination and enhance public-private sector dialogue on trade facilitation.
- Supporting and strengthening National Trade Facilitation Committees in Nepal, Bangladesh, Gaza Strip and Tunisia, Zambia, Timor Leste, Kosovo, Atlantic Montenegro.
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Our Approach

Technical Assistance

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Technical Assistance Activities

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- Review and validate self-assessments and identify reform gaps.
- Support and strengthen National Trade Facilitation Committees.
- Review and assess trade laws and implement regulations to ensure alignment with the TFA.
- Facilitate reforms.
- Foster partnerships between public and private sectors to catalyze trade.
- Improve transparency and accountability measures of trade practices.
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- United Kingdom’s Department for International Trade
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Find out more: www.worldbank.org/en/programs/trade-facilitation-support-program

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