



Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation



USAID  
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# IMPLEMENTING THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT IN THE APEC REGION

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation's (APEC's) commitment to fostering free and open trade align with efforts to implement the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). Specifically, APEC offers technical assistance to developing economies to improve their supply chain efficiency and remove obstacles to trade. The provision of technical assistance and training is facilitated by the US Support for Economic Growth in Asia (US-SEGA) project, which is funded by the US Department of State and administered by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

## APEC SUPPORT OVERVIEW

Launched in 2013, the **APEC's Support Fund—Sub-Fund on Supply Chain Connectivity** finances technical assistance and training for developing economies to improve their supply chains along a number of key areas aligned with the WTO TFA. Technical Assistance is available to developing APEC economies and currently focuses on three areas of WTO TFA implementation: Publication (Article 1), Advance Rulings (Article 3) and Expedited Shipments (Article 7.8). Economies interested in receiving technical assistance volunteer themselves by announcing their intentions via the APEC Committee on Trade and Investment.

APEC also created the **APEC Alliance for Supply Chain Connectivity (A2C2)** to provide a dynamic forum where public and private sector representatives can discuss mechanisms to improve regional supply chains and collaboratively design capacity building sup-

*APEC leaders have committed to a 10% improvement in supply chain performance in terms of reduction of time, cost and uncertainty of moving goods and services within the APEC region. Under the APEC Support Fund, developing economies may receive assistance to overcome specific obstacles to enhance supply chain performance.*



US-SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN ASIA (US-SEGA)

## TFA IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE

APEC Supply Chain Connectivity Sub-Fund assistance typically begins with a rapid assessment done by a team of experts. Once complete, assistance provided to the recipient Economy can take a range of forms and will be tailored towards the economy's needs and will include a timeline of activities. Assistance captured in TORs may include rapid assessment/gap analyses of TFA article implementation, legal/regulatory review, institutional capacity building, public/private dialogue support, and communication/outreach.

The APEC Support Fund offers a variety of supply chain capacity building services to APEC developing member economies in order to meet WTO TFA obligations. Available programs include:



**Publication and Availability of Information.** This program can help economies meet TFA Article I obligations, particularly related to the publication of guides with necessary steps to import, export and transit in an economies territory (Article 1.2.1), as well as the requirement to publish all fees and charges related to import/export and transit of goods (Article 1.1(c)). Peru is one economy currently participating in the program



**Advance Rulings.** The program can help economies' meet obligations under TFA Article 3 that establish reliable and comprehensive Advance Rulings regimes. In Vietnam APEC funding supported a public-private dialogue discussing improvements in advance rulings and provided legal review assistance.



**Expedited Shipments.** Within this project, activities can assist in the implementation of a TFA-compliant expedited shipments regime (Article 7.8), allowing for a de minimis that promotes growth of e-commerce, decreases the workload for customs administrations, and facilitates trade. In the Philippines, APEC funding supported training related to expedited shipments procedures for the implementation of a new customs law and assisted in the development of new operating procedures.

## SUPPORT AREAS

Economy-level programs begin with assessments and work with customs and trade officials to develop targeted technical assistance programs based on an economy's priorities. Programs may include:

- Trainings and workshops
- Legal/regulatory review
- Public-private dialogue support
- Economy-level studies

## ACCESSING ASSISTANCE UNDER US-SEGA

US-SEGA is co-managed by USAID's Asia Bureau with funding and strategic direction from the U.S. Department of State. It is implemented by Nathan Associates, led by Chief of Party, Ann Katsiak. For more information on how to access US-SEGA technical services, including supply chain connectivity support, please contact:

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