

ANNUAL REPORT



2020



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This report sets out the activities and outcomes of the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (the Facility, or TFAF) for the calendar year 2020

ACTIVITIES

The delivery of technical assistance in 2020 was very particular given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and its knock-on effects on travel and remote-working which led to the cancellation of some activities. Throughout the year, TFAF organized or participated in **14 demand driven activities** covering topics such as the TFA notification requirements, best practices in National Trade Facilitation Committees, finding donor support, the role of the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee, TF and COVID 19, and where to find resources supporting each of these topics. Through these activities training was delivered to **just under 2000 participants**.

WTO developing and Least Developed Country (LDC) Members to submit **33 notifications to the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee within 12 weeks** of participation in a TFAF activity.

GRANT PROGRAM

Six Members and one regional group were awarded TFAF Project Preparation Grants in 2020 to identify support for the implementation of 38 provisions of the TFA. These grants will support these Members to fully articulate their implementation support needs for specified provisions that they had notified in Category C, and to engage with development partners who may be able to assist them. For any outstanding needs, TFAF Project Implementation Grant applications will be drafted by the engaged experts and will be considered by the Grant Selection Committee in due course.

WEBSITE

The TFAF website had a total of **99,714 visitors** in 2020, generating **189,298 unique page views**. Visitor numbers peaked in October, indicating a link to the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee meeting held that month. New webpages added during the year include pages with information on how to prepare TFA notifications, TFAF highlighted activities, TFAF grants that have been awarded, and a trade facilitation and COVID-19 resource repository. The first phase of the website's redevelopment also began in 2020 - the first of its kind since its launch, with the aim of enhancing the website's user experience.

PARTNER COORDINATION

The TFAF coordinated closely with its partner organizations as evidenced by the cooperation in almost all the activities conducted this year. The TFAF participated in events organized by partners in order to reach out to more WTO Members and avoid duplication of efforts.

PROGRESS

In 2020, training/presentations by WTO officials were delivered in 14 activities to just under 2000 participants. The overall number of activities organized by TFAF was reduced because of the pandemic, however participation in remote learning and virtual events helped to balance this fall with an increase in the overall number of participants. In addition, at the instruction of a Member of the WTO TF Committee, TFAF did not organize or participate in activities in November or December. This required TFAF to cancel participation in several events, including an LDC event. The TFAF made every effort to find replacement speakers. **Participation in TFAF activities was closely followed by 33 notifications**. Seventy percent (70%) of the notifications that followed participation in a TFAF activity were submitted by LDC Members a significant increase on 2019 (17%); but which can be attributed to the notification deadline in the TFA that applied only to LDC Members. Overall, the number of notifications submitted following participation in a TFAF activity fell by 65%¹ on 2019 figures, caused not only by the impact of the pandemic and cancellation of events, but also because of fewer notification deadlines in the TFA in 2020.

The TFAF website total number of **visitors increased by 35% from 2019** (increasing from 74,112 to 99,714), unique page views increased from 151,799 to 189,298 - a 25% increase.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The TFAF organized three activities in 2020 specifically focused on the needs of LDCs. Total participants representing LDCs range between 150-200 in all events, although due to the move to virtual activities the exact number of LDC participants, as well as gender statistics, was not possible to trace because participation links to video meetings were often distributed beyond a fixed list or watched by more than one participant on the same computer.

BUDGET

The TFAF received a donation from a new donor, the Czech Republic. The full list of donors in 2020 includes: Australia, Austria, China, Czech Republic, the European Union², Finland, France, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom, plus three legacy donors, Ireland, Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu and the United States³.

In 2020, the TFAF **spent a total of 294,921.74 Swiss Francs (CHF)** from total funds of CHF 5,270,873.98⁴. The closing balance on 31 December 2020 was CHF 4,975,952.24.

[1] 33 notifications in 2020, compared to 96 in 2019.

[2] The European Union made a final contribution to the TFAF as set out in the contract. This concluded their existing commitment.

[3] Legacy donors provided funds to the trade facilitation needs assessment trust fund that were transferred to the TFAF trust fund when it was created.

[4] Including opening balance, interest on investments and new contributions received in 2020.



INTRODUCTION



TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT

The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement entered into force on February 22, 2017, when more than two-thirds of the WTO Membership had domestically ratified a Protocol of Amendment and notified the WTO of their acceptance of this Protocol. The WTO Committee on Trade Facilitation was also created when the Agreement entered into force. The Committee held four formal and one informal meeting in 2020.

At the beginning of 2020, 147 of the WTO's 164 Members had successfully ratified the Agreement. Five additional ratifications were received in 2020, bringing the total to 152, just over 90% percent of the Membership.

The TFA contains numerous notification requirements. The A, B, C related notification requirements have specific deadlines. These are the notifications required for developing and LDC Members taking advantage of the provisions allowing them to self-determine the date of implementation for each TFA measure. All ABC-related notification deadlines for developing Members finished in 2019. The year 2020 contained a deadline requiring LDC Members to notify their definitive implementation dates for provisions notified in Category B by February 22. Other notification deadlines are based on the implementation schedule of the Member. Over the course of the year, developing and LDC Members submitted 113 notifications relating to the ABC requirements, transparency, and technical assistance and capacity building.

TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT FACILITY

Under the TFAF Operational Guidelines, the TFAF reports to the Membership through a workplan that sets out the types of activities that the TFAF will conduct the following year. In planning these activities, the Guidelines instruct the Secretariat to draw on activities set out in an annex, while maintaining the flexibility to amend the activities listed in order to more effectively and efficiently fulfil its scope and purpose and the principles (needs driven, demand driven, efficient and effective, non-duplicative, non-disruptive, and open and transparent). These principles underpin the planning, monitoring and evaluation of all activities.

These Guidelines provide that the TFAF should conduct activities under the following themes.

1. OVERALL ACTIVITIES (e.g. the website)
2. SUPPORT/ASSISTANCE (Ratification, Scheduling and Implementation Support)
3. ASSISTANCE IN IDENTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS (e.g. matchmaking)
4. OUTREACH (e.g. participation in events organized by partners or other WTO divisions)
5. PROMOTE COHERENCE (e.g. coordinate Annex D and other development partners)
6. FUNDING (e.g. TFAF grants)

To realize these goals, in 2020 the TFAF delivered coordinated activities under the following four workstreams

WORKSTREAMS:

- A. Matchmaking and funding**
- B. Ratification and notifications**
- C. Implementation support and capacity-building**
- D. Participation in external events**

For the purposes of tracking progress, these workstreams are identical to those used in the annual work plans of the Facility and in the overall TFAF log frame. Stakeholders can therefore follow the logic of activities as they are outlined in the work plan, described in detail in the annual report, and track their contribution to the overall goals of the Facility with reference to the Facility log frame.⁵



[5] Annex 1.



TFAF ACTIVITIES IN 2020

In 2020 TFAF priorities were driven by the needs of developing and LDC Members and by the priorities expressed by Members in meetings of the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee. Early priority was given to assisting LDC Members to notify their Category B definitive dates by the February deadline. Throughout the year attention was given to the broad range of notifications, including the requirements to notify requests for time extension. Information on trade facilitation in the context of COVID 19 was also in high demand so TFAF added activities and participated in related events to respond to this need. Work on the delivery of the TFAF grant program and the development of the website accelerated this year. Accordingly, activities were relatively evenly distributed across all four workstreams in 2020.



Matchmaking & Funding

MATCHMAKING & FUNDING

Matchmaking and funding are integrated in the TFAF's daily work



Throughout the year, WTO developing and LDC Members regularly contact WTO officials via drop-in visits, telephone and email to pose informal questions and give updates on their TFA implementation needs. At the same time, TFAF maintains ongoing informal communication and coordination with development partners, including international organizations, regional and bilateral development partners, as well as donor/development partner information. Close communication with Members and partners means that WTO officials are well informed on both the supply and demand of TFA implementation support. This country-specific information is fast expanding as donor representatives respond to expressions of interest for TFAF grants.

This coordination function is an important part of the TFAF's work, to provide advice to Members seeking technical assistance and capacity-building relating to TFA implementation and to avoid duplication. Matchmaking support often takes the form of informal advice on which development partners and programs are active in specific regions or on specific topics. Upon request, the Facility connects Members directly with partners that can provide them with the necessary implementation support.

At TFAF organized events, information is provided to WTO developing and LDC Members on the support available to them from partners and the TFAF itself.

Sessions are often included for donors and partners to present their programs. In addition, the TFAF website provides pages where further information can be found on each development partner's activities, as well as contact information. The website's developing country profile pages⁶ provide information on the support provided to each developing and LDC, as well as through a searchable page of completed partner implementation projects⁷.

The first step of the TFAF grant program is the circulation of an expression of interest from the requesting Member to the development partners with the aim of finding implementation support. In 2020, one expression of interest resulted in matchmaking with a development partner for implementation of 16 TFA provisions. In addition, in response to the circulation of the expressions of interest, development partners frequently provide information about on-going programs which further adds to the awareness/knowledge of TFAF staff, as mentioned above.

In addition to this ongoing informal activity, dedicated, specific activities and sessions were organized on matchmaking and funding in many of the activities described below; these are described throughout the remainder of the report.

[6] Contact points & profiles | TFAF - Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (tfafacility.org)

[7] Partner Organization Projects | TFAF - Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (tfafacility.org)

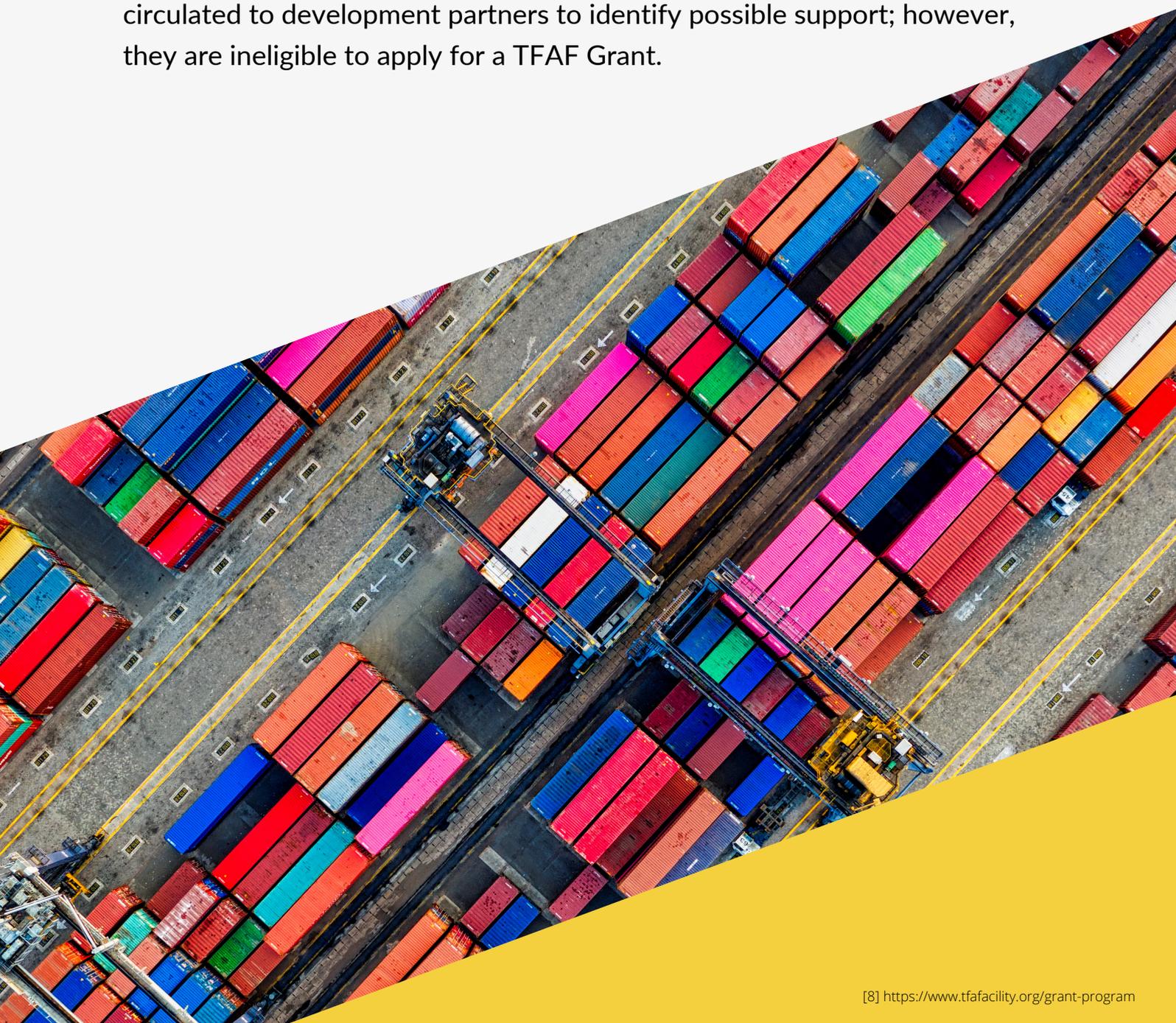
TFAF GRANTS⁸

If the circulation of the expression of interest does not identify a suitable partner, applicants are then eligible to apply for the support available under the TFAF Grant Program, which includes the following:

Project Preparation Grants, up to a maximum value of USD 30,000;

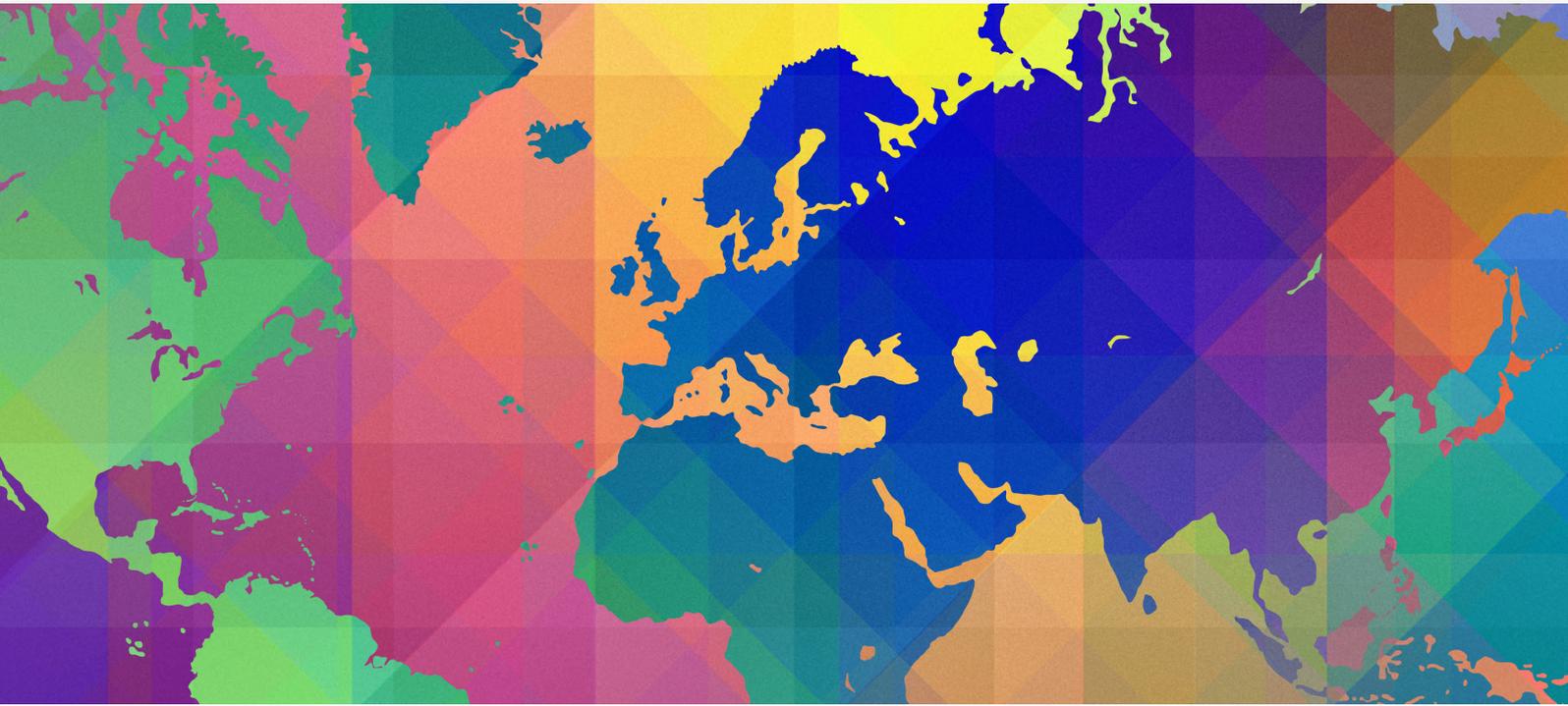
Project Implementation Grants, up to a maximum value of USD 200,000.

WTO Observers may submit an expression of interest, which is then circulated to development partners to identify possible support; however, they are ineligible to apply for a TFAF Grant.



[8] <https://www.tfafacility.org/grant-program>

TFAF GRANTS



Outcome: : Seven TFAF Project Preparation Grants (PPG) awarded in 2020

In 2020, the TFAF worked closely with 11 grant applicants for whom development partners were not found in the expression of interest stage. Once applications were fully completed, with guidance from TFAF, and officially submitted, TFAF processed the application by preparing terms of reference outlining the required interventions.

By the end of the year, applications had been completed and officially submitted for implementation of a total of 38 TFA provisions from seven Members; Grenada (8 provisions), Namibia (11 provisions), Dominican Republic (3 provisions), Mongolia (4 provisions), Guyana (9 provisions), CARICOM regional project (1 provision), Jamaica (1 provision). Once each application was approved by TFAF, terms of reference were prepared and experts were identified and contracted to conduct the grant project.

One Project Preparation Grant covering eight TFA provisions was launched for Grenada on 1 October and completed on 31 December 2020.

In 2021 the TFAF will use the project proposal resulting from this grant to attempt to find implementation partner(s). If this effort is not successful, Grenada can request a TFAF Project Implementation Grant.

The other six grant projects were scheduled to be delivered in the first half of 2021. The remaining four grant applications will be brought forward for consideration in 2021 and will be reviewed and processed by TFAF as soon as they are officially submitted by the applicants.

Each Project Preparation Grant is designed to assist the Member to articulate their TFA implementation needs for specified TFA provisions that the Member had notified in Category C, and to identify development partners to support implementation.

If donor support is not found for any of the TFA provisions that are subject of the PPG, then the Member is eligible to apply for a TFAF Project Implementation Grant(s).



RATIFICATION & NOTIFICATIONS

This workstream comprises national and regional activities that support Members' ratification and to meet deadlines for submitting notifications to the WTO TF Committee.

None of the five members that ratified the TFA in 2020 requested assistance with their ratification during this period. Use of resources on the TFAF website on how to complete and submit the Instrument of Acceptance, used to notify the WTO of ratification, cannot be directly linked to actual submissions.

In 2020 LDC Members had to notify their definitive implementation dates for provisions designated in Category B. Transparency notifications came due for many Members as the relevant provisions were implemented. Notifications of requests for extension of implementation were submitted by some Members. Submission of proper and timely notifications continued to be an important focus of the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee in 2020. For these reasons, it was also an important focus of TFAF.

In measuring TFAF assistance with notifications, it is to be noted that 33 notifications (30% of the total received in 2020) were submitted by WTO Members shortly following their participation in a TFAF activity.

In addition, due to the cancellation of in-person events and meetings because of the pandemic, the TFAF focused on making detailed information on all the TFA notifications requirements available through the website as described under "Website" below. TFAF conducted four activities under this workstream in 2020, reaching 250 participants. A fifth planned event was cancelled because of the pandemic.

Main outcome: Seven notifications to the WTO TF Committee followed Members participating in these activities.

Guinea National Workshop on notifications, Conakry 20-23 January

At the request of Guinea, an LDC, a WTO official conducted a workshop in cooperation with two experienced local experts to train government officials on the TFA, issues and benefits of implementation, and notification requirements. Participants included 35 officials from multiple border agencies, and in particular members of the national trade facilitation committee.

Outcome: Within four weeks, Guinea submitted a notification on definitive dates of implementation for Category B measures to the WTO TF Committee meeting the associated deadline. The notification also contained indicative dates of implementation for Category C measures and a description of the technical assistance and support for capacity building necessary for implementation.

Online workshop for Afghanistan, 4 February

At the request of Afghanistan, an LDC, a WTO official conducted a workshop on the TFA including the benefits of implementation, and an explanation of the notification requirements. A transit expert provided a session on the TFA and transit. Participants included 20 government border agency officials and representatives of the private sector.

Outcome: Within four weeks, Afghanistan submitted a request for an extension of time to notify Category B definitive dates to the WTO TF Committee meeting the associated deadline.

CARICOM notification workshop 23 July

At the request of the CARICOM Secretariat, a WTO official participated in a "Consultation of CARICOM Trade Facilitation Agreement Focal Points" organized in cooperation with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The objective of this consultation was to receive updates on TFA implementation and to facilitate discussion and sharing of experience among CARICOM WTO Members on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on national implementation of the TFA, as well as measures and policies that have been adopted at the national and regional levels to facilitate trade and to ensure business continuity.

The WTO Secretariat emphasised the important role that implementation of the TFA can play in coping with the impact of the pandemic at the border. The Secretariat presented the TFA notification requirements and stressed the importance of notifying any implementation delays in a timely manner, and provided an explanation of available resources. Around 100 officials participated including TFA Focal Points (representatives of national committees that participate in the regional TF committee) representing the 15 CARICOM Member States.

Outcome: Within 12 weeks, two participating Members had between them submitted a total of three notifications to the WTO TF Committee. An additional Caribbean country submitted a timely request for extension by the end of the year.

Regional Workshop for Pacific Island Countries. 16-20 March - cancelled

At the request of Pacific Island WTO Members, the TFAF, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Annex D partners, and donors had organized a regional workshop to support Pacific Island countries to implement the TFA. This workshop was cancelled due to COVID 19.

Regional Workshop for Pacific Island Countries. Towards a Pacific Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy: key issues, challenges and opportunities. 6-8 October

To follow up on some of the sessions in the cancelled workshop, and in particular to meet the need for information related to the pandemic, TFAF coordinated with the Commonwealth Small States Office, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, and several Annex D partners, to conduct a two-part workshop on Trade Facilitation for Pacific Island Countries. The activity provided a forum for more than 60 participants from 14 countries to discuss impacts and lessons learned from COVID-19 and how trade facilitation can help alleviate the impacts. It also included sessions to enhance regional cooperation and development of a regional strategy. The WTO presented on resources related to TF and COVID 19 as well as TFA notification requirements.

Outcome: This activity directly contributed to one of the TFAF's primary tasks to collaborate with partner organizations; at the same time, this activity helped to build the capacity of the national committees as well as the individual participants, enhance regional cooperation, and understanding of TFA notification requirements.





**IMPLEMENTATION
SUPPORT & CAPACITY
BUILDING**



This workstream comprises thematic activities organized on specific TFA implementation issues; it also gives details of the support provided on the establishment and development of NTFCs; and it covers the updating and maintenance of the TFAF website.

In 2020 TFAF organized two activities in this workstream reaching around 100 participants. Six new web resources were added which combined have received over 8000 hits.

Main outcome: Activities in this workstream were followed by 23 notifications submitted to the WTO TF Committee from participating Members.

LDC notification drop-in sessions, January and February

In anticipation of the upcoming deadline for Category B definitive dates and in keeping with messages heard in TFC meetings to support LDCs to meet notification deadlines, the Facility contacted LDC Members individually to set up sessions in the appropriate working languages to discuss notification requirements and to offer support as needed. This approach built on similar successful sessions in 2019. In total 25 participants from 17 LDC members met with WTO officials over the course of 8 dates in January and February. Detailed reports showing notification status and forthcoming deadlines on the basis of information in the TFA Database were prepared for each participant.

Outcome: 100% of Members attending the drop-in sessions that had an outstanding notification(s) (14), submitted timely notifications to the WTO TF Committee by the 22 February deadline. Participants submitted a total of 19 notifications within 6 weeks of the activity.

Webinar for capital-based officials to prepare for WTO TF Committee, 14 October

Normally TFAF funds the participation of capital-based officials, that must be members of the NTFC, in the WTO TF Committee meeting that includes the dedicated session on technical assistance and capacity building. Due to the pandemic the Committee meeting was held on-line. To assist capital-based officials to fully participate in the virtual committee meeting, the TFAF organized a webinar one week in advance to explain the meeting program and how to use the remote meeting platform, remind Members of the notification requirements, inform Members about new TFAF resources, and how to access the TFAF Grant Program. 50 capital-based officials participated from 35 Members, including 8 LDCs.

Outcome: 4 Members submitted notifications to the WTO TF Committee within 4 weeks of the activity. Participants took part in the TFC meeting.

COVID-19 survey

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic led to rapid and frequent changes to import, export and transit procedures, as well as the introduction of health measures aimed to reduce person to person contact. In order to collect information on how the TFA could assist Members to cope with this situation TFAF, working in cooperation with the International Chamber of Commerce and the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, conducted a short survey through the TFAF website.

The results of the survey show that overall implementation of the TFA can help Members cope, in particular, border agency cooperation, availability of information and digitalization (e.g. electronic payment) are most urgent. A full report on the findings, and how implementation of the TFA can help overcome the barriers, can be found here: <https://www.tfafacility.org/tfaf-covid-19-survey-final-results>

THE

TF AFACILITY.ORG

WEBSITE





TFA FACILITY.ORG WEBSITE

The function of the TFAF website is two-fold. First, it provides transparency to the administration and work of the TFAF by publishing operational rules and guidelines, workplans and reports, as well as information about TFAF events. Second, it provides a platform to make resources available, in an easily accessible manner, that can assist Members to implement the TFA. For example, the TFA resources provides tools, instruments, guidelines, and case studies for each provision of the TFA. To assist developing and LDC Members to find implementation support, the website contains information and contact points for development partners and a searchable database of past and ongoing implementation assistance projects.

Outcome: In 2020, the website received 99,714 visitors, generating a total of 189,298 unique page views. This represents a 35% increase in visitors since 2019.

THE TOP 10 MOST VISITED CORE* PAGES WERE:

1. THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT
2. COVID-19 REPOSITORY
3. NOTIFICATIONS
4. TFA ARTICLE RESOURCES
5. RATIFICATIONS
6. ABOUT THE FACILITY
7. GRANT PROGRAM
8. CONTACT POINTS AND PROFILES
9. PARTNERS AND ORGANIZATIONS
10. SUCCESS STORIES

THE TOP 10 VISITING COUNTRIES IN 2020 WERE:

1. MEXICO
2. UNITED STATES
3. COLOMBIA
4. INDONESIA
5. PERU
6. FRANCE
7. SPAIN
8. INDIA
9. ECUADOR
10. ARGENTINA

THE TFA FACILITY.ORG WEBSITE



WEBSITE UPGRADE
THIS YEAR WORK BEGAN ON THE FIRST UPGRADE OF THE WEBSITE'S CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN 2014. IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING STRENGTHENED SECURITY, THIS UPGRADE WILL ALLOW FOR THE EXPANSION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE SITE'S FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS WHICH WILL ALLOW FOR EASIER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION WHILE MAKING THE SITE MORE USER-FRIENDLY. THE LAUNCH OF THE UPGRADED WEBSITE IS SCHEDULED FOR LATE 2021.

To enhance support for Members in 2020, the following new webpages and tools were added:

COVID-19 Resource page

In the early stage of the pandemic, the TFAF created a webpage with links to COVID-19 resources created by the WTO and partner organizations and associations. This was later replaced by the TF and COVID-19 Repository.

COVID-19 Tools Repository

Copious resources were created by partner organizations and associations to help governments and private sector to cope with the pandemic. In keeping with its mandate to coordinate partner organizations, and to make these resources easily available in one location, TFAF, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Commonwealth Secretariat, Annex Ds and other partners, collaborated to create a searchable repository of trade facilitation and COVID-19 related resource. By the end of 2020 the repository contained around 350 resources from 30 organizations and associations. These resources include, inter alia, articles, case studies, instruments and tools. The repository can be found here: <https://www.tfafacility.org/covid19-trade-facilitation>

New notification pages

In order to help Members to complete the required TFA notifications the Facility developed two new webpages for the TFAFacility.org website. One page provides general information on all the TFA requirements for notifications related to the ABC categories, as well as the transparency notifications, assistance arrangements, shifting categories and time extension, and notifications related to implementation assistance. The second webpage provides detailed information on how to prepare each of these notifications with links to templates, explanations on how to complete the templates, and sample extracts from Member notifications.

Members were informed of where to find these resources through webinars, features on the TFAF website, and a feature in an edition of NEWSBYTES. Despite the fact that the focus of these pages appeals to a limited audience of officials preparing notifications, these pages received 661 unique hits and 1041 total page views in English, 128 unique views and 172 total views in Spanish, and 47 unique and 81 total views in French.

The pages can be found here:

Notifications General Information: <https://www.tfafacility.org/wto-tfa-notifications-general-overview>

How To Prepare Notifications: <https://tfafacility.org/how-prepare-trade-facilitation-agreement-notifications>

New Notification Brochure

To further enhance notification-related information, the Facility updated its popular brochure on TFA notification requirements to highlight the transparency, Article 22, and implementation arrangements notification requirements. It can be found here: https://tfafacility.org/sites/default/files/brochure_2_tf_notification_brochure_final_may_2020.pdf

Grant tracking page

In order to provide transparency to the TFAF grant program and spending of TFAF funds, a page was added to the website that provides information on the grants that have been awarded. For each grant information is provided on the Member or regional organization that has received the grant, the TFA provisions covered, the project implementation period, and the grant application. This page can be found here: <https://tfafacility.org/grant-applications>

TFAF Highlighted activities page

In order to provide information on TFAF's various events and successes, a TFAF highlighted activities page was created containing details from a selection of previous workshops, forums, committee-related side events and more. Each story provides an overview of the activity, successful outcomes, photos and links to more information. This page can be found here: <https://www.tfafacility.org/highlighted-activities>



Participation in External Events

WTO officials are regularly invited to speak at events organized by other TF stakeholders, including national and regional events, thematic events, and events hosted by international organizations on the implementation of the TFA. Such events, grouped under Workstream D, can provide a cost-effective way for the TFAF to avoid duplication of TF events. Many more requests and invitations to speak are received throughout the year than there are WTO officials available to participate. When more relevant to the mandate or functions of other organizations, or the WTO Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation, such requests are passed on accordingly. Invitations to events where there is no clear link to the WTO TFAF mandate are declined.

Main outcome: TFAF participated in 8 outreach events, reaching over 1600 participants and contributing to a primary TFAF task of coordinating international organizations. 3 notifications closely followed the events.

World Customs Organization (WCO) TFA Working Group, Brussels, Belgium, 4-5 March

A WTO official delivered a presentation on the TFA and notification requirements to over 200 participants, representing WCO Members, development partners, international organizations, and private sector associations. The Chair of the WTO TF Committee, Ambassador Haqjo gave a keynote address. The meeting featured experience sharing sessions on time release study, post clearance audit, transit, and single window. In break-out sessions WCO members also discussed border management, and separation of release from clearance. TFAF met with Annex D partners on the margins of the meeting.

Outcome: This activity directly contributed to one of the TFAF's primary tasks; to coordinate the support from international organizations for TFA implementation; at the same time, this activity helped to build the capacity of participants and encourage both government officials and private sector participants to encourage TFA implementation.

Food Trade Logistics, Navigating the Risks of COVID-19 Joint WTO – World Economic Forum (WEF) Webinar, 11 June

The WTO Agriculture Division and World Economic Forum (WEF) created a series of Trade Dialogues on Food to create a conversation around the role of international trade in food security. In a webinar on Logistics and Navigating the Risks of COVID 19, the WTO presented on how the TFA can reduce red tape, the state of implementation, and finding implementation support. The webinar has been viewed over 650 times and can be viewed here:

https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/reser_e/tradedialogfood_e.htm

Outcome: This activity helped to inform government officials and private sector about how the TFA can help agriculture agencies operate more effectively and efficiently through implementation of the TFA, especially during the pandemic.

Business Coalition for Trade Facilitation National Webinar on TF and COVID-19 for Brazil, 19 June

Building on a regional event hosted by TFAF in 2019, the hosts requested TFAF to participate in this webinar with over 50 government officials and private sector representatives. A WTO official presented on efforts to share information around TFA-related implementation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Outcome: This was an important, low-cost opportunity to engage with the private sector in a WTO Member which has significant trading links with many developing countries in the region.

ADB and UN Pacific Regional Office Webinar on Discussion of Multisectoral Support to Safely Reopen Points of Entry into Pacific Island Countries, 22 July.

The ADB and UN Pacific Regional Office organized a high-level roundtable meeting on safe border reopening for Pacific Island countries. The goal of this meeting was to facilitate information sharing on the needs of the countries and the available support from various development partners. The TFAF provided written information on its programs and participated in this event to answer questions about these programs. It was attended by approximately 50 people. All countries had representatives from multiple border agencies as well as health and PM offices.

Outcome: This activity directly contributed to two of the TFAF's primary tasks, namely, to coordinate with partner organizations and to assist developing and LDC Members to find implementation support.

International Chamber of Commerce Customs and Trade Facilitation Commission, 15 September

The International Chamber of Commerce held a meeting for the members of its Customs and Trade Facilitation Commission to provide an update on its activities. At this meeting a WTO official presented to over 100 business representatives on TFAF resources, the role of TF committees, how private sector can be involved in TFA implementation, and the results of the TF and COVID 19 survey results,

Outcome: This activity directly contributed to one of the TFAF's primary tasks; to coordinate support from the international organizations for TFA implementation, as well as to encourage private sector to participate in the national trade facilitation committees and to support TFA implementation.

Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation Private Sector Working Group, 16 September

In this webinar TFAF presented its grant program, resources, a factual update on recent Committee meetings, and TF and COVID 19, to around 65 business partners of the Global Alliance.

Outcome: This was an important, low-cost opportunity to encourage private sector participation and support of TFA implementation.

COMSEC Trade Working Group. Guidelines for Establishing Effective National Trade Facilitation Bodies in the OIC Countries, 22 September

A WTO official participated in the 15th Meeting of the COMSEC Trade Working Group for Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries. The focus of this meeting was on national trade facilitation committees and featured the launch of the new COMSEC Guidelines for Establishing Effective National Trade Facilitation Bodies in the OIC Countries. The WTO presented the global view of national trade facilitation committees, the role of the WTO TF Committee, and the TFA ratification and notifications. Several countries presented case studies on their committees. The meeting was attended by more than 65 officials from OIC countries.

Outcome: This was an important, low-cost opportunity to build the capacity of members of the national trade facilitation committees, in particular on the notification requirements. One participating Member submitted two notifications to the WTO TF Committee within 12 weeks of participation in this event.

IATA Cargo Border Management Webinar, 8 October

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) conducted a webinar for its members that included a session on COVID-19 pandemic impact on cross border trade that was presented by the WTO and WCO. A WTO official presented on numerous topics including: TFA notifications, the TF and COVID 19 survey and repository, TFAF role and resources, measures taken by Members to cope with the pandemic, how private sector can encourage implementation of TF measures, and the role of the WTO TF Committee.

Outcome: This was an important, low-cost opportunity to encourage private sector participation and support of TFA implementation.

In addition to these activities, TFAF identified speakers to participate, in an additional 16 informal activities, as detailed in the 2020 Activity Tracker annexed to this report. These activities largely took place based on unscheduled conversations with delegates. As no formal activity was attributed to these interactions, no specific outcomes were measured for them, other than in terms of their overall contribution to the TFAF goals of supporting developing and LDC WTO Members to implement the TFA and to coordinate with international organizations active in TF implementation support.





CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES & RISKS



CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

When designing activities and inviting speakers, TFAF seeks gender balance and strong LDC representation wherever possible. Whenever participation in TFAF activities is limited, LDCs are given priority.

Due to the move to remote working and the delivery of virtual activities in 2020, it was not possible to track the gender of participants in the same way as previous years. Participation links to video meetings were often distributed beyond a fixed list or watched by more than one participant. As always, it is difficult to evaluate participant make up if the TFAF has not organized the event.

The TFAF organized three activities in 2020 specifically focused on the needs of LDCs. In the 2020 Activity Tracker, annexed to this report, the number of participants representing LDCs have been noted, where possible, under each activity. It is estimated that between 150-200 LDC representatives participated in TFAF events throughout the year, although the move to on-line training makes accurate numbers impossible.

Outcome: 70% of the notifications supported by TFAF in 2020 were submitted by LDC Members of the WTO, a significant increase on 2019 (17%) but which can be attributed to the relevant notification deadline in the TFA which applied only to LDC Members.

RISKS

A risk register was maintained for all activities in 2020 and a summary of the primary risks that were identified and mitigated for each activity may be found in the 2020 Activity Tracker annexed to this report. The main recurrent risk facing activities organized by TFAF in 2020 was the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Suddenly most people had to make the transition to remote working, all meetings had to be carried out in a virtual format and at the same time Members were focused on how to keep goods flowing across borders while protecting health and safety. Technical assistance and support for capacity building (TACB) was affected as all travel and in-person meetings were cancelled, requiring TFAF to cancel a regional event planned for March. The provision of TACB was largely replaced by on-line webinars, which are normally shorter in duration, less interactive, and do not allow the same depth of information to be shared as in face-to-face activities. In addition, because webinars are relatively easy to organize, there was a profusion of events towards the end of the year.

To overcome these challenges, TFAF and partner organizations became adept at organizing meetings and activities on-line. TFAF developed new activities to meet Members' needs for information on TF and COVID 19 and worked closely with partner organizations to deliver this information in an efficient and cooperative manner. These adaptations allowed TFAF to continue to provide its assistance to a wide number of members as demonstrated by a stable number of participants, compared to 2019.

Going forward TFAF staff will continue to improve their skills in the use of on-line tools and applications that enable interactive long-distance learning. In addition, TFAF will expand its efforts to a wider group of organizations and associations to encourage collaboration.

Another risk which did occur, was the instruction of a WTO Member for TFAF to stop the delivery of events starting from October 22. Information on the Member's reasoning can be found in G/TFA/W/36. This request caused the TFAF to cancel participation in some events and caused the cancellation of a webinar in early 2021 to assist LDC Members to meet the 2021 notification deadline.

The reduced number of activities caused by these realised risks clearly had an impact on TFAF's planned output for the year and the abstention from activities will certainly impact its output in 2021.

In addition to this systemic risk, in 2020 the financial transfer for an event was delayed due to complications. The TFAF worked with the WTO Finance team to explore ways to mitigate similar complications in future events.

A floating market boat is shown, packed with a wide variety of goods. The boat is covered with a blue tarp. On the deck, there are numerous baskets and containers filled with items. Visible items include packaged snacks like Oreo cookies, various brands of instant noodles, and bags of popcorn. There are also fresh produce items such as green limes, small round fruits in a green basket, and bunches of bananas on a large metal tray. Several metal pots are present, one containing white eggs and another with what appears to be fried food. A large white box is filled with many small cans, likely soft drinks. The boat is situated on a body of water, with the greenish water visible in the background. The overall scene depicts a busy floating market stall.

2020 FUNDS

2020 FUNDS

TFAF expenditure fell from CHF 1,210,515.23 in 2019 to CHF 294,921.74 in 2020. This represents an annual decrease of CHF 915,593.49, or just over 75%. This decrease was entirely caused by the move to virtual delivery of activities which have no costs attached beyond staff time. In addition, as outlined in the risk section above, all activities outside the grant programme were halted in October following instruction from a Member in the Committee on Trade Facilitation. To offset this decrease in spending, the TFAF focused on supporting Members to progress their grant applications, leading to an increase in grants awarded as described above. Projects funded by these grants will be carried out in the first half of 2021 and therefore project spend will continue even if the outlook for in-person activities remains uncertain due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and the halt on TFAF activities. The remaining balance in favour of development partners reflects the need to maintain sufficient funds to cover future grant awards and applications for project implementation grants.

In 2020 France made an anticipated contribution of CHF 107,422.70 and the Czech Republic joined donors with a new contribution of CHF 22,360.45.

All the figures in the following tables are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

Opening Balance as at 1 January 2020¹⁰	5,097,810.83
Australia (contribution to TFAF and transfer from TTFNA)	534,285.10
Austria (contribution to TFAF)	139,653.53
China (contribution to TFAF)	675,188.48
Finland (contribution to TFAF)	283,612.82
France (contribution to TFAF)	170,875.38
Ireland (transfer from TTFNA)	22,877.10
New Zealand (contribution to TFAF)	31,336.54
Norway (contribution to TFAF and transfers from TTFNG and TTFNA)	2,951,953.63
Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu (transfer from TTFNA)	22,285.39
United Kingdom (contribution to TFAF)	237,134.42
United States (transfer from TTFNA)	28,616.58
Contributions Current Year	173,063.15
Czech Republic	22,360.45
European Commission ¹¹	43,280.00
France	107,422.70

TOTAL FUNDS 2020	5,270,873.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	294,921.74
BALANCE IN FAVOUR OF DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS	4,975,952.24
BALANCE PER DEVELOPMENT PARTNER	

Australia	508,565.56
Austria	132,930.85
China	642,686.09
Czech Republic	21,281.74
Finland	269,960.20
France	264,901.30
Ireland	21,775.84
New Zealand	29,828.05
Norway	2,809,851.78
Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu	21,212.61
United Kingdom	225,719.19
United States	27,239.03

TFAF: Trust Fund for Trade Facilitation Facility

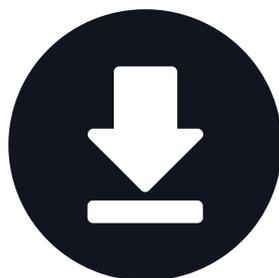
TTFNA: Trust Fund for Trade Facilitation National Needs Assessments

TTFNG: Trust Fund for Participation of Capital-Based Officials in Negotiating Group Meetings

[10] Including interest deductions

[11] In 2020 the European Union made a final contribution of CHF 43,280.00 concluding their multi-year contribution to the Facility.

DOWNLOAD THE TFAF ACTIVITY TRACKER



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Trade Facilitation
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