Framework for the Management and Operation of the
Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility

*Adopted at the meeting of 4-5 April 2022*

*Noting* that the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (hereafter "the Facility") which was launched on 22 July 2014 was created at the request of the African LDC and ACP groups to address *inter alia* concerns pertaining to the adequacy and accessibility of donor support to fully implement the Trade Facilitation Agreement (hereafter "the Agreement") in order to reap the full benefits of such implementation;

*Recognizing* that the work undertaken by the Facility has contributed to this goal through activities including the development and delivery of technical assistance and capacity building on the Agreement, the enhancement of the flow of information between beneficiaries and donors and the establishment of the grant programme;

*Taking note* that the operational guidelines of the Facility under which the Facility has functioned were developed in 2015, prior to the entry into force of the Agreement and the establishment of the Trade Facilitation Committee (hereafter "the Committee");

*Desiring*that an update of the Facility's operational guidelines through the development of a new framework to take account of the evolution of the needs of Members as expressed through the Committee would be timely;

The Committee *decides* to establish the following framework for the management and operation of the Facility:

**1.** **Objectives**

1. The role of the Facility is to support the Committee's work in relation to assisting developing Members and LDCs in implementing the Agreement. Guidance concerning the nature of such support will be provided by the Committee.

**2.** **Operational Directives**

1. Priorities
2. To fulfil its role, the Facility will prioritize the following activities:
3. The Grant Programme
4. Technical Assistance and Capacity Building:
5. Engagement with Annex D and Development partners
6. Maintain the TFAF website.
7. These priority activities will be conducted respecting the Paris Principles of Aid Effectiveness, namely ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability.
8. Modes of Delivery
9. Grant Programme: The Facility will administer a grant program to which, when no other funding is available, a Member having notified Category C provisions may apply. The procedures of the grant programme are established in its Operational Rules[[1]](#footnote-1)
10. Technical Assistance and Capacity Building: The Facility will respond to requests from developing Members and LDC Members for technical assistance and capacity building on the Agreement which relate to the following outcomes: identifying implementation assistance, ratification of the Agreement, notifications under the Agreement, and strengthening the operation of National Trade Facilitation Committees. Activities may be organized to address the needs of an individual Member, group of Members or a regional grouping.
11. Engagement with Annex D and Development partners: The Facility will maintain close contact with Annex D and Development partners so as to share information and allow for coordination and non-duplication of efforts on trade facilitation. The Facility may respond to requests from those organizations to participate in activities to further support these objectives.
12. Maintain the Facility website: The Facility website underpins the three modes of delivery described above. In addition, the maintenance of up-to-date trade facilitation resources on the website ensures that it constitutes a comprehensive information sharing/exchange platform.
13. Relationship to the Operational Guidelines
14. This Framework is intended to supplement the provisions of the 2015 Operational Guidelines. If there is any conflict or inconsistency between the two, the provisions of this Framework will apply.

**3.** **Management and Transparency**

(a) Planning

1. The Facility working jointly with a representative group composed of interested Members shall prepare a work plan for the upcoming calendar year.
2. This work plan shall be drawn up based on *inter alia* the following:

(i) Priorities identified by the Committee as conveyed during a formal meeting held before mid-year, under a specific agenda item entitled "The Facility Work Plan"; and

(ii) Trade facilitation needs identified in the biennial ITTC survey of Members' technical assistance needs as well as needs identified in Category C notifications.

1. The work plan, accompanied by a draft budget based on the activities identified, shall be reviewed by the Committee during its dedicated session on assistance and capacity building. Requests for activities will be submitted throughout the year, via the activity request form on the Facility website[[2]](#footnote-2) and shared with interested Members via the online tracker to enhance transparency.

(b) Monitoring

1. Activities undertaken by the Facility will be monitored using a log frame which will be updated as required during the annual work planning phase.
2. Each activity request will identify the targeted outcomes of the activity in the context of the annual work plan priorities, and reports evaluating these activities will be posted thus allowing for results-based management, ensuring transparency and contributing to avoiding duplication of efforts.
3. Requests for grants will be submitted using the online expression of interest process, which may progress to a grant application which is then reviewed according to the Operational Rules of the Grant Programme. This process should help ensure transparency, non-duplication of activities and enhanced monitoring of the requested grant.

(c) Reporting

1. The Facility shall provide the Committee with an annual report by the end of June of the following year. The report will be composed of two Sections.
2. Section I will cover the following elements:

(i) a presentation and assessment of achieved outputs and outcomes compared to their aims and presented in the context of the log-frame and work plan priorities;

(ii) An estimation of impact; and

(iii) An outline of risks identified prior to and during implementation of the Facility's activities since the last report and how these risks have been mitigated, as well as lessons-learned for the future;

1. Section II will cover the following elements:

(i) The financial report which will describe the use of funds in the Facility since the last report and be set up in accordance with WTO financial rules and regulations including, as appropriate, any outcomes from the current discussions on trust funds in the context of the Budget Committee. The financial report will be based on the draft budget presented alongside the corresponding work plan, with additional expenditure related to the activities approved by the request forms received throughout the year.

1. The Facility shall also provide an update of its activities (either orally or in writing) to each regular formal meeting of the Committee.

**4. The Facility Secretariat**

1. The Facility Secretariat is housed within the WTO and its responsibilities comprise the delivery of the operational guidelines, as supplemented by this document.
2. The Facility continues to be subject to the regular audit procedures of the WTO.

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1. <https://www.tfafacility.org/assistance-grants/tfaf-grant-program> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://wto.formstack.com/forms/tfaf_ta_virtual> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)