ANNEX D+

TFA IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT FACILITY AND PARTNERS

JULY 2020
TABLE OF CONTENTS

FORWARD .................................................................................................................................................. 2
GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION .................................................................................. 3
INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION .............................................................................. 4
INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ....................................................................................... 5
INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE ......................................................................................................... 6
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE .............................................. 8
STANDARDS AND TRADE DEVELOPMENT FACILITY ........................................................................... 9
TFA IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE/ACTIVITIES DURING COVID 19 ........................................... 9
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT .................................................. 10
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE ............................................................ 13
WORLD BANK GROUP ............................................................................................................................ 16
WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION ...................................................................................................... 17
WTO TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT FACILITY ...................................................................... 21
FORWARD

The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF) was created to help WTO developing and least developed country Members find the support they need to implement the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). One of the ways that we fulfil this role is by providing information on the TFA implementation support programs offered by our partner organizations, the so-called "Annex D+" organizations.

Since the COVID 19 pandemic and its consequences- government restrictions on travel, teleworking, etc.- the normal modes of providing assistance have been disrupted. However, international organizations are adapting to these conditions and continue to work uninterrupted, albeit in some cases using alternative means.

This document provides updates on the TFA implementation support activities that are being carried out by the TFAF and our partner organizations during this pandemic.
GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION

TFA IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE/ACTIVITIES DURING COVID 19

Brief description of your organization’s role in supporting implementation of the TFA

The Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation is a public-private partnership supporting governments in developing and least developed countries to implement the World Trade Organization’s Trade Facilitation Agreement. It is funded by six donors (United States, Canada, Germany, Denmark, United Kingdom and Australia) and hosted by the Centre for International Private Enterprise, International Chamber of Commerce and World Economic Forum, in cooperation with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

The Alliance brings together governments and businesses as equal partners to address delays and unnecessary red-tape at borders and design and deploy targeted reforms that deliver commercially quantifiable results. All its projects directly address articles of the TFA.

Assistance available/activities during COVID 19

It is essential that governments continue to collaborate and communicate with the private sector when addressing trade facilitation reform. The Alliance can support governments by:

• providing technical assistance to support reforms that address any aspect of the TFA. All TFA measures which make trade simpler, faster and more cost-effective can help countries to respond to and recover from the pandemic. Specifically, research suggests adopting risk management principles and systems (Article 7), fostering border agency cooperation (Article 8) and simplifying and digitising the submission of documents (Article 10) could have the largest positive impact on countries’ ability to facilitate trade during a pandemic;

• fostering public-private dialogue on trade facilitation reform; and

• facilitating knowledge exchange on international best practices in trade facilitation.

One particular offer of support available under Article 10 is the introduction of electronic phytosanitary certificates, or ephytos. The Alliance has been supporting Morocco to introduce ephytos and is now working to replicate this approach in other countries.

How to request assistance

Governments can request assistance by contacting Sandra Wydler, Coordinator, Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation at Sandra.WydlerNietlispach@weforum.org.

Useful information (links to website, research articles, etc)

www.tradefacilitation.org
INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

TFA IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE/ACTIVITIES DURING COVID 19

Brief description of your organization’s role in supporting implementation of the TFA

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is actively promoting trade facilitation and proactively supporting the implementation of the WTO TFA. Several IATA projects are tightly linked to the TFA’s objectives and directly relate to some of its provisions, such as the e-freight project and the Cargo Border Management Capacity Building activities, among others.

Assistance available/activities during COVID 19

Assistance

IATA has developed various capacity building consulting services centered around articles 7, 8 and 10 of the agreement to facilitate country’s compliance with the TFA commonly through the review of programs processes and procedures to ensure compliance with the agreement, the provision of international airport TFA readiness assessments and the delivery of bespoke TFA/trade facilitation workshops and/or trainings.

The IATA WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) Compliance Program is available during COVID-19. More information about the IATA Cargo Border Management Capacity Building portfolio can be in found in the herein catalogue.

Activities and projects

COVID-19 Trade Facilitation Repository

IATA has developed in collaboration with international organizations, NGO’s and associations the COVID-19 Trade Facilitation Repository, a platform that aims at consolidating COVID-19 trade-facilitation measures adopted by key stakeholders while facilitating access to this information by making it user-friendly, easily accessible, searchable and unifying in one single database (avoiding multiple searches in different engines and platforms). It contains a useful listing of all such initiatives and is broken down by organization, type of measure, and subject matter.

Global Alliance for trade Facilitation

The Alliance is working with governments and the private sector, including IATA, to deliver projects that will help implement the Trade Facilitation Agreement, making international trade simpler, faster and more cost-effective.

IATA has submitted a project idea for the automation of customs requirements, risk management and publication of customs procedures in Colombia. The project is now in its development phase.

How to request assistance

Contact the IATA Cargo Border Management team at cbm@iata.org.

Useful information (links to website, research articles, etc)

IATA Cargo Covid-19 website
https://www.iata.org/en/programs/cargo/

IATA Cargo Border Management Capacity Building Catalogue
https://www.iata.org/contentassets/3faa089d849846d49d089e66ffdf9a79f/iata_cargo_border_management_capacity_building_catalogue.pdf

COVID-19 Trade Facilitation Repository
https://www.tfafacility.org/covid19-trade-facilitation
INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ICC is the institutional representative of more than 45 million companies in over 100 countries with a mission to make business work for everyone, every day, everywhere. ICC’s business network, comprising national and sub-national chambers of commerce, plays an important role in facilitating trade through the provision of both practical tools and policy advice.

ICC is one of the host organisations of the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation which provides assistance to developing and least developed countries to support TFA implementation through public-private partnerships.

ICC chambers issue ATA Carnets, international customs documents permitting the duty-free and tax-free temporary export and import of goods for up to one year. Similarly, many chambers also issue and attest Certificates of Origin, with the ICC World Chambers Federation maintaining a universal set of procedures for their issuance and attestation.

ICC provides trade, customs and trade facilitation advice to governments worldwide, both directly and via international organisations such as World Trade Organisation and the World Customs Organisation. As the only business organisation with Observer Status at the United Nations, ICC has a unique presence in New York and Geneva and regularly participates in trade related international discussions with a view to improving its facilitation.

Key advice for governments on trade facilitation:

- Customs measures specifically designed to help small and medium-sized enterprises
- Recommendations on Authorized Economic Operators

Enquiries regarding trade facilitation can be directed to:

Damien Bruckard

Deputy Director, Trade and Investment, ICC

Telephone: +33 (0)1 49 53 28 06
damien.bruckard@iccwbo.org

Links

http://www.iccwbo.org
INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE
TFA IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE DURING COVID-19

Brief description of your organization’s role in supporting implementation of the TFA

The International Trade Centre (ITC) offers a comprehensive range of trade facilitation services to its beneficiaries towards implementation of the TFA factoring in the business perspective and continuous engagement between stakeholders at its core. ITC also provides support to public and private actors in preparing for the implementation of selected TFA transparency and efficiency obligations. ITC has also consolidated its expertise in strengthening NTFCs – both at the national and regional level – and in supporting beneficiary WTO Members to request financial and technical assistance to enable implementation of Category C commitments.

Assistance available during COVID-19

The spread of COVID-19 has enormously put under stress global value and supply chains, disrupting international trade flows and making cross-border trade procedures more complex to navigate. To better support beneficiaries to respond and mitigate the effects of this unprecedented global challenge, ITC has continued to leverage the TFA and strived to adopt digital tools in responding to and mitigating the health and economic impact of the crisis in the short and medium term.

With a view to expedite import and export procedures of priority goods such as medical equipment and food products, ITC has sought to enhance transparency and access to trade information related to COVID-19 priority products, measures and responses. This has been achieved by providing prompt online access to information on export, import and transit procedures of priority products, including medical and pharmaceutical products crucial to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, through Trade Facilitation Portals. Additionally, relevant information on COVID-19 measures, standards and guidelines adopted by different border agencies – from instructions for border crossings to production of hand sanitizers – has been consolidated in dedicated sections on the Trade Facilitation Portals.

Furthermore, in order to facilitate the movement and clearance of essential goods, ITC has enhanced its technical assistance to adapt implementation of specific TFA provisions that are essential to address the COVID-19 situation. This includes measures such as simplified clearance procedures, pre-arrival processing, streamlined risk management, sector-specific authorised operator (AEO) schemes and expedited shipment measures applied on all air cargo for essential goods.

ITC has also provided support in preparing forecasts and impact scenarios of COVID-19 on particular sectors or trade flows to help policymakers and businesses formulate appropriate trade facilitation measures to mitigate the economic impact of disruptions caused by the pandemic and take advantage of any emerging trading opportunities. Surveys to capture the width of economic challenges brought by COVID-19 have also been designed and shared with micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to elaborate tailored crisis management and mitigation measures.

To meet medium-term recovery needs, ITC has also initiated discussions with businesses and policymakers – at the national and regional economic community (REC) level – on a comprehensive approach to the simplification of cross-border procedures. In particular, ITC has refined a methodology to analyse trade obstacles across supply chains, and design and implement simplified import and export procedures and formalities for selected priority sectors that are critical for COVID-19 management and recovery.
How to request assistance

ITC is adapting its technical assistance on TFA implementation to COVID-19 mitigation and economic recovery – subject to the availability of funding – in the context of multi-annual trade-related projects that are being implemented in specific countries and regions. The portfolio of COVID-19-related trade facilitation services provided to beneficiary clients is hence pre-determined under the framework of these country-specific or region-specific trade-related technical assistance programmes.

Nonetheless, with the support of additional funding, ITC can further assist clients to capitalize on the implementation of the TFA to manage the COVID-19-related impact, both the immediate health crisis and trade disruptions, as well as ensuing economic repercussions.

Useful information (links to website, research articles, etc.)

Trade facilitation principles play a pivotal role for efficient cross border procedures as reflected in the ITC 15-Point Action Plan (http://www.intracen.org/covid19/15-Points-Action-Plan/) for open economies, supporting small businesses through the COVID-19 crisis and towards the future. This plan seeks to support internationally-oriented MSMEs through the crisis, and reaffirms the importance of facilitating cross-border trade in goods and services and streamlining the movement of essential products, including through the digitization of trade documents and procedures.

As a timely response to Covid-19 economic analysis and forecasting, ITC has produced the ITC SME Competitiveness Outlook 2020 – Covid-19: The Great Lockdown and its Impact on Small Business (https://www.intracen.org/publication/smeco2020/) to investigate the impact of the pandemic on small firms, international supply chains and trade, based on a large-scale global survey, also recommending actions to businesses, policymakers and business-support organizations to tackle the crisis and put in place resilient, digital, inclusive and sustainable policies for economic recovery.

ITC has contributed to develop the COVID-19 Trade Facilitation Repository (https://www.tfafacility.org/covid19-trade-facilitation) in collaboration with other development partners. The COVID-19 Trade Facilitation Repository is a joint platform of actions and initiatives adopted by international organizations that aims at enhancing access to and consolidating information on COVID-19-related trade facilitation measures adopted by key stakeholders in a user-friendly and easily accessible manner in one single database.
Brief description of your organization’s role in supporting implementation of the TFA

In 2016, the OSCE participating States decided by consensus to renew the OSCE’s mandate with regard to connectivity and trade facilitation. Since then, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) in the Secretariat, as well as the field operations have intensified their activities in trade facilitation.

The OCEEA and the OSCE Field operations have been supporting through regional and national projects in setting up or strengthening the capacity of National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) with the aim, inter alia, to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA) and other relevant international standards. Furthermore, through its projects and activities the OSCE has been assisting its participating States in implementing their obligations under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, such as data harmonization, recording and publishing average release times, cooperation between authorities, and perfecting the national single window.

Assistance available/activities during COVID 19

Some of the Field Presences of the OSCE, at the request of the respective host countries, assisted among others Customs Services with different equipment like protective respiratory masks and disinfectant items to equip the personnel involved in the measures to comply with the state of emergency in the respective countries on a day-to-day basis.
STANDARDS AND TRADE DEVELOPMENT FACILITY

TFA IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE/ACTIVITIES DURING COVID 19

Brief description of your organization’s role in supporting implementation of the TFA

The STDF is a global partnership that helps developing and least developed countries improve their food safety, and animal and plant health capacity to meet sanitary and phytosanitary requirements for trade, based on international standards. In recent years, STDF work has focused on how SPS measures are applied to imports, exports and transit goods, and the extent to which, if any, these measures unnecessarily increase the costs of doing business. This work has identified, analyzed and fostered dialogue on how to improve the implementation of SPS controls in a way that facilitates safe trade, while minimizing transaction costs. As part of this work, the STDF supports the increased use of electronic SPS certificates (SPS e-cert), in the broader context of paperless trade and the Trade Facilitation Agreement. STDF’s e-certification projects - ePhyto and eVet – are delivering innovative solutions to improve safe trade, including a central hub to facilitate the transfer of electronic phytosanitary certificates as well as the web-based Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS) that can produce and receive ePhytos. The STDF continues to work on enhancing and promoting the integration of SPS-related components in broader trade facilitation programmes.

Assistance available/activities during COVID 19

The STDF provides funding to beneficiaries for the development and implementation of collaborative and innovative SPS projects. Funds up to US$ 50,000 are available for project preparation grants (PPGs) to prepare technically sound and sustainable projects. These grants can involve the application of SPS-related capacity evaluation tools, preparation of feasibility studies and/or formulation of project proposals to address specific SPS capacity building needs linked to trade.

Funds up to US$ 1,000,000 are available for project grants (PGs) that improve food safety, animal and plant health capacity to comply with international sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements. These grants are expected to help address particular SPS challenges or issues that affect trade to international markets.

Since COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic in March 2020, the STDF Secretariat has put in place a range of actions, in close cooperation with STDF partners and other members of the partnership, to mitigate and manage the risk across STDF’s work as far as reasonably possible.

How to request assistance

The STDF Guidance Note for Applicants provides detailed information on STDF funding requirements. This Guidance Note as well as other information regarding STDF grants can be found on the following webpage: https://standardsfacility.org/funding.

Useful information (links to website, research articles, etc)

https://standardsfacility.org/SPS-eCert
https://standardsfacility.org/facilitating-safe-trade
https://standardsfacility.org/stdf-partnership-updates-covid-19
https://youtu.be/Eww1MsewAOk
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

TFA IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE/ACTIVITIES DURING COVID 19

Brief description of your organization’s role in supporting implementation of the TFA

UNCTAD works globally based on requests from Governments or regional organizations providing technical assistance and capacity building. We have worked on Trade Facilitation in Africa (Central, East, Southern and West and Africa), Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Pacific Islands countries.

Assisting developing countries in identifying their particular trade and transport facilitation needs and priorities and helps them program the implementation of specific trade and transport facilitation measures.

Assistance available/activities during COVID 19


News, Analysis and Resources. UNCTAD is monitoring the effects of the global pandemic on manufacturing, trade, foreign direct investment and economic growth.


b. COVID-19, a 10-point action plan to strengthen international trade and transport facilitation in times of pandemic

There is a need to keep ships moving, ports open and crossborder trade flowing, while ensuring that border agencies can safely undertake all necessary controls. Facilitating trade and the transport of goods has become more important than ever, to avoid logistics obstacles that lead to shortages of necessary supplies. The concrete measures proposed in this policy brief help to facilitate transport and trade and to protect the population from COVID-19.


c. Support for National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs)

Online course Empowerment Programme for NTFCs: UNCTAD provides an intensive professional program for the Secretariat and the members of National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) in English, French, Spanish (to be launched) and Portuguese consisting of 9 courses. The main objective is to help them implement, in a coordinated manner, trade facilitation reforms, including the provisions of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation of the World Trade Organization.

https://unctad.org/en/DTL/TLB/Pages/TF/Committees/Empowerment-Programme-for-National-Trade-Facilitation-Bodies.aspx

d. Rapid scan of National Emergency Regulations Framework in relation to cross-border trade

There is often a lack of transparency in connection with the introduction of emergency measures relating to trade and transport. This leads to disruption of international trade and supply chains. In close collaboration with the stakeholders of the National Trade Facilitation Committee, UNCTAD
offers to undertake desk based rapid scans of the framework of national emergency regulations and with the relevant stakeholders develop a strategy to publish such information in the most transparent manner. In countries that have national trade portals, such information would naturally feature on these portals under a special section of the website.

e. Regional training course for transit coordinators

Transit is per definition a multi-country operation, which involves multiple procedures in every country of the transit operation, which leads to complexity. The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement suggests that each country appoints a national transit coordinator to liaise with other countries to facilitate movement under transit and to collaborate to address transit challenges. UNCTAD provides a one-week regional training course for transit coordinators focusing on concrete collaboration mechanisms that are particularly important in times of crisis such as COVID-19, with view to coordinating interventions and trade restrictions between regional trading partners.

f. Regional collaboration policy framework on Trade Facilitation

With a view to ensuring that trade facilitation policy is coordinated at regional level, UNCTAD offers technical assistance and advisory services to regional and sub-regional bodies to assist with developing policy frameworks and setup regional and sub-regional Trade Facilitation Committees, that are particularly relevant to coordinate interventions in times of crisis and emergency.

g. Trade Information Portals

The Trade Facilitation Portals are a key tool for transparency and provides online step by step descriptions of import, export and transit procedures from the trader's point of view. For traders, it gives a detailed picture of what needs to be done to comply with national regulations. For policymakers, it helps with the identification of all unnecessary redundancies and administrative bottlenecks. [https://businessfacilitation.org/](https://businessfacilitation.org/)

h. Adapting the use of Asycuda World to the Covid-19 Situation

Guidelines to Customs Administrations: The ASYCUDA World (AW) system is well-equipped to assist Customs and cross-border agencies in scaling-up necessary actions to better deal with this pandemic by adopting policies and procedures to prevent, and/or limit transmission of the virus in their respective work environments, while at the same time ensuring the smooth functioning of cross border trade.

The automated support provided by AW affords Customs, cross-border agencies and traders to electronically submit and exchange data and documentation, and computerize procedures to expedite the clearance of imports, exports, transits and other trade transactions, thereby reducing to a great extent the need for face-to-face interaction.


**How to request assistance**

For item A: 
tc@unctad.org

For Item B: 
jan.hoffmann@un.org
For items C, D, E, F, y G:
unctad-tf@un.org

For item H:
asycuda@unctad.org

Useful information (links to website, research articles, etc)

Item C: https://unctad.org/en/DTL/TLB/Pages/TF/Committees/Empowerment-Programme-for-National-Trade-Facilitation-Bodies.aspx
Item G: https://businessfacilitation.org/

Other: The COVID19 Pandemic and the Blue Economy.
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

TFA IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE/ACTIVITIES DURING COVID 19

Brief description of your organization’s role in supporting implementation of the TFA

UNECE serves as the focal point within the United Nations Economic and Social Council for trade facilitation and electronic business standards. UNECE, through its inter-governmental body of UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) develop these recommendations and standards. These recommendations and standards support both commercial and government business processes with the aim of fostering growth in international trade and implementation of the WTO TFA. UNECE provides capacity building support to UNECE countries to support the implementation of the TFA by supporting National Trade Facilitation Committees and providing training materials on TFA articles including Articles 10.1 on formalities and documentary requirements; 10.3 on use of international standards; 10.4 on single window; and 23.2 on national trade facilitation committees and their implementation.

Assistance available/activities during COVID 19

1. Strengthening the capacity of Central Asian countries to implement trade facilitation measures and better integrate into the international rules-based trading system

This project strengthens national capacities of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to implement trade facilitation measures and better integrate into the international rules-based trading system. This includes capacity building of policymakers and experts in NTFCs, regulatory agencies and other relevant stakeholders, to develop and implement trade facilitation policies and measures and to ensure the efficient and fast recovery from COVID-19 trade disruptions.

2. Strengthening the capacity of the Kyrgyzstan National Trade Facilitation Council to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

The project is aimed at strengthening the capacity of the National Trade Facilitation Committee to implement trade facilitation reforms and to develop a trade information portal with the focus on emergencies and overcoming trade disruptions caused by COVID-19. The integration of the COVID-19 impact on trade facilitation prepares the country for further shocks and similar crises.

3. UN Development Account - Evidence-based trade facilitation measures for economies in transition

The project aims at enhancing countries’ exports and cross-border trade in Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Georgia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Special attention is paid to help countries recover from COVID-19 trade disruptions using the UNECE trade facilitation policy recommendations, standards and tools and to develop an evidence-based policy coherence to support implementation of provisions of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

4. UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation

The survey results allow the countries to monitor progress in the implementation of measures for sustainable and digital trade facilitation and serve as evidence based for policymaking helping to identify areas where efforts are most needed to address the remaining policy, legal, regulatory and technical obstacles as well as needs for capacity-building and technical assistance. The member States can benefit from other countries’ experiences and learn from good practices.

5. UN/EDIFACT Health and Insurance Standards

Standards facilitate the exchanges between medical providers. These include messages for medical prescriptions, medical service requests, medical service reports, health care claims.
6. UN/CEFACT dematerialization approach and related tools

Single Window, Single Submission Portals, eBusiness standards, Data Pipeline, Internet of Things / Smart Containers, instruments for e-business (electronic documents such as eCMR, e-Invoice, Reference Data Models, etc.)

7. UN/CEFACT Recommendation 33 on Single Window

Within the context of this Recommendation, a Single Window is defined as a facility that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardized information and documents with a single-entry point to fulfil all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it allows stakeholders to easily locate and access information.

8. UN/CEFACT Recommendation 37 on Single Submission Portals

The Recommendation streamlines procedures at the border and connects traders to all relevant agencies through a single portal.

9. UN/CEFACT tools on traceability and transparency

These tools support transparency and traceability of the value chain, such as traceability in agri-food supply chains and wildlife (eCITES), Electronic licenses, permits and certificates (LPC) for agriculture trade (eCERT standards), Rapid Alert Systems for Feed and Food (RASFF), Electronic Animal Passport. During COVID-19, these tools assist in implementing risk management, detecting fraud and preventing health risks (e.g. zoonosis).

10. UN/CEFACT tool on Smart Container

Smart Containers are standardized seagoing containers as defined by the International Standards Organization ISO-6346 standard. The data obtained from Smart Containers is the basis for the development of value-added services that can be offered to the relevant stakeholders in the shipping world. During COVID-19, Smart Containers help keep a real-time information of trade transactions and make trade more efficient.

11. UN/CEFACT tool on eCMR

This tool standardizes and harmonizes messages related to electronic road consignment note (e-CMR) to be exchanged between the actors of a supply chain. In COVID-19 period, it allows clear and efficient communication between all stakeholders of the supply chain.

12. UN/CEFACT Data Pipeline Standards

This tool aims at standardizing and harmonizing messages related to the cross-border exchange of goods for any mode of transport to be exchanged between multiple actors within a supply chain. In times of crisis, this tool enables all stakeholders of international trade of cross-border exchange status and restrictions.

13. UN/CEFACT tool for Integrated Services for MSMEs in International Trade

Integrated Services for MSMEs in International Trade (ISMIT) and development of eService platforms facilitates trade for MSMEs by addressing obstacles in an effective manner and allows them to reach export markets. SMEs are particularly affected by disrupted supply chains during COVID-19, economic downturn and current crisis.
14. Report on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on international trade and logistics and the ways advanced technologies can help overcome such disruptions

Report was developed by the Advisory Group on Advanced Technologies in trade and logistics to identify main ways how new technologies can help overcome COVID-19 related trade disruptions.

15. Enhancing Traceability and Transparency for Sustainable Value Chains in Garment and Footwear

Improving transparency and traceability is a priority for the garment and footwear industry to increase its ability to manage the value chains more effectively, identify and address labour and human rights violations and environmental impacts, combat counterfeits, and handle reputational risks, while embracing more sustainable production and consumption patterns.

16. UN/CEFACT tool on emergency response (under development)

Recommendation on readiness for emergency relief imports for clear, accessible and concise best practice and guidelines to enable efficient clearance for goods needed in case of crises.

How to request assistance

To request assistance, please contact Ms. Maria Ceccarelli, Chief, Trade Facilitation Section (Telephone: +41 22 917 2455, maria.ceccarelli@un.org)

Useful information (links to website, research articles, etc)

UN/CEFACT: www.unece.org/cefact.html
UN/CEFACT COVID19 response: www.unece.org/uncefact/covid-19-response.htm
Recommendations and Standards: www.unece.org/cefact/recommendations/rec_index.html
TFA IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE DURING COVID 19

Brief description of your organization's role in supporting implementation of the TFA

The World Bank Group (WBG) provides assistance to countries in aligning their trade practices with the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA). Focused on supporting the full and effective implementation of the WTO TFA and related trade facilitation reforms, the WBG provides practical and demand-driven assistance.

The WBG supports countries through larger lending projects and through its two flagship trade facilitation programs; the Trade Facilitation Support Program (TFSP) and the Trade Facilitation Program for Middle Income Countries (TFMICs).

Assistance available during COVID 19

The WBG helps client countries identify existing constraints and bottlenecks to cross-border trade; design and plan for the implementation of reforms; and increase the predictability, transparency, and harmonization of systems and procedures in line with international standards covering import, export, and transit activities. Recognizing the important roles of both the public and private sectors in trade facilitation, the WBG draws on the unique expertise of both the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in its support to clients.

During COVID-19, the WBG continues to provide guidance and technical assistance to countries to implement best practices to facilitate the flow of goods. Technical assistance is moving forward through country offices utilizing virtual modalities and relying on local staff and consultants.

Support to trade facilitation is critical and should be part of the response to the crisis. Improving border processes and procedures to facilitate trade is more important than ever to enable safe and fast flow of perishable food commodities, medical and personal protection equipment, and cargoes essential for economic recovery. While the movement of people across borders may need to be temporarily restricted to constrain the spread of the epidemic, borders should remain open to movements of goods and services.

The World Bank Group’s package of immediate support will fast track US$14 billion in financing, complemented by policy advice and technical assistance, to help developing countries cope with the health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As COVID-19 continues to evolve, the WBG will adapt its approach and resources as needed. Building on our existing knowledge and instruments, our response is anchored in the COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan. We will continue to actively engage with international institutions and country authorities to help coordinate the global response.

How to request assistance

Assistance can be requested through the WTO TFAF Secretariat, World Bank Group Country Offices or directly through the TFSP and TFMICs Secretariats (wgain@worldbank.org);

Useful information (links to website, research articles, etc)

Trade and COVID-19 Brief Page
Managing Risk and Facilitating Trade in the COVID-19 Pandemic
Managing Risk and Facilitating Trade in the COVID-19 Pandemic - video
Trade Facilitation Support Program
Brief description of your organization’s role in supporting implementation of the TFA

The World Customs Organization (WCO) is the only intergovernmental organization dealing with Customs matters. It provides TFA support to its Members through its Mercator Programme launched in June 2014. The Mercator Programme follows a dual-track approach that comprises of overall and tailor-made tracks, allowing the WCO to respond to important cross-cutting, as well as country-specific challenges to TFA implementation. The Mercator Programme is a unique initiative that allows for uniform implementation by applying WCO instruments and tools and is supported by the practical experiences of the global Customs community. It has been evolving to address the needs and requirements of the Membership, including those arising from the most recent challenges faced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Assistance available/activities during COVID 19

Since its outbreak, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major disruptions to cross-border trade movements. It has been critical for Customs administrations to continue to facilitate the cross-border movement of, not only relief goods, but goods in general, to help minimize the overall impact of the outbreak on the economies and societies all around the world. Customs administrations were strongly urged to establish a coordinated and proactive approach with all concerned agencies to ensure the integrity and continued facilitation of global supply chains during the pandemic.

Repository of Members’ practices

The WCO and its Membership have marshalled all efforts through responsive measures and policies to maintain Customs business and to share useful lessons from this experience with global partners. Over 110 Members submitted examples of Customs administrations’ practices to prevent and fight the spread of COVID-19, while safeguarding supply chain continuity by facilitating trade and applying appropriate risk management. Examples of enhanced coordination and cooperation with other government agencies and the private sector were also highlighted, as well as measures to protect the health of Customs officers. They have been collected into a repository of Members’ practices, which is available at a dedicated WCO COVID-19 web page. This has been supplemented by a Secretariat Note on What Customs Can do to Mitigate the Effects of COVID-19.

Cooperation with international organizations and the private sector

The WCO has been working closely with a number of international organizations (including the WHO, WTO, UPU, IMO, UN/OCHA, OTIF, and OSJD etc.) in addressing challenges in facilitating the movement of goods across borders through different joint actions. Furthermore, over the past three months, the Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG), which represents a wide range of businesses and industry associations, (ICC, IRU, IATA, GEA, IFCBA, FONASBA, BASC, ASAPRA, AAET and others) has been holding virtual weekly/bi-weekly meetings with the WCO Secretary General, Deputy

---

3. World Health Organization (WHO), Universal Postal Union (UPU), International Maritime Organization (IMO), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN/OCHA), Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), Organization for Co-operation between Railways (OSJD), International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), International Air Transport Association (IATA), Global Express Association (GEA), International Federation of Customs Brokers Associations (IFCBA), Federation of National Associations of Ship Brokers and Agents (FONASBA), World Business Alliance for Secure Commerce (BASC), Association of Professional Customs Brokers of the Americas (ASAPRA), American Association of Exporters and Importers (AAEI)
Secretary General and Council Chairperson in attendance. These meetings have been enabling the members of the group to provide status updates relevant to their respective industries, discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international trade and the global economy, and have served as a table for discussing proposals for courses of action by the global Customs community.

On 13 April 2020, the Chairperson of the PSCG submitted a paper to the WCO Secretary General outlining some observations, priorities and principles to be considered by the WCO and its Members during the pandemic. The WCO Secretary General emphasized to the PSCG that working even harder together in the spirit of Customs-Business partnership was even more important during these critical times, modelling the partnership for emulation at national levels. The PSCG paper will contribute to the agendas of the relevant WCO working bodies in the months to come.

Availability of information

In close collaboration with a number of partners (WTO, UNCTAD, Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, ITC, Commonwealth Small States Office and IATA), the WCO contributed to the development of the COVID-19 Trade Facilitation Repository, a joint platform aimed at consolidating information on trade facilitation measures adopted by key stakeholders into a single user-friendly, easily accessible and searchable database. The WCO also supported another similar initiative, the recently revamped Global Trade Helpdesk (GTH), launched in 2017 by the ITC, UNCTAD and the WTO. This initiative has created a user-friendly digital platform that empowers micro, small and medium sized enterprises by providing a one-stop shop where businesses can find up-to-date trade statistics, export potential estimations, tariffs, regulatory requirements, as well as information about voluntary standards, and contact information for key public and private partners. The WCO contributed to the GTH by making its origin database and information on Authorized Economic Operators available for the purposes of the platform.

Discussions within the WCO committee structure

During the pandemic, the WCO continued its committee work in a document-based manner through the WCO CLiKC! Platform. The 227th/228th Sessions of the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) meeting held from 15 May to 3 July discussed, amongst other, the role of Customs in mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The PTC took note of the proposals for future WCO work with regard to the role of Customs in the different phases of the disaster management cycle, including conducting a review and gap analysis of existing instruments and tools, developing a new tool dealing with business continuity and the role of Customs, as well as developing a database or compendium of best practices.

Project to support Customs response to the impact of COVID-19

The WCO’s Secretary General Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, and the Japanese Ambassador to Belgium, H.E. Mr. Makita Shimokawa virtually exchanged Notes Verbales on 4 June 2020, on the Government of Japan’s financial support of the WCO’s project to improve the capacity of developing countries’ Customs administrations to respond to the impact of COVID-19 (COVID-19 Project).

The COVID-19 Project will develop WCO Guidelines for Customs administrations on business continuity and incident response in dealing with various disruptive scenarios represented by COVID-19 and other similar emergency situations on the basis of collected best practices. This project will also promote relevant WCO instruments and tools, in particular to WCO developing Members including Least Developing Countries (LDCs), through various assistance measures including national and regional training, considering each country’s individual situation and particular needs.

---

6 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development’s (UNCTAD), International Trade Centre (ITC).
7 https://www.tfafacility.org/covid19-trade-facilitation
8 www.globaltradehelpdesk.org
In order to ensure the timely dissemination of information and expertise, the project will also contribute to further upgrading the dedicated WCO web-site, which compiles information about relevant WCO instruments, tools, initiatives, databases and national practices that can be utilized in the effort to address the various COVID-19-related challenges faced by our Members and concerned stakeholders.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

The relevance of international trade facilitation rules and standards contained in the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and in the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention, have proven to be more critical during the pandemic than ever. Border agency cooperation, pre-arrival processing, single window, use of international standards, electronic payment options, risk management and many others, not only help to facilitate trade, but also contribute to the safety of citizens. Furthermore, they respond to shortages in Customs staff during pandemics and other occurrences that may cause similar disruptions. Customs administrations have been exploring innovative ways to ensure that their operations are carried out efficiently and effectively, in line with international standards, while conducting work remotely and while maintaining social distancing measures.

With the outbreak, many businesses around the world have adapted to the pandemic and moved into e-commerce much faster than planned. This willingness to change has saved many businesses and demonstrated the power of e-commerce. Trade facilitation and a truly paperless Customs environment will constitute a critical building block for further growth of e-commerce. WCO’s capacity building plan for e-commerce, recently endorsed by the PTC, will play an important role in that respect.

It is also important to recognize that COVID-19 is not the first, and will not be the last, pandemic. Customs administrations will, therefore, need to be supported in the preparedness for and management of any future ‘comparable’ situation, which would require procedures for expediting the release and clearance of goods.

All of the above-mentioned developments, induced by the COVID-19 pandemic are having an important impact and giving an additional boost to the future of technical assistance and capacity building under the Mercator Programme, including with the newly-launched COVID-19 related project.

Taking into consideration that international travel has been halted and will very likely remain restricted during 2020, the WCO Secretariat has focused on using alternative arrangements allowing the WCO to continue providing its technical assistance and capacity building support by using various on-line tools.

How to request assistance

The WCO Capacity Building delivery is based on the multi-year project planning as well as on the annual Capacity Building needs assessment carried out by the Secretariat together with Member Customs administrations and supported by the Regional Offices for Capacity Building (ROCBs).

However, in addition to this needs assessment process, developing countries and LDCs may submit their requests for assistance to the WCO Capacity Building Directorate (capacity.building@wcoomd.org) at any time.

Interested development partners and donor institutions may contact the WCO Office of External Relations (external.relations@wcoomd.org) with regard to further cooperation, including financial support for technical assistance and capacity building projects.
Useful information (links to website, research articles, etc)

WCO web site: www.wcoomd.org


WTO TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT FACILITY

TFA IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE/ACTIVITIES DURING COVID 19

Brief description of your organization’s role in supporting implementation of the TFA

The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility was created at the request of Members to help developing and least developed country Members to find the support they need to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. This support is provided in a number of ways including by providing resources on our website www.TFAFacility.org, through technical assistance and training, providing information and contacts for programs offered by development partners, and by offering project preparation and project implementation grants.

Assistance available/activities during COVID 19

During the COVID 19 pandemic we are working to make more resources available on our website and to continue training and grant programs using virtual formats.

TFA Notification Resources: We have added two new webpages to assist Members to prepare TFA required notifications. One page provides general information on all the TFA requirements for ABC, transparency, assistance arrangements, shifting categories and time extension, and Article 22 notifications. The second webpage provides detailed information on How to Prepare each of these notifications with links to templates as well as well as explanations on how to complete them and sample extracts from Member notifications. These webpages can be found here:

Notifications General Information: [coming soon]

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

COVID 19 Resources: The TFAF has launched a searchable repository of resources to help governments and private sector to cope during the COVID 19 pandemic. It was launched in cooperation with IATA and the Commonwealth Secretariat and contains resources from 17 organizations and associations. These resources include, inter alia, articles, case studies, instrument and tools. We continue to add new partners and resources. It can be found here:  
https://www.tfafacility.org/covid19-trade-facilitation

COVID 19 Survey: The TFAF conducted a survey on trade facilitation and COVID 19 in cooperation with the International Chamber of Commerce and the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation. It asked government officials and private sector representatives worldwide to identify which import, export and transit processes have become more cumbersome or time consuming in the context of the COVID 19 containment efforts, which processes have become less cumbersome or time consuming, and which trade-related processes would have the most positive impact if implemented in the current circumstances. A report on the findings, and how implementation of the TFA can help, can be found here: https://www.tfafacility.org/taf-covid-19-survey-final-results

Technical Assistance and Training: We continue to offer training on the TFA and the notification requirements through virtual formats. Our training is aligned to Members' needs and can be arranged upon request.

More information and a training request form can be found here: https://wto.formstack.com/forms/taf_ta_virtual
**Grants:** TFAF staff continue to work uninterrupted to assist WTO Members to find the support they need to implement the WTO TFA through the grant program. We are processing applications and engaging experts who can help TFA implementation efforts remotely while travel is restricted.

Please submit an expression of interest through the link below or contact the team on tfaf@wto.org to launch an application. While we know that there are many other priorities at this time, the TFAF team are ready to help you through the application process. [https://www.tfafacility.org/grant-program](https://www.tfafacility.org/grant-program)

**Coordination with Partner Organizations:** We continue to communicate closely with our partner organizations and to cooperate on projects, as noted in some of the initiatives mentioned above. We also participate in meetings organized by regional organizations.

**Useful information (links to website, research articles, etc.)**

In addition to the projects described above you can find a wealth of information on the website. We invite you to take a look.

The WTO Trade Dialogue on Food: Food Trade Logistics, Navigating the Risks of COVID 19. This webinar contains a segment on the TFA. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aa4bvHT6_yA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aa4bvHT6_yA)

Resources (case studies, tools, guidelines, etc.) on the implementation of the TFA provisions: [https://www.tfafacility.org/article-resources](https://www.tfafacility.org/article-resources)

Information on implementation support programs:
1. Programs offered by Members, international, regional and specialized organizations: [https://www.tfafacility.org/implementation-support](https://www.tfafacility.org/implementation-support)
2. Searchable database of international organizations' completed implementation projects. [https://www.tfafacility.org/projects](https://www.tfafacility.org/projects)

Information on WTO and partner e-learning courses is found here: [https://www.tfafacility.org/e-learning-courses](https://www.tfafacility.org/e-learning-courses)

WTO COVID 19 resource page: [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/covid19_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/covid19_e.htm)

If you want to provide a case study, advertise an event, or have suggestions on how the TFAF can better serve our Members, please contact the TFAF team at [TFAF@wto.org](mailto:TFAF@wto.org)