



GLOBAL ALLIANCE
FOR TRADE FACILITATION



Annual Report

2023

Watch our
video



1. ABOUT US

- Purpose, Vision and Mission [PAGE 4](#)
- Trade Facilitation: Our Theory of Change [PAGE 5](#)
- Donors, Host Organisations and Secretariat [PAGE 6](#)
- Private Sector Partners [PAGE 7](#)
- Steering Group [PAGE 8](#)
- Year in Review [PAGE 9](#)
- Letter From Our Director [PAGE 10](#)

2. TACKLING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

- Food Security, Healthcare, Disaster Preparedness [PAGES 12-13](#)
- Climate and the Environment [PAGE 14](#)
- Honing a Strategic EDGE [PAGE 16](#)

3. OUR IMPACTS

- Making a Real Difference [PAGE 18](#)
- Empowering MSMEs: Fiji, Cambodia in FOCUS [PAGES 19-20](#)
- Empowering MSMEs: Women in Business [PAGE 21](#)

4. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

- Forging Strong Partnerships [PAGES 23-24](#)
- Business Delivers [PAGE 25-27](#)

5. PROJECTS IN IMPLEMENTATION

- Where We Are Working [PAGE 29](#)
- The Ways We Work [PAGE 30](#)
- Accurate Measurement [PAGES 31-32](#)
- Holistic Trade Facilitation [PAGE 33](#)
- Projects at a Glance [PAGES 34-43](#)

6. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

- 2023 Financial Summary [PAGE 45](#)



1

ABOUT US

- Purpose, Vision and Mission [PAGE 4](#)
- Trade Facilitation: Our Theory of Change [PAGE 5](#)
- Donors, Host Organisations and Secretariat [PAGE 6](#)
- Private Sector Partners [PAGE 7](#)
- Steering Group [PAGE 8](#)
- Year in Review [PAGE 9](#)
- Letter From Our Director [PAGE 10](#)



GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION



OUR PURPOSE

To drive economic growth and opportunity for everyone by boosting international trade



OUR VISION

A world where cross-border trade is simple, safe, and inclusive



OUR MISSION

To deliver targeted and measurable trade facilitation reforms through public private partnership in developing countries

TRADE FACILITATION: OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Alliance projects cut through red tape and end costly delays at borders by bringing together governments and businesses of all sizes as equal partners to deliver targeted, measurable trade reforms, streamlining international trade processes, and strengthening supply chain resiliency.

By emphasising digitalisation and focusing on practical, targeted, and measurable reforms, Alliance projects enable businesses to trade more easily in an environment where resource-poor micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) stand to gain most.

Modernising trade procedures strengthens border management, encouraging legitimate trade while safeguarding consumers. Alliance projects boost trade competitiveness and business conditions, driving inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction.

Recognising the pivotal role of the private sector in generating employment, contributing to government revenues, and serving as a vital supplier of essential goods and services, businesses are integral to the success of every Alliance project. Their inputs are evident throughout the Alliance project lifecycle, from scoping to implementation, to post-completion sustainability.

“The issue is that there isn’t enough money in government coffers, Multilateral Development Banks or philanthropies to address the multitude of challenges that we’re facing. So, the private sector has to bring its capital, ingenuity, people and technology to the table.”

Ajay Banga
President of the World Bank

Supporting UN Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations recognises international trade as an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction, and an important means to achieve its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Alliance’s work to support developing countries and least developed countries in implementing the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) can help to meet several of these goals.



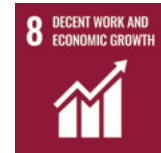
Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere



Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all



Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies



Goal 17: Revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development



REDUCED TIME AND COST OF TRADE



INCREASED TRADE, INVESTMENT AND JOBS



INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND POVERTY REDUCTION

OUR DONORS



HOST ORGANISATIONS



Center for International Private Enterprise

CIPE works with local partners to craft business-driven solutions to social-economic problems that affect millions of people. CIPE believes that democracy is at its strongest when the private sector is flourishing. Working with local partners, including business associations, chambers of commerce, think tanks, universities and advocacy organisations, CIPE helps to create the enabling environment for business to thrive. CIPE currently has more than 200 projects on the ground, including grants with local partners in over 80 countries, to help build those institutions.

International Chamber of Commerce

ICC is the institutional representative of more than 45 million companies in over 130 countries with a mission to make business work for everyone, every day, everywhere. Through a unique mix of advocacy, solutions, and standard setting, ICC promotes international trade, responsible business conduct and a global approach to regulation, in addition to providing market-leading dispute resolution services. Members include many of the world's leading companies, MSMEs, business associations and local chambers of commerce.

World Economic Forum

The World Economic Forum, committed to improving the state of the world, is the international organisation for public-private cooperation. The Forum engages the foremost political, business and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas. The Forum provides a global, impartial and not-for-profit platform for meaningful connection between stakeholders to establish trust, and build initiatives for cooperation and progress.

SECRETARIAT

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS



GLOBAL BUSINESS PARTNERS INCLUDE:



LOCAL BUSINESS PARTNERS INCLUDE:

<p>BANGLADESH Bhomra Customs Clearing & Forwarding Agents Association</p>	<p>MADAGASCAR CCM Transit Groupement des Exportateurs de Girofle de Madagascar Groupement des Exportateurs de Vanille de Madagascar Groupement du Patronat Malagasy - FIV.MPA.MA Local professional groups of importers & exporters (GEM) Madagascar Ground Handling</p>
<p>BRAZIL Association of Customs Brokers of São Paulo ICC Brazil</p>	<p>MALAWI Clearing and Forwarding Agents Association of Malawi Indigenous Customs Clearing and Forwarding Agents Association of Malawi (ICCAFA)</p>
<p>CAMBODIA Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association DHL Express (Cambodia) European Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia Khmum Technology Co., Ltd.</p>	<p>MOZAMBIQUE AIPROMEM (Medicines Importers Association) CTA (Confederation of Economic Associations) Mozambique Single Window</p>
<p>COLOMBIA ANALDEX (Asociación Nacional de Comercio Exterior) Asociación Nacional de Empresarios de Colombia (ANDI) ICC Colombia</p>	<p>NIGERIA Association of Nigeria Licensed Custom Agent (ANLCA) ICC Nigeria Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT)</p>
<p>GUATEMALA Chamber of Industry of Guatemala (CIG) ICC Guatemala National Association of Shipping Agents</p>	<p>PERU Asociación de Exportadores (ADEX) Chamber of Commerce of Lima (CCL) National Society of Industries (SNI) Sociedad de Comercios Exterior del Perú (COMEXPERU)</p>
<p>ECUADOR CORBANEC AMCHAM Quito Anecacao Association of Banana Exporters of Ecuador (AEBE) Expoflores ICC Ecuador Kallari Logiztik Alliance Quito Chamber of Commerce Unión de Organizaciones Campesinas Cacaoteras (UNOACE)</p>	<p>SENEGAL Association des Unions Maraichères des Niayes Coopérative Fédérative des Acteurs de l'Horticulture du Sénégal (CFAHS) Syndicat des Exportateurs des Produits Agricoles (SEPAS)</p>
<p>JORDAN The Association of Owners of Clearance and Transport Companies ICC Jordan Jordan Chamber of Commerce Jordan Dates Association (JoDates) Jordan Exporters and Products Association for Fruit and Vegetables (JEPA)</p>	<p>TUNISIA Union Tunisienne de l'agriculture et de la pêche (UTAP) Union Tunisienne de l'industrie, du commerce et de l'artisanat (UTICA)</p>
<p>INDONESIA ICC Indonesia Indonesia Fish Canning Association (APIKI) Indonesian Fishery Producers Processing and Marketing Association</p>	<p>UGANDA HortiFresh</p>
	<p>ZAMBIA Zambia Customs and Forwarding Agents Association (ZCFAA) Zambia Freight Forwarders Association (ZAFFA)</p>

STEERING GROUP

Our Steering Group embodies public private collaboration and puts partnership at the core of all Alliance work. It comprises representatives of our donor governments and global business partners. Our Steering Group provides strategic direction, approves projects, and authorises budgets on a consensus basis.



Amgad Shehata

Senior Vice-President of Global Public Affairs & Strategy
UPS



Jochen Daechert

Vice-President of Global Customs
BASF



Leila Aridi Afas

Director of Global Public Policy
Toyota Motor North America



Mark FeDuke

Director of Risk Management and Regulatory Affairs
ArdoVLM



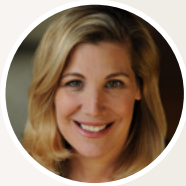
Mona Marshy

Senior Policy Advisor,
Economic Relations and Strategy
Global Affairs Canada



Paul Fekete

Senior International Trade Advisor
USAID



Sarah Thorn

Senior Director of Global Government Affairs
Walmart



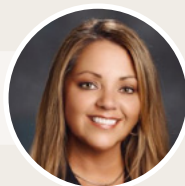
Stephan Bethe

Head of Division Trade Policy,
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
BMZ



Steven Pope

Head of Trade Facilitation (GoTrade)
Deutsche Post DHL Group



Susie Hoeger

Senior Director, Global Trade Compliance & Policy
Abbott Laboratories



William Petty

Global Product Development Manager,
Customs & Trade Consulting
A.P. Møller - Maersk

YEAR IN REVIEW

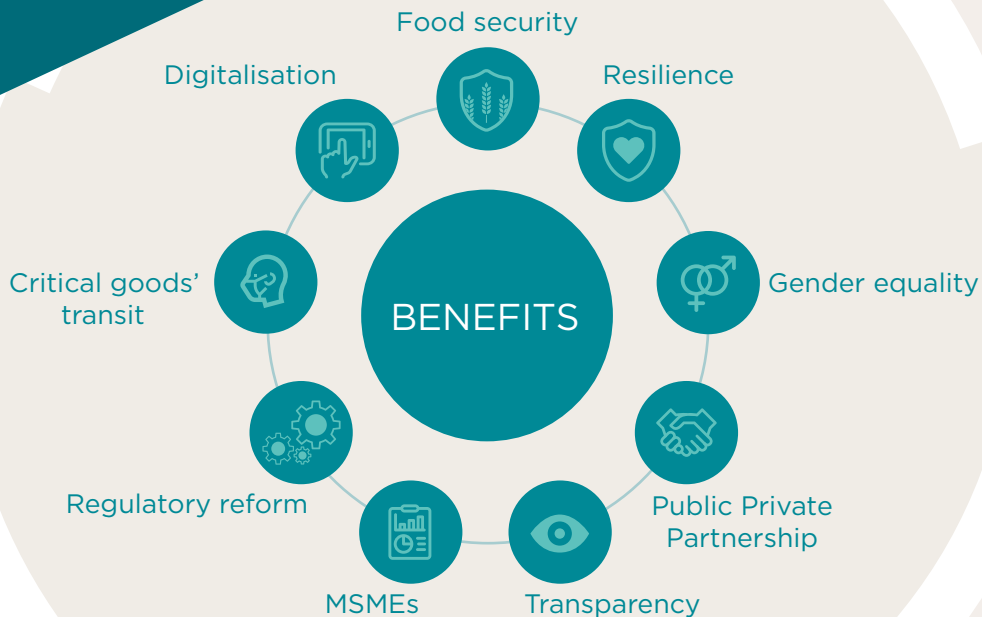
Total business contributions
US\$ 12 million
(2023: US\$ 2 million)

- 102** Chambers of Commerce & Associations
- 592** MSMEs
- 41** Global Business Partners
- 2** New Global Business Partners
- 72** Public Private Dialogues
- 39%** Women Participants in Public Private Dialogues
- 5** Completed Projects
- 16** Projects in Implementation
- 5** New Projects
- 26** Project Countries

GLOBAL ALLIANCE
FOR TRADE FACILITATION

Saving
US\$ 142 million

Return on investment
264%



LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

PHILIPPE ISLER



Words like deglobalisation, fragmentation and polarisation tend to obscure the reality of our interdependent world. Recent crises are placing significant strains on international commerce, patterns are changing, but trade continues to make our world go round.

A failure to connect people to global markets stifles economic opportunity, threatening to reverse previous gains, particularly for small businesses in the developing world. With its key role in streamlining cross-border trade, now, more than ever, trade facilitation is paramount.

Since our formation in 2015, the Alliance has been a driving force in bringing fresh approaches to trade facilitation, primarily by leveraging private sector resources, measuring the impact of our work, and operating in agile, responsive ways. This approach delivered yet again for project countries during 2023, making us ideally placed to confront new and emerging challenges in achieving sustainable development.

Building inclusivity

Whether our teams are helping to build a digital land port management system in Bangladesh, linking disparate IT platforms in Cambodia, or supporting Ecuadorian government agencies in interconnecting the national Single Window, it all comes down to one thing: making the benefits of trade more inclusive.

Building on cohesive experience, expertise and ideas gained from previous successes as well as inevitable setbacks, during 2023 we successfully completed five projects across the world, with several more nearing conclusion, while launching a further five. Our projects are wide and varied and the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement remains our guiding reference.

Responding decisively

Our awareness of the fast-moving trading landscape and a rebalancing of trade patterns also encourages us to respond decisively to evolving practices such as nearshoring and the acceleration of intra-African trade. For example, we recently launched a project in the Dominican Republic to position small companies in becoming suppliers to large multinational exporters operating in the country's Free Trade Zones. We are also collaborating with the AfCFTA Secretariat, with proposals for further digitalising trade processes.

I never tire of being asked about the work of the Alliance because it signifies a growing appreciation of the potential of trade facilitation, moving it centre-stage in policy formulation. It also gives me the opportunity to discuss the role of innovation in our field and how we might tackle some of the world's biggest challenges, including climate change, supply chain resilience, food security, healthcare provision, and disaster preparedness.

Strong partnerships

In this regard, the Alliance has forged strong, strategic partnerships with influential international organisations that share our goals and can help us in achieving them, including UNCTAD, UNICEF, FAO, and ICDT.

This partnership approach extends to the private sector, where our growing network of Global Business Partners contribute significant resources, including in-country access, to further our work.

As our future projects expand to focus on tackling identified challenges such as enabling the circular economy through reverse supply chains, improving crisis management preparations, and incubating innovative solutions, the Alliance will continue to concentrate on delivering targeted, cost-effective projects of defined duration, with measurable, sustainable benefits for governments, businesses, and consumers.

A big thank you yet again this year to our staff and teams working across the world for their dedication and hard work. I would also like to thank our host organisations and implementing partners. Finally, I want to thank our donor countries – the United States, Canada, and Germany, and our growing number of global and local private sector partners for their continuing support and close operational collaboration.

Together, we are continuing to change lives for the better. The challenges remain daunting, but in implementing trade facilitation, we must continue to be bold and imaginative, wielding technology and the many other powerful, innovative tools at our disposal to achieve our goals.



2

TACKLING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

- Food Security, Healthcare, Disaster Preparedness PAGES 12-13
- Climate and the Environment PAGE 14
- Honing a Strategic EDGE PAGE 16

SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT



Alliance projects show how the benefits of trade facilitation go far beyond time and cost reduction. Eliminating bottlenecks at borders can contribute towards tackling some of the world's greatest collective challenges.



Food Security

Trade facilitation plays a vital role in ensuring that perishable goods make it to market in optimal condition. Reducing the time and cost of trade can also mitigate deterioration and spoilage, while greater access to global markets may also encourage the transition from subsistence farming to surplus production.

Digitalisation, the lifeblood of Alliance projects, has helped transform agri-food trade, contributing to food security in many ways, including by strengthening plant health protection and consumer safety.

For example, replacing the manual, paper-based transmission of mandatory phytosanitary certificates with end-to-end electronic exchange reduces the risk of error, loss, or fraud. Close-

circuiting certification makes forgery or illegal alterations far more difficult, reducing the transmission of pests and diseases.

Initiatives such as upgrading risk management systems enable border officials to concentrate on high-risk threats to the food chain.

Other examples of successful Alliance digitalisation initiatives include automating the mandatory certification process Tunisia requires for agriculture exports; introducing electronic Certificates of Origin in Jordan; and modernising government testing laboratories handling agriculture and sanitary permits for processed foods in Ecuador.

The Alliance is currently scoping several projects that would strengthen food security goals.



Since 1975, the planet's population has almost doubled.



Healthcare

A one-size-fits-all approach to cross-border trade can frustrate the swift flow of urgent pharmaceutical equipment, vaccines, and medicines crucial for disease prevention, treatment, and control.

In streamlining cross-border trade, while also strengthening security by allowing authorities to concentrate on riskier shipments, trade facilitation techniques such as improving risk management can help in getting goods – moving faster and more cost-effectively to vulnerable populations.

Working closely with UNICEF on expediting the cross-border flow of vaccines against common diseases in Mozambique, the Alliance catalysed reforms that have reduced processing times, improved shipment traceability, and cut costs stemming from storage and inventory management.

Encouraged by this collaboration, UNICEF and the Alliance subsequently agreed a formal partnership, and both parties continue to explore future collaboration opportunities.



Fake medicines kill around 500,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa every year.



Disaster Preparedness

Modernising outdated border procedures and processes ensures that critical aid flows into countries in their hours of greatest need.

Given the necessary government buy-in, trade facilitation may require little infrastructural investment, be tightly targeted and delivered quickly. The alternative is played out all too regularly:- once disaster strikes, it is often too late.

Previously, in Madagascar, the Alliance liaised with the World Customs Organization and the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at the Columbia Climate School to

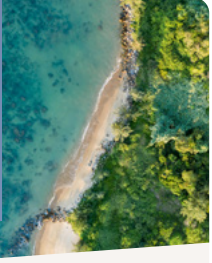
simulate the difference new operating procedures would make in expediting imports of vaccines and protective medical equipment during an emergency.

The arrival of a hurricane during the exercise suddenly turned theory into reality. The benefits of the new procedures became immediately apparent as imports of critical supplies arrived more quickly to help the island's people cope and recover in the aftermath.

The Alliance is excited about exploring ways to deploy its multi-faceted expertise to work pro-actively on disaster preparedness.



CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

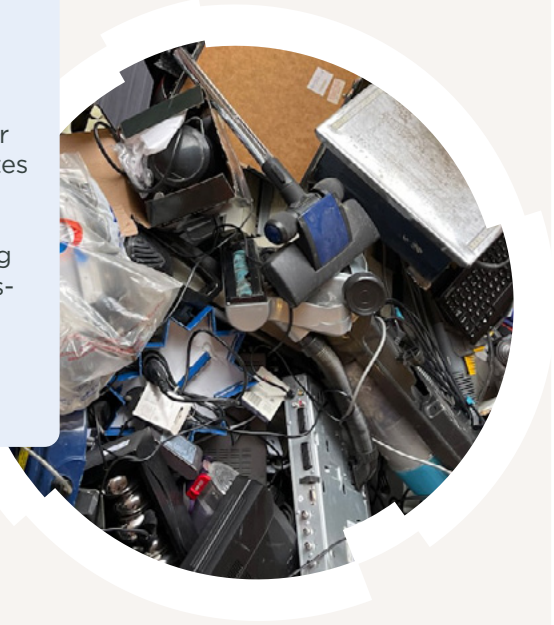


Building the Circular Economy

Electronic waste (e-waste) consists of discarded electronic products, ranging from household appliances and IT equipment to toys, tools, and medical devices. Technological ubiquity and mass production of relatively cheap consumer goods are contributing to an exponential rise in e-waste, with much of it ending up in landfill.

In general, recognising the unsustainable nature of dissociating

industrial production from its end-of-life disposal, pressure is mounting on governments and businesses to build a more circular economy, encouraging greater rates of recycling and re-use. However, the level of capital investment required to build e-waste recycling facilities will invariably entail cross-border shipment for treatment.



“Trade is good for economic development, but it has a bad impact on the planet if we don’t set up counter-balancing measures.”

Tarik Maaouni
Chief Information Officer – National Port Agency of Morocco

Streamlining cross-border movement

This means that efficient e-waste recycling – much of it containing hazardous materials requiring special handling – must rely upon timely cross-border movement, underpinned by an effective international control system that permits legitimate trade while preventing wrongdoing, such as the dumping of waste in developing countries.

A global framework based on Prior Informed Consent (PIC) covers the control of trans-boundary movement of hazardous (and other) wastes

for disposal or recycling, but it is largely paper-based and can be poorly implemented, leading to delays, lack of transparency, miscommunication, and uncertainty. From January 1, 2025, PIC will extend to cover all e-waste, prompting concerns, particularly within the IT sector, regarding the impact on circular economy programmes.

Since June 2023, the Alliance has been participating in an initiative involving the Information Technology Industry Council, focused on developing an electronic or ePIC system. Conditions are now favourable for moving forward with a live pilot.

Greening Trade

The many challenges are daunting, but trade facilitation promises exciting solutions to environmental challenges. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other technologies such as blockchain are already delivering further supply chain optimisation, meaning less time on the road or sea, and rationalised shipments. AI-powered data analysis, for instance, is automating compliance processes to reduce manual inspections and is strengthening risk management by identifying

suspicious anomalies in financial records and shipping information. Faster processing may mean fewer ships and trucks idling at ports, reducing emissions.

Moreover, transitioning to electronic certification can play a part in reducing deforestation, while also taking pressure off scarce paper-production resources, such as water and energy.

Governments and businesses share in the benefits of switching from paper-based procedures.

The Alliance has agreed to collaborate in further developing the Trade Logistics Information Pipeline (TLIP), which aims to better manage trade information across borders by replacing cumbersome, paper-based procedures. If successful, TLIP would streamline trade, saving time and cost, while also reducing instances of error, loss, and fraud.

“Converting bills of lading detailing cargo and ownership to electronic format could save traders **US\$ 6.5 billion** a year in direct costs and grow annual global trade by up to **US\$ 40 billion.**”

Digital Container Shipping Association

Change is imperative:
the momentum is with us

HONING A STRATEGIC EDGE



In December 2023, an Alliance project in the Dominican Republic entitled ‘Driving Inclusive Trade’ was among the first to benefit from USAID’s new Enterprises for Development, Growth, and Empowerment (EDGE) Fund, which aims to encourage greater private sector involvement in tackling global development challenges.

This project, due for completion in 2025, will empower small businesses, particularly those owned and led by women, to capitalise on the trend of nearshoring and other global export market opportunities.

This project presents an opportunity for the Alliance to highlight how broader trade facilitation measures beyond reforming border processes can have a massive impact on economic development. Taking a more integrated approach encompasses organising bespoke networking and matchmaking events designed to enable MSMEs to supply multinational exporting companies.

Currently, in the Dominican Republic, more than 700 large companies operating in 79 Free Trade Zones (FTZ) account for

around 75% of total exports by value (excluding minerals). In contrast, MSMEs, comprising almost 99% of all registered companies and employing 500,000 people, currently represent only 7% of total exports (excluding minerals). This project will begin to redress this imbalance.

Like all Alliance projects, there is special focus on businesses owned or led by women, with gender sensitisation throughout implementation. At present, in the Dominican Republic, MSMEs owned or led by women account for only around 2% of total export value.



“The EDGE Fund looks to see what businesses’ comparative advantages are, what is their edge. And how can we work together in a manner that is good for business, that helps solve some of the world’s toughest development challenges, and where the investments are going to last well beyond the life of the partnership.”

Samantha Power, USAID Administrator

Three complementary components

1

Bridging MSMEs and Free Trade Zones

The Alliance aims to connect MSMEs with a select number of FTZ companies, providing the necessary technical and financial assistance to enable small businesses to become suppliers.

2

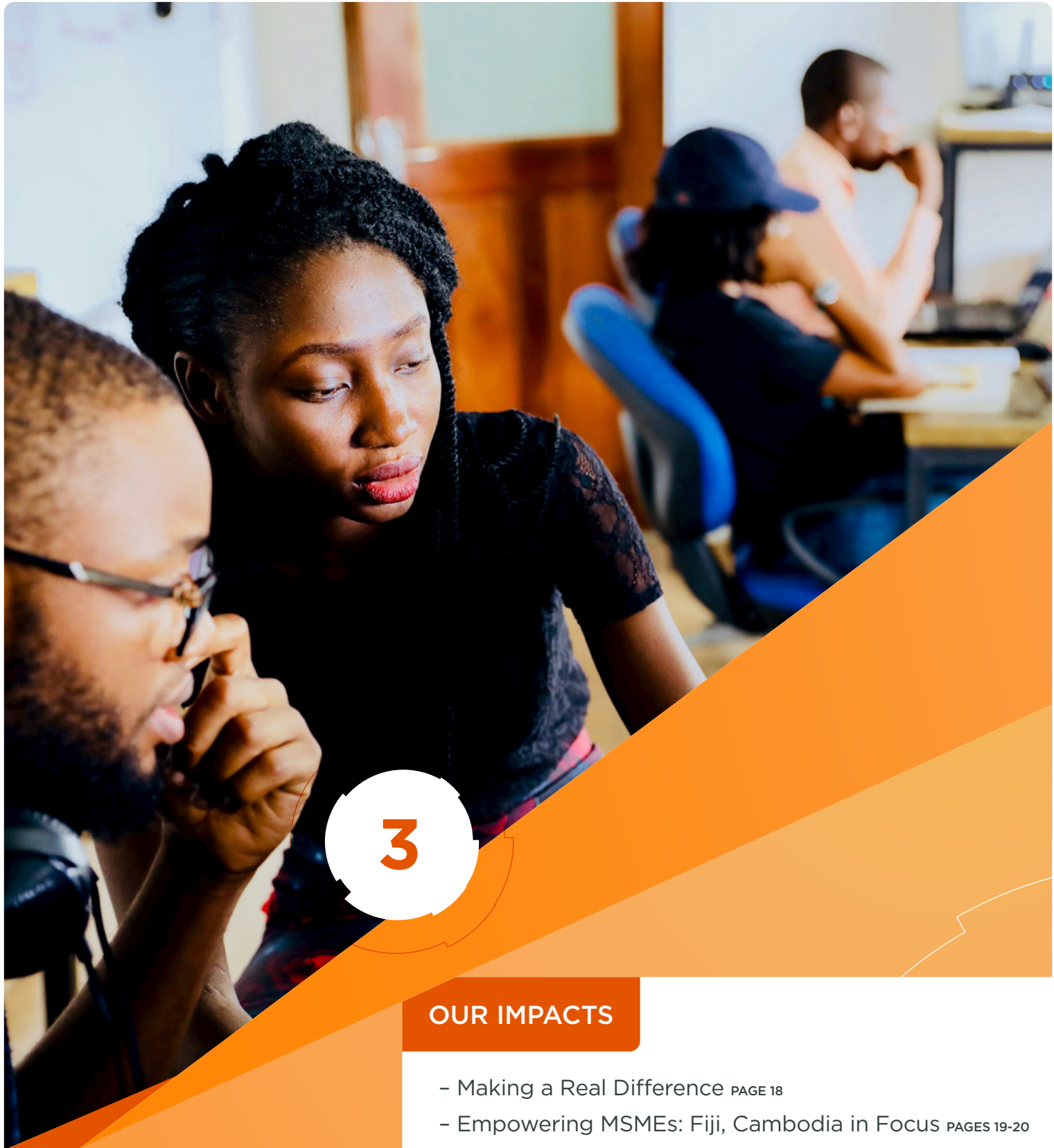
Simplified Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) certification

AEO certification offers compliant importers benefits such as expedited customs clearance and dedicated customs support. The Alliance is delivering the necessary assistance to comply with AEO requirements.

3

Export Training Programme

Training will focus on enhancing MSME capabilities in e-commerce, enabling use of digital platforms and expansion into international markets.



3

OUR IMPACTS

- Making a Real Difference [PAGE 18](#)
- Empowering MSMEs: Fiji, Cambodia in FOCUS [PAGES 19-20](#)
- Empowering MSMEs: Women in Business [PAGE 21](#)

MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE



Building on our successes in previous years, the Alliance concluded five projects in 2023, began another five, and continued progress on 19 more – many of them scheduled for completion in 2024.

Our work continues to highlight the agility of trade facilitation and the tangible, diverse impacts it can have in developing countries.

Small businesses typically stay local, but the opportunities afforded by e-commerce in particular offer MSMEs greater opportunities to expand into other markets.

In 2023, our work demonstrated yet again the extensive potential of trade facilitation. Completed projects in **Cambodia, Cameroon, Fiji, Thailand, and Vietnam** all contribute in numerous ways to increasing supply chain resiliency and predictability, while also enhancing the conditions for more inclusive economic growth.

The Alliance supported Vietnam in introducing self-certification and electronic submission of proof of origin documents, increasing transparency, producing potential time and cost savings for traders, and enhancing the security of the trading ecosystem.

Promoting e-commerce

Also in south-east Asia, supporting Cambodia towards fully digitalising its Customs processes for international postal shipments of small packages has helped pave the way for more MSMEs to venture into cross-border e-commerce, while encouraging existing exporters to upscale.

Meanwhile, Cameroon, Fiji and Thailand became the latest countries the Alliance has helped transition to electronic phytosanitary certification, improving their business environment while strengthening plant and public health protection.

In ongoing projects, the Alliance continues to apply technological knowledge to streamline trade processes, from building an

electronic management system at the busy Bhomra Land Port in **Bangladesh**, to upgrading risk management practices for fish and fishery products in **Indonesia**, to establishing an online system for processing electronic Certificates of Origin (eCOs) in **Jordan**.

While digitalisation continues to be the lifeblood running through Alliance projects, trade facilitation can take many forms. For example, in **Zambia** and neighbouring **Malawi**, the Alliance has helped design and implement a licensing framework for customs clearing agents, including a formal examination to verify competence and consistency. Once completed, these reforms are expected to reduce the number of physical inspections of goods at borders, cut down processing time and decrease errors in classification, origin, or valuation.

Improving collaboration

At Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) in **Nigeria**, the Alliance supported and informed public private dialogues to improve coordination among various border control agencies and freight forwarders. Routine consultations involving both parties are now taking place independent of Alliance involvement.

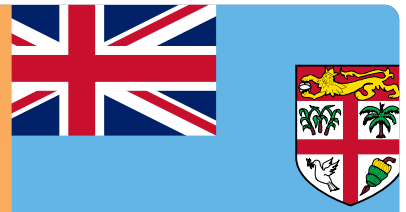
Increased trust also encouraged the piloting of new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for joint inspections of cargo at the airport, paving the way for faster clearance times for goods. There is now active consideration of a national roll-out to other border posts.

“The project provided us with important opportunities for public private dialogue... We are pleased to see the reforms outlined in the recently issued government decision on the import of tuna, sardines, and mackerel. We hope that the dialogue can continue and can lead to this reform being expanded to other fish types in the future.”

Ir. Budhi Wibowo
President, Indonesian Fishery Producers Processing & Marketing Association.



EMPOWERING MSMEs: FIJI IN FOCUS



It would be hard to overstate the importance of MSMEs in the economic and social fabric of developing countries, much of it based in the agri-food sector.

Fiji exports products such as kava, taro, ginger, papaya, pineapples, eggplant, okra, and breadfruit to countries around the world but its proximity to Australia and New Zealand makes these especially important markets.

The Alliance supported Fiji in introducing electronic phytosanitary (ePhyto) certification exchange, strengthening the competitiveness of the island's agriculture sector and, by extension, the entire economy. It also enhances regional and global access for agrifood exporters, with benefits for small farmer producers.

A phytosanitary certificate is a legal document issued by a country's National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) certifying that exports of plants and goods of plant origin, are free of the insects and pathogens that could devastate individual businesses and undermine a country's export capacity.

The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) holds the mandate to ensure phytosanitary safety of agricultural products. In 2020 BAF started digitalising phytosanitary processes by implementing the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) ePhyto Solution, through the Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS), but gaps remained.

Looking to boost its economy and enhance the island's food security, the Fijian government reached out to the Alliance to work with BAF and the private sector in finalising the transition to GeNS, enabling seamless electronic exchange through a central hub.

Shortly after its successful completion in November 2023, Australia announced that Fiji would be the first country to shift to ePhyto certification for Australian exports of horticulture and grain.



The IPPC ePhyto Solution has a global reach of more than 130 countries.

ePhyto pioneer details 'no-brainer' transition

Lami Kava was the first company to register with GeNS in Fiji and began using the new solution immediately, freeing up three employees who had previously been tied up in the process of obtaining the necessary paperwork for its export shipments, representing a significant saving for a company with only 30 employees.

The small firm exports dried kava to Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and the Pacific Island countries.

Lami Kava's general manager, Edward Hoerder, says that as well as time and cost savings, he has also noted increased customer satisfaction because of quicker turnaround times.

"Transitioning to the system was a no-brainer. This is a positive step for Fiji. We have already seen the benefits and are excited for when more countries join the IPPC hub and accept ePhytos."

Edward Hoerder
General Manager, Lami Kava



EMPOWERING MSMEs: CAMBODIA IN FOCUS



For MSMEs in Cambodia, unlocking the potential of e-commerce involves far more than a trip to the local post office to send quality goods abroad.

In recent years, the government has made significant strides in making it easier to export small packages overseas, but technological and information gaps persist. A twin-pronged Alliance project, completed successfully in 2023, has further increased the e-commerce capacity of MSMEs, many of them women-owned or led.

The Alliance project focused on building an Electronic Advance Data (EAD) link between Cambodia Post's Customs Declaration system and Customs clearance and rectifying the lack of access to relevant, transparent information on the rules, procedures and costings for small package exports and imports.

The project bridged the 'missing link' between the postal and customs IT platforms, establishing a functioning EAD system, supporting awareness

campaigns, capacity building, and public relations throughout deployment.

In tandem, the Alliance worked with the Cambodian Women Entrepreneurs Association (CWEA) to develop and test an e-logistics platform, providing 600-plus MSMEs with easier access to postal and express shipment services for domestic and international e-commerce activities.

This solution is a one-stop portal, which includes all tracking and delivery updates and access to real-time shipping rates.

The Alliance complemented both with a capacity building initiative, The Small Package Exporter Champions (SPEC) programme, aimed primarily at cross-border e-commerce 'champions' and

'early adopters', with women-owned businesses comprising a considerable proportion of the 120-plus MSME attendees.

MSMEs account for just 10% of total exports. Raising this to 30% - levels achieved elsewhere in the region - could be worth an additional US\$3.2 billion to the economy.



MSMEs account for **99%** of private sector businesses, **70%** of employment, **58%** of GDP but just **10%** of total exports.

Fair Weave: Fair Shake

Fair Weave employs more than 60 women, many of them landmine survivors, producing a variety of handwoven textile home decor accessories, including throws, rugs, and cushions.

Chomnab Ho, its founder, believes in paying competitive wages and providing flexible working conditions, including childcare and access to professional development training.

Fair Weave's domestic market is niche, comprised of a small group of ethical consumers with a willingness and an ability to pay for artisan products. More affluent overseas markets may hold the key to long-term viability.

In joining the Alliance SPEC programme, the company's main goals were to increase e-commerce sales and access higher-end export markets in neighbouring ASEAN countries, the European Union, and the United States.

In part, Mr Ho attributed a 65% spike in e-commerce sales following completion of the SPEC programme to the mentoring and digital tools he received during participation, including the ability to better navigate complicated export processes. SPEC has also enabled the business to reach larger overseas consumer markets online through website improvements and better online marketing.



EMPOWERING MSMEs: WOMEN IN BUSINESS



The Alliance recognises that overcoming endemic gender inequity means initiatives must be sensitised to maximise women’s participation.

Women entrepreneurs run a significant proportion of businesses in developing countries but face significant additional challenges to becoming exporters, including gender bias and unequal domestic responsibilities.

While MSMEs benefit equally from successful reform regardless of gender, certain project components are geared towards maximising female participation.

The Alliance takes pro-active steps to involve women and women’s business groups from project inception through to completion. Considering the prevalence of family

and household commitments, for instance, would mean scheduling meetings, workshops and trainings at times and places that better suit women.

For example, as part of an Alliance project to improve import and export operations in **Nigeria**, in 2023 the Alliance conducted targeted trainings for women customs agents at the air cargo terminals of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport on advocating for a more women-friendly work environment.

And in **Malawi** and **Zambia**, training sessions as part of an ongoing accreditation programme for

licensing customs brokers are scheduled at family-friendly times and include online elements to broaden access.

Female participation in Alliance projects has risen year-on-year since the publication of Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines in 2021. The document reflects the Alliance’s determination to ensure women and men benefit equally from its supports for trade reform efforts. In 2023, women comprised almost 40% of almost 3,000 participants in 72 Alliance-supported public private dialogues.

“As women, trade is in our blood – my grandmother was a street trader, and you see women traders all the time here in Peru. Women love to work and trade – it is part of our culture. I believe that gender should not limit anyone.”

Nadia Gamarra Abanto, Founder and CEO of Macarena Punch



Packing a Macarena Punch

A life-long passion for the reputed powers of the maca plant, which is often described as ‘Peruvian ginseng’, is the driving force behind Nadia Gamarra Abanto’s entrepreneurial expansion and the impetus for her flagship drink, Macarena Punch.

Maca has been used in Peru since pre-Inca times as a natural food and medicine and Ms Abanto believes value-added products containing this ingredient have serious export potential. Her small business currently employs four people directly and more than 20

indirectly across its supply chain.

She has dipped her toes into overseas markets, exporting in small quantities to several countries, including Uruguay, Panama, and the USA. Ms Abanto says regular delays of up to six months for export approval had previously meant lost orders but recent reforms, including those implemented under the Alliance project, were a real improvement.

Making information more readily available, transparent, and consistent meant companies knew what information authorities

required and the database of precedent decisions was extremely helpful in framing applications.

“The platform is more interactive, faster and easier to understand,” she says. “I believe it is going to benefit the country’s competitiveness because it allows companies to respond quickly to customer requirements and helps reduce delays.”

Ms Abanto also said this increased efficiency had enabled better production scheduling and cash-flow management.



4

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

- Forging Strong Partnerships PAGES 23-24
- Business Delivers PAGE 25-27

FORGING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS



The Alliance forms strategic partnerships with influential organisations that share our goals and recognise the value of working together towards achieving them.



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Following a successful inaugural event in 2022, the Alliance once again collaborated with UNCTAD in hosting Trade Facilitation Innovation Days (TFID), an online forum for government officials, policymakers, logistics providers, business leaders, entrepreneurs, software developers, academics, and other relevant stakeholders to suggest fresh approaches to transform trade.

The event, attended by more than 600 participants in 94 countries, focused attention on some of the hottest topics in world trade, including:

- Harnessing technology to further streamline processes
- Reinforcing supply chain sustainability
- Advancing e-commerce
- Improving risk management
- Transitioning to clean energy.

Participants consistently emphasised the centrality of data management to every aspect of trade including building supply chain resilience. Speakers also explored the transformational potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI), cryptocurrencies and blockchain technologies, with many participants noting that developing countries and LDCs would require significant investment to share in anticipated gains.

Illustrating this, Pren-Tsilya Boa-Guehe, Google Head for Pan-African Institutions, Government Affairs & Public Policy, pointed out that despite the explosion in mobile phone usage in Africa, fewer than 7% of the continent's estimated 44 million MSMEs are currently trading online.

There was broad agreement that innovations such as AI and blockchain may not realise their full potential without harmonised data

regulation and that public private partnership would be the best way to achieve this.

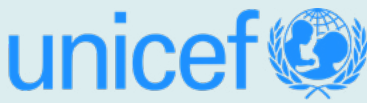
“Despite the rapid pace of tech advancement, the human factor remains as crucial as ever,” said Shamika Sirimanne, Director of UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics. “It is people that steer technologies and ensure collaboration to ensure success.”

Every session in the event culminated in pitches – 14 in total – on applying innovative technologies in solving identified trade facilitation problems.

The Alliance was also well represented at UNCTAD's e-Week 2023 in December, participating in a range of panels, exploring opportunities for promoting sustainable and inclusive trade through trade tech and innovation.

“People from every walk of life should be encouraged to contribute to trade facilitation,” said **Alliance Director Philippe Isler**. “We need to tap into people with first-hand experience of the realities on the ground and listen to those sometimes-hidden voices. We must also be prepared to experiment even if this means taking a bit more risk – this is what innovation is about.”

FORGING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS



United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

The Alliance and UNICEF have agreed to extend and enhance an initial partnership, aiming to build on a successful collaboration in Mozambique, which has expedited the provision of life-saving vaccines and related medical products to children and vulnerable communities.

Both parties have pledged to intensify their efforts to upgrade border procedures in other countries, improving the flow of critical healthcare supplies. As previously, they will also continue advocating for policy reforms, process improvement initiatives, and stronger public-private collaboration to modernise delivery of essential goods to designated populations.

In Mozambique, the Alliance partnered with UNICEF in supporting government efforts to digitalise and streamline imports of routine vaccines, reducing wait times of between two and four weeks for import approvals. The new system has improved product traceability and predictability, mitigating the risk of delays due to misplaced, incorrect, or damaged paperwork.



The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

The Alliance's partnership with the FAO's International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat continues to bear fruit by supporting developing countries to introduce electronic phytosanitary certificates, or ePhytos.

The IPPC Secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations International Computing Centre, developed the ePhyto Solution to bring phytosanitary certification into the digital era. It allows countries to exchange ePhytos with each other through a central hub, quickly, accurately and at low cost. The risk of loss, damage or fraud to the certificate is greatly reduced, as is the administrative burden on both border agencies and business.

The collaborative nature of the project also paves the way for countries to exchange other types of data with trading partners. To date, the Alliance has supported the successful completion of eight projects - including three in 2023 - with a further four in implementation.



The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT)

ICDT is responsible for promoting trade and investment across the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) 57 member states.

Since its foundation in 1984, ICDT has developed a strong network of political and diplomatic connections and has built extensive trade networks. It provides a wide range of trade-related activities to OIC members, including negotiations, promotion, information, investment, research, and training.

Two Alliance-supported ePhyto projects due for completion in 2024 - in Nigeria and Togo - are being co-funded by ICDT, the first such initiatives since signing a partnership agreement in 2022 to support its member states, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, in achieving inclusive economic growth through fulfilling their TFA commitments.

Prior to this official partnership, the Alliance had already successfully completed five projects in three OIC countries, Morocco, Mozambique, and Senegal, with projects in implementation in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Indonesia, Jordan, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Uganda.

BUSINESS DELIVERS



The Alliance is the only international Aid for Trade initiative based explicitly on public private partnership and committed to measuring the impact of its project work in terms of time and cost savings for businesses.

Governments set the rules, but businesses drive trade and are the biggest beneficiaries of trade reform. The Alliance provides a platform for businesses of all sizes to get involved in streamlining border processes, ensuring our projects address real-world sectoral priorities and deliver on their promise to benefit everyone – companies, consumers, and governments.

Continuous liaison

The Alliance private sector team liaises continuously with global business partners and local associations to ensure private sector participation at every stage of a project. Our growing number of Global Business Partners – 44 and counting – all have deep expertise in moving goods across borders as efficiently as possible and are making themselves available to share this knowledge.

The Alliance private sector team actively seeks out opportunities to involve businesses and their representative bodies throughout projects, while also managing the constant flow of information between the private sector and local project teams, catalysing resources, and keeping them up to date on progress.

Most Global Business Partners maintain a significant presence in project countries, affording the Alliance a ready-made network of contacts on the ground. This provides invaluable inputs and opens doors that may make all the difference for successful completion.

The Alliance also connects project teams with local chambers of commerce, including International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) national committees. ICC members help in organising events such as public private dialogues, workshops, and related networking opportunities throughout the project life cycle.

The Alliance conducts quantitative and qualitative measurement of the value of business partner engagement on projects. In 2023 alone, our private sector partners contributed in-kind US\$ 2 million and to date in all Alliance projects they have contributed in-kind US\$ 12.4 million.

MSME engagement

In 2023, 592 MSMEs cumulatively spent 4,600 hours engaging in Alliance projects and global business partners made wide-ranging contributions to the success of our projects, including:

- Bosch, BASF, and Michelin advocacy on introducing advance ruling mechanisms
- Nestlé involvement in piloting the newly introduced electronic phytosanitary certification system in Nigeria
- Agility support to e-port process evaluation in Bangladesh
- Maersk joining in an Alliance-led WTO Public Forum session on e-certification
- Agility, DHL, Cisco, IATA, Maersk, and UPS participating in Trade Facilitation Innovation Days 2023
- DHL facilitating Alliance participation in the company's 2023 GoTrade Summit
- IATA promoting the Alliance in the organisation's Cargo Tracker Newsletter, circulated to 100,000 accredited agents
- Thought pieces presented by senior executives at Cisco and Maersk.

An annual Alliance survey of Global Business Partners found unanimous agreement that the Alliance is taking meaningful action to create inclusive trade facilitation outcomes in areas such as gender, socio-economic strata, and MSMEs.

“We are delighted to support the work of the Alliance through active engagement with air cargo operators. Technological change in global trade needs to accelerate to match the pace of other industries. In that respect, the work of the Alliance in engaging the private sector is inspiring.”

Chris McDermott
UK Chief Executive,
Champ Cargosystems



BUSINESS DELIVERS



Providing Invaluable Input

Agility, a leading supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company and Alliance Global Business Partner, is playing a significant role in the successful installation of a digital management system at the busy Bhomra Land Port on the Bangladesh-India border.

Transitioning from paper-based procedures will have several advantages for traders and customs officials at the Port, including:

- Enabling clearing agents to input information once, eliminating duplication
- Capturing weighbridge information automatically
- Reducing waiting times for inspections
- Automating invoice generation
- Integrating e-payment solutions
- Automating generation of exit gate passes.

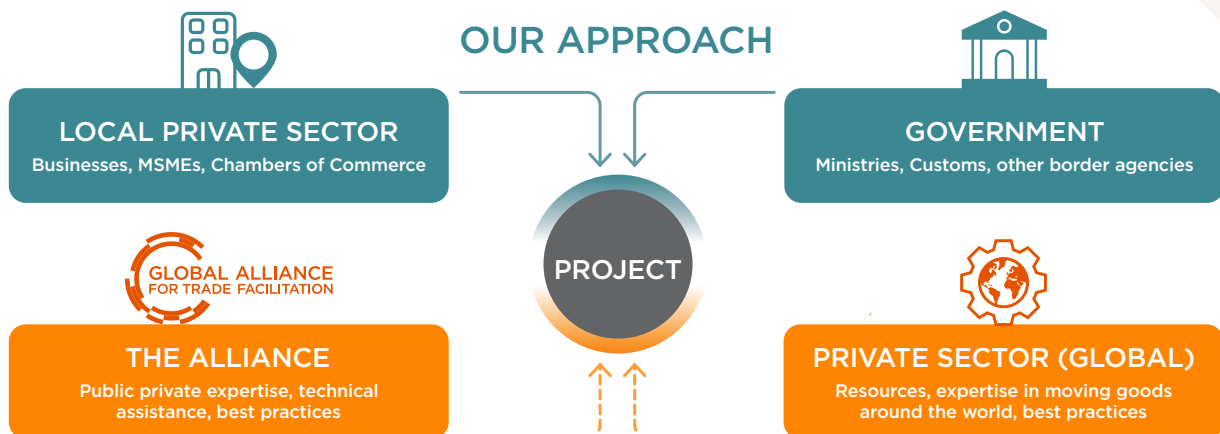
The Alliance project in Bangladesh, which is scheduled to close in mid-2024, is an excellent example of how the private sector can have a major impact on trade facilitation. Agility engaged with local Customs, traders and clearing agents before conducting a thorough review of the proposed e-port system's architecture and process flows, and then offering constructive feedback.

With more than 20 years' experience in trade facilitation initiatives, Agility recognises the benefits of modernising border processes. And, like other Alliance Global Business Partners, familiarity with Customs and traders enables Agility to extend knowledge from the perspective of both public and private sector stakeholders.

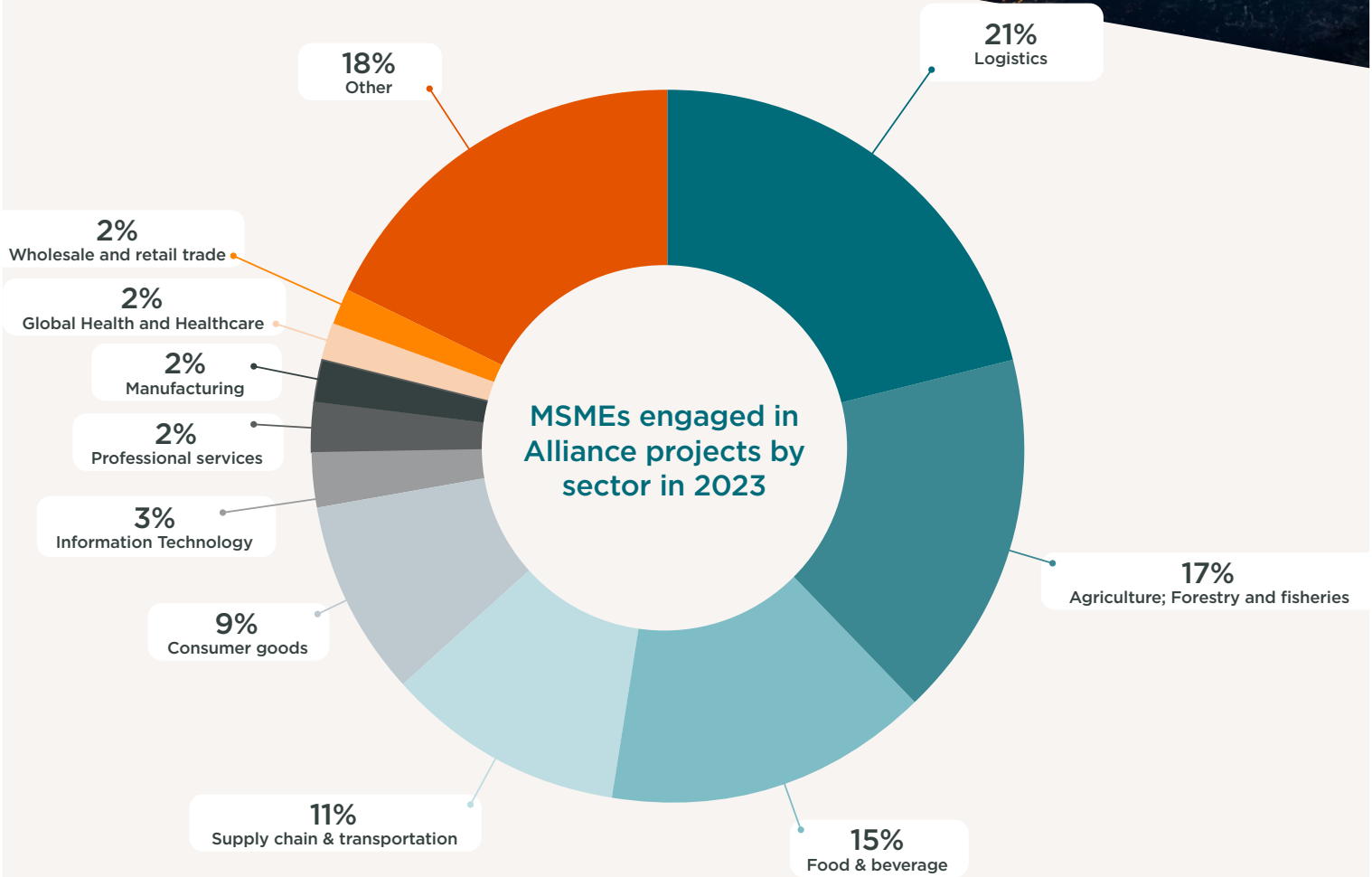


India is Bangladesh's second-largest export partner behind China, accounting for 12% of total exports worth over US\$ 2 billion in 2023.

“Trade facilitation has become increasingly crucial, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, where there has been a surge in e-commerce,” said **Sushant Palakurthi Rao, Managing Director for Global External Relations, Agility**. “The Alliance provides a platform for diverse trading communities across industries to collaborate, sharing challenges and exchanging ideas from various perspectives to find solutions: - Agility is delighted to contribute our knowledge and expertise for the benefit of the broader community.”



BUSINESS DELIVERS



Private sector contributions

EXPERTISE, INSIGHTS & IDEAS

- Participation in roundtables, workshops, public-private dialogues, working groups
- Provision of technical assistance, project ideas
- Input into project documents, reports, hackathons, other events
- Development & delivery of training, training documentation
- Piloting new systems

ADVOCACY & OUTREACH

- Speaking at events on behalf of the Alliance, advocating for the full implementation of the TFA
- Contributions to podcasts, social media
- Blog writing

COMPANY DATA, TOOLS & SOLUTIONS

- Company-specific/sector-specific data
- Software, tools
- Data solutions for hackathons/innovations
- Business process analysis
- Impact measurement

GOVERNANCE

- Alliance Steering Group (upon invitation)
- Project steering groups



5

PROJECTS IN IMPLEMENTATION

- Where We Are Working [PAGE 29](#)
- The Ways We Work [PAGE 30](#)
- Accurate Measurement [PAGES 31-32](#)
- Holistic Trade Facilitation [PAGE 33](#)
- Projects at a Glance [PAGES 34-43](#)

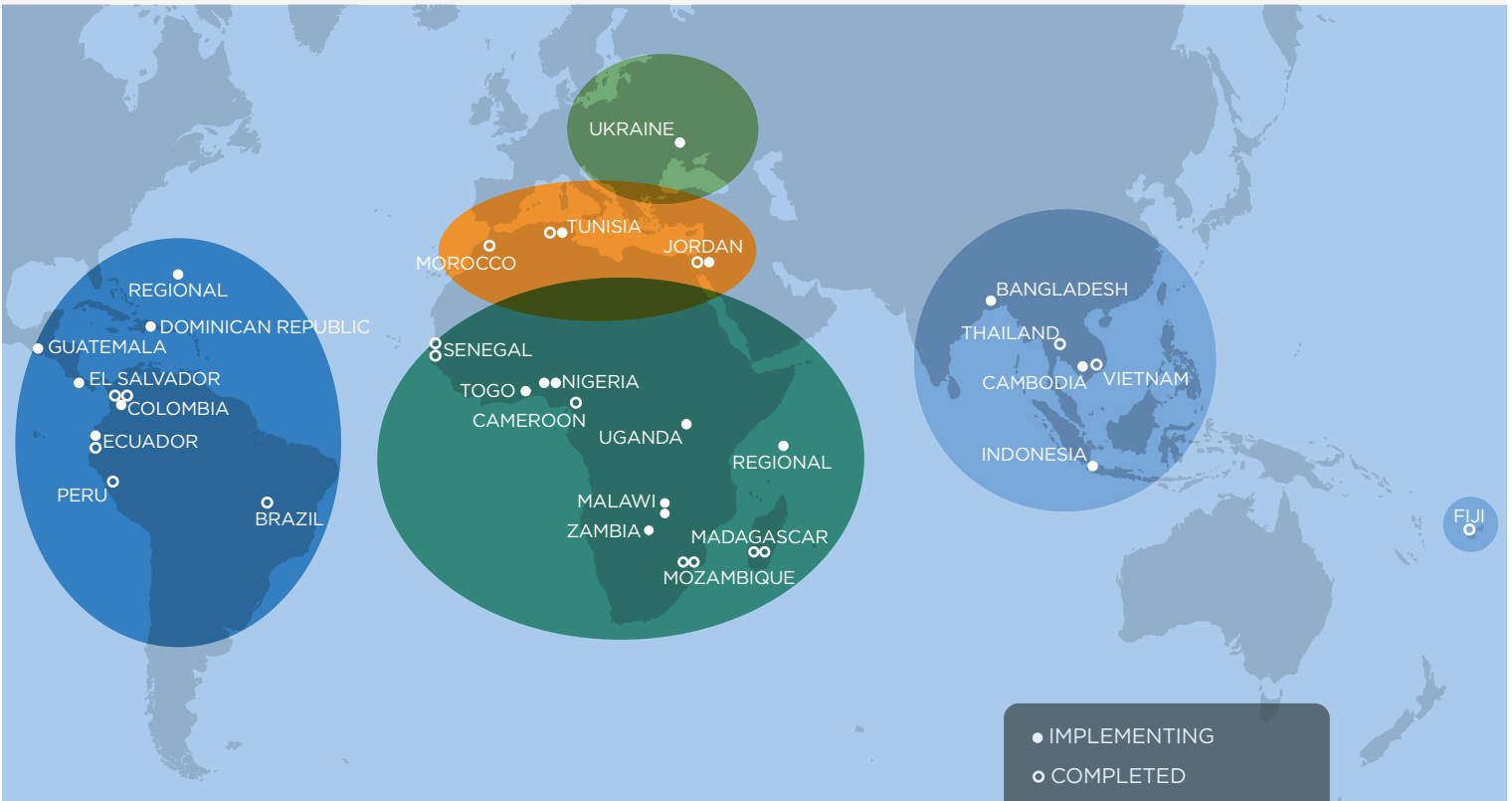
WHERE WE ARE WORKING

Our project work is designed to directly address the needs of both governments and the private sector. This philosophy, alongside our multilateral, multi-donor approach, has led to a diverse and growing global project portfolio, addressing a range of TFA provisions.

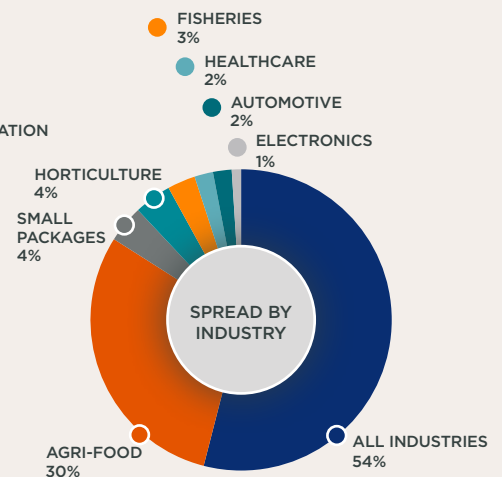
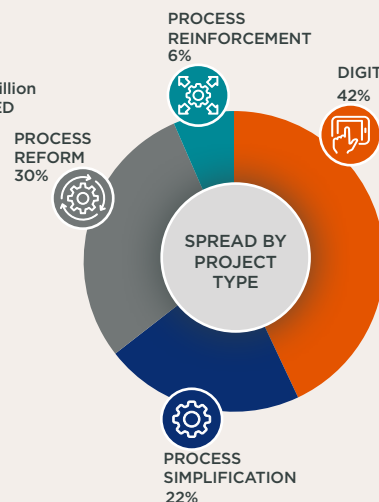
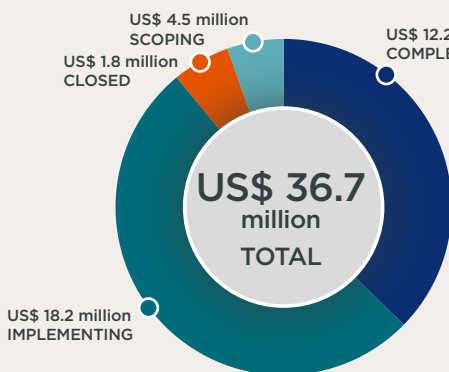
Our projects cover the spectrum of trade facilitation solutions, from broad, high-level reforms of customs regulations through to narrowly focused, rapid interventions within a single sector or industry.

Alliance projects are unique in international trade, connecting private sector expertise with governments committed to improving their customs and border services. To reach approval, every

Alliance project must show that it will deliver measurable results within the overall objective of making trade smoother and more cost-effective for all, including MSMEs and women-owned businesses.



Value of Projects



THE WAYS WE WORK

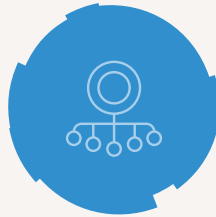
Our projects fall into three categories: **CO-CREATION**, **BUSINESS ACTION** and **UPSCALING**.

All of our projects stem from joint recognition by the public and private sectors of the need to target identified trade barriers and the willingness to work on them together. Every Alliance project is launched with the full support of the beneficiary government and the local private sector.



CO-CREATION

In co-creation projects, governments and businesses join with the Alliance to prioritise trade bottlenecks and align behind the idea of reform. We then encourage a willingness to collaborate in developing the project proposal and ensure the concept has feasible, targeted and measurable goals. The Alliance then leads project implementation, which relies on private sector delivery of technical expertise, resources, data, or modern systems.



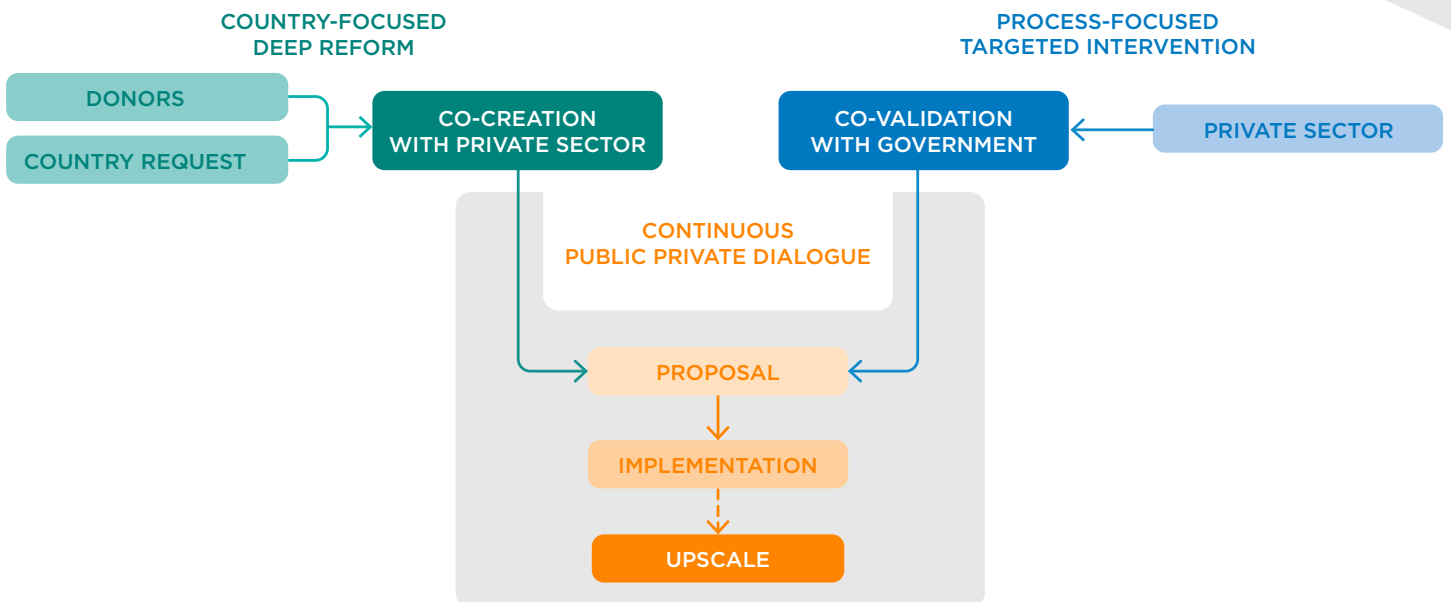
BUSINESS ACTION

Our business partners alert us to particular 'pinch points' hindering trade. We diagnose the underlying problem and act as an impartial catalyst to engage governments in formulating and delivering solutions. These targeted, short-term projects do not require deep policy changes or sweeping measures to achieve success, allowing governments and companies to align behind them quickly, paving the way for deeper and wider reforms.



UPSCALING

Our successful implementation of trade facilitation reforms has encouraged other governments to ask for our help to follow suit. For example, Morocco's agri-food sector has reaped the benefit from the country's adoption of electronic phytosanitary certificates, or ePhytos. The Alliance is now helping several countries to emulate this success. Our reputation and the way we work has also encouraged engagement from different government agencies in the same country.



ACCURATE MEASUREMENT

Standardised measurement is essential for assessing the impact of projects and the differences they make in improving people's lives, both quantitative and qualitative.

To capture the benefits of trade facilitation, the Alliance applies various tools, including standard Business Process Analysis (BPA) and our bespoke Total Trade and Logistics Cost (TTLIC) methodology, originally developed by A.P. Møller-Maersk A/S.

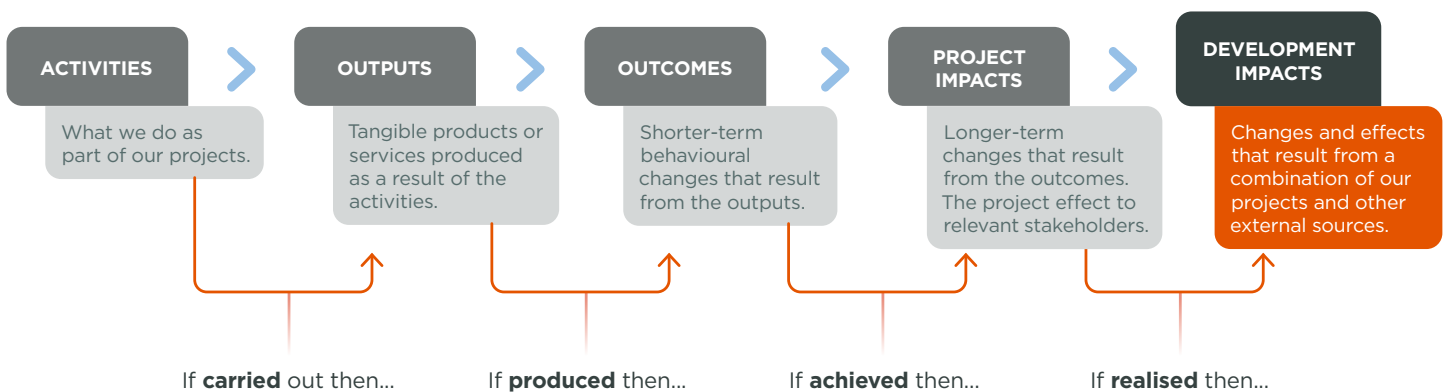
The Alliance has drawn important lessons in implementing and completing an increasing number of projects, enabling our dedicated measurement teams to refine our methodology and to develop new ways of measuring the potential and

realised benefits of trade facilitation on the time and cost of trade.

Impacts on time and cost are analysed from the perspective of three supply chain flows: the material flow of goods, the financial flow of payments, and the information flow of trade-related documentation. Though separate, they are interlinked, and sub-optimal operation in any of these can slow down the entire process or lead to unpredictable outcomes.

Alliance projects also generate significant impacts beyond time and cost. They may also improve the efficiency of resource-stretched border agencies, enabling them to better protect consumers. Documenting improvements to the ways they work allows them to better appreciate the true value of trade facilitation.

Charting progress



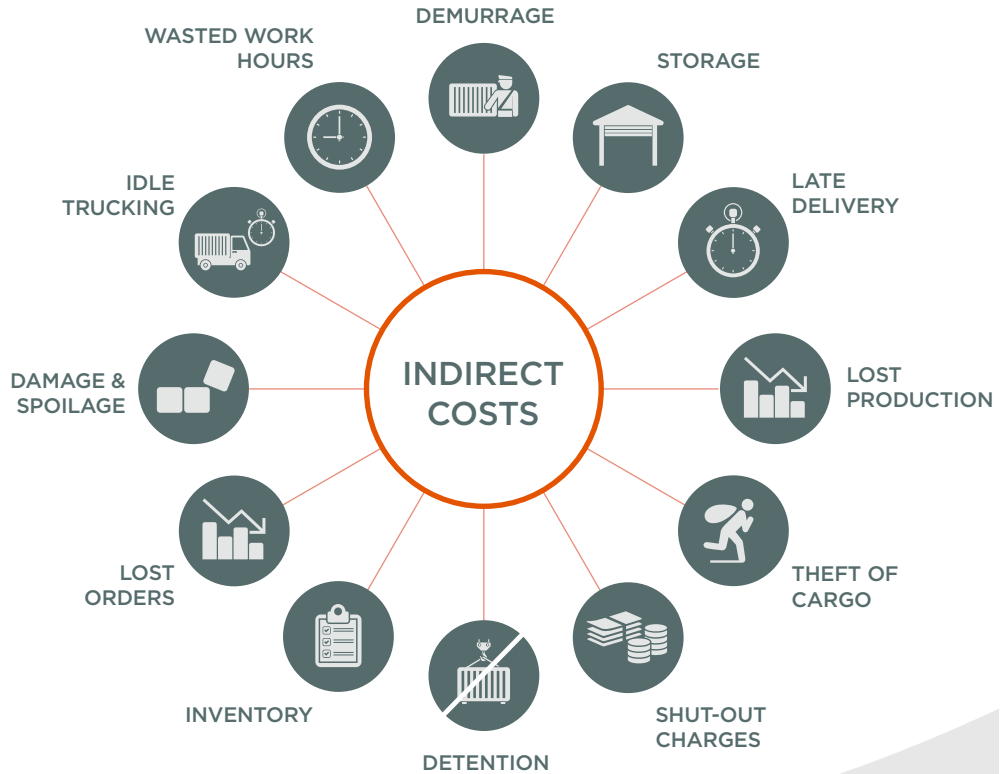
Causal pathway: If [inputs] and [activities] produce [outputs] this should lead to [outcomes] which will lead to project [impacts] and ultimately contribute to development [impacts].

Indirect Costs

The Alliance pays particular attention to measuring the impacts that faster, more reliable obtention and transmission of information have on cross-border trade.

This includes capturing the indirect costs of delays and long lead times, such as wasted work hours, late delivery penalties, lost orders, extra storage and inventory costs, and demurrage and detention charges.

Such indirect costs have cascading effects and can severely impact supply chains, driving up production costs and hurting the reputations of both importers and exporters, significantly eroding trade competitiveness.



Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

The Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) team plays a key role in fulfilling an Alliance commitment to keeping its finger on the pulse of every project and capturing impacts.

The team is active at every stage of every project:

- Guiding development based on a Theory of Change – a roadmap outlining how a project will effect change and deliver benefits.
- Continually monitoring implementation through data collection and analysis to measure progress against key project indicators.
- Helping to assess impact, including by devising a comprehensive plan for data collection, analysis, and communication.

M&E contributes to data-driven decision-making, accountability, and continuous knowledge acquisition. The team is engaged across every Alliance function, providing key data to everyone from senior management to in-country project officers.

Recognising the distinctive characteristics inherent in every project, the M&E team works closely with in-country project officers to capture and contextualise the significance of our work. For example, many projects deliver important benefits beyond time and

cost savings, such as sustainable increases in collaboration and trust between public and private sectors.

The M&E team has developed tools to capture diverse data, including project log frames, surveys, internal trackers, qualitative interview guides and case studies. It harmonises this data to provide regular updates to key stakeholders and to highlight successes and lessons learned.



HOLISTIC TRADE FACILITATION

Geopolitical tensions, supply chain uncertainties, and the ongoing effects of climate change continue to reverberate on world trade, particularly in developing countries battling high inflation and debt repayments, while still struggling to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Signatories to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) reinforced the belief in the power of international commerce to achieve development goals.

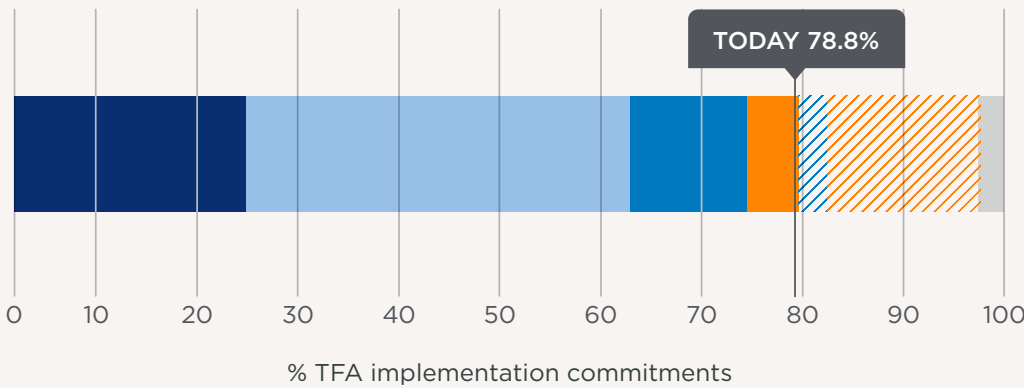
Guided by this comprehensive, multilateral agreement and working through public private partnership, the Alliance is continuing to support countries in implementing broad trade facilitation reforms, making trade easier, faster, more cost-effective.

While efficient international trade is essential for providing the basic human necessities of food, clothing, and shelter as well as improving quality of life generally, it also generates significant emissions. Eliminating trade is neither

reasonable nor desirable and so addressing any negative traits is key to achieving sustainable and inclusive development. Through digitalisation and other modernisation mechanisms, trade facilitation also has a role to play in achieving greener trade.

Global implementation commitments

Implementation commitments according to notification data



- Developed Members: 23.3%
- Cat. A commitments for implementation to date: 39.0%
- Cat. B commitments for implementation to date: 11.7%
- Cat. C commitments for implementation to date: 5.3%
- Cat. B commitments for future implementation: 3.1%
- Cat. C commitments for future implementation: 15.1%
- Unknown: 2.7%

The TFA gives developing countries and least developed countries (LDCs) the option to have more time to implement the agreement and to request technical assistance and support for capacity building. They must notify these choices using A, B and C categories:

Category A - a provision notified under this category means that it is deemed implemented

Category B - a provision notified under this category means that the country requires more time to implement it

Category C - a provision notified under this category means the country needs more time as well as technical assistance and support

Source: Trade Facilitation Agreement Database (TFAD) www.tfadatabase.org

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

EAST AFRICA

TFA Articles

- 6.1 General Disciplines on Fees and Charges Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation
- 10.7 Common Border Procedures and Uniform Documentation Requirements



Kenya is one of the biggest mango producers in Africa but may lose up to 50% of this crop post-harvest. Pureeing fresh mangoes for fruit juice industry supply allows growers to reduce spoilage, while also creating an additional income stream. Coca-Cola, one of the largest anchor buyers in regional East Africa, imports mango puree from Kenya, and to a lesser extent Tanzania, to make up for supply shortfalls in Uganda, many of which are supplied by MSMEs. However, mango puree shipments to Uganda sometimes face delays or blockages, and may also incur taxes and levies for which they

should be theoretically exempt, thus undermining this objective. In overcoming such inconsistent treatment, the Alliance is supporting the creation of a 'Mango Hub', an initiative offering economic opportunities for farmers and processors as well as wholesalers and retailers in the region. This project focuses on identifying the main obstacles and supporting their removal by working with relevant border agencies to build trust and capacity to process cross-border movements of mango puree consistently and efficiently.

MALAWI



TFA Articles

- 10.6 Use of Customs Brokers



Customs brokers, also known as clearing agents, play a vital role in moving goods across borders, helping businesses to fulfil export and import requirements. In Malawi, customer brokers operate in a weak institutional and legal framework, with limited training. This increases the risk of non-compliance for exporters, particularly resource-strapped micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with limited resources to absorb the resulting costs. Inspired by a similar initiative in neighbouring Zambia, the Alliance is supporting Malawi to enhance

cross-border trade by introducing a new licensing framework for Customs brokers, including a training curriculum and qualifying examination on completion of the course, in line with international best practices. The project places special emphasis on recruiting and training women, not only to address the gender gap in this vital supply chain function but also because women represent a sizeable percentage of the country's informal cross-border traders.



PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

MALAWI



TFA Articles

- 1 Publication and Availability of Information
- 10 Formalities Connected with Importation, Exportation and Transit



PROCESS REFORM

Like their counterparts in other developing countries and LDCs, MSMEs in Malawi – 49% of them women-owned or led – must overcome multiple challenges in accessing international markets, including limited access to finance and inadequate infrastructure. However, in Malawi, these are compounded by regulatory hurdles and a lack of critical information, curtailing the ability to make informed decisions on potentially lucrative export opportunities. This Alliance project comprises two strands: an export training programme to bolster MSME capability, and the introduction of a user-friendly Harmonised System (HS) classification tool. Training will focus on agricultural businesses, the country's leading export sector,

while the new HS tool will assist all traders to better understand market opportunities, duty obligations, compliance requirements, and preferential origin rules. Customs authorities worldwide use HS codes to identify products when assessing duties and taxes and for gathering statistics. In Malawi, between 20-40% of all import declarations are currently subject to a formal or informal dispute related to HS classification, creating delays of up to eight weeks and consistent upwards adjustments. This project aims to remedy this, complementing the Alliance's other project currently in implementation, to significantly improve the country's competitiveness and encourage more MSME export trade.

NIGERIA



TFA Articles

- 2.2 Consultations
- 8 Border Agency Cooperation
- 10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements



PROCESS SIMPLIFICATION

Moving goods across Nigeria's borders entails dealing with various government agencies with overlapping mandates, discouraging trade, and hindering competitiveness. In partnership with private sector terminal operators and freight forwarders at Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) in Lagos, the Alliance supported and informed formal consultation involving various border control agencies to improve coordination among them. The project also focused on enhancing public-private sector engagement on trade facilitation, mainly through initiating a series of public private dialogues at the airport and across the country. These events were informed by training for National Customs Service (NCS) officials,

other relevant border agencies and businesses. Private sector stakeholders, particularly freight forwarders, have confirmed the sustainability of this initiative, with formal consultations now taking place independent of Alliance involvement. These regular dialogues have increased trust between the business sector and border control agencies. The various Alliance initiatives encouraged the piloting of new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for joint inspections of cargo, paving the way for faster clearance times for goods and a more benign working environment. These SOPs are now also being rolled out at national level.

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

NIGERIA

TFA Articles

- 7.9 Perishable Goods
- 10.1 Formalities Connected With Importation, Exportation, and Transit



The Alliance is supporting Nigeria in adopting the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) ePhyto Solution, enabling the exchange of electronic phytosanitary certificates, or ePhytos, with a growing number of trading partner countries through a central hub, quickly, accurately and at low cost. Seamless electronic exchange also increases transparency and trust in the certificates, while making it easier to rectify at destination ports in cases of rejection. This might happen for any number of reasons, including illegible handwriting, damage, or contents description. Presently, such documents must be sent back to the issuing country for amendment. The Alliance is also

supporting Nigeria in connecting the ePhyto system with an electronic payment solution (e-payment), digitalising the payments system to further reduce transaction costs. Recognising the logistical challenges in trying to introduce ePhytos across a vast country with numerous land, sea and air cross-border inspection points, this project initially focuses on southwestern Nigeria, which is responsible for 70% of the country's agricultural exports. Once implemented, the Alliance will work with relevant public and private sector stakeholders in designing a sustainability plan to enable roll-out to the remainder of the country.

TOGO

TFA Articles

- 7.1 Pre-arrival Processing
- 7.9 Perishable Goods
- 10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements



Togo's strategic location, particularly through the deep seaport of Lome, makes the country a vital transit centre and regional hub for goods flowing to neighbouring landlocked countries in West Africa. The Alliance is supporting Togo in adopting the IPPC ePhyto Solution, replacing the current paper-based procedures with seamless electronic exchange. Technical integration will include introducing e-Payment for certification and e-Signature for

European Union-bound exports. Recognising the potential of the Abidjan-Lagos corridor to improve Togo's economic development and food security, ICDT is funding the introduction of electronic phytosanitary exchange represents a major step towards improved phytosanitary trade procedures within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

UGANDA



TFA Articles

- 1.2 Information Available Through the Internet
- 1.3 Enquiry Points
- 7.4 Risk Management
- 7.9 Perishable Goods
- 10.1 Formalities Connected With Importation, Exportation, and Transit



Horticulture produce is among Uganda's top export revenue earners but only about 20% is exported, suggesting high potential growth in export revenue and employment. The Alliance is supporting Uganda in streamlining and automating processes for clearing horticulture exports. MSMEs dominate the sector, with women owning 30% of businesses and comprising 70% of the workforce. However, they struggle with the time and costs associated with sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) inspections, particularly at the country's main airport at Entebbe. The Alliance is implementing a process review and re-engineering of the manual SPS inspection process at the airport to introduce an electronic SPS inspection system. The Alliance is also working with public and private

sector stakeholders to support improved trade information flows on horticulture exports through Uganda's trade information portal. Greater information should enable exporters to more readily identify and overcome potential obstacles to trade. The project is expected to:

- Ensure higher volumes and values of horticulture exports pass SPS inspections
- Minimise horticulture waste due to rejections or spoilage during SPS inspections
- Ensure up-to-date trade information on horticulture exports
- Foster greater interagency cooperation between public and private sector stakeholders.

ZAMBIA



TFA Articles

- 10.6 Use of Customs Brokers



Zambia lacks a proper licensing framework and accreditation programme for clearing agents, who can currently obtain a licence to operate without demonstrating the skills required to perform the role. This can lead to errors in documentation which cause mistrust between traders and customs, an elevated level of physical inspections, and delays at the border. These delays increase the cost of trade for businesses and the government, damaging Zambia's international competitiveness. The Alliance is supporting the introduction of a new licensing framework for agents, including a

training curriculum and qualifying examination on completion of the course, in line with international best practices. The project places special emphasis on recruiting and training women, not only to address the gender gap in this vital supply chain function but also because women represent a sizeable percentage of the country's informal cross-border traders. By reducing customs processing times, physical inspections and errors in classification, origin and/or valuation, Zambia will benefit from higher levels of compliance and efficiency gains.

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

JORDAN

TFA Articles

- 2.2 Consultations
- 8 Border Agency Cooperation
- 10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
- 10.4 Single Window



Certificates of Origin are vital international trade records, certifying that goods in a particular export shipment are obtained, produced, manufactured, or processed in a specific country. Traders in Jordan must obtain these paper certificates from the relevant chamber of commerce or industry for all exports to clear customs. Some chambers process them differently, creating a lack of uniformity, which leads to a knock-on effect of greater regulatory scrutiny. The Alliance is working with Jordan's government to establish a web-based system for facilitating electronic Certificates of Origin (eCOs), reducing clearance times, and enhancing efficiency at customs

points. An electronic platform for issuing and verifying eCOs will save time and money for public and private sector stakeholders.

The adoption of eCOs will:

- Cut customs clearance times and eliminate unnecessary administrative burdens
- Reduce the time and cost of obtaining certificates
- Minimise the risk of fraudulent certificates
- Improve communications with national and international stakeholders.

TUNISIA

TFA Articles

- 3 Advance Rulings



In Tunisia, discretionary treatment of goods often creates unpredictability and a lack of transparency, undermining business confidence. To tackle this, the Alliance is supporting Tunisia in introducing an advance rulings mechanism whereby traders can voluntarily request a binding legal opinion on how Customs will treat certain goods. These rulings will be uniformly applied and valid for a set period – at least a year and often longer. A key component of the project involves intensive training of Customs officials by the World Customs Organisation on

classification and rules of origin, creating a critical mass of awareness and expertise. Advance rulings give companies the confidence to conduct trade with a clear legal opinion covering their goods before they ship, reducing the chance of disputes at Customs. The system promises increased transparency and predictability in payments of import duties for operators that choose to use it.

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

EUROPE

UKRAINE



TFA Articles

- 7.9 Perishable Goods
- 10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements



DIGITALISATION

Phytosanitary certification in one of the world's most important food producers remains paper-based and currently Ukraine cannot exchange electronic phytosanitary certificates (ePhytos). Ongoing conflict has disrupted conventional trade routes, leading to huge administrative burdens at all borders, damaging exports and threatening global food security. The Alliance is supporting Ukraine in adopting the IPPC ePhyto Solution, easing access to most of the country's main trading partners. This involves building capacity to receive and manage import certificates, including the provision of IT equipment and extensive training for agency staff and private sector stakeholders. Introducing

the IPPC ePhyto Solution will have measurable short and long-term benefits for Ukraine and global food security, including:

- Improving scheduling and planning for the arrival and clearance of plants and plant products
- Reducing delays in receiving replacement phytosanitary certificates
- Enabling more efficient storage, management, and access to electronic information
- Streamlining phytosanitary certification
- Streamlining border procedures.

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

ASIA & THE PACIFIC

BANGLADESH



DIGITALISATION

TFA Articles

- 7.2 Electronic Payment
- 7.9 Perishable Goods
- 8 Border Agency Cooperation

Traders are used to spending a lot of time at the busy Bhomra Land Port on Bangladesh's border with India awaiting clearance. Moving goods across the border in either direction involves completing many sequential, paper-based steps, including inspections, assessments, and payments. With the completion of the US\$ 3.6 billion Padma Bridge in 2022, the port is set to become even busier. The bridge shaves 70km off the journey from the Bangladesh capital, Dhaka, but more importantly it replaces erratic ferry crossings, where hundreds of trucks might expect lengthy delays. Determined to avoid the port becoming a major bottleneck, government and private sector stakeholders are working together on digitalising Bhomra Land Port's management system. Upon completion, the new system will transform current procedures,

including:

- Automating vehicle information at entry and tracking their journey through the port
- Capturing weighbridge information automatically
- Reducing overall waiting times for consignments
- Automating billing assessment and invoice generation
- Integrating e-payment solutions
- Automating generation of exit gate passes
- Deploying a modern surveillance system to ensure strong security and port management.

The project also aims to use Bhomra Land Port as a template for an 'ideal digitalised model' that can be replicated across the other 26 Bangladesh land ports.

INDONESIA



PROCESS SIMPLIFICATION

TFA Articles

- 7.4 Risk Management

Currently, 100% of fish imports into Indonesia are inspected. In comparison, roughly 1% of fish imports that cross into the European Union are subject to such testing. The Alliance is supporting Indonesia to strengthen and enhance risk management systems to reduce the time and storage costs incurred by traders awaiting clearance. A reduction in overall inspections may also enable more efficient and effective laboratory testing, which constitutes a significant component of the overall process. Improving the risk management system for how fish and fishery product imports are controlled and inspected is

expected to:

- Reduce storage and laboratory testing costs for importers
- Reduce the time spent waiting for imports to be cleared and released, which enables fish and fishery products to go to market faster – and fresher
- Enhance food safety by introducing more effective lab testing, thanks to a lower volume of testing initiated.

In addition to importers, others involved in the value chain will save time and money, many of them MSMEs.



PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

COLOMBIA



TFA Articles

- 7.4 Risk Management
- 7.9 Perishable Goods
- 8 Border Agency Cooperation
- 10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements



Trade risk management practices in Colombia, particularly in the agricultural sector, rely heavily on physical inspections of goods, leading to delays in shipments and extra costs for traders. In two interlinked initiatives, the Alliance is supporting the optimising of risk management while also replacing manual phytosanitary certification with seamless electronic exchange by adopting the national system for connection with the IPPC ePhyto Solution.

The Alliance is supporting the Colombian Institute of Agriculture and Livestock (ICA), the SPS agency responsible for animal and plant health, to develop the necessary processes, expertise, and systems to differentiate between low-risk and high-risk shipments of agricultural and livestock products. An optimised risk management system

will allow authorities to:

- Better protect public health and consumers by focusing on high-risk shipments thanks to fewer physical inspections when possible while keeping the sanitary and phytosanitary status of the country
- Reduce clearance time for agricultural exports and imports
- Cut costs associated with documentary compliance and clearance processes for private and public sector stakeholders.

These benefits will be amplified by introducing paperless phytosanitary certification by integrating with the IPPC ePhyto hub, which will enable electronic exchange with key trading partners, including the United States and the European Union.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



TFA Articles

- 7.4 Risk Management
- 7.9 Perishable Goods
- 8 Border Agency Cooperation
- 10.4 Single Window
- 11 Freedom of Transit



The Dominican Republic, one of the fastest-growing economies in Latin America and the Caribbean, has made significant socio-economic progress in recent decades but access to international trade remains elusive for many of the country's small businesses. A changing external trade environment combined with ongoing government reforms, including nearshoring, new customs regulations, the development of a comprehensive Single Window and investment in physical infrastructure, create unprecedented conditions for MSME expansion into export markets.

This project, launched in November 2023, will provide MSMEs with the necessary technical and financial assistance to supply multinationals exporting from the country's Free Trade Zones. Enabling MSMEs to attain Authorised Economic Operator status will contribute to expedited clearance and develop a culture of formalising and documenting processes. The Alliance will also deliver training on export requirements to take full advantage of emerging supply chain trends and e-commerce opportunities.

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

ECUADOR



TFA Articles

- 10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
- 10.4 Single Window

Ecuador has embraced electronic services in recent years but around 40% of trade procedures remain paper-based, requiring in-person filing and processing. Approvals can take as long as 72 hours on average for manually processed documentation, as opposed to 24 hours for electronic submissions through VUE - the country's Single Window. Traders also face lengthy processing times and costs in obtaining permits and certifications from Phyto and Zoo Sanitary Regulation and Control Agency (Agrocalidad) laboratories and the National Agency for Sanitary Regulation, Control, and Observation (ARCSA). The project has two main components: strengthening and extending VUE; and modernising process management at Agrocalidad laboratories and ARCSA. To date, several VUE services have been developed or updated. Agrocalidad

laboratories' online user interface has been developed; and one third of ARCSA's 301 processes have been configured in its new IT platform, giving producers the ability to digitally process a range of export formalities via the Single Window while also making it easier for them to import key inputs such as fertilisers, machinery, and aquaculture supplies. The resulting streamlined processes are:

- Reducing the time and cost of trade
- Improving the capacity and efficiency of Agrocalidad laboratories
- Eliminating queues at the agencies
- Improving sanitary registry processing and other key procedures.

EL SALVADOR



TFA Articles

- 23.2 National Committee on Trade Facilitation

El Salvador's National Trade Facilitation Strategy (NTFS) 2023 - 2027 is designed to further develop its economy and to cement the country's status as a trading hub in the Americas. The Alliance is providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Economy (MINEC) in implementing Total Transport and Logistics Cost (TTL) methodology to monitor NTFS progress and identify and remedy logistical inefficiencies. Initially developed by Maersk, the Alliance uses TTL throughout its project portfolio to benchmark and measure supply chain performance in terms of time, as well as direct and indirect costs. The project in El Salvador comprises two, separate TTL studies, covering import and export-related processes in the textile/apparel and agriculture

sectors. The TTL studies rely heavily on data gathered from the private sector - informing project activities with valuable business perspectives on supply chain bottlenecks. The Alliance is also conducting significant capacity building, enabling MINEC to apply the methodology independently by project-end. Understanding the quantitative impact of trade reform is crucial in enabling governments to assess and communicate on the tangible benefits of trade reform implementation. The project will use the Alliance's trademark public private partnership approach, bringing together business and government as equal partners and creating the potential for collaboration on future reforms.

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN



GUATEMALA



DIGITALISATION

TFA Articles

- 8 Border Agency Cooperation
- 10.1 Formalities and Documentation Requirements
- 10.3 Use of international standards

Arrival and departure processing at Guatemala's busy ports requires shipping agents and ships' captains to make multiple in-person visits to comply with paper-based formalities, slowing port operations and clearance times. The Alliance is partnering with the public and private sectors in Guatemala to automate these procedures at the country's four main cargo ports, creating greater uniformity and efficiency in line with international standards. The aim is to reduce late fees, and reduce idling times of port cranes and ships waiting to berth, thereby reducing fuel consumption, cutting emissions, and producing savings that may translate to lower prices for consumer goods. In mid-2023, key public and private sector stakeholders completed formal training ahead of five government agencies signing an agreement for the adoption of streamlined

procedures and introduction of the country's Maritime Single Window (VUMAR), a system that will transform the authorisation procedures for vessels arriving and departing these ports. Private sector stakeholders are part of the technical group overseeing the development of the system. VUMAR is expected to go live in early 2024. The main benefits will be:

- Reducing the time and cost required to secure necessary authorisations for ships' arrivals and departures
- Boosting efficiency by cutting the amount of idle time at berth
- Enhancing control and monitoring of vessel movements by registering all ships' pre-arrival and departure in the electronic platform.

REGIONAL



PROCESS REFORM

TFA Articles

- 2 Opportunity to Comment, Information Before Entry into Force and Consultations
- 7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorised Operators
- 12 Customs Cooperation

In 2022, 11 Latin American and Caribbean countries endorsed an Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Regional Recognition Arrangement (RRA). The arrangement involving Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay has the potential to boost intra-regional trade by simplifying processes, accelerating transactions, and reducing costs for AEO-certified companies operating across the region. The endorsement of this landmark regional arrangement – the biggest in the world outside of the European Union – was the culmination of four years of negotiations involving Customs administrations in these countries. The Alliance supported the negotiations and played a

pivotal role by facilitating joint site validations, which were instrumental in fostering the trust required to make it happen. The Alliance is now focused on supporting Paraguay and Costa Rica to develop comprehensive AEO management systems, and creating a streamlined mechanism that enables countries to easily identify eligible AEO companies. The agreement allows AEO companies to trade throughout the region with fewer physical and documentary inspections of their goods, faster border clearance times, and ultimately reduced costs. Meanwhile customs agencies can increase their administrative efficiency by allocating their human and technical resources to high-risk shipments, thus fortifying regional trade security.



6

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

- 2023 Financial Summary PAGE 45

2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

INCOME		US\$
Donor contribution		10,674,680
EXPENDITURE		
Workstream 1: Creating public private partnerships and multi-stakeholder dialogues		2,363,679
Workstream 2: Delivering commercially measurable trade facilitation reforms (in-country projects)		7,431,038
Workstream 3: Measuring results and building trade facilitation knowledge		879,963
TOTAL		10,674,680



GLOBAL ALLIANCE
FOR TRADE FACILITATION



Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation Annual Report 2023

Copyright © 2024 Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation

To get involved or for more
information, please contact us at

info@tradefacilitation.org
www.tradefacilitation.org



global-alliance-for-trade-facilitation

X @GATFnews

Watch our
video



CREDITS
Designed by **wearezeephyr.com**

Photography
Page 3. Photo by shawnanggg on Unsplash
Page 4. Photo by venti views on Unsplash
Page 11. Photo by timelab on Unsplash
Page 12. Photo (top) by bernd dittrich on Unsplash
Page 12. Photo (bottom) by kiyoshi on Unsplash
Page 13. Photo (top) by haley lawrence on Unsplash
Page 13. Photo (bottom) by bruno fantulin on Pexels

Page 14. Photo (top) by kiril dobrev on Unsplash
Page 14. Photo (middle) by john cameron on Unsplash
Page 14. Photo (bottom) by caleb ruter on Unsplash
Page 15. Photo (top) by shubham dhage on Unsplash
Page 15. Photo (bottom) by kiril dobrev on Unsplash
Page 17. Photo (top) by desola-lanre-ologun on Unsplash
Page 22. Photo (top) by rosebud on Unsplash
Page 23. Photo by charlesdeluio on Unsplash

Page 24. Photo by cytonn photography on Unsplash
Page 25. Photo by headway on Unsplash
Page 26. Photo by vardan papikyan on Unsplash
Page 27. Photo by nasa on Unsplash
Page 28. Photo by wonderland on Unsplash
Page 44. Photo by christopher burns on Unsplash

All other images are © 2024 Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation.