



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

Advancing Free Trade
for Asia-Pacific **Prosperity**

Assessment Report: APEC Customs Capacity Building for Improved Trade Facilitation

APEC Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures

October 2022



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Project Background

The Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)

The TFA entered into force on 22 February 2017 after two-thirds of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) membership completed their domestic ratification process. The TFA contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. It also sets out measures for effective cooperation between customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues. It further contains provisions for technical assistance and capacity building in this area.¹

Estimates show that the full implementation of the TFA could reduce trade costs by an average of 14.3% and boost global trade by up to \$1 trillion per year, with the biggest gains in the poorest economies.² A recent Sub Committee on Customs Procedures (SCCP) led Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) publication also highlighted that full implementation of the TFA is a critical measure to mitigate the effects of trade disruptions, such as COVID-19.³

Furthermore, the TFA is expected to dramatically improve the regulatory architecture, which will create more transparency and predictability at the border. Through the harmonization and standardization of global best practices that govern the movement, release, and clearance of goods, there will be a decrease in trade costs and fewer opportunities for corruption.

It is important to clearly recognize that corruption has a profound impact on public resources, fosters crime and discourages public and foreign investment. Therefore, corruption must be fought as a multi-sectoral problem that affects the social, economic and political development of economies. The TFA contains potentially valuable measures to combat corruption, since the simplification and modernization of customs procedures can greatly reduce opportunities for corruption. In turn, businesses will also be better able to tap into global value chains and participate more in trade, which should in theory increase employment and income.⁴

A unique aspect of the TFA is that developing and least-developed members are allowed to choose their own implementation schedules and will be provided technical and financial assistance for capacity building if needed. Developed members that committed to implementing the TFA when it entered into force had to ensure its full implementation by 22 February, 2017. All other members have been provided with three categories to allocate their measures to. These are described below:

¹ [WTO | Trade topics - Trade facilitation - Background](#)

² [WTO | 2015 Press Releases - Full and Swift Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement can Deliver Large Trade Dividends to Developing and Least-developed Countries - Press/755](#)

³ [Trade Facilitation Measures to Mitigate Trade Disruptions: COVID-19 Lessons and Response Toolkit | APEC](#)

⁴ [Why trade facilitation matters now more than ever \(brookings.edu\)](#)

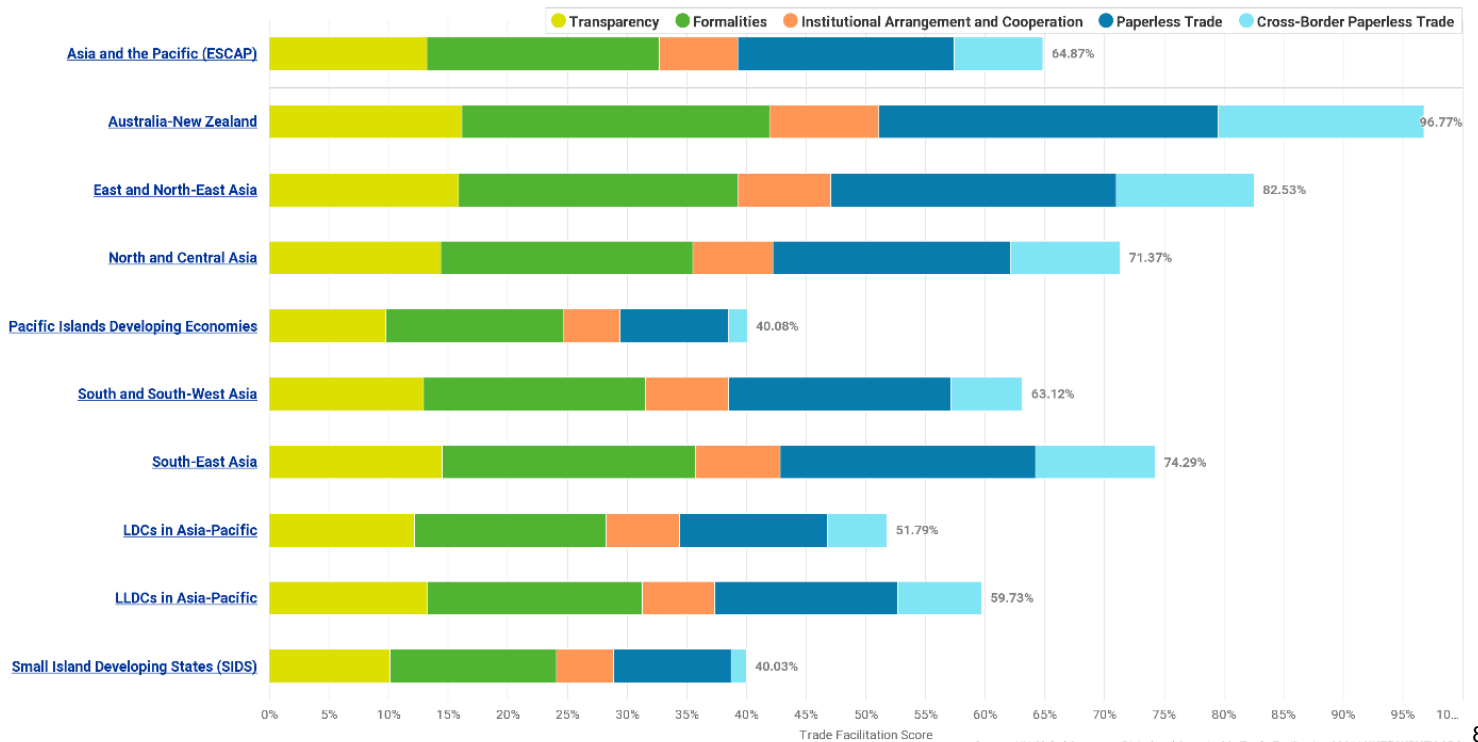
- Category A: Developing members will implement the measure by 22/02/2017, that is, the day of enforcement, and least-developed members will do the same a year later, on 22/02/2018.
- Category B: Members will require additional time to implement the measure.
- Category C: Members will require additional time and capacity building support to implement the measure.

APEC and accelerating the implementation of the TFA

Accelerating implementation of the WTO TFA has been a longstanding item on the APEC agenda. Given that trade and investment liberalisation is a key pillar of APEC’s agenda, significant related work has been conducted over the past two decades.⁵ The average rate of implementation of the TFA for APEC economies has been remarkably better than the average of all WTO members.⁶ The TFA implementation rate for the entire WTO membership stood at 75.4% in 2021 based on developing and LDC Members’ notification as well as developed members’ commitments. Broken down, that figure equates to 100% implementation rate by developed members, 77.5% among developing members, and 43.3% among less developed economies.⁷

Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific (2021)

Source: UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation 2021



⁵ [tfa-escap-policy-brief_final.pdf \(apec.org\)](#)

⁶ [TFAD - Trade Facilitation Agreement Database \(tfadatabase.org\)](#)

⁷ [Implementation commitments by grouping \(developed, developing and LDC Members\) | TFAD - Trade Facilitation Agreement Database \(tfadatabase.org\)](#)

⁸ [Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific | UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation \(untfsurvey.org\)](#)

The SCCP and the TFA

The SCCP's efforts over the past two decades have contributed greatly to the two-time 5 percent reductions of APEC trade transaction costs and have played a fundamental role in the 10 percent improvement in supply chain performance among APEC economies in 2015.⁹ These efforts had contributed to the development of a fair, transparent and dynamic economic and trading environment in the Asia-Pacific region.

There are also a number of other SCCP Projects that emphasize the importance of the TFA. As of writing, one of the most recent ones is the *Guidelines for Paperless Trade*, which sets out a non-exhaustive set of guidelines to assist APEC economies in implementing electronic/paperless customs procedures.¹⁰

How this Publication was developed

In May 2022, the SCCP endorsed New Zealand's Project Proposal *World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement implementation acceleration: priorities and channels for adoption of customs related chapters*. One of the outputs of the proposal is a questionnaire to understand gaps in assistance that economies would like to see addressed by future SCCP projects. The objective of this questionnaire was to inform future SCCP work to accelerate the implementation of customs related TFA articles.

This Assessment Report informs the findings from this questionnaire, and recommends a future stream of work run by the SCCP to accelerate the implementation of customs related areas of the WTO TFA.

We note that while the TFA is a crucial tool in facilitating trade, we recommend its implementation is not seen as a final goal but instead as a best practice.

Thank you note to co-sponsors

New Zealand would like to thank the co-sponsors to this project: Australia; Mexico; Singapore; Thailand; and The United States of America. Collaboration and cooperation are foundations of APEC and your support has made this work possible.

⁹ <https://www.apec.org/Groups/Committee-on-Trade-and-Investment/Sub-Committee-on-Customs-Procedures/>

¹⁰ [APEC Publication: Guidelines for Paperless Trade](#)

Methodology

The questionnaire

The questionnaire used the Committee on Trade and Investment's (CTI) [Table Monitoring APEC TFA Implementation](#) as a foundation and gathered information at an economy-level. Using CTI's table allowed us to gather up to date information and collaborate with CTI on accelerating the implementation of the TFA.

The questionnaire was divided in to two sections: one for economies that have already implemented the TFA, and for economies that have not. Both sections included quantitative and open-ended questions; the former to collect data for quantitative analysis and the latter to collect different opinions.

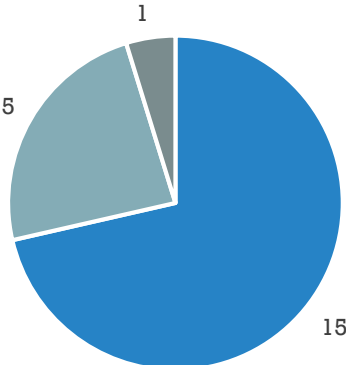
Each section had four questions. Questions for economies that have not implemented the TFA focused on their priorities, challenges and what they would like to see addressed in SCCP capacity building projects. Questions for economies that have implemented the TFA focused on what they have found useful in assisting with their own implementation, and the type of assistance they would be willing to provide.

Characteristics of respondents

Out of 21 SCCP members, 20 responded to the questionnaire. Respondents included advanced, emerging, and developing market economies, based on the International Monetary Fund's classification.¹¹ Out of the respondents, 15 have met their TFA commitments and five are working towards it.

¹¹ [World Economic Outlook Database April 2022 -- WEO Groups and Aggregates Information \(imf.org\)](#)

Implementation of the TFA among SCCP economies



- Have fully implemented the TFA
- Are working towards the full implementation of the TFA
- Did not respond

Highlight of findings

The key findings of this research related to:

Priorities and challenges to implementing the TFA

1. Legislative and Regulatory Framework, and Cross Government Coordination were cited as the main challenges in implementing the TFA, closely followed by Funding.
2. Test Procedures (Article 5.3) was thrice cited as a priority for implementation. Notifications for Enhanced Controls or Inspections (Article 5.1), Single Window (Article 10.4) and Risk Management (Article 7.4) are the next highest priority for economies that are working on implementing the TFA.
3. Language barriers, the need to review current regulations, and the lack of monitoring post project were mentioned as some of the gaps in some of current capacity building projects.

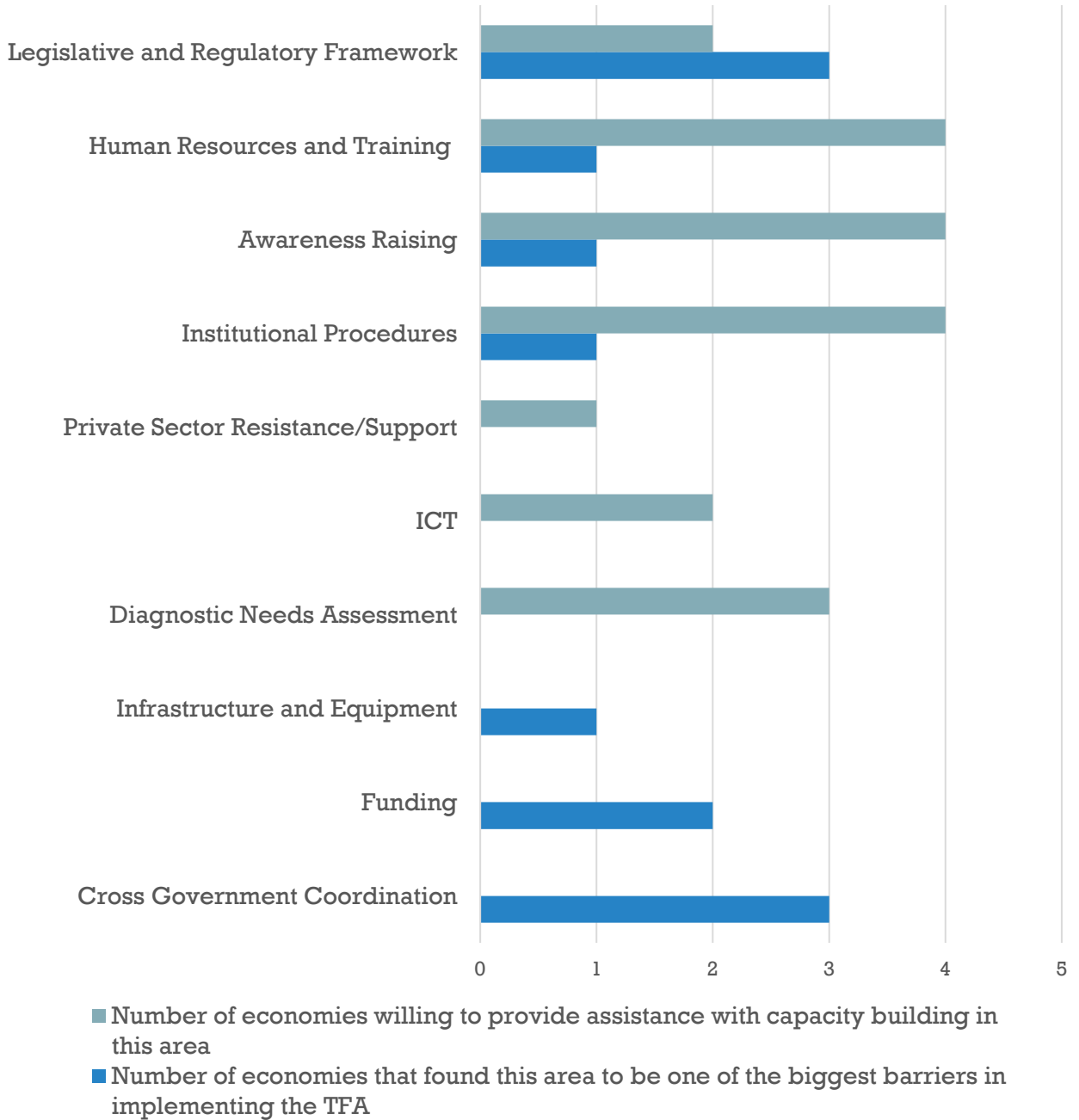
Economic assistance available

4. Two economies are willing to provide assistance with Legislative and Regulatory Framework; and no economies are willing to provide Financial Support.
5. Four economies are willing to help with Human Resources and Training, of which one economy found to be one of the biggest challenges in implementing the TFA.
6. Seven economies are willing to assist in participating in Projects (e.g. as speaker) and four would be willing to work in conjunction with capacity building providers.

Awareness of capacity building projects

7. There are a number of capacity building projects that SCCP economies may not be aware of.
8. SCCP members should seek to combine their experience to make the most out of assistance already available.
9. There are a number of capacity building providers with which SCCP members can collaborate with to provide targeted capacity building.

Does assistance offered meet the needs highlighted?



Findings: Capacity building projects already available

On the last section of this report we identify a number of different capacity building providers available, of which, according to questionnaire responses, not all economies were aware of. These providers range from wider APEC fora, bilateral providers and international organizations. Some of them are region or economy specific, others are open to all that need assistance. These providers have access to a pool of expertise, knowledge and resources, of which the SCCP should seek to take advantage of.

The concept of providing direct access to capacity building projects is one that should be explored further. Most providers highlighted had had at least one economy involved in a capacity building project. This means that the SCCP has a large amount of collective knowledge about capacity building opportunities. This awareness and connection to capacity building projects could be shared to ensure all economies can take advantage of what is already being provided. This could be done by providing avenues to participation in capacity building projects. For example, through a stock take of capacity building providers available and how to connect to them. Economies should also seek to share these when they become available, for example if economy A becomes aware of a capacity building project related to Article 8, and they know that economy B has a priority of implementing Article 8, economy A could then arrange for economy B to participate in that project. A living document where economies can update the list of capacity building projects as they become aware of more, may also be something worth exploring. We would need an economy to take “ownership” of this concept to ensure it remained relevant and up to date.

We also note that while questionnaire responses are anonymous, we encourage economies to openly discuss the results. If economies are comfortable to identify themselves either in terms of need or the assistance they are willing to provide, the SCCP will be better able to make the most out of questionnaire findings. The Project Overseer will actively provide opportunities for such collaboration, such as through discussions about the results during SCCP meetings.

Findings: Economies that are working towards implementing the TFA

Implementation priorities

SCCP members were asked to indicate in order, their top three priorities for implementation. Note that not all respondents answered this question; and of those that answered, some had less than three articles remaining to implement.

The table below shows the top three priorities members identified for implementing the TFA:

Priority level	Articles cited
1	Notifications for Enhanced Controls or Inspections (Article 5.1) Test Procedures (Article 5.3) Risk Management (Article 7.4) Single Window (Article 10.4)
2	Test Procedures (Article 5.3) (cited twice) Border Agency Cooperation (Article 8)
3	Information Availability through the Internet (Article 1.2) Post Clearance Audit (Article 7.5)

As we can see, Test Procedures (Article 5.3) was cited three times as a priority for implementation. Other articles were each only mentioned once, at different priority levels. Understanding priorities for the implementation of the TFA amongst SCCP members will assist in creating and promoting targeted capacity building. In return, targeted capacity building projects will allow providers to allocate their resources more efficiently and in a way that is most effective for recipients to meet their TFA commitments.

“The capacity building initiatives should be covered with all the articles that economies have not fully implemented such as Test Procedures.”

- Questionnaire Respondent

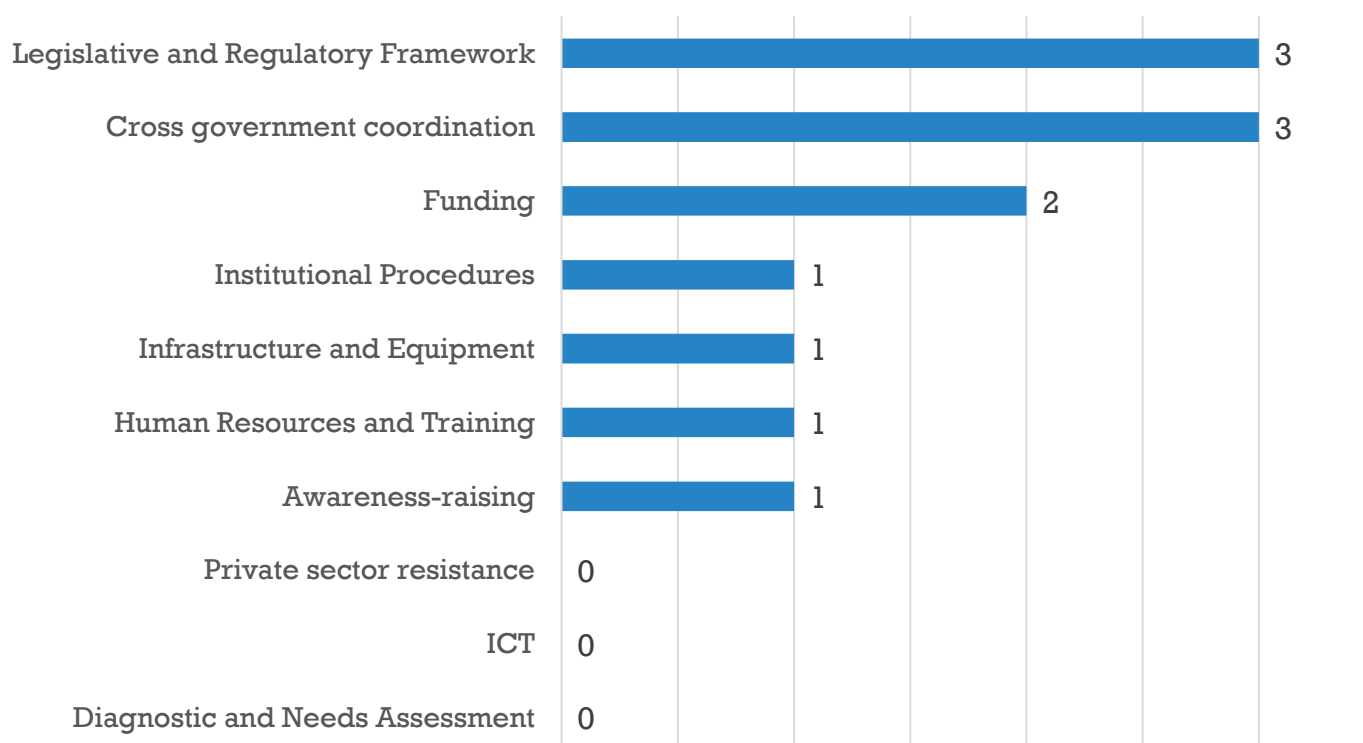
One interesting observation is that ‘not all TFA articles are equal’. Some TFA articles can contribute more to trade facilitation than others, and some that may utilise fewer resources to implement can generate a higher return and benefits than those that are highly complex to implement. While economies should aim to implement them all, priority could be given to those that are seen as more beneficial or easily implementable. For example, Risk Management (Article 7.4) could be prioritised over Single Window (Article 10.4).

Clearly, some of the priorities listed cannot be addressed by the SCCP alone. For example, for Border Agency Cooperation (Article 8), members' border agencies are encouraged to cooperate domestically and with their counterparts in neighbouring economies. In cases where Customs agencies are not the only or the main agency involved in implementation, the SCCP can seek to be involved in capacity building ran by others. In the case of Article 8, there are a number of work streams the SCCP can take advantage of, such as CTI's recent Capacity Building and Technical Assistant project, for which the SCCP was invited to attend.¹²

Major challenges in implementing the TFA

When asked about the biggest challenges faced in implementing the TFA, three economies cited Cross Government Coordination and Legislative and Regulatory Framework as some of their main challenges. Funding was cited as the second largest challenge, with two economies finding it to be a major challenge in implementing the TFA. Institutional Procedures, Infrastructure and Equipment, Human Resources and Training, and Awareness Raising were cited as a challenge by one economy each. Interestingly, ICT, Private Sector Resistance and Diagnostic Needs Assessments were not identified as a major challenge by any of the respondents.

Biggest challenges in the implementation of the TFA



¹² [Concept Notes - Capacity Building and Technical Assistance... \(apec.org\)](#)

Capacity building projects which focus on the specific challenges economies face in implementing the TFA, would maximise the benefits to recipients. Specifically, future capacity building projects could seek to more deeply understand these challenges and formulate guidelines on how to overcome them.

“[the SCCP can help] through guidance and knowledge sharing from subject matter experts in order to improve customs procedures by reviewing existing legislations, policies, procedures and technical aspects.”

- Questionnaire Respondent

Designing tailored capacity building to cater to individual recipients needs will also increase efficiency of the project. Some aspects that could be taken into account when designing capacity-building projects include: laws and regulations of the recipient economy, how different agencies interact with one another domestically, and information sharing and technological environment.

“[...] the project could cover the elaboration of legal drafts (statues laws or regulations) which is very important because most of the time these are necessary to implement certain measures.”

- Questionnaire Respondent

A possibility worth exploring is to have economies speak on their own experiences and relate their environment with that of the recipient. This way, recipients can receive specific recommendations that are relevant to them, and hear of experiences that relate to them. These types of tailor made capacity building programmes would be useful as different economies face different challenges under different environments. A customised capacity building programme could help the relevant economy to address their own specific issues directly with the appropriate measures.

“The exchange of experiences and the identification of individual needs by economy are a way for the SCCP to address gaps in current TFA related capacity building projects.”

- Questionnaire Respondent

How the SCCP accelerate the implementation the TFA

SCCP members could continue to work closely with subject matter experts, and explore collaborating with other capacity-building providers. Partnership and collaboration are core strengths of APEC, and SCCP members have contacts with

a number of technical experts in the area. This is an opportunity to harness skills and resources of different organisations and individuals with the same aim: to assist economies in fully implementing the TFA.

“[one of the main gaps in current capacity building is] insufficient experts/facilitators who can meet the requirements/objectives of the project activities.”

- Questionnaire Respondent

Capacity building providers should also seek to work closely with recipients to monitor actual implementation. The measurement of the implementation status should also be conducted before the start of the capacity building programme to establish the baseline level of readiness of implementation of the economy to compare with the level of readiness post-programme. By doing so, capacity building initiatives will be more effective in measuring the actual magnitude of benefit provided by the programme to the economy, in contrast with measuring the absolute implementation status. Monitoring of effectiveness of capacity building projects will expose what has worked and what has not worked, to help improve the project for the future. It will also provide guidance for capacity-building receivers to have a better chance of utilising the knowledge or information gained and ensure that efforts by providers have the best possible chance to be fruitful.

“[one of the main gaps in currently capacity building is] monitoring of actual implementation after capacity building provided.”

- Questionnaire Respondent

The main avenue for SCCP to directly assist with the implementation of the TFA is through exchanging experiences and information. SCCP members could provide capacity-building opportunities that encourage sharing of best practices, lessons learnt, opportunities, challenges and strategies in implementing the TFA.

Capacity building projects could be in any form, such as workshops, discussions, dialogues. However, it is recommended that the environment is interactive, so that receivers and other participants can share their own experiences and ask questions.

“The SCCP is a perfect arena for members to share experience in the implementation of the Customs related WTO TFA chapters.”

- Questionnaire Respondent

It should be taken into account that sometimes language is a barrier for experts to communicate effectively. The TFA touches on a number of technical terms, and capacity building projects often deal with complex issues that can be challenging to translate. This means deliverance might not be as effective as expected. Therefore, it would be greatly beneficial to consider language barriers when designing capacity building projects. This could include having providers that speak the language of the receivers, or having real-time translators.

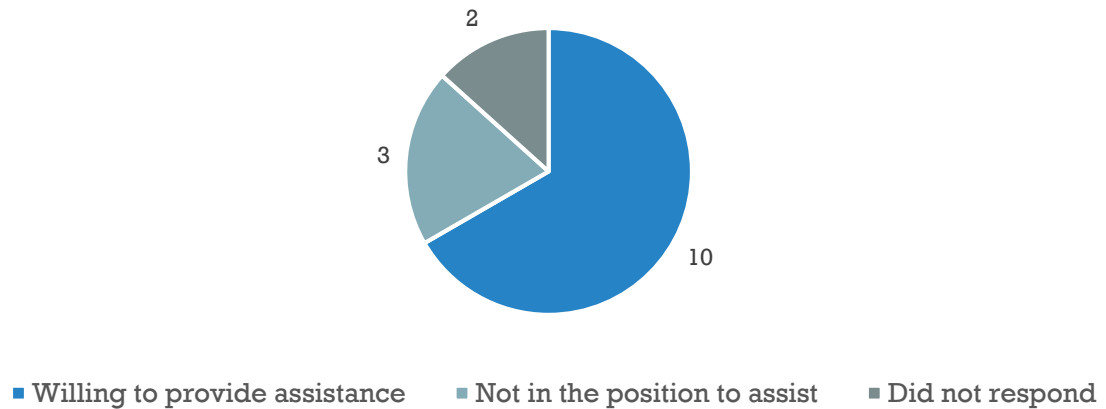
“We found also a challenge to find consultants that can speak the same economy official language.”

- Questionnaire Respondent

Findings: Economies that have fully implemented the TFA

Economies willing to assist in capacity building

Willingness to provide assistance in capacity building projects



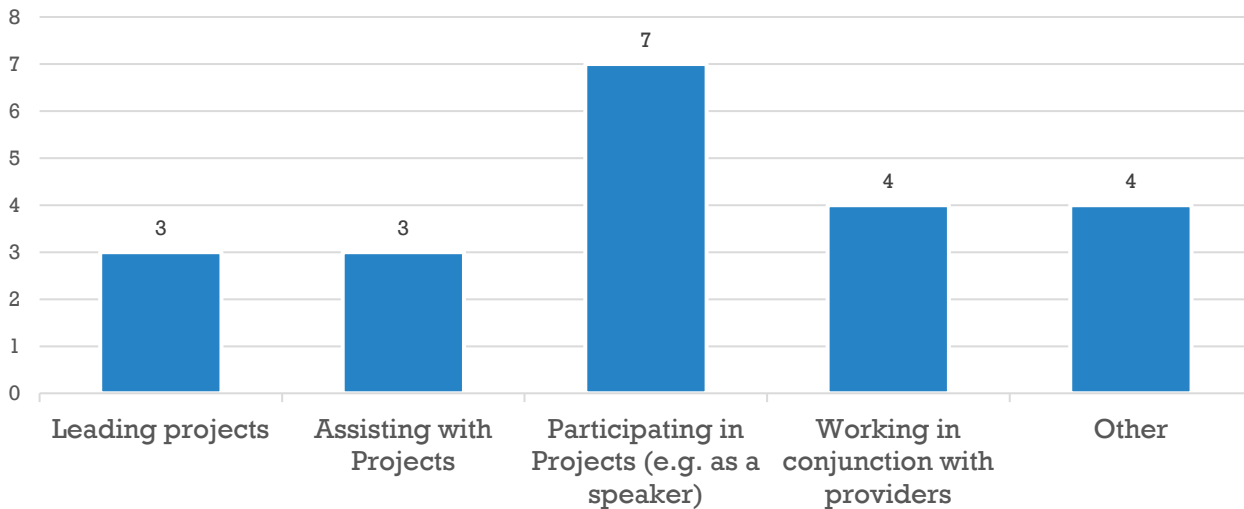
Level of assistance economies are willing to provide

Seven out of ten economies are willing to participate in projects, such as providing speakers. As many economies found that the best way for SCCP to provide assistance was through exchanging of experiences, there is a large opportunity to make the most out of this offer. Specifically, economies could match with those with similar processes and share about how they overcame their challenges, and where they found opportunities.

“The SCCP could provide a forum for exchanging information and experiences, in the form of Capacity Building, among member economies that have fully implemented the WTO TFA and those that have not.”

- Questionnaire Respondent

Level of assistance economies are willing to provide



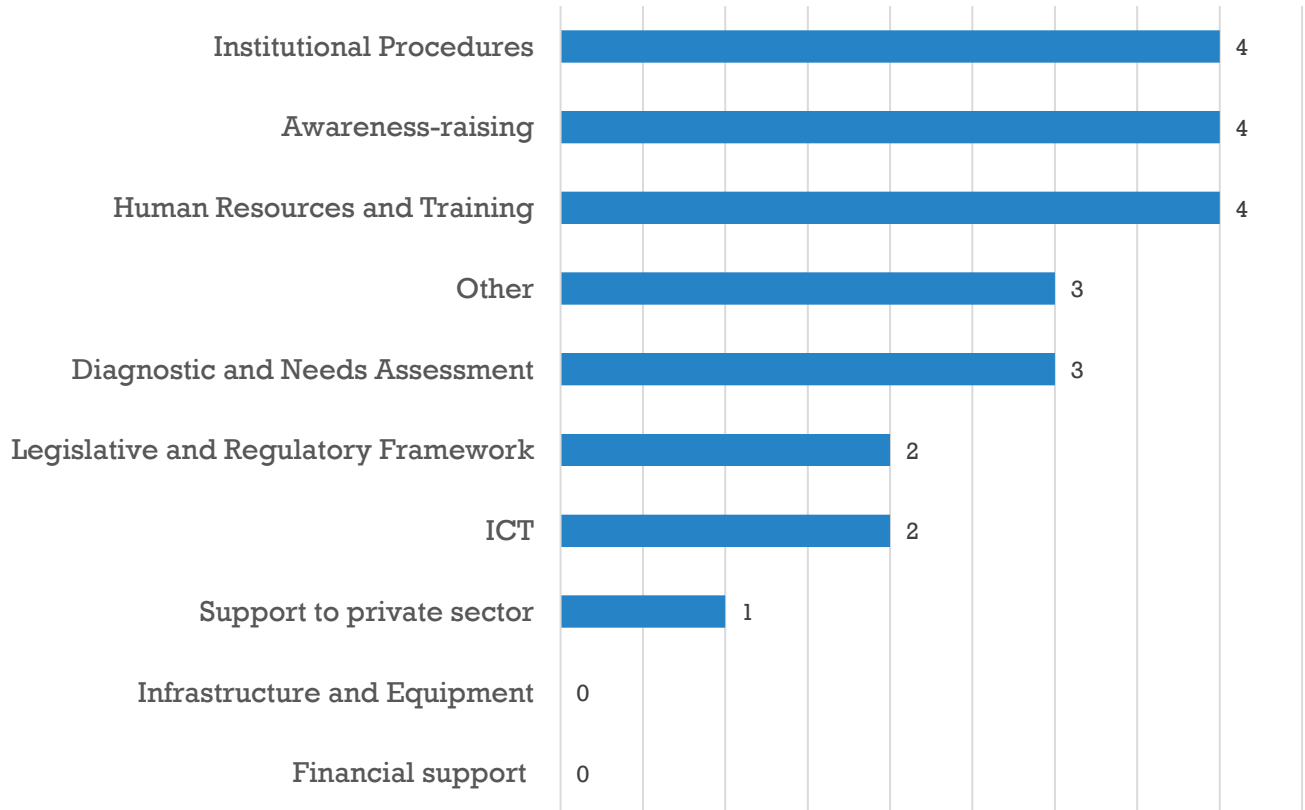
There are a number of capacity building providers already available. However, there seems to be a gap in the knowledge of SCCP members about capacity building providers and projects already available and how they can provide assistance. The SCCP could close this gap by collaborating with these providers and leveraging their knowledge and resources, while providing their own skills too.

“Economies should seek to take advantage of WCO knowledge and skills, as well as other capacity building providers when creating their own projects.”

- Questionnaire Respondent

Four of ten respondents would be willing to provide assistance with Human resources and Training, Awareness raising, Institutional Procedures, and ‘Other’. Other included providing feedback when requested, analysing needs of recipient economies and assistance with valuation. Three respondents said they would help with Diagnostic and Needs Assessment. No economies were willing to assist with Financial Support or Infrastructure and Equipment, which as seen above were highlighted as a main challenge for some economies in implementing the TFA.

Type of assistance economies are willing to provide



If agreed by individual recipients, capacity-building projects could also go beyond the TFA and include aspects on current and future trends in the trade facilitation space. Looking beyond the TFA will further facilitate trade by assisting recipients not only to achieve their TFA commitments, but also increased modern systems that will assist in developing economies full potential.

“Technological application (digitalization, data analytics, etc.) and innovative solutions will help modernize Customs Administrations and enable more effective implementation of the TFA, so more capacity building programs in these fields will be helpful.”

- Questionnaire Respondent

Conclusion and recommendations for the SCCP

- The biggest opportunity for SCCP led projects lays in experience and information sharing. To make the most out of lessons learnt in implementing the TFA, the SCCP could host workshops, discussions and other methods for economies to share different experiences.
- When running these projects, the SCCP should be aware of economies priorities and challenges in implementation. The SCCP should also focus in addressing gaps that were identified in other projects.
- The SCCP should collaborate with other relevant APEC fora, such as CTI, especially in articles that are not only related to Customs. This way, SCCP members can take advantage of knowledge and experiences from other fora, and enhance collaboration with other agencies to accelerate the implementation of the TFA.
- The SCCP should seek to collaborate with other capacity building providers. This could be done through participating in projects either as a speaker or spectator capacity. This way the SCCP can take advantage of existing capacity building projects to expand their knowledge base and share their own experiences to assist others.
- The SCCP should explore providing direct access to existing capacity building projects, for example, by forwarding information about upcoming projects that may be of interest to other economies. We recommend economies first identify the relevant articles of the TFA that the project may be associated with, in order to quickly identify if the project/programme is an area that others need help with implementing.
- SCCP members could bring together their pool of knowledge to create a directory of capacity building providers and their projects. Individually there are many gaps in the knowledge of economies, however as a whole the SCCP is well connected and have a rich understanding of available projects. Creating a SCCP directory that is regularly updated would promote collaboration and ensure all economies have access to different projects.

Capacity building projects already available

*Links to each capacity building project are available by clicking on the title.

Capacity building provider/programme	Description	Areas of expertise
<p>ARISE Plus</p> <p>Eligibility * ASEAN institutions * Private sector</p> <p><u>Number of economies involved</u> (according to questionnaire responses): 3</p>	<p>The overall objective of the ARISE+ programme is to support greater economic integration in ASEAN through the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025, which includes trade facilitation.</p> <p>Objectives: * To improve customs, transport facilitation, trade facilitation, and standards with a view to achieve a highly integrated cohesive economy; * To strengthen institutional capacities through, in particular: (1) managing the integration process with an emphasis on strengthening compliance, (2) outcomes monitoring, and (3) impact assessment including statistics, coordination and management and improved capacity among ASEAN bodies and the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC)</p>	<p>Technical assistance ARISE Plus has organised workshops on: implementation of Authorised Economic Operator (AEO), analytical studies,</p> <p>Harmonisation of customs environment to facilitate regional trade.</p> <p>* Deployment of specialised teams of experts to engage with the authorities of each AMS * Mapping exercises of the current status of the individual NTRs and their linkages to the ATR * Specialised training, workshops and capacity building events * Pursue co-operation and synergies with other EU technical assistance projects * Provide assistance to AMSs and CCA * Support actions * Collecting data and statistics * Briefing actions</p>
<p>Asian Development Bank</p> <p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 2</p>	<p>ADB supports projects in developing member economies that create economic and development impact, delivered through both public and private sector operations, advisory services, and knowledge support.</p> <p>It assists its members and partners by providing loans, technical assistance, grants, and equity investments to promote social and economic development.</p>	<p>Some recent projects ADB has been involved in:</p> <p>Post Clearance Audit (Article 7.5)</p> <p>Authorised Operators (Article 7.7)</p> <p>Border Agency Cooperation (Article 8)</p> <p>Single Window (Article 10.4)</p>
<p>Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF)</p> <p>(international)</p> <p>Eligibility *LDEs</p>	<p>EIF provides tailored support to the poorest economies in the world, helping them to integrate into regional and global trading systems, create jobs and increase incomes.</p> <p>The EIF supports LDEs to be more active players in the global trading system by helping them</p>	<p>Research and Analysis: EIF coordinates essential economy-specific trade analysis in the form of Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS) and Action Matrices. This evidence-based work helps economies identify priorities to guide their trade agendas, reveals</p>

<p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 1</p>	<p>tackle supply-side constraints to trade. EIF's unique approach guarantees full ownership by the least developed economies (LDE), with the majority of projects co-financed by the economies themselves.</p>	<p>constraints to trade integration, and advises on key action areas. <u>Institutional Support</u>: to assist in-economy trade planning and implementation, EIF supports the creation of National Implementation Units, which coordinate the delivery of an LDE's trade strategy and policy. These bodies are integral to government operations related to trade. <u>Enhancing trade sectors</u>: used on the evidence provided by EIF's in-economy trade research and analysis, injections of funds are made in key sectors.</p>
<p><u>Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation</u></p> <p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 5</p>	<p>The Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation is a public private partnership dedicated to international trade facilitation. The objective of the Global Alliance for Trade is to accelerate trade facilitation reforms by supporting swift and wide implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).</p>	<p>The Alliance is focused on achieving measurable results in trade facilitation that ultimately can help reduce poverty and improve lives in developing and least developed economies. Trade that is simple, fast, and cost-effective can unleash the potential of businesses of every size, enabling them to access global markets and expand, providing new jobs and generating investment that can drive inclusive economic growth. It is built on three pillars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Forging strong public private partnerships (2) Delivering impactful projects (3) Measuring and sharing results
<p><u>International Finance Corporation</u></p> <p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 0</p> <p>Eligibility for IFC funding The project must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Be located in a developing economy that is a member of IFC; *Be in the private sector; *Be technically sound; *Have good prospects of being profitable; *Benefit the local economy; and *Be environmentally and socially sound, satisfying our environmental and social standards as well as those of the host economy. 	<p>IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, advances economic development and improves the lives of people by encouraging the growth of the private sector in developing economies.</p>	<p>IFC help economies develop their private sectors in a variety of ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Investing in companies through loans, equity investments, debt securities and guarantees. (2) Mobilizing capital from other lenders and investors through loan participations, parallel loans and other means. (3) Advising businesses and governments to encourage private investment and improve the investment climate. <p>IFC offers <u>investment</u>, <u>advice</u> and <u>mobilization</u>.</p>

		You can read more about what IFC does here .
<p>International Monetary Fund (IMF)</p> <p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 1</p>	<p>The IMF's mandate includes facilitating the expansion and balanced growth of international trade, promoting exchange stability, and providing the opportunity for the orderly correction of economies' balance of payments problems.</p> <p>The IMF, the WTO, and other international organizations and donors often work together to help economies improve their ability to trade.</p>	<p>The IMF shares its knowledge with government institutions such as finance ministries and central banks through hands-on advice, training and peer-to-peer learning.</p> <p>The IMF also offers the Trade Integration Mechanism (TIM), which is available to all Fund member economies whose balance of payments positions might suffer, albeit temporarily, as a result of multilateral trade liberalization. It is not a lending facility, but rather a policy aimed at making Fund resources more predictably available under existing IMF facilities.</p>
<p>International Trade Centre(ITC)</p> <p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 1</p>	<p>The ITC is a multilateral agency which has a joint mandate with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations (UN) through the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).</p> <p>The ITC is involved in projects providing trade technical assistance in economies all over the world. ITC also works to build capacity in the private sector, ensure business sectors in LDEs are aware of the implications of WTO accession, and works with other organizations to support public and private capacity in trade.</p>	<p>ITC's work is demand-driven and client oriented. ITC provides tailored support, aligned with domestic objectives, to grow trade opportunities for client micro, small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs), business support organizations and policymakers in developing and least-developed economies.</p> <p>You can browse areas the ITC is involved in here and some of their recent projects here.</p>
<p>Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)</p> <p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 4</p>	<p>JICA aims to contribute to the promotion of international cooperation as well as the sound development of Japanese and global economy by supporting the socioeconomic development, recovery or economic stability of developing regions.</p> <p><i>"JICA had provided expert on technical cooperation and knowledge sharing which focused on pre-arrival</i></p>	<p>JICA uses an array of development assistance schemes to meet the diverse needs of developing economies around the world.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Technical Cooperation (2) Official Development Assistance Loans (3) Official Development Assistance Grants <p>JICA also promotes collaboration with other development partners, including emerging donors and civil society. Furthermore, JICA endeavours to proactively deliver Japanese experiences and</p>

	<p><i>procedure, expedited shipment and freedom of transit.”</i> – questionnaire respondent</p>	<p>approaches, and to contribute to international discussions.</p> <p>You can read more about JICA’s work here.</p>
<p>US Agency for International Development (USAID)</p> <p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 5</p> <p>Eligibility Where We Work U.S. Agency for International Development (usaid.gov)</p>	<p>USAID programs expand enterprise-driven economic growth and employment through robust analysis, regulatory reform, trade promotion, and entrepreneurial capacity development to foster sustainable development outcomes.</p>	<p>USAID’s economic growth and trade programs focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Providing expert research, analyses, and technical capacity building (2) Building trade capacity to implement trade agreements, remove trade barriers, improve customs procedures, and modernize markets; (3) Improving the enabling environment for private investment through support for regulatory reform and private sector advocacy that opens markets; (4) Increasing employment opportunities through improved market systems that enhance competition and enterprise growth. <p>You can find out more about what USAID does here.</p>
<p>World Bank - Trade Facilitation Support Program (TFSP)</p> <p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 1</p>	<p>The TFSP was launched in June 2014 to assist developing economies in aligning their trade practices with the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA).</p> <p>The program is designed to provide practical and demand-driven assistance, and supports client economies with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) identifying existing constraints and bottlenecks to cross-border trade; (2) designing and planning for the implementation of reforms; and (3) increasing the predictability, transparency, and harmonization of systems and procedures in line with international standards covering 	<p>Areas of assistance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Undertake WTO TFA gap assessments and implementation of reform action plans (2) Support in establishing and strengthening of National Trade Facilitation Committees (3) Assist in designing risk-based approaches for border clearance (4) Prepare for single window implementation (5) Support in ratification and notification of the WTO TFA (6) Facilitate knowledge sharing (7) Leverage global and regional partnerships to ensure optimal delivery of support.

	import, export, and transit activities.	
<p><u>World Customs Organisation (WCO)</u></p> <p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 12</p> <p>“(…) the WCO (The Mercator Program) which was held in 2014 is the most significant one because it offered us the basic platform and guidance for each WTO TFA article. Therefore, the WCO Mercator Program has supported us to accelerate the fulfillment of all WTO TFA obligations.”</p>	<p>As the global centre of Customs expertise, the WCO is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters and can rightly call itself the voice of the international Customs community.</p> <p>The World Customs Organization develops international standards, fosters cooperation and builds capacity to facilitate legitimate trade, to secure a fair revenue collection and to protect society, providing leadership, guidance and support to Customs administrations.</p>	<p>The WCO assists Members in establishing National Committees on Trade Facilitation as required by the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. It has performed a survey and is collecting case studies to share experiences amongst the Members.</p> <p>To support the harmonized implementation of the TFA by using core WCO instruments and tools, the WCO released an Implementation Guidance for Section I. For each TFA Article, it contains the following categories of information: Overview; Text of the TFA Article; relevant RKC Standards and RKC Guidelines; other relevant WCO tools; Member practices; and performance indicators.</p> <p>The WCO Mercator Programme was developed as a WCO Strategic Initiative to Support Trade Facilitation and aimed at assisting governments worldwide to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) expeditiously and in a harmonized manner by using core WCO instruments and tools.</p> <p>You can read more about what the WCO does to accelerate the implementation of the TFA here.</p>
<p><u>World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF)</u></p> <p><u>Agreement & Article Resources TFAF (tfafacility.org)</u></p> <p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 2</p> <p>“In the WTO National Workshop on Trade Facilitation (...), the expert from the WTO Secretariat lectured on the history and overview of the TFA, such as provisions concerning customs procedures, transparency, notifications, as well as cooperation</p>	<p>The TFAF was created to help developing economies and LDCs implement the Trade Facilitation Agreement. The TFAF complements efforts by regional and multilateral agencies, bilateral donors and other stakeholders to provide trade facilitation-related technical assistance and capacity building support.</p> <p>The TFAF will support Developing and LDC Members to assess their specific needs and to identify possible development partners to help</p>	<p>Activities include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) assisting Members in the preparation of their notification of special and differential treatment categories; (2) the development and delivery of assistance and support for capacity building, by making available training materials, case studies, and best practices; (3) supporting developing and LDC Members to access the available implementation assistance from regional and multilateral agencies, bilateral donors and other

<p>among Customs and other government agencies, which all helped to deepen participants' understanding of the TFA's contents, further facilitating simplification and transparency of customs procedures, and establishment of the NCTF [in our economy]."</p> <p>Eligibility *Developing and Less Developed Economies</p>	<p>them meet those needs through a diverse number of activities.</p> <p>Where no other funding source is available, the TFAF will offer two types of grants to Developing and LDC Members notifying Category C commitments: project preparation grants and project implementation grants.</p>	<p>stakeholders that offer a broad range of different programs.</p> <p>You can find out more here. The Trade Facilitation Agreement Database is a useful resource for economies. Technical Assistance projects TFAD - Trade Facilitation Agreement Database (tfadatabase.org)</p>
<p>APEC capacity building</p> <p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 5</p> <p>"APEC-SEGA will provide a diagnosis to identify best practices to improve Border agencies cooperation, especially between sanitary agencies."</p>	<p>APEC often provides capacity building to member economies. This is usually done on a fora or sub-fora context.</p> <p>SOM Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (SCE); CTI</p>	<p>APEC Capacity Building Workshop on WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises APEC</p> <p>Proposals - Capacity Building and Technical Assistance... (apec.org)</p>
<p>Others mentioned</p> <p>Number of economies involved (according to questionnaire responses): 4</p>	<p>UNCTAD: The Project is called "Enforcement of national committee on Peru" and had three important components which were: 1) a capacity building program, b) the implementation of a reform tracker and 3) a rapid scan of the regulations issued during the lockdown for the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>SECO is the first joint initiative between the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland (SECO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO).The Project is called "Initiative to improve sanitary management for the implementation of TFA" and it contributes to the implementation of TFA measures such as risk management, AEO, test procedure, border agency cooperation and notifications for enhanced controls or inspections. It provides a diagnosis, models and technical or/and legal proposals to implement TFA measures such as risk management, AEO, test procedure, border agency cooperation and notifications for enhanced controls or inspections.</p> <p>The objective of the Global Trade Facilitation Programme is to "contribute to fostering and facilitating international trade of selected beneficiary countries, in particular Customs Administrations, through the implementation and application of international standards and best practices for the importation, exportation and transit of commercial goods. Additionally, the Programme supports the strengthening of the organizational and technical capacities of the beneficiaries".</p> <p>The GTFP has 3 specific outcomes:</p> <p>1) Organizational development:</p>	

Strengthening through leadership and management development (strategic planning, human resources and stakeholder engagement)

2) Trade facilitation

Improving of compliance capacity for Customs and relevant stakeholders, as well as implementing international standards and best practices

3) Performance measurement

Supporting the development of a comprehensive measurement tool for Customs performance”.

More information at http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/capacity-building/activities-and-programmes/cooperation-programmes/seco_wco-gtftp.aspx

Other mentions included: World Bank Other, Bilateral Programmes, World Trade Organisation Other.