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**Committee on Trade Facilitation**

Original: English

## **TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT ARTICLE 21.4**

### COMMUNICATION FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

The following communication, dated 18 October, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of the United Kingdom.

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1.1. The United Kingdom submits the following communication pursuant to the objective of Article 21.4(c) of the Trade Facilitation Agreement ("TFA"), to share further information on ongoing assistance and support for capacity building. The information in Annex A of this communication is provided to give a more detailed understanding of the trade facilitation activities the UK is supporting with delivery partners, as previously outlined in the UK's notifications under Article 22.1 and 22.2 of the TFA, submitted on 1 January 2021.

1.2. The UK invites donors and international and regional organisations and other relevant agencies to contact the UK where they are funding or delivering programmes in the same countries or regions with similar aims, should they require further information that could lead to improved coordination or collaboration between trade facilitation capacity building offers, whilst avoiding unnecessary duplication.

1.3. This is with the purpose of strengthening donors' overall capacity building offer for developing Members, to support further implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

1.4. For the avoidance of doubt, this communication is not made for the purpose of fulfilling the notification requirements under Articles 22.1 and 22.2 of the TFA.

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**ANNEX A****1 HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD TRADE FACILITATION CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME****Delivery Partner: World Customs Organisation (WCO)**

*Within the context of the WCO Mercator approach for effective TFA implementation, the Programme focuses on Customs administrations and comprises of tailor-made tracks, allowing the WCO to support important cross-cutting enablers in the Customs organizational domain, as well as respond to country specific TFA implementation. The Programme is a unique initiative that allows for uniform implementation by applying WCO instruments and tools and is supported by the practical experiences and support of the global Customs community.*

Current engagement:

- **Eswatini:** Supporting Coordinated Border Management in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation/World Bank Group, along Time Release Study (TRS) capacity building. Continuing supporting Eswatini Revenue Authority in the areas of Risk Management competency based Human Resource Management.
- **Lesotho:** Assistance to streamline air cargo clearance and release processes applying the WCO Immediate Release Guidelines, in alignment with Article 7.8 TFA on Expedited Shipments and Article 8 TFA on Border Agency Cooperation. Competency-based Human Resource Management and Risk Management/Data Analytics support are also provided to the Lesotho Revenue Authority.
- **Liberia:** Supporting Liberia Revenue Authority's (LRA) Time Release Study working group to carry out a TRS at the Monrovia-Freeport and international airport, as well as capacity building on streamlining air cargo clearance and release processes. WCO is also providing support to LRA on competency based Human Resource Management, Gender Equality and Diversity and Project Management for effective Customs reforms. Ongoing support on Risk Management, including in the area of Customs enforcement and data intelligence.
- **Madagascar:** Technical assistance and capacity building support on Air Cargo Streamlining, Time Release Studies and Risk Management including in the area of Customs enforcement and data intelligence. Moreover, support will be provided on rolling-out a competency based human resource management within Customs.
- **Nigeria:** Ongoing dialogue on supporting Nigerian Customs Service on technical assistance and capacity building on Air Cargo streamlining, Time Release Studies as well as possibly enhancing Customs integrity and gender & diversity.
- **Philippines:** extensive support is rendered to enhance gender and diversity, integrity, TFA awareness, and competency based human resource management and leadership development within the Bureau of Customs. Furthermore, ongoing capacity building and technical assistance on Air Cargo streamlining, Time Release Studies and Risk Management (in coordination with the World Bank Group).
- **South Africa:** extensive support is rendered to enhance gender and diversity, integrity, TFA awareness, and competency based human resource management and leadership development within South African Revenue Authority. Furthermore, ongoing capacity building and technical assistance on Air Cargo streamlining, Authorised Economic Operators, Time Release Studies (in coordination with the World Bank Group) and Risk Management, including on Customs enforcement data intelligence.
- **The Gambia:** Technical assistance and capacity building support is being offered on Air Cargo Streamlining, Advanced Ruling, Time Release Studies, Authorised Economic Operator and Coordinated Border Management, Customs enforcement/data intelligence as well as on simplification and harmonisation of customs procedures in line with the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention.

- **Zambia:** WCO is engaging with the Zambian Revenue Authority to support streamlining of air cargo clearance and release processes. Further upcoming support on Authorised Economic Operators and Gender Equality and Diversity Assessment in collaboration with the WCO SIDA programme.

**Delivery Partner: UNCTAD** - Empowerment Programme

*UNCTAD provides a wide pallet of capacity building, technical assistance and advisory services on trade facilitation, including an intensive dedicated professional capacity building programme for the members of national trade facilitation committees (NTFCs) and their Secretariats, the so-called Empowerment Program. The principal activities being delivered with the Members below have been focused on delivering training for NTFC members on trade facilitation related issues, and equipping NTFCs with the Reform Tracker, a project management tool to monitor, support and accelerate alignment with the TFA.*

Current engagement:

- **Botswana**
- **Bolivia:** Note delivery of Reform Tracker financed by separate UNCTAD Project.
- **Cambodia**
- **Eswatini:** Additionally piloting course on resource mobilisation developed for the Eswatini. NTFC
- **Honduras:** Note delivery of Reform Tracker financed by separate UNCTAD Project.
- **Lesotho**
- **Madagascar**
- **Malawi**
- **Myanmar:** All engagement on hold as per official UN instructions.
- **Namibia**
- **Somalia:** Supporting the establishment and functioning of the Somalia NTFC and organising delivery of e-Learning modules on Gender and Trade Facilitation.
- **Sao Tome e Principe:** Delivering e-learning course only.
- **Timor-Leste:** Delivering e-Learning course only.
- **Zambia**
- **Zimbabwe:** Additionally, rapid scan for trade facilitation preparedness in times of crisis

## 2 TRADE ADVOCACY AND INVESTMENT FUND II PLUS (TAF2+)

**Delivery Partner: Cowater**

*The Trade and Investment Advocacy Fund (TAF2+) negotiations supports developing countries to effectively participate – to their advantage – in trade and investment negotiations including through increasing the technical skills and coordination of trade and investment ministries in developing countries. It creates a clear focus on using trade and investment negotiations to address poverty and social exclusion and helps to build sustainability through institutional capacity development. As part of the WTO Trade facilitation agenda, TAF2+ has helped shape proposals and text and facilitated convergence of Africa group, LDC group and G90 positions.*

Current engagement:

- **LDC Group at WTO:** Provides long-term support to the LDC Group with technical, analytical and legal assistance across WTO forums to make strong and original proposals.
- **West/Sub-Saharan Africa, Pacific:** Undertaking scoping studies to identify areas of potential support with the UK's Economic Partnership Agreement, including chapters relating to customs and trade facilitation.
- **Algeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, ECOWAS, Uzbekistan:** Providing rapid response analytical mechanism to provide quick analysis on trade policy and facilitation issues by developing countries as they tackle COVID-19.

UK Government-Funded Trade Facilitation Projects delivered with Cowater, non-TAF2+ funded:

- **Ethiopia** – Tax Transformation Project: developing a customs commission strategy, risk management system, streamlining and implementing customs procedures, strengthening Post Clearance Audit, and developing anti-smuggling enforcement strategy.
- **Occupied Palestinian Territories** – Trade Facilitation and Customs Support: Helping to expedite the movement of goods and reduce transaction costs, improve business enabling environment, and Palestinian Customs readiness to assume functions from Israel and revenues from trade-related taxes.
- **Somalia** – Customs Reform and Trade Enhancement Somalia: Working with the Federal Government of Somalia to develop and improve customs practices, building capacity on compliance and enforcement. Particularly focus on declaration and valuation, risk management and intelligence, and anti-smuggling. Also supporting development of an ICT system for Customs in Somalia.
- **Zambia** – Cities and Infrastructure for Growth: Supporting Zambian Customs authority with fast tracking priority of COVID-19 goods, created the Chirundu Inter-Agency Technical Coordination Committee to improve border agency cooperation with Zimbabwe, and developed COVID-19 related communication materials to improve checks and procedures at borders.

### 3 TRADE FACILITATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME (TFSP)

#### Delivery Partner: World Bank Group

*The TFSP was launched in June 2014 to support countries seeking assistance in aligning their trade practices with the WTO TFA. The TFSP's funding helps countries – particularly developing countries – achieve full and effective implementation of the WTO TFA and related trade facilitation reforms. Since inception, the TFSP has provided assistance to 48 countries. Funded by Australia, Canada, the European Union, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.*

Key areas of assistance include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting the ratification and notification of the WTO TFA
- Undertaking WTO TFA Gap Assessments and implementation of reform action plans
- Supporting the establishment and strengthening of NTFCs
- Assisting with the design of risk-based approaches for border clearance
- Preparing for Single Window implementation
- Leveraging global and regional partnerships and knowledge sharing to ensure optimal delivery of support

Current engagement:

- **Albania**
- **Bolivia**
- **Cambodia**
- **Costa Rica**
- **El Salvador**
- **Eswatini**
- **Fiji**
- **Georgia**
- **Guatemala**
- **Honduras**
- **Kosovo**
- **Kyrgyz Republic**
- **Lao PDR**
- **Lebanon**
- **Lesotho**
- **Liberia**

- **Malawi**
- **Mongolia**
- **Montenegro**
- **Myanmar** (on hold)
- **Nicaragua**
- **Panama**
- **Papua New Guinea**
- **Republic of North Macedonia**
- **Samoa**
- **Serbia**
- **Sierra Leone**
- **Sri Lanka**
- **Timor-Leste**
- **Tonga**
- **Vanuatu**
- **Vietnam**
- **Zambia**

#### **4 ASIA REGIONAL TRADE AND CONNECTIVITY PROGRAMME (ARTCP)**

**Delivery Partner: World Bank, ADB, Aga Khan Foundation, CUTS International and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**

*The ARTCP programme is helping to increase trade and investment across regions, targeted sectors, and geographical areas in Central, South & Southeast Asia by supporting key cross-border transport, energy and IT infrastructure projects, as well as cutting red tape to ensure goods can pass through borders more quickly. The programme focuses on improving connectivity infrastructure, including trade facilitation-related sectors on connectivity and trade, transport connectivity, digital connectivity, regulatory reform and regional trade and investment facilitation, and cross-border value chains.*

Current engagement:

- **Intraregional Cooperation across Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia**
- **Afghanistan**
- **Bangladesh**
- **Bhutan**
- **India**
- **Kyrgyzstan**
- **Nepal**
- **Pakistan**
- **Tajikistan**
- **Uzbekistan**

#### **5 REVENUE MOBILIZATION INVESTMENT AND TRADE PROGRAMME (REMIT)**

**Delivery Partners: World Bank Trust Fund, International Trade Centre, Commercial Supplier**

*Through REMIT's Tax Component key areas in which we are providing support are (i) increasing capacity of the Customs Administration to employ the Risk Management System (RMS) to promote compliance, collect the right revenue, and facilitate trade and (ii) increasing capacity of the Customs Administration to conduct Post Clearance Audit (PCA). Under this activity key operational improvements will be supported such as the pre-clearance and pre-arrival procedures. Through REMIT's Trade component, we are mainly providing support on implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), and capacity building of Border Regulatory Authorities and Small and Medium Enterprises on border procedures.*

Current activity:

All activities given below are being undertaken in **Pakistan** through Tax and Trade component of REMIT.

Tax Component:

- Implementation of Pakistan Single Window supported through effective technical assistance on quality assurance of systems developed and process monitoring.
- PCA of Customs Clearances undertakes compliance gap analysis in one sector.
- Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) Strategy developed
- PCA Framework and Compliance Risk Based (CRB) Analysis and Framework prepared
- Technical notes on pre-arrival/preclearance procedures, PCA, Compliance Risk Based (CRB) analysis, and NII prepared

Trade Component:

- Pakistan's compliance with WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement requirements assessed and action plans for compliance aligned to WTO obligations in line with best international practice developed
- Scope of work for each selected measure agreed and aligned with ongoing reforms of Federal Board of Revenue, Time Release Studies Conducted, and Discussion Papers for Roadmap on Authorized Economic Operators & Risk Management System completed
- Gaps (and needs) of Border Regulatory Agencies for Integrated Risk Management and border coordination identified and one training delivered
- Implementation of Trade Facilitation Portal
- Public-private dialogue on trade facilitation strengthened

## 6 UK TRADE PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAMME (UKTP)

**Delivery Partner: International Trade Centre**

*The UK Trade Partnerships (UKTP) programme delivers technical assistance and capacity building to the countries party to Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), trade agreements between African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the UK. UKTP will support our ACP partners to effectively implement and maximise the benefits of the EPAs, including Customs and Trade Facilitation-related matters.*

Current Engagement:

- **CARIFORUM**
- **Cameroon**
- **Comoros**
- **Cote D'Ivoire**
- **Fiji**
- **Ghana**
- **Madagascar**
- **Papua New Guinea**
- **Zimbabwe**

## 7 TRADEMARK EAST AFRICA (TMEA)

**Delivery Partner: TMEA**

*TMEA aims to reduce barriers to trade by: improving the efficiency and capacity of trade and logistics; improving trading standards and reducing NTBs; improving and making more transparent trade processes and system; and improving the trade regulatory environment. This is achieved by ensuring internal cooperation among agencies, reducing the complexity of formalities, streamlining release and clearance processes, and facilitating greater international cooperation between customs authorities. Funded by France, Belgium, Canada, the European Union, Ireland, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.*

Current Engagement:

- **Burundi**
- **Democratic Republic of the Congo**
- **Ethiopia**
- **Kenya**
- **Malawi**
- **Rwanda**
- **Somalia**
- **South Sudan**
- **Tanzania**
- **Uganda**
- **Zambia**

## 8 ENHANCED INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK (EIF)

**Delivery Partners: WTO and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), with implementers including WBG, International Trade Centre (ITC) and ODI.**

*Supporting Trade Facilitation is a central pillar of the EIF. EIF support is both through policy and institutional support, as well as investments directly into trade facilitation projects. A cornerstone of this support for trade facilitation is the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS). While covering a whole range of trade issues, there is almost always a dedicated chapter to trade facilitation, consequently laying the foundation for policy reform and investment. EIF is a multi-donor WTO trust fund.*

Current Engagement:

- **COMESA:** EIF is funding a regional project, co-funded by the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), to identify and prioritise major Sanitary and Phytosanitary constraints for export market access. The project is working across Malawi, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda.
- **South Asia:** Contributing to the implementation of Government strategies and priorities aimed at facilitating trade and e-governance. The project has supported implementation of the WTO TFA as well as paperless trading commitments in RTAs and relevant initiatives in which many countries are already engaged at the bilateral or sub-regional level.
- **West Africa:** The overall objective of this project is the development of a sub-regional strategy for the implementation of the regional conventions on transit, transport and trade facilitation (TFA) issues. The project is being implemented in Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger and aims to achieve; Improved productive and export capacity through the implementation of a functional transit programme; a reduction of the costs of factors of production by increasing the competitiveness of the land transport sector based on a comprehensive approach taking into account the economic and social dimension (externalities on the labour market in the transport sector) of the envisaged reforms; and better integration of the three beneficiary countries into the overall value chains through the coordinated implementation of Articles 8, 10.4, 11 and 23.2 of the TFA.
- **Bhutan:** Supporting e-Infrastructure for trade and services development set up a "One stop information center" for trade & industry related data and information. It also developed an "eRegulations portal", with support from the Business Facilitation Program of UNCTAD, to provide on-line information on procedures for foreign and domestic investment.
- **Cambodia:** The ongoing Go4ECAM project has a component related to trade facilitation of cross-border eCommerce through the synchronisation of the Custom clearance system with the Post clearance system for small parcels. The component is being implemented by the Universal Postal Union (UPU), UNCTAD, Cambodia Post, Custom office, Ministry of Commerce, with funding support from EIF, Switzerland, UPU and UNCTAD.

- **Lao PDR:** The ongoing EIF project in Lao PDR is supporting improved public-private dialogue particularly around trade issues. To date this has included discussion at national level of seven issues specifically related to trade facilitation. The project has also provided support to improve policy advocacy capacity to selected local BMOs.
  - **Rwanda:** This project aims to improve strategic trade infrastructure and the cross-border business environment. The EIF, together with the Government of Rwanda, has set up CrossBorder Market Centers on the borders with Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to strengthen the trading facilities and improve the livelihoods and earning potential of people engaged in crossborder trade in Rwanda, of which 74% are women
  - **Vanuatu:** The first module of the Vanuatu Single Window for trade was launched in March 2020. The project is also leveraging additional resources from the Government of Australia to implement a Humanitarian Supplies module for the National Disaster Management Office he implementation of movement restriction and social distancing policies. A separate project in Vanuatu with the UPU and UNCTAD is facilitating improved processing of small parcel, aiming to link the postal system with ASYCUDA.
  - **Zambia:** Support monitoring the status of implementation of categories A, B and C in preparation for WTO TFA Committee Meetings and to mobilise additional resources for implementing the TFA; supporting implementation of Article 3 TFA (Advance Rulings) with stakeholder education and assessments on Advance Rulings in Chirundu, Mwami and Nakonde; supporting implementation of Article 1.4 TFA (Notification) with consultative meeting with stakeholders to determine Zambia definitive dates for Category C designations; supporting the development of a One-Stop Border Post in Kipushi. A separate project in Zambia, also co-financed with the STDF is also facilitating improved pest management processes for Zambia and the SADC region.
-