



25 February 2025

(25-1327)

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Committee on Trade Facilitation

Original: English

**NOTIFICATION OF ARRANGEMENTS AND PROGRESS IN THE PROVISION  
OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING  
SUPPORT OF CATEGORY C DESIGNATIONS**

COMMUNICATION FROM VANUATU

The following communication, dated 21 February 2025, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Vanuatu.

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Vanuatu hereby notifies information on the arrangements concluded and progress made in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support of the following category C designations, in response to Article 16 of the Trade Facilitation Agreement ([WT/L/931](#)).

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 5.3	Test Procedures	C	31 December 2021	31 December 2030
<b>Donors:</b> World Bank Group (WBG)				
<p><b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b></p> <p>This is a transparency measure and needs a policy response. Each border regulatory agency has its own policy framework for second testing, but procedures are not standardized or widely published.</p> <p>There is progress on the Vanuatu Bureau of Standards, and the government lab is currently being fully equipped (with assistance from the International Atomic Agency which provided the equipment) and protocols for tests are currently being created. Currently there is no information or protocols in place to what is required for testing (i.e., for textiles).</p> <p>The government laboratory is currently on track to become accredited to ISO 17025 by the end of 2025.</p> <p>The Vanuatu Bureau of Standards plans to launch a communications policy, which includes testing etc, strategies based on policies and regulations. There is a lack of communications among each other, and even though upgrades are currently taking place, they are not communicated and there is a need for a public campaign to bring awareness to the private sector that the government lab is able to do that (even though currently second testing is not being used very often, due to perishables)</p> <p>At a regional level, Vanuatu is a key participant in the Pacific Quality Infrastructure Initiative (PQII) that is managed by the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS). This initiative is assessing laboratory capacity and future needs on a regional basis.</p> <p><b>Areas of assistance required:</b></p> <p>Vanuatu needs support to develop a multi-agency policy framework that provides for the possibility of second testing, where appropriate, the development of a Standard Operating Procedures and to also ensure that the business community is well informed of the availability of second testing procedures.</p> <p>World Bank Group will be assisting with the supporting the Test Procedures Working group under the TFSC to review the existing legal/policy instruments for alignment with the TFA test procedures article and SOPs to support 2<sup>nd</sup> testing.</p> <p>Vanuatu requires assistance to develop the following 2<sup>nd</sup> testing requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laboratory training and capacity development requirements.</li> <li>• Equipment and infrastructure to for laboratories to facilitate priority border testing needs.</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> testing Implementation strategy (including processes and timing).</li> <li>• Implementation of policy and standard operating procedures when legislation is approved.</li> <li>• Potential automation and laboratory sample tracking.</li> <li>• Stakeholder consultancy and awareness on secondary tests.</li> </ul>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 7.4	Risk Management	C	31 December 2020	31 December 2030
<b>Donors:</b> World Bank Group (WBG)				
<p><b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b></p> <p>The implementation of the VNSW has expanded the use of the ASYCUDA World risk management for Customs and technical control agencies by enabling selectivity criteria to be used to identify risk goods.</p> <p>The technical control agencies, including Biosecurity Vanuatu, Environment, Ministry of Health and others, need to be included into a framework for an integrated approach to risk management. Vanuatu Bureau of Standards are not represented at the port and the Customs selectivity committee needs to include standards for risk-based approach for regulated goods.</p> <p>The World Bank Group facilitated the Border Risk Management and Digital Information workshop in New Zealand, from 2-6 December 2019, where Pacific where Biosecurity and Customs representatives from five Pacific Island countries were provided briefings, demonstrations and initial training on Risk Compliance and developing a risk management and targeting regime.</p> <p>The World Bank Group is assisting Vanuatu border agencies to analyse current capabilities to implement an effective integrated risk management system based on a common methodology and to develop overall agency risk management framework. This included promoting a regional approach to managing risk and initial regional planning was undertaken in Sydney in December 2022.</p> <p><b>Areas of assistance required:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vanuatu requires assistance to develop risk management and risk reporting strategies for all regulatory border agencies and an effective risk-based targeting system based on a review and update of current risk management processes and procedures for risk goods and risk traders to optimise border outcomes and enhance data-informed risk-based decision making.</li> <li>Vanuatu requires assistance to deliver training of officials from all border agencies to enable them to participate in an integrated risk-based approach, which includes assistance with a TOR for a joint selectivity committee. This may include development of joint targeting approach for all border related profiling and vessel/packaging and commodity screening.</li> </ul>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 7.6	Establishment and Publication of Average Release Times	C	31 December 2020	31 December 2023
<b>Donors:</b> World Customs Organization (WCO) and World Bank Group (WBG) in partnership with the Private Participation in Infrastructure (PPIU)				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>  The Import TRS 2023 report was finalized and launched in 2024.  The World Bank Group provided training and support to the members of the Trade Facilitation Steering Committee (TFSC) Working Group to utilize the WCO Time Release Study Tool and to identify key 'testing points' in the clearance for preparation of a TRS survey. The TRS Working Group developed an initial survey and conducted the TRS.  <b>Areas of assistance required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is anticipated that at the completion of the TRS analysis that Vanuatu will require assistance in the next few years and aims to be self-sufficient for future TRS by 2026.</li> </ul>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 7.7	Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators	C	31 December 2020	31 December 2025
<b>Donors:</b> World Bank Group (WBG), Australian Border Force (ABF)				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>  The provision for Authorized Operators (AO) is outlined in the Customs Legislation.  The Australian Border Force (ABF) is undertaking traders' compliance and sharing of experiences on trader compliance program (related to AEO). Customs is sending a official to attend 1 month's skills training at the WCO Headquarters (Brussels) on Authorised Economic Operator and the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards.  <b>Areas of Assistance required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vanuatu requires assistance with undertaking a gap analysis of the legislative framework, policy documents and SOPs for imports and exports.</li> <li>Vanuatu requires assistance to expand the AO from Customs to Biosecurity Vanuatu.</li> <li>Vanuatu is investigating future regional AO relationships within the Pacific and may require assistance as this concept is being developed.</li> </ul>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 10.3	Use of International Standards	C	31 December 2022	31 December 2022
<b>Donors:</b> World Bank Group (WBG)				
<p><b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b></p> <p>There is a number of international standards, including TFA, RKC, TBT, SPS, UNECE, ISO, IPPC, WOH, Codex which are being used in Vanuatu. The SAD includes a common set of fields based on the WCO Data Model, as well as on the UNECE Data model (mostly for Biosecurity fields and the private sector)</p> <p><b>Areas of assistance required:</b></p> <p>Vanuatu requires assistance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a capacity building workshop to take stock of all international standards and agree which international standards should be used, with a focus on achieving full alignment to international standards, including taking stock on what is being used in other PICs.</li> <li>Undertake capacity building to develop capability to incorporate and use international standards in standard setting and frontline decision making.</li> </ul>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 10.4	Single Window	C	31 December 2020	31 December 2023
<b>Donors:</b> World Bank Group (WBG), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)				
<p><b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b></p> <p>Following a VNSW Gap Analysis assessment undertaken by the World Bank Group as a benchmark against international best practices provided by the UNECE recommendation 33 on NSW which found an implementation alignment rate of 75% and the report recommendations provided, few recommendations were already picked by the Department of Customs and Inland Revenue (DCIR) to be implemented and funded by the government of Vanuatu under Phase III of the single window project. These are also prior actions for a new WBG DPO. These included: 1) At least 3 additional Departments involved in regulating trade and businesses are integrated with the single window clearance system 2) Enable businesses to submit and pay for import and export certificates, licenses and permits online and 3) Be able to issue certificates of origin online. In addition, the rules of origin module was activated.</p> <p>UNCTAD had supported the implementation of ASYCUDA and VNSW under Phase I and II of the EIF support. They have also provided support for the Reform Tracker and the NTFC empowerment programme.</p> <p>The World Bank Group is assisting the TFSC to develop a Single Window Action.</p> <p><b>Assistance required for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vanuatu requires assistance to assist TFSC to continue to monitor how the VNSW is being implemented, develop a timeline for an action plan to stay on track.</li> <li>Vanuatu requires assistance to establish the linkages with other border agency systems including support for back-office system for Biosecurity and support for ASYCUDA to IPPC hub connection to facilitate the sending and receiving of e-phytosanitary certification.</li> </ul>				