

Success stories

Bangladesh advanced timeline to implement some TFA Category C measures

Bangladesh, under the Notification of Category Commitments of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), had identified Category C measures, for which implementation is subject to availability of technical assistance from the development partners. The indicative dates of implementing those measures were mostly set at 2030, much later than other comparable countries, despite assurance of assistance and several on-going projects from the development partners. According to WTO TFA database, the current rate of implementation of WTO TFA commitments of Bangladesh is around 44% (overall), and the rate of implementation of category C commitments is zero percent. The longer timeline had the chance of making the regulatory agencies reluctant to change as well as could hamper the image of Bangladesh as a trading partner in terms of trade facilitation.

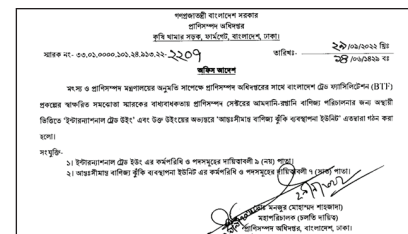
Trade facilitation has been given utmost priority and has received highest-level of political commitment from the Government of Bangladesh. The more than 70 regulatory authorities involved in cross-border trade are responsible for implementing the TFA measures and need to contribute as per their respective roles in the system. The country will be graduating from the LDC status in 2026 and facilitated trade and business environment, in line with international standards, will be the key in mitigating the post-graduation challenges. Delaying the trade facilitation implementation, therefore, could have hampered the smooth and sustainable graduation process.

Understanding the necessity and importance of faster implementation of TFA measure, the Ministry of Commerce, along with the USDA Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project analyzed the Category C commitment under the WTO TFA and the present status of the agencies along with the support from development partners and identified where faster implementation were possible and necessary. A joint national stakeholder consultation workshop titled “WTO TFA Category C Bangladesh Implementation Status.” was organized to set the definitive date for implementation where all the agencies relevant to Category C measures were present. After extensive discussion on each measure and active interventions made by the USDA-BTF project, definitive dates for five very important measures were preponed. The dates were officially notified to the WTO on 22 August 2022.

Table 1: Updates on Indicative Date of Implementation of Category C Measures

Article	Indicative Date	Definitive Date
1.4 (c) Notification	30 June 2026	30 June 2023
7.4 Risk Management	30 June 2030	30 June 2026
7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators	30 June 2026	30 June 2024
7.9 Perishable Goods	30 June 2030	30 June 2026
10.1.1 (a) Formalities and Documentation Requirements	30 June 2030	30 June 2026

The revised dates not only made the position of Bangladesh stronger in terms of trade facilitation, but also made the regulatory agencies more driven to comply. Immediate results were seen as agro-trade agencies like Department of Agricultural Extension, Department of Fisheries and Department of Livestock Services took a milestone step and established Risk Management Units within the agencies as part of implementing Article 7.4. It is expected that other agencies, understanding their role in TFA and with support from the development partners, will take similar initiatives to fulfill the obligations. The benefit of expedited implementation will go beyond WTO commitments and will only help increase cross-border trade, the driving force of the economy of Bangladesh.



"The finalized definitive dates for implementing Category C measures of the WTO TFA reflects Bangladesh's commitment towards facilitating cross-border trade and making it a country with enabling trade environment. We recognize the support from the USDA BTF project in expediting the implementation for the agro-trade agencies."

- Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Director General, WTO Cell, Ministry of Commerce

