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AFGHANISTAN

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DOC Office: +93 (0)700 11 4015
E-mail: kabulAIDdoc@usaid.gov
<http://afghanistan.usaid.gov>

FACT SHEET

Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan (TAFa)

OVERVIEW

The Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan (TAFa) project generates economic growth, trade, and investment by improving conditions for international trade and transit. The project helps the Afghan Government and the private sector capitalize on regional and global trade linkages and boosts trade through assistance in trade policy liberalization, customs reform and trade facilitation.

ACTIVITIES

- Assist the Afghan Government with World Trade Organization (WTO) accession.
- Develop Afghan Government capacity to negotiate and implement trade agreements, such as the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement and the South Asian Free Trade Area agreement.
- Reform customs laws and procedures, revenue collection, information management, budget, organizational structure, and human resource policy at the Afghanistan Customs Department.
- Reduce time and expense of customs clearance, transport, trans-shipment, and other border crossing operations for exports and imports, as well as reduce opportunities for corruption.
- Improve the Afghan Government's capacity to collect and analyze trade-related data.
- Improve export opportunities through the development and adoption of international standards and quality control for Afghanistan's export products.
- Improve the business community's knowledge of trade policies and opportunities and involve businesses in trade policy development.
- Facilitate establishment of e-payments for customs debts to facilitate increased trade which, in turn, will generate revenue.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Assisted the Afghan Government in resolving key policy and technical bottlenecks and ratifying the historic Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement.
- Helped the Afghan Government ratify the South Asia Free Trade Area agreement, lowering tariffs on many Afghan exports to India, Pakistan and other South Asian countries.
- Worked with the Afghan Government to prepare and submit more than a dozen draft laws and revisions to existing laws needed to facilitate WTO accession.
- Prepared the Afghan Government to participate in three WTO Working Party meetings and organized study tours to the WTO Secretariat in Geneva and to Nepal, a recent WTO member.
- Developed a new border management model to streamline processes at the borders and to formalize a partnership between the country's two key border agencies, the Afghanistan Customs Department and the Afghan Border Police.
- Introduced streamlined customs procedures at seven locations across Afghanistan, saving valuable time and millions of dollars of expenses.
- Provided extensive training to the Afghan Government and other stakeholders on regional trade agreements, WTO accession, and negotiation and analytical skills.
- Worked with the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan to create action plans for the saffron and gemstone industries to respond to global market demand.
- Assisted the Afghan National Standards Authority to develop and adopt a five-year strategy for development of international product and safety standards and quality control standards for exports.