

2025 UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation

METHODOLOGY

Scope

The 2025 Survey includes 62 trade facilitation measures, which are grouped into 4 groups and 12 sub-groups, namely:

A. General trade facilitation

1. Transparency
2. Formalities
3. Institutional Arrangement and Cooperation
4. Transit Facilitation

B. Digital trade facilitation

5. Paperless Trade
6. Cross-Border Paperless Trade

C. Sustainable trade facilitation

7. Trade Facilitation for SMEs
8. Agricultural Trade Facilitation
9. Trade Facilitation and Women

D. Other trade facilitation

10. Trade Facilitation for E-Commerce
11. Green Trade Facilitation
12. Trade Finance for Trade Facilitation (optional sub-group)

The sub-group 'Trade Finance for Trade Facilitation' (questions 60-62) and question 59 from the sub-group 'Green Trade Facilitation' are optional.

The full list of trade facilitation measures¹ under each group and sub-group is listed in table 1:

¹ The question numbers correspond to those in the UNTF Survey questionnaire, available at <https://www.untfsurvey.org/files/images/UNTF-Survey-2025-Questionnaire-English-version.pdf>

Table 1: List of trade facilitation measures in each group and sub-group

Groups	Sub-groups	Question #	Measures	Relevant TFA Articles
General Trade Facilitation	Transparency (5 measures)	2	Online publication of import-export regulations	1.2
		3	Stakeholder consultation on draft regulations	2.2
		4	Advance publication/notification of trade regulations	2.1
		5	Advance rulings on import tariff classification and origin	3
		9	Independent appeal mechanism	4
	Formalities (8 measures)	6	Risk management	7.4
		7	Pre-arrival processing	7.1
		8	Post-clearance audits	7.5
		10	Separating release from final customs duties determination	7.3
		11	Establishment and publication of average release times	7.6
		12	Trade facilitation measures for authorized operators	7.7
		13	Expedited shipments	7.8
		14	Acceptance of copies for trade formalities	10.2.1
	Institutional arrangement and cooperation (5 measures)	1	National committee on trade facilitation	23
		31	National legislative framework for border agency cooperation	8
		32	Agencies delegating border controls to Customs	
		33	Alignment of working days/hours with neighbouring economies at borders	8.2(a)
		34	Alignment of formalities/procedures with neighbouring economies at borders	8.2(b)
	Transit facilitation (4 measures)	35	Transit facilitation agreement(s)	
36		Limit physical inspections/Use risk assessment for transit goods	10.5	
37		Pre-arrival processing for transit facilitation	11.9	
38		Cooperation between agencies of economies involved in transit	11.16	
Digital Trade Facilitation	Paperless trade (10 measures)	15	Automated Customs System	
		16	Internet access for Customs and border agencies	
		17	E-Single Window System	10.4
		18	E-Submission of Customs declarations	
		19	E-Submission and issuance of import/export permits	
		20	E-Submission of Sea Cargo Manifests	
		21	E-Submission of Air Cargo Manifests	
		22	E-Application/issuance of Preferential Certificates of Origin	
		23	E-Payment of Customs Duties	7.2
		24	E-Application for Customs refunds	

Groups	Sub-groups	Question #	Measures	Relevant TFA Articles
	Cross-border paperless trade (6 measures)	25	Laws and regulations for electronic transactions	
		26	Legal framework for digital authentication	
		27	Electronic exchange of Customs declaration	
		28	Electronic exchange of Certificate of Origin	
		29	Electronic exchange of Sanitary & Phyto-Sanitary Certificate	
		30	Paperless collection of payment from letters of credit	
Sustainable Trade Facilitation	Trade facilitation for SMEs (5 measures)	39	Trade-related information measures for SMEs	
		40	SMEs in AEO scheme	
		41	SMEs access Single Window	
		42	SMEs in national committee(s) on trade facilitation	
		43	Other special measures for SMEs	
	Agricultural trade facilitation (4 measures)	44	SPS testing and laboratory facilities	
		45	SPS national standards and accreditation bodies	
		46	E-Application/issuance of SPS certificates	
		47	Special treatment for perishable goods	7.9
	Trade facilitation and women (3 measures)	48	Trade facilitation policy/strategy for women's participation	
49		Trade facilitation measures benefiting women		
50		Women membership in national committee(s) on trade facilitation		
Other Trade Facilitation	Trade facilitation for e-Commerce (5 measures)	51	Legal framework to facilitate cross-border e-commerce	
		52	Customs duties waived on small value shipments	
		53	Immediate release procedures for e-commerce goods	
		54	AEO program for cross-border e-commerce	
		55	E-Submission of Customs declarations by postal operators/express carriers	
	Green trade facilitation (4 measures)	56	Facilitation of sustainability reporting for traded goods	
		57	Trade facilitation of green and climate-smart goods	
		58	eCITES application/issuance/exchange	
		59	Facilitation of legitimate trade in waste	
	Trade finance for trade facilitation (3 measures)	60	Single Window facilitates traders access to finance	
		61	Authorities engaged in emerging tech project(s) covering trade finance	
		62	Variety of trade finance services available	

Data collection and validation: a three-step approach

Step 1. Data submission by experts: The survey instrument was sent by the UNRCs to trade facilitation experts (in governments, the private sector and academia) to gather preliminary information. The questionnaire was also made publicly available online. In some cases, the questionnaire was also sent to

relevant national trade facilitation authorities or agencies and regional trade facilitation partners or organizations.

Step 2. Data verification by the UNRCs Secretariat: The UNRCs cross-checked the data collected in Step 1. Desk research and data sharing among UNRCs and survey partners were carried out to further check the accuracy of data. Face-to-face or telephone interviews with key informants were arranged to gather additional information when needed. The outcome of Step 2 was a consistent set of responses per country.

Step 3. Data validation by national governments: The UNRCs sent the completed questionnaire to each national government to ensure that the country had the opportunity to review the dataset and provide any additional information. The feedback from national governments was incorporated in order to finalize the dataset.

Levels of implementation

Full implementation: the trade facilitation measure implemented is in full compliance with commonly accepted international standards, recommendations and conventions such as the Revised Kyoto Convention, UN/CEFACT Recommendations, or the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA); it is implemented in law and in practice; it is available to essentially all relevant stakeholders nationwide, supported by adequate legal and institutional framework, as well as adequate infrastructure and financial and human resources. (a TFA provision included in the Notifications of Category A commitments may generally be considered as a measure which is fully implemented by the country, with a caveat that the provision will be implemented by a least-developed country member within one year after entry into force of the TFA agreement). If a country registers positive responses for all sub-questions concerning a given trade facilitation measure, that measure should be considered fully implemented.

Partial implementation: a measure is considered to be partially implemented if at least one of the following is true: (1) the trade facilitation measure is in partial – but not in full - compliance with commonly accepted international standards, recommendations and conventions; (2) the country is still in the process of rolling out the implementation of measure; (3) the measure is practiced but on an unsustainable, short-term or ad-hoc basis; (4) the measure is implemented in some – but not all- targeted locations (such as key border crossing stations); or (5) some – but not all - targeted stakeholders are fully involved.

Pilot stage of implementation: a measure is considered to be at the pilot stage of implementation if, in addition to meeting the general attributes of partial implementation, it is available only to (or at) a very small portion of the intended stakeholder group (location) and/or is being implemented on a trial basis. When a new trade facilitation measure is under pilot stage of implementation, the old measure is often continuously used in parallel to ensure the service is provided in case of disruption of new measure. This stage of implementation also includes relevant rehearsals and preparation for the full-fledged implementation.

Not implemented: a measure has not been implemented at this stage. However, this stage may still include initiatives or efforts towards implementation of the measure. For example, under this stage, (pre)feasibility or planning of implementation can be carried out; and consultation with stakeholders on the implementation may be arranged.

Implementation rates

For each measure, implementation level is recorded as:

- 3 Fully implemented
- 2 Partially implemented
- 1 Pilot Stage of Implementation
- 0 Not implemented
- NA Not Applicable
- DK Don't Know

The implementation rate of each measure can be calculated based on the fully implemented score of 3. For example, in the case of an electronic single window system that is partially implemented (score of 2), the implementation rate is $2/3 = 0.6667$ or 66.67%. This allows calculation of average implementation rates for groups or sub-groups of measures expressed in percentage terms to facilitate interpretation and discussion of the results.

Overall rate of trade facilitation implementation (TFI) as well as group or sub-group rates of implementation are calculated using simple averages of implementation rate of relevant individual measures.

The TFI is calculated using measures from the 5 following sub-groups: (1) transparency, (2) formalities, (3) institutional arrangements and cooperation, (4) paperless trade and (5) cross-border paperless trade. Note that there are 34 measures in these 5 sub-groups. However, 3 measures are excluded from the calculation of implementation rates as they are not relevant/applicable to all countries – these are measure related to questions no. 33 and 34, classified under Institutional arrangement and cooperation, and question no. 20 under Paperless trade. Therefore, there are **31 measures** used for the calculation of TFI. All DK and NA responses of these 31 measures are treated as “no implementation” (score of 0).

Overall TFI and implementation rate of each sub-group is therefore defined as follows:

$$IMP_RATE_k = \sum_{n \in S} \frac{Q_n}{3 \times m_k}$$

where $S \in \{s_1, s_2, s_3, \dots, s_9\}$

m_k = total number of measures included in group k

Q_n = scores of question number n, which follows the definition in table 2

Table 2: sub-group s_i , corresponding question numbers (n), and sub-group name for TFI

s_i	n (question number related to each measure included)	m_k (number of measures)	TFI/sub-group (k)
s_1	2, 3, 4, 5, 9	5	Transparency (TRANSPARENCY)
s_2	6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14	8	Formalities (FORMALITIES)
s_3	1, 31, 32	3	Institutional arrangement and cooperation (INSTITUTION)
s_4	15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24	9	Paperless trade (PAPERLESS)
s_5	25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30	6	Cross-border paperless trade (CROSS_BORDER)
s_{TFI}	$\forall n \in \{s_1, s_2, \dots, s_5\}$	31	Overall trade facilitation implementation (TFI)
s_7	39, 40, 41, 42, 43	5	Trade facilitation for SMEs (SMEs)
s_8	44, 45, 46, 47	4	Agricultural trade facilitation (AGRI)
s_9	48, 49, 50	3	Trade facilitation and women (WOMEN)

EXAMPLE: Thailand 2023

TRANSPARENCY	$= (3+3+3+3+2)/15$	$= 0.9333$	$= 93.33\%$
FORMALITIES	$= (3+3+3+3+3+3+3)/24$	$= 1.0000$	$= 100.00\%$
INSTITUTION	$= (2+2+0)/9$	$= 0.4444$	$= 44.44\%$
PAPERLESS	$= (3+3+3+3+3+2+3+1)/27$	$= 0.8889$	$= 88.89\%$
CROSS_BORDER	$= (3+3+2+2+1+2)/18$	$= 0.7222$	$= 72.22\%$
TFI	$= (14+24+4+24+13)/93$	$= 0.8495$	$= 84.95\%$

Calculation of sustainable trade facilitation sub-group implementation rates are subject to the same conditions as in the original 5 sub-groups that compose the TFI. The sub-group implementation rate is calculated, with all NA and DK treated as no implementation (score of 0).

EXAMPLE: Austria

Data for Austria on trade facilitation for SMEs (5 measures) in Survey 2023 are: DK, 3, DK, 1, and 3. SMEs implementation rate for Austria, where DK is treated as zero, is $(0+3+0+1+3)/(3 \times 5) = 7/15 = 46.67\%$. Data for AGRI are: DK, 0, 3, and DK. Implementation rate of AGRI is $(0+0+3+0)/(3 \times 4) = 3/12 = 25.00\%$. Last but not least, data for WOMEN are: DK, DK and 0. WOMEN implementation rates is $(0+0+0)/(3 \times 3) = 0/9 = 0.00\%$.

Note that transit facilitation is the only sub-group that allows DK and NA as missing values, because not all transit facilitation measures may be applicable to all countries. The rate of implementation is calculated using simple average based on measures for which data is available only. If all measures are missing, implementation rate is not calculated.

EXAMPLE: AUSTRALIA

Responses in Survey 2023 for transit facilitation (question 35-38) are NA, 3, 3 and 3, respectively. Thus, rate of implementation is $(3+3+3)/9 = 100\%$.