



Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project FY20 USDA Food for Progress (FFPr) Midterm Evaluation

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FY20 USDA Food for Progress (FFPr) Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) Midterm Evaluation

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Acronyms

Acronyms (AB - IOA)		Acronyms (IP - WTO)	
AB	Accreditation Body	IP	Import Permits
ACCESS	Automated Customs Clearance System for Export and Import	IPMC	Integrated Pest Management Center
AECC	Atomic Energy Center Chattogram	IPO	Import Policy Order
AECD	Atomic Energy Center Dhaka	IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
AHFSS	Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems	ISBN	International Standard Book Number
AMR	Anti-Microbial Resistance	ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ASYCU DA	Automated System for Customs Data	ISPMs	International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures
BAB	Bangladesh Accreditation Board	IT	Information Technology
BADC	Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation	ITC	International Trade Centre
BAEC	Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission	KG	kilogram
BAFFA	Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association	KII	Key Informant Interview
BAFISA	Bangladesh Foodstuffs Importers & Suppliers Association	KVA	Kilovolt-amps
BAHIS	Bangladesh Animal Health Intelligence System	LC	Letter of Credit
BAPA	Bangladesh Agro Processors Association	LC-MS	Liquid Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics	LDC	Least Developed Countries
BC	Behavioral Change	LIMS	Laboratory Information Management System
BCSI	Bangladesh Crop Protection Association	LOP	Life of Project
BCSIR	Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research	LTFA	Local Trade Facilitation Act
BFFA	Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association	MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
BFFEA	Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporter Association	MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
BFFIA	Bangladesh Fresh Fruits Importer Association	MoC	Ministry of Commerce
BFSA	Bangladesh Food Safety Authority	MoFL	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
BFTI	Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
BFVAPE A	Bangladesh Fruits Vegetable and Allied Products Exporters Association	NATA	National Agriculture Training Academy

Acronyms (AB - IOA)		Acronyms (IP - WTO)	
BIRI	Bangladesh Industrial Research Institute	NBR	National Board of Revenue
BPA	Business Process Analysis	NDA	non-disclosure agreement
BRCP	Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project	NEP	Government of Bangladesh
BSTI	Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution	NOC	No Objection Certificate
BSW	Bangladesh Single Window	NPP	National Plant Protection
BTF	Bangladesh Trade Facilitation	NSW	National Single Window
C&F agent	Clearing and Forwarding agent	NTFA	National Trade Facilitation Action Plan
CA	Competent Authorities	NTFC	National Trade Facilitation Committee
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	PC	Phytosanitary Certificates
CDIL	Central Disease Investigation Laboratory	PEC	Project Engagement Committee
CIC	Central Intelligence Cell	PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
CLPO	Certificates, Licenses, Permits & Others	PQW	Plant Quarantine Wing
CPQ	Central Plant Quarantine	PRTC	Poultry Research and Training Centre
CSIRL	Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Laboratory	PSO	Principal Scientific Officer
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization	PT	Proficiency Testing
CSO	Chief Scientific Officer	QA	Quality Assurance
CVASU	Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University	QC	Quality Control
DAC criteria	Evaluating Development Assistance Impact	R&D	Research and Development
DAE	Department of Agricultural Extension	RA	Risk Assessment
DAM	Department of Agricultural Marketing	RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
DCCI	Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry	RM	Risk Management
DG	Director General	RO	Release Order
DLS	Department of Livestock Services	SC	Institutional/stakeholders Commitment
DoF	Department of Fisheries	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
DPP	Department of Plant Protection	SDT	Special and Differential Treatment provisions
DR	Dependency on Project Resources	SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
EC	European Communities	SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary

Acronyms (AB - IOA)		Acronyms (IP - WTO)	
EOH	Environmental and Occupational Health	SRO	Statutory Regulatory Order
EPB	Export Promotion Bureau	SRS	System Requirement Specifications
ERD	Economic Relations Division	SSO	Senior Scientific Officer
ETP	Effluent Treatment Plant	TCL	Temperature-Controlled Logistics
EU	European Union	TEST VERITA S, ITALY	Testing and Verification, Italy
EU TRACES	European Union Trade Control and Expert System	TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	ToT	Training of Trainers
FAPAS, UK	Food Analysis Performance Assessment Scheme, United Kingdom	TRS	Time Release Study
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions	UK	United Kingdom
FBCCI	Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry	UN	United Nations
FFPr	Food for Progress	UPLC	Ultra-Performance Liquid Chromatography
FIQC	Fish Inspection and Quality Control	US	United States
GCCA	Global Cold Chain Alliance	US FDA	United States Food and Drug Administration
GoB	Government of Bangladesh	USA	United States of America
HS	Harmonized System	USD	United States Dollar
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
IC	Institutional Capacity	USG	United States Government
icddr,b	International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh	VAT	Value Added Tax
IE	Integration of existing system	WB	World Bank
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission	WHO	World Health Organization
ILC	Inter-Laboratory Comparison	WITS	World Integrated Trade Solutions
INFOFISH	Information on Fisheries	WTO	World Trade Organization
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations		
IOA	Investment Options Analysis		

Executive Summary

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation project (BTF) is a five-year project funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food for Progress (FFPr) Program and implemented by Land O'Lakes Venture37 (Venture37). The project aims to enhance Bangladesh's trade facilitation system and expand regional and international agricultural trade opportunities. Initiated in October 2020, BTF has worked with key government agencies that regulate and promote international trade in food and agricultural products, focusing on the implementation of four key World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) provisions which Bangladesh has notified under Category C, namely 5.3 Test Procedures, 7.4 Risk Management, 7.9 Perishable Goods, and 10.1 Formalities. The project also involves private sector stakeholders in its effort to create a sustainable impact in Bangladesh's agri-trade environment.

Evaluation Approach & Methodology

This midterm evaluation aimed to measure the short-term progress made towards achieving the key indicators set for the BTF project and assess any deviations from the set targets. It also analyzed the impact and sustainability of the project activities categorized under four levels. At the **process level**, the evaluation team focused on assessing the impact of BTF-supported trade policies, regulations, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), and automation of trade systems. At the **institutional level**, the study team examined how BTF activities influenced the performance of government agencies, testing facilities, and private firms involved in trade operations. At the **system level**, the study team looked at the trends in the value and volume of trade for specific agricultural products and the percentage change in the rejection of Bangladesh's agricultural export consignments by importing countries. Lastly, the evaluation delved into the **implementation level**, where the study team assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project. By evaluating BTF interventions at these distinct levels, the assessment provided a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact across various dimensions of trade facilitation in Bangladesh.

The midterm evaluation employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. The evaluation team conducted a desk review of project monitoring documents and studies from the initial three years. Key Informant Interviews (KII) with the project implementation team, government agencies, laboratories, and private sector stakeholders provided insights into capacity changes due to the project activities. Additionally, a quantitative survey gathered feedback from private-sector traders to capture the expectations and experiences of them using the updated processes and procedures.

Limitation and Challenges

The midterm evaluation faced several limitations and challenges, including difficulty in attributing observed improvements in organizational capacity of the CAs directly to the project due to the CAs' independent initiatives and donor interventions. Data collection issues arose, particularly in estimating the number of individuals applying improved management practices, leading to reliance on qualitative evidence. As a result, there was a risk of personal or political biases influencing responses, given the reliance on key informants. Interview scheduling was problematic, especially with government officials, due to their heavy workloads and national elections, resulting in some missed or rescheduled interviews. Additionally, the study encountered data gaps, particularly in extracting import-export data for specific HS codes and finding alternative data sources, likely impacted by Brexit.

Evaluation Findings

Process level findings

- **BTF supported 28 legislative documents showing moderate progress on improving the legislative environment for trade facilitation in Bangladesh.** In its first three years of implementation, BTF supported 28 legislative and policy documents through close assistance with ministries and agencies. These documents ranged from national-level import and export policies to government institution level implementation of risk management units. Through these documents, BTF has made significant strides in impacting four critical WTO provisions on perishable goods management, implementation of risk-based selectivity, second testing procedure and simplification of formalities and documentations. However, due to the longer-than-expected bureaucratic process and coordination required with multiple stakeholders, the project target of supporting 35 policies, regulations, and/or administrative procedures by the end of Year 3 could not be achieved. Nonetheless, agencies and ministry-level officials have shared their satisfaction with the assistance provided by BTF.
- **4 electronic systems out of a target of 1, have been developed with BTF assistance to facilitate trade processes.** BTF has supported the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) in developing a platform for their *E-Health Certification* system, automating the certificate issue process, and *Lab Information Repository* for easier access to lab and testing information for traders. Similarly, BTF supported the Department of Fisheries (DoF) to launch an *E-Certification System* which automates 17 services, including licensing, certification, registration, etc. BTF also assisted DoF in developing a *Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)* for two DoF Quality Control (QC) labs. Compared to the set indicator target of one system by the end of Year 3, the project has surpassed it with 3 additional systems. However, even though the systems were launched in the last quarter of Year 3, due to some awaited updates and bureaucratic delays in approval of payment systems, they are yet to be utilized at full capacity and bring enough traction to achieve the Year 3 target of 35,000 certificates, licenses, permits and other documents being issued.

Institution level findings

- **11 organizations demonstrated improved institutional capacity.** In the first three years of the project, BTF has supported 9 laboratories, 5 competent authorities (CAs), and 3 other government agencies to improve their capacity. Eleven organizations demonstrated improved institutional capacity, versus a target of 15 organizations by Year 3. The comparison between the baseline and midterm scorecards reveals improved performance across BFSA, Plant Quarantine Wing (PQW), DoF, Department of Livestock Services (DLS) and Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) that were assessed. Among the laboratories evaluated, significant enhancements were observed in Quality Control Laboratory-DoF in Savar, Central Plant Quarantine Laboratory in Khamarbari-PQW, Central Disease Investigation Laboratory (CDIL)-Department of Livestock Services (DLS) in Dhaka, Atomic Energy Center Dhaka (AECD)-BAEC, and Atomic Energy Center Chattogram (AECC) – BAEC. Among other government agencies supported, only the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) reported improvements in organizational practices, particularly in submitting WTO notifications with assistance from BTF. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) and the Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM) have ongoing collaborations with BTF in areas such as legal reforms and capacity building, respectively, but impacts on their capacity are expected to materialize in the next two years of project timeline. The focus of BTF interventions with the private sector have been primarily on mobilizing investment, and as a result, the enterprise has not yet demonstrated any improvement in performance.

- **No laboratories have achieved ISO17025 certification against a Year 3 target of 3.** Atomic Energy Center Chattogram (AECC) laboratory is collaborating with BTF and completed and sent all required paperwork to Bangladesh Accreditation Board (BAB) for evaluation for ISO17025 certification. BAB indicates that laboratories typically need about three years to achieve ISO17025 certification, given the multifaceted feedback loop from certification authorities. Consequently, AECC is awaiting certification approval from BAB, with responses not expected until mid-2024. Despite this timeline, considering the progress made in recent years, the evaluation team anticipates that AECC and CDIL, which has initiated the accreditation process with BTF support, laboratories will receive ISO17025 certification by Year 4 of the project intervention timeline.
- **BTF assisted in establishing a frozen and refrigerated Temperature Controlled Logistics (TCL) facility in Chattogram, totaling 125 cubic meters (25 MT), with a total private sector investment of \$132,112.** Despite exceeding the project's performance targets for increased storage volume, the actual value of investments in the cold chain sector falls short of the Year 3 target of \$500,000. However, BTF anticipates significant growth in leveraged investment in Year 4, as 15 businesses plan to invest in developing TCL facilities. Furthermore, the project is actively engaging industry pioneers such as Bengal Meat, Bonton Foods, and Ejab Group to provide them with support in developing and expanding their cold chain facilities. Additionally, the program's ongoing stakeholder outreach, provision of technical assistance, and grant support is expected to create a further pipeline of potential investors.

System level findings

- **From 2019 to 2021, the value of both exports and imports of targeted agricultural products has increased at a rate of 38% and 77%, respectively.** However, the volume of exports has experienced fluctuations due to the price increase of the key agricultural export products such as jute yarn, jute and other textile bast fibers, molluscs, crustaceans, and other aquatic products. Imports started seeing a surge in 2021 post-COVID but eventually faced a decline in 2022 due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The situation was further affected by an unusual increase in global freight costs impacting on the country's overall trade flow. The post-pandemic global political and macroeconomic landscape, coupled with domestic economic conditions, including the dollar crisis, devaluation of the Taka, supply chain disruptions, and food product inflation, have contributed to these fluctuations in trade influencing both the value and volume of agricultural product exports and imports.
- **The total count of agricultural export rejections documented in the European Union (EU) and United States (US) markets has varied over time, with a notable surge observed in 2021, reaching 134 rejections, compared to 63 in 2019.** The rejections data indicate that most of the agricultural export consignment rejections from 2019 to 2022 in the EU and US markets are caused by misbranding or mislabeling of the products, adulteration of the food products, chemical and microbial contamination, and regulatory non-compliance. Representatives from the Bangladesh Fruits Vegetable and Allied Products Exporters Association (BFVAPEA) and the Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA) stated that the increase in agricultural export rejections is not primarily due to non-compliance issues. They explained that many rejections are related to people hand-carrying agricultural items through ports, which inflate the reported numbers. According to BFVAPEA, non-compliance rejections from their member exporters have decreased over time, indicating improved adherence to export regulations.

Implementation level findings

- **Project relevance:** BTF project activities have been relevant to national trade policies and are considered a critical initiative directly addressing key challenges hindering Bangladesh's agricultural trade growth. The project aligns with the international commitments of WTO TFA. The activities conducted through Year 3 have been directly connected to Bangladesh's progress towards achieving TFA provisions. Compared to the set target of impacting 5 WTO TFA provisions in indicator "Number of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement provisions supported by USG assistance", BTF has impacted 13 provisions by the end of Year 3. Private sector engagement has also been incorporated into the project implementation plan as validated by the trader associations.
- **Project efficiency:** BTF has been commendably efficient in its usage of human and financial resources. The implementation team has chosen individuals with government service backgrounds, which has made working with the government agencies much easier. The utilization of financial resources has also been exemplary in its ability to maintain an average expenditure rate of 45% of the total project funds up to September 2023 (end of Year 3).
- **Project effectiveness:** The Project Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) outlines indicators and targets in alignment with the project's goal for the BTF project. Despite the constant and agile approach of the team in meeting targets, only three of the 19 indicators met the Year 3 targets. Notably, the accomplished targets were surpassed significantly, highlighting the project team's resourcefulness and dedication amidst challenging circumstances. However, most tasks faced delays due to bureaucratic decision-making and slow-moving cooperation from government counterparts. While representatives of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) agencies acknowledged this challenge, they appreciated the project team's efforts.

Recommendations

Facilitate Harmonization of Legislative Tools and Processes

- Advocate for a National Trade Facilitation Act for Bangladesh
- Assist GoB agencies to enhance capacity to market expansion (export)
- Lead the Formation of a Non-binding Forum for Trade Facilitation

Improve Access and Transparency of Trade Information

- Address the Ownership and Continuity of the Bangladesh Trade Portal and the embedded Agro-Trade Gateway/Agro-Trade Section

Facilitating Implementation of Risk-based Compliance Process

- Introduce Risk Management (RM) legislative mandates/pertinent administrative orders that would obligate the agency to implement and practice risk-based compliance.
- Conduct a Business Process Analysis (BPA) of the release process of Competent Authorities (CAs)
- Computerize activities of the Risk Management Units

Improving Laboratories and Testing Facilities

- Advocate for a 'laboratory network system' to enhance the nation's laboratory infrastructure and to optimize resources across food and chemical laboratories.
- Establish a training and technical support system for laboratories.
- Establish Proficiency Test (PT) provider for Chemical and Microbiological contaminants in Bangladesh.

Private Sector Engagement

- Enhance Private Sector Involvement in Trade Harmonization for the Remainder of the Project
- Address cold chain technical skill gaps within the market

- Arrange a challenge grant competition for the local cold chain entrepreneurs and SMEs

MEL and Endline Evaluation Recommendation

- Conduct a Comprehensive Firm-Level Survey to Evaluate BTF's Impact on Cold-Chain Enterprises
- Incorporate Supplementary Tools for Enhanced Monitoring and Validation
- Establish a Comprehensive Methodology for Endline Evaluation of CAs and Laboratories
- Revise targets for Indicator 17 “Number of CLPOs issued through the new project-supported process automation systems” targets.
- A new indicator is proposed to measure changes in the knowledge level of the trader community.
- Extend Project Timeline by One Year
- Increase Direct Support for Cold Chain Industry

1.0 Background

1.1 Bangladesh Context

Bangladesh has made significant strides, emerging as one of the fastest-growing economies in South Asia since gaining independence in 1971. Despite starting as one of the poorest nations, Bangladesh is now set to graduate from the United Nation's Least Developed Countries (LDC) list in 2026¹. The majority of the credit for this rapid growth goes to the bloom of the readymade garments (RMG) sector, constituting over four-fifths of total export earnings since 2015. In FY21 alone, RMG accounted for a staggering 81 percent of Bangladesh's total exports². While the RMG sector's contribution has become the pillar of growth for the country, this heavy reliance on a single sector has also underscored the urgent need for export diversification. In alignment with this need, the government has prioritized the agriculture and agro-food processing sector in its 2021-2024 Export Policy. However, to fully leverage the international market potential for agricultural products, Bangladesh requires substantial support in facilitating agricultural trade.

The country has been experiencing challenges in providing trade related services due to economic instability which was further exacerbated during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a 16 percent decline in exports in 2020, while global exports contracted by only 9 percent³. Challenges included currency devaluation and a decline in foreign exchange reserves, influencing general trade flows.

To reduce the costs of cross-border trade around the world by expediting movement of goods across borders, the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) came into force in February 2017 being ratified by two-thirds of World Trade Organization (WTO) members. Since its ratification, agro-trade exports in the LDCs have increased by 17%, implying the importance of the agreement in reaching the trade potential Bangladesh aims to achieve. As a signatory nation of the TFA, Bangladesh has been working towards the implementation of the agreement. Until 2026, Bangladesh will enjoy specific Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) provisions under the TFA. However, as Bangladesh is nearing graduation from the LDC category, the implementation of the agreement by building the capacity of the country trade stakeholders becomes crucial. As per the provision of the TFA, Bangladesh has notified itself in category C, requiring assistance and capacity-building support, for implementing 13 measures of the agreement.

1.2 Project Overview

Launched in October 2020, The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation (BTF) project, a five-year, initiative funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food for Progress (FFPr) program and implemented by Land O'Lakes Venture37 aims to enhance Bangladesh's trade facilitation system and expand regional and international agricultural trade opportunities. The total agreement value is \$27.7 million. By closely collaborating with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), the project focuses on implementing the TFA category C measures including Test Procedures (Article 5.3), Risk Management (Article 7.4), Perishable Goods (Article 7.9) and Formalities (Article 10.1) to directly impact cross-border agricultural trade. The overarching goal of the project is to expand trade of agricultural products

¹ <https://www.un.org/ldcportal/content/bangladesh-graduation-status>

² <https://www.bb.org.bd/pub/research/policynote/pn2201.pdf>

³ <https://www.bb.org.bd/pub/research/policynote/pn2201.pdf>

in Bangladesh by improving the efficiency of agricultural imports and exports. Specifically, BTF seeks to address systemic challenges hindering agricultural trade at Bangladeshi ports. To achieve this, the project supports policy reform activities and provides technical, logistical, and technological assistance to government agencies and agro-trade industry stakeholders. Having reached the three-year mark of its five-year duration, this midterm evaluation report aims to offer comprehensive insights into the project's progress, performance, and provide recommendations for outlining the action plan for the remaining two years. The project implementation can be categorized under five broad activities, described below.

Activity 1. Increase Harmonization of Processes, Formalities and Pre-Clearance Processing

BTF is providing support to the GoB to simplify processes and formalities related to the import and export of agricultural goods and facilitate international trade by reducing documentation requirements. To simplify the trade process and formalities, the project implementation team has analyzed and outlined key laws, rules, and SOPs that require update, reformation, or new formulation to ultimately create a harmonized process for traders engaged in the trade of agricultural products. Additionally, BTF is providing support to simplify and automate the issuance of certificates, licenses, permits, and other required documents for traders and service providers to easily access the system. These activities were planned to have a two-way impact, reducing time and effort from both the service user and service provider side, and expediting and simplifying the service experience.

Activity 2. Increase Transparency of Trade Information and World Trade Organization Notification Compliance

Activities under this component of the BTF project are designed to improve the capacity of GoB institutions to accomplish the WTO objective of increasing transparency of trade information in Bangladesh. The project is actively working towards enhancing WTO notification compliance of the relevant government agencies by improving their capacity to create and submit notifications regularly, fostering a sustained practice in the notification process. Moreover, the project is playing a key role in aiding the development of trade portals and enhancing their content to better serve the needs of traders. Efforts have been directed towards enhancing the transparency of trade information, with BTF supporting the institutionalization of enquiry points by bolstering the authorities' capacity to handle trade inquiries. Collectively, these initiatives are designed to empower domestic and international traders with improved access to market information, facilitating their entry into new markets for the sale of agricultural products.

Activity 3. Strengthen Risk Management Systems

To reduce the time and cost of clearance processes of cross-border trade of agricultural products, BTF is working on establishing risk management (RM) units and strengthening RM practices at the GoB agencies. This involves building their capacity to implement and enforce a risk-based compliance process and sample-based testing procedures. The efforts include enhancing the agencies' ability to create risk profiles, compile and analyze data and then automating the risk assessment process on an RM system. The project provides technical assistance and necessary hardware to ensure effective implementation of risk management procedures. Simultaneously, to acquaint the competent authorities (CAs) with the RM process, as part of RM activities, BTF is developing agency-specific capacity-building program and guiding the CAs to establish the institutional framework to proficiently execute RM procedures.

Activity 4. Improve Laboratories and Testing Procedures

BTF works to improve the capacity of both government-run and commercial food and agricultural product testing laboratories to ensure compliance with international standards. The specific initiatives include, (i) updating inspection and sampling procedures; (ii) upgrading testing and treatment tools, equipment, and processes; and (iii) automating laboratory services and reporting of test results. BTF develops laboratory information software and provides the required hardware to selected government laboratories. This system aims to automate the submission of lab reports and test certificates, facilitating quick information sharing among GoB agencies. Moreover, the project supports GoB laboratories to prepare and apply for accreditation and certification to meet ISO 17025 standards and other requirements of international standard-setting bodies. BTF's capacity-building interventions extend to providing comprehensive training for agency and lab officials in quality management, calibration, inspection, proficiency testing, sampling, test procedures, and overall laboratory operations.

Activity 5. Enhance Cold Storage Infrastructure for Perishable Goods

BTF is actively engaged in enhancing the availability of cold chain infrastructure for agricultural products and the efficient handling of perishable goods. This involves promoting and facilitating investments in cold chain and temperature-controlled logistics (TCL). The project activities include comprehensive market analyses, stakeholder identification and support, and investment facilitation. BTF also promotes and advocates for investments and projects to refurbish or build new cold chain facilities at or near the Dhaka international airport and Chattogram and Mongla seaports to improve management of perishable consignments. The project is providing support to build the capacity of customs agents, agricultural officers, and cold storage staff in warehouses to improve handling of perishable goods. These collective activities aim to streamline the handling and expedite the release of perishable goods at the ports, contributing to an improved and efficient cold chain system.

1.3 Objectives of the Midterm Evaluation

The key objectives of the midterm evaluation are as follows:

- Measure the short-term progress made toward achieving key indicators, assessing attribution to the extent possible, and explaining deviations from planned targets.
- Assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of project activities.
- Document lessons learned, challenges and unanticipated effects.
- Identify enablers and constraints to progress that have supported or limited success.
- Provide recommendations for necessary changes to strengthen project performance, efficiency, and sustainability; and
- Provide recommendations for focus areas of the final evaluation, including reviewing and strengthening data collection systems and metrics in preparation for the final evaluation.

1.4 Key Evaluation Questions

The midterm evaluation addresses questions related to the Relevance, Impact, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability of the BTF project. The key questions covered under this evaluation are included in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Key evaluation questions.

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well aligned is the project strategy and activities with the development goals, objectives and strategies of USDA, GoB and private sector priorities? • How well is it aligned with the achievement of the standards outlined in the WTO TFA?
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the project affected imports and exports of priority agricultural products, and business investment? • How has support to the trade facilitation legal framework affected the progress of updating trade legislation, rules, and SOPs at PQW, DLS, DoF, BSTI, BAEC and BFSA ⁴? • How have capacity development efforts affected the organizational capacity of PQW, DLS, DoF, BSTI, BAEC, BFSA and laboratories? • How has the project affected the time to trade agricultural products, number of inspections required for imports into Bangladesh, and number of rejections of Bangladeshi exports by the import country? • What models of collaboration among local and international actors, including donors, private sector, partners, academic institutions, and NGOs are effective in supporting policy change? • What policies and regulatory or governing mechanisms are necessary to lay the groundwork for market expansion? • What, if any, unintended consequences resulted from the project implementation?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What internal and external factors have influenced the ability of the project to meet expected results and targets? • To what extent are the project targets and outcomes likely to be achieved by project end? • What key successes should be replicated, or key improvements made to the implementation to maximize the results?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were project activities carried out in a timely manner and with effective use of resources? • How well has the project been managed and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) data used to make programmatic decisions?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which project activities and benefits are likely to be sustained or not past the project lifespan and why?

⁴ Plant Quarantine Wing (PQW), Department of Livestock Services (DLS), Department of Fisheries (DoF), Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI), Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC), Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA)

2.0 Evaluation Methodology

The midterm evaluation employed a mixed methods approach to answer the key evaluation questions and meet the midterm objectives. The evaluation team analyzed the impact and sustainability of the project activities under four levels: process, institution, system, and implementation. For the **process level**, the evaluation team reviewed the impact of BTF on the progress of key trade policies, regulations, and standard operating procedures, and automation of key trade systems. For the **institutional level**, the study team assessed the impact of BTF activities on the performance of government agencies, testing facilities, and private firms. For the **system level**, the study team captured the trend in the value and volume of trade of identified agricultural products and tracked the percentage change in Bangladesh's export consignment of agricultural products rejected by import countries. Lastly, for the **implementation level**, the study team assessed the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, and sustainability of the project. A detailed breakdown of the tools used to collect the data is provided in the following section.

2.1 Data Collection Methods

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were utilized to collect data for this midterm evaluation. Data collection methods included conducting Desk Research, KII, Gemba Walk⁵, and surveys. The details of the data collection methods and sampling strategies are delineated below.

Desk Research

The study team conducted desk research of both project documents and secondary data. The project documents included the project agreement, workplan, semi-annual reports to USDA, indicator tracking tables, the performance monitoring plan, baseline evaluation report and organizational scorecards and reports from BTF commissioned research studies. The team also reviewed monitoring data on the trainings conducted, policies supported, and private sector cold chain entities supported. The secondary trade data reviewed and analyzed is discussed in section 2.2. This in-depth exploration proved effective in better understanding the project activities, refining the study tools, identifying key information sources, and improving the research plan.

Interviews with BTF staff and Implementing Partners

The study team started by conducting interviews with the relevant BTF staff to better understand the project and its activities. These interviews served as a crucial information-gathering step in the research process. By engaging with key personnel within BTF, the evaluation team gained insights into the project's objectives, status, challenges, and opportunities. Two rounds of interviews were conducted with relevant BTF staff and the project's implementing partners. The results of these interviews helped to finalize the tools for interviews and surveys with project stakeholders.

⁵ A facility and process mapping exercise that allows an assessment team to identify the process gap, human system gap, and opportunities for service-process-system nexus.

Key Informant Interviews

As a primary method of data collection, the study team conducted interviews with purposively selected informants from multiple cohorts of project stakeholders. KIIs were specifically carried out with individuals from GoB CAs, laboratories, other pertinent GoB entities, private sector cold chain enterprises, trade and industry associations, as well as donor agencies. In total, the study team conducted 62 KIIs with representatives across these cohorts. The interviews were conducted in person, with the study team employing a structured questionnaire tailored for each cohort. A detailed list of informants is included in Annex C of the report.

Gemba Walk

The study team deployed this tool for selecting testing facilities/laboratories supported by BTF. The purpose of the Gemba walk was to validate the findings from lab personnel interviews with a detailed walk-through of the laboratory facility. Among the nine laboratories considered in the midterm evaluation, the evaluation team conducted Gemba walks in three of them. The study team visited these labs in person to verify their service delivery process, equipment availability, logistical and infrastructural adequacy, etc. The study team employed a Gemba Checklist that enumerates the items to be verified/mapped during the Gemba walk. The study team also reviewed relevant documents/process flow charts available at these laboratories to be better informed about the service processes at the laboratories.

Survey with Traders and Clearing and Forwarding (C&F) Agents

A survey was conducted with a random sample of agro-traders and C&F agents to assess the improvement in trade processes. The information provided by respondents was instrumental in triangulating and validating the insights shared by government stakeholders regarding their respective trade service processes for the end-user. One of the objectives of the survey was to collect feedback from respondents to identify specific areas or needs of traders involved in cross-border trade activities. The survey was carried out in person. The survey questionnaire was digitized and transformed into an online format utilizing Kobo Toolbox for easy data transfer.

2.2 Indicator Data Extraction & Calculation

Some indicators were drawn from secondary data, either through publicly accessible trade data or monitoring data from BTF. This section describes how the evaluation team extracted the secondary data and used it to calculate those indicators.

- **Value and Volume of Agricultural Imports-Exports (Indicators 1- 4):** Data for the value and volume of agricultural exports and imports were collected from secondary sources. The study team conducted import and export calculations for agricultural products using specific four-digit Harmonized System (HS) Codes. At baseline, BTF identified 63 imported agriculture products and 125 exported agriculture products that the team believes that BTF interventions would support. The midterm analyzed the trend in imports and exports of these products from 2019 to 2022. Additionally, the study team revised the baseline data for these four indicators using an updated methodology. This adjustment was necessary as the baseline methodology for calculating the agricultural trade value and volume could not be replicated during the midterm assessment. The import-export data were collected from the World Integrated Trade

Solutions (WITS)⁶ database. On selected HS codes, data was extracted using the HS Nomenclature of 2002, as the HS coding system was adopted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) in 2002-03. Trade values were extracted in USD and trade volume as Net weight in kilogram (KG) for both imports and exports from 2019 to 2022.

- **Change in Rejection of Bangladesh Export Consignments of Agricultural Products (Indicator 10):** For this indicator, the study team considered rejections of plant, animal, food, and feed products notified in the EU and US-based market databases from 2019 to 2022. Only border rejection notifications were considered when extracting data. However, the rejection notifications do not provide specific HS codes. To overcome this, the team assigned and validated HS codes with the help of experts. Data for Bangladesh's export consignments of agricultural products rejected by importing countries were sourced from two sources: the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) window⁷ for the EU market and the United States Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) Import Refusal Report⁸ for US market. For this indicator, the study team also updated the baseline data using a revised methodology.
- **Tracking impact of Indicator 17, 'Number of CLPOs (Certificates, Licenses, Permits & Others) issued through the new project-supported process automation systems':** For this indicator, the study team considered monitoring data from BTF, the policy tracker and legislative documents of completed/issued legislative changes, to assess the impact of the changes.

2.3 Sampling Strategy

KII with Key Stakeholders

The study team conducted a total of 62 KIIs with CAs, laboratories, other GoB agencies, private sector enterprises, trade and industry associations, donor agencies, and BTF staff.

A total of **18** interviews were conducted with the representatives of the six GoB CAs. The informants who were approached and participated in the interview were selected using three criteria: **1)** member of the Project Engagement Committee (PEC), **2)** high exposure to BTF activities, and **3)** engagement as current/former director general or chairman of the CA.

The study team conducted a total of **18** key informant interviews with the nine government laboratories that had been undergoing lab testing standardization and capacity improvement activities with the support of BTF. The interviews were conducted with two key personnel at each laboratory: **1)** laboratory chief and **2)** lab technician or scientific officers, with a primary focus on understanding changes in laboratory activities due to the project interventions.

In addition to CAs and testing facilities, the study team has conducted 7 interviews with other relevant GoB entities, 10 with private sector cold chain enterprises, 7 with trade and industry associations, and 2 with donor agencies. The total number of interviews is presented in Table 02 below and the list of key informants interviewed is included in Annex C of this report.

⁶ <https://wits.worldbank.org/WITS/WITS/Restricted/Login.aspx>

⁷ [Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed \(RASFF\)](#)

⁸ <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/ImportRefusals/index.cfm>

Table 2: Summary table of KII distribution.

Cohorts	Respondents	Number of KIIs
Competent authorities	PQW, DoF, DLS, BSTI, BFSA, BAEC ⁹	18
Laboratory Facilities	Atomic Energy Centre Laboratory (BAEC), Quality Control Laboratories (DoF, DLS), Poultry Research and Training Centre Lab, Central Laboratories (DLS, PQW)	18
Other Relevant GoB Agencies	NBR, DAM, MoC, BRCP-1, BPC, EPB, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University ¹⁰	10
Private Sector Enterprises - Cold Chain	Potential investors in cold chain facilities	8
Trade and Industry Associations	BFVAPEA, BCSA, FBCCI, BAFISA, BFFEA, CCAA ¹¹	6
Donor Agencies	World Bank, USDA	2
BTF Staff & Implementation Partner		10¹²
Total		72

Gemba Walk in the Laboratories

The selection of the laboratories for Gemba Walk was based on the midterm laboratory scorecards. Once the KIIs at the nine laboratories were completed, the evaluation team updated the scorecard (see discussion of scorecard in analysis section below) with preliminary data. The updated scorecards were used to identify the following three laboratories where a 'Gemba walk' took place:

Lab 1: The best-performing lab with the highest score on updated scorecard, was selected to serve as a benchmark for others.

⁹ Plant Quarantine Wing (PQW), Department of Fisheries (DoF), Department of Livestock Services (DLS), Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI), Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA), Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC).

¹⁰ National Board of Revenue (NBR), Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM), Ministry of Commerce (MoC), Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project 1 (BRCP-1), Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

¹¹ Bangladesh Fruits, Vegetables, and Allied Products Exporters Association (BFVAPEA), Bangladesh Cold Storage Association (BCSA), Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Bangladesh Foodstuffs Importers & Suppliers Association (BAFISA), Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporter Association (BFFEA), Chattogram Customs Agents Association (CCAA).

¹² Two rounds of KIIs were conducted with the BTF team.

Lab 2 & 3: The two labs with the lowest score in the updated scorecards, were selected to undertake a detailed system/facility mapping so that a turn-around strategy with adequate guidelines can be recommended.

Survey with Trader Community Including C&F Agents

Sampling consideration: C&F agents and traders involved in agro-product export and import who frequently visit GoB agencies and their laboratories for receiving Certificates, License, Permits and other documents (CLPOs) were considered as target populations for the survey. The survey was conducted in three major districts: Dhaka, Chattogram, and Khulna, where the primary trade ports are situated. The sample frame included agro-traders¹³ who had received services from the six GoB competent authorities.

Three data source points were considered while developing the sample frame. The data source points are as follows:

Data Source 1- Agro-trade Association Member List: The study team accessed the list of members from relevant associations involved in the export and import of agro-products to identify the targeted traders.

Data Source 2- Competent authorities Records/Reference Documents: The study team reviewed records and reference documents held by CAs about exporters and importers.

Data Source 3- Laboratory Records/Reference Documents: Laboratory records and reference documents were examined to identify exporters, importers, and C&F agents who had utilized lab testing services.

Sample size: To calculate the sample size, the study team applied Cochran's formula together with a population correction. The formula produced a sample size of 194 for an unknown small population. The following formula was used to calculate the sample size for the survey in this regard:

$$\text{Sample size } n = [DEFF * Np(1-p)] / [(d^2/Z^2(1-\alpha/2)^2 * (N-1) + p * (1-p))]$$

Population size (N): Unknown

Z score: 1.96

Population proportion (p): 0.5

Margin of error: 7%

Design effect for cluster survey: 1

After rounding up, the final sample size was considered at **200**.

Sample distribution: The total number of surveys conducted during the data collection period is **218**. Most of the survey respondents received services from multiple government agencies. The distribution of respondent traders who received services from the six GoB competent authorities are enumerated in Table 3.

¹³ Agro-traders include the exporters, importers and C&F agents of agricultural products.

Table 3: Survey sample distribution.

Competent Authorities	Number of Surveys (n=218)
Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI)	104
Plant Quarantine Wing (PQW)	96
Department of Livestock Services (DLS)	59
Department of Fisheries (DoF)	56
Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA)	31
Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC)	20

2.4 Field Activities

Field activities began on October 7, 2023, with KIIs conducted with officials from the relevant GoB agencies, and they continued until the end of December 2023. The interviews were conducted in-person by the midterm study team, however in cases where in-person interviews were not feasible, online interviews were arranged. Most of the in-person KIIs took place in the capital city, Dhaka, as most of the headquarters of government agencies and private firms are located there. KIIs with the GoB laboratory informants were conducted in Chattogram. The interviews were scheduled in advance by the study team with assistance from the project team.

The data collection for the survey took place over three weeks, beginning on November 12, 2023, in Dhaka and Chattogram and concluding on December 6, 2023. Data collection in Khulna commenced on December 3, 2023, and concluded on December 6, 2023. The data collection team comprised of seven locally trained data collectors, overseen by one core team member responsible for coordinating fieldwork. Rigorous selection criteria were employed to choose data collectors, who were required to possess at least a bachelor's degree and undergo a four-day training program covering project overview, survey methodology, and questionnaire administration.

Several quality assurance measures were implemented by the study team to ensure the survey's success:

- Pre-interview internal discussions to review preparations and identify any necessary adjustments.
- Bi-weekly debriefing sessions with interviewers to address challenges, share experiences, and mitigate potential biases.
- A comprehensive four-day training for data collectors before field deployment.
- Use of paper-based surveys, digitally transferred daily via Kobo Collect software for real-time tracking of interview times and locations.
- Periodic back-checks on 10% of sampled survey respondents to confirm data accuracy, source reliability, and response consistency.
- Daily digital data checks by the core team to identify errors, inconsistencies, and missing information, cross-referencing against available records.

- Extending the data collection period to accommodate respondents unable to participate within the initial time frame.
- Employing virtual and physical interviews to maximize response rates as appropriate.

2.5 Data Entry & Analysis

Qualitative data from KIIs were recorded in notes and audio transcripts, with interviewers from the core team responsible for identifying and rectifying any editorial errors. Transcripts underwent thorough checks for completeness by cross-referencing with audio recordings to ensure all information was accurately captured. Content analysis techniques were employed to identify response patterns and themes in the qualitative data. Findings from qualitative data are presented using comparison tables, and case narratives with proper justifications.

Organizational scorecards for the six CAs and nine laboratories were developed during the baseline of the project to evaluate the agencies' capacity to adhere to the TFA and the laboratories' ability to adhere to the ISO17025 standards of laboratory operations. The midterm evaluation team completed the scorecards based on the KIIs with CAs and laboratories and other secondary data to measure the changes in comparison to the baseline scores.

Quantitative data collected from surveys of private sector traders were retrieved from the Kobo Collect database and exported for analysis using MS Excel software after undergoing data cleaning and coding. Analysis of quantitative data involved descriptive statistical methods such as mean, mode, and frequency distributions, as well as inferential statistical methods including bivariate and multivariate analyses to discern general trends within the population. These analyses informed the reporting of feedback from private sector stakeholders.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The midterm evaluation study adhered to all the ethical considerations for conducting research studies. Ahead of field activities, the study team, in collaboration with the project implementation team, diligently secured all necessary permissions from government authorities, private sector entities, and other pertinent stakeholders involved in the project. Before each interview or survey, informed consent was obtained from participants, outlining the purpose of the evaluation, the voluntary nature of their participation, the potential benefits and risks, and our commitment to maintaining their confidentiality. Interviews proceeded only after verbal consent was obtained from each respondent. Throughout the data collection process, interviewers upheld professional ethics and respected any additional ethical requirements deemed acceptable by respondents. This approach ensured the integrity and ethical conduct of the evaluation study.

2.7 Limitations and Challenges

Listed below are the limitations and challenges confronted by the study team during the midterm evaluation.

- **Assessing attribution of BTF on the CAs:** Beyond the project's direct interventions, independent initiatives undertaken by the CAs, coupled with interventions from other donor organizations, have contributed to the observed improvements in organizational capacity during

the midterm evaluation. Consequently, determining the precise and individual impact of the project on organizations was challenging to ascertain definitively.

- **Calculating the Number of Individuals Applying Improved Management Practices/technologies with USDA Assistance (Indicator 8):** The Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) requires estimating the number of individuals who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance, using scorecards from supported GOB agencies and interviews with businesses. The PMP also lists BTF participants as a data source. However, due to the inability of CA respondents to provide an exact number of individuals, it was not feasible to determine a quantitative figure through interviews and tools. Consequently, the study team has only provided qualitative evidence of individuals who have adopted improved management practices, marking the midterm year achievement as N/A.
- **Interview Schedule:** The study team encountered challenges in reaching some targeted respondents, particularly government officials. Due to their heavy workloads, some respondents were unable to participate in scheduled interviews. This challenge was exacerbated during the national elections in Bangladesh, particularly with high level officials (Chairman, Director General) from NBR, BAEC and BSTI who did not participate in interviews. Additionally, some private-sector trade associations, such as the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association (BFFA) and the Dhaka Customs Agents Association (DCAA) did not agree to a scheduled interview. However, to ensure the representation of the views of these associations, the study team conducted interviews with alternative associations. For instance, failing to engage with the DCAA, the study team conducted KII with a representative from the Chattogram Customs Agents Association (CCAA). Accessing some respondents proved difficult, notably within BAEC the study team managed to interview only one individual. Additionally, turnover among officials with significant exposure to BTF project activities resulted in difficulties conducting interviews with highly relevant government officials. While response rates were relatively good, some participants either declined to participate or provided incomplete responses to the interviews.
- **Potential Biased Responses:** Given the heavy reliance on key informants for data collection in the study, there's a possibility of responses being influenced by personal or political biases of the participants.
- **Data Gaps:**
 - The study team utilized WITS to extract the import-export data. While extracting data from WITS, some data were not found notably, import information on HS 5001 and export information on HS 1505. The absence of this data may stem from either negligible trade value or non-reporting by importing countries. Due to the absence of a database when considering Bangladesh as the reporting entity¹⁴ and all other countries as partners¹⁵, the study team reconfigured the extraction process with countries as reporters and Bangladesh as partners to obtain the necessary data. Moreover, the dynamic nature of information on the secondary source portal introduces potential fluctuations over time, making the current extracted data subject to change in future extractions.
 - Because BTF project did not have any interventions with BSTI labs as of the midterm evaluation, an updated laboratory scorecard was not completed for BSTI labs. However, in CA scorecards, there is a criterion under “Laboratories and Testing

¹⁴ Refers to the country which conducts exports or imports. But putting Bangladesh as the reporter the result shows no data set. As a result, all the countries are selected.

¹⁵ Partners refers to the country from which products are imported or to which products are exported. Bangladesh was selected for partners, as all the counties were selected as reporters.

Procedure” which required the average score from the lab scorecard to be added. Since the midterm scorecard was not completed for BSTI labs, the evaluation team carried-forward the baseline score in that section for standard scoring.

- For the rejection data, in addition to examining RASFF and US FDA data, the study team searched for reliable alternative consignment sources in the UK. Regrettably, no alternative sources were identified beyond the two. This limitation arises from the impact of Brexit, rendering European portals devoid of UK-based data.

3.0 Findings

The findings are presented in the next sub-sections under four levels. The **Process Level** includes a discussion on changes to policies, regulations, SOPs, and automation to facilitate trade. The **Institutional Level** discusses capacity changes in CAs and laboratories, while the **Systems Level** explores macro level changes in agricultural trade and rejections. Lastly, the **Implementation Level** explores the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the project approach.

3.1 Process Level

This chapter presents the process-level changes impacted by BTF during the first three years of the project. It outlines the laws, policies, regulations, and SOPs that BTF has supported in line with WTO TFA provisions. This section will also cover the government-automated service systems developed with the assistance of BTF.

3.1.1 Progress on Government Policy

Bangladesh has specifically notified in category C for the provisions of Perishable Goods (Article 7.9), Risk Management (Article 7.4), Test Procedures (Article 5.3), and Formalities and Documentation Requirements (Article 10.1). BTF aims to find the existing policy and legislative gaps hindering the implementation of these provisions and support government entities in overcoming those gaps. In alignment with this, BTF impacted changes/upgrades of 28 policy orders, standard operating procedures (SOPs), Statutory Regulatory Orders (SROs), regulations, acts, rules, guidelines, and office orders within the first three years of the project tenure. Support was provided to four CAs and five other relevant government entities (MoC, MoFL, MoA, NBR, and DAM). See Annex B for a full list of the policies that BTF supported.

Table 04 below shows the targets and actual achievement for the BTF performance indicator “Number of policies, regulations, and/or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance”. The different stages, according to the USDA definition, are as follows:

- **Stage One:** Analysis (review of existing policy/regulation/administrative procedure and/or proposal of new policy/regulation/administrative procedure)
- **Stage Two:** Public debate and/or consultation with stakeholders on the proposed new or revised policy/regulation/administrative procedure.
- **Stage Three:** Revisions (policies were presented for legislation/decreed to improve the policy environment for agriculture)
- **Stage Four:** Official approval (legislation/decreed) of new or revised policy/regulation/administrative procedure by the relevant authority]
- **Stage Five:** Implementation of new or revised policy/regulation/administrative procedure).

Table 4: Indicator 16. Number of policies, regulations, and/or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance.

Stage of Development	Target to year 3	Achieved
Stage 1	9	3
Stage 2	11	3
Stage 3	6	9
Stage 4	5	5
Stage 5	4	8
Total	35	28

The legislative documents that BTF supported can be classified under the four key provisions of TFA as notified by Bangladesh in category C.

Test Procedures (Article 5.3)

Article 5.3 outlines obligations for WTO members to re-test samples at the request of traders in a transparent and trade-facilitative manner. A second test would ensure or challenge the consistency of the first test and highlight any discrepancies that might have occurred between the first test and the declaration of goods for importation.

BTF has drafted the outline of **Customs Inspection and Sample Management Rules** which is at Stage 3 and being reviewed by international consultants. This legislative reform sets clear protocols for customs officers to collect samples and ensure procedures are standardized and transparent. Previously, such rules and procedures were neither documented nor promulgated. BTF anticipates that this reform will significantly impact Bangladesh's trade by streamlining the customs process, reducing delays, and enhancing the reliability of import inspections. With this legislative reform being approved, BTF is supporting NBR with an efficient and standardized approach to the agri-products' inspection process at Customs.

Risk Management (Article 7.4)

Article 7.4 outlines the obligations for WTO members to implement or uphold a risk management system for customs control, as far as possible. This system aims to avoid the stringent physical inspection regime, where every shipment is stopped and partially or completely examined, causing significant delays at border crossings, ports, and airports. By applying a risk management approach and using risk-based selectivity criteria, customs administrations can allocate their resources to high-risk consignments.

BTF assisted four CAs, DoF, DLS, DAE-PQW, and BSTI, in establishing **Cross Border Trade Risk Management Unit**. The four CAs issued the office order and operationalized the RM units. The reform initiatives, therefore, reached Stage 4. To exercise risk-based management principles in each competent authority, as per TFA article 7.4 Risk Management, the RM units will act as a steppingstone for the implementation of risk-based compliance processes and sample-based testing procedures in each

agency. Other than Bangladesh Customs, the four CAs are the only GoB agencies to establish this institutional framework. However, the implementation of risk-based selectivity criteria would only be effective after each CA brings changes in their mandate.

BTF team is supporting another regulation, **Electronic Governance of Safe Food Import Regulation**, to facilitate the implementation of a risk management system. This regulation would allow inclusion of pre-border and pre-arrival notifications to BFSA before 72 hours of shipping. This will allow BFSA to determine risk-categories and advise both food import control agencies and importers if any food safety issues arise during pre-border notification.

Perishable Goods (Article 7.9)

Article 7.9 of the TFA addresses the specific challenges faced by exporters of perishable goods due to inadequate customs and logistics services at the border. It mandates that WTO members facilitate the quick release of perishable goods and provide suitable storage conditions while these goods await clearance. This provision is essential to safeguard the quality and economic value of perishable items, ensuring that they reach their markets in optimal condition.

BTF has supported two SROs on tariff rationalization: one related to the import of cold storage and freezer equipment, and the other concerning the shrimp hatchery industry. The **SRO on tariff rationalization for the import of cold storage and freezer equipment** was accepted in the national budget for 2022-2024. This order facilitated tariff reductions for local businesses importing cold storage equipment. Similarly, another government order titled '**SRO on Tariff Rationalization for the Shrimp Hatchery Industry**', also assisted by BTF, resulted in tariff reductions in the national budget.

BTF drafted the **Cold Storage Establishment and Operation Regulations, 2023** for DAM under the Agricultural Marketing Act 2018 (Stage 3). BTF developed a schedule of perishable agricultural products with recommended temperature, relative humidity, and approximate storage life that will be incorporated into the regulation. The recommendations are aimed at building good storage practices to reduce loss, maintain quality and safety, and prolong the marketing time of perishable agro-products.

Formalities and Documentation Requirements (Article 10.1)

Article 10.1 of the WTO TFA focuses on the simplification and review of formalities and documentation requirements for cross-border trade. Traders often face a multitude of formalities, including submitting documents, completing administrative procedures, and exchanging information. Excessive paperwork and cumbersome procedures significantly increase the time and costs associated with import, export, and transit processes. To address these challenges, Article 10.1 mandates that WTO members periodically review their formalities and documentation requirements to reduce their incidence, complexity, time, and cost.

Initially, export health certificates for food products (certifies that the food item is “fit for human consumption”) were issued by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB). BTF conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the certificate issue process if transferred to the BFSA and have shown how the process would be more transparent and trade user-friendly. Upon agreement, a government order was issued to **change the authority to issue Export Health Certificates for food items from EPB to BFSA**. This transfer consequently led BTF to assist BFSA to shift the certification application and delivery process on digital platform.

BTF supported DLS by developing the draft of the **National Guidelines for Good Livestock Practices** and received validation on the draft by multi-stakeholder consultations. The guideline was approved through a government official order by MoFL in 2023, reaching Stage 5. With the application of this guideline, new opportunities in export of livestock are envisioned to open up and enhance credibility of importing countries.

3.1.2 Other Supported Policies by BTF

BTF has also supported policies under TFA provisions 1.1 (Publication), 7.5 (Post clearance audit) and, 10.3 (Use of international standards) through its activities up to Year 3.

BTF reviewed the Import Policy Order (IPO) 2015-'18 and shared 32 recommendations with MoC about provisions related to the import of agricultural products (plant and plant-based products, animal and animal products, fish and fish products) and food items. Among these, 11 recommendations were accepted and added to the **Import Policy Order (IPO) 2021-'24**. Among the key changes, the new IPO includes a provision allowing government-approved labs to test food items not listed under the BSTI schedule, previously restricted to testing only by the Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR). This change is expected to expedite and facilitate the clearance of these food items by reducing the time and fees associated with overburdened BCSIR testing. The IPO also now includes all quarantine-related provisions for plants, animals, and fish, incorporating specific acts related to each category. This consolidation provides legislative clarity and aligns IPO provisions with the legal requirements of respective quarantine acts. Further improvements based on BTF's recommendations include other organization, administrative, and corrections to the regulatory directives were also amended, to clarify the formalities related to import.

BTF also reviewed the Export Policy 2018-'21 and shared findings with the MoC. Among the 73 proposals made under eight chapters, MoC incorporated a total of 21 recommendations in the **Export Policy 2021-'24**. Considering Bangladesh's forthcoming LDC graduation, this updated policy provides an action plan to utilize the WTO's Special and Differential Treatment (S&D) provisions. It also emphasizes maintaining export compliance standards and improving the ease of doing business, aligning with the BTF project's interventions.

Another major support provided by BTF is the establishment of the **International Trade Wing at DLS**. BTF provided technical support to DLS in forming the trade wing and embedding the RM unit temporarily under the trade wing. The Trade Wing will be acting as the coordinating wing for the import-export trade control of livestock products and trade risk management. The wing is expected to expedite the implementation of WTO provisions and related BTF activities to create an enabling trade environment in trade of livestock.

BTF has also assisted the drafting and issuance of **SOP for Inspection and Sampling Procedures for Import of Plant and Plant Products** which helps streamline the import process by ensuring the accurate submission of information necessary to obtain an Import Permit (IP). This is also crucial for the subsequent submission and approval of Release Orders (RO). By establishing a precise inspection system, the SOP ensures proper risk assessment and compliance with relevant laws and regulations. This facilitates trade by minimizing the infiltration of quarantine pests and limiting the entry of regulated non-quarantine pests with imported commodities, thereby safeguarding agricultural health and supporting smooth trade operations.

BTF is currently supporting an **Amendment of Plant Quarantine Act 2011** and **Pesticide Rules 2023** which are currently under Stage 3 and awaiting revisions based on stakeholder consultation.

BTF is also assisting CAs in drafting **Sanitary and Phytosanitary Policy, and Animal and Livestock Products (Inspection and Quality Control Act)**. These legislative changes are under stage 1 and undergoing review. Two SOPs for **Inspection and Sampling Procedures for Import of Fish and Fish Products** and **Notification Change for Reporting on Contract Farming and Traceability Compliance** are in Stage 2, being consulted with relevant stakeholders for review. A detailed list of each legislation with its current status stage is attached in the Annexure B.

3.1.3 Progress on Electronic Systems

The target set for performance indicator, “the number of systems created or improved to automate trade documentation” was one system to be created or improved by the end of Year 3. The project has surpassed the set target and advanced in creating four new automated systems which are projected to be fully functional within Year 4.

Table 5: Indicator 18 - Number of systems created or improved to automate trade documentation.

Indicator	Target (Year 3)	Achieved
Number of systems created or improved to automate trade documentation	1	4

Table 6: Summary of new systems created or improved to automate trade documentation.

Name of developed systems	Attached CA	Status of the systems
E-Health Certification system	BFSA	The system went live in August 2023, enabling traders to efficiently apply for and receive health certificates through digital platform. Currently, BTF is working on developing an e-payment gateway with Sonali Bank to enhance the system's functionality.
E-Certification System of DoF	DoF	The system is currently in the pilot stage with ongoing user testing. It automates 17 services related to the international trade of fish and fisheries products and is expected to be fully operational by the first half of year 4.
Lab Information Repository	BFSA	The repository contains information on food and chemical labs, including their accreditation status, testing capabilities, available parameters, and pricing. This resource is designed to assist traders by providing a comprehensive, publicly accessible database of lab information, which was previously unavailable.
Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)	DoF	LIMS is in the piloting stage being tested in three Quality Control Labs of DoF.

BTF assisted BFSA in developing an **E-Health Certification system** to automate the certificate issue process. The system went live in August 2023 and has completed pilot testing. Traders can now submit their applications and receive issued health certificates through the system. BTF is currently supporting BFSA with the e-payment gateway development with Sonali Bank as a potential partner. BFSA officials have expressed their satisfaction with the system's efficiency and team engagement approach with BFSA. They appreciated the promptness of the team's response in functioning the e-certification platform. However, as the launch of the system was in the last three months of year 3, the private sector traders' service experience is yet to be captured for any further improvement.

BTF has also developed a **lab information repository** for BFSA with the information of 40 food and chemical labs (including both public and private labs). The repository includes information about accreditation status, testing capabilities, available parameters, and pricing. This repository is targeted for the traders to easily avail themselves of information about the available labs and testing parameters. The lab repository has been a noteworthy resource for the traders to look into this information as there was no other publicly available comprehensive database as such.

BTF also supported the **e-Certification System of DoF** which automates 17 services including licensing of exporters and facilities regulated by DoF and issuing of health certificates, import registration, import No Objection Certificates, and Import Release Letters offered by the agency required for the international trade of fish and fisheries products. The system is in the pilot stage, with user testing ongoing, and is envisioned to be fully operational by the first half of year 4. BTF has also developed a **Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)** with DoF which is active in the pilot stage with three QC labs.

However, even after the systems have been launched in the final quarter of Year 3, the potential users are yet to be onboarded with the process due to the updates underway. For the BFSA e-Health Certification system, BFSA is yet to approve the payment gateway service provider which will simplify the fee payment process for the users. For the DoF LIMS and e-Certification System, the agency has repeatedly postponed activities, including deferring hands-on testing at the Dhaka lab for reasons such as EU export audits and ISO accreditation assessments, even though not all lab staff were involved. Additionally, the agency's leadership stalled progress by delaying prompt approval of vendor selection server operations, and additional system features, further impeding the project's timely implementation. Thus, BTF did not achieve the target up to year 3, as shown in Table 07, for Indicator 17: The number of certificates, licenses, permits and others (CLPOs) issued.

Table 7: Indicator 17 Number of CLPOs (Certificates, Licenses, Permits & Others) issued through the new project-supported process automation systems.

Indicator	Targets (in number units, Year 3)	Achieved
Number of CLPOs (certificates, Licenses, Permits & Others) issued through the new project-supported process automation systems	35,000	0

3.2 Institutional Level

This section delves into the capacity changes in supported CAs and laboratories. The capacity strengthening areas differ across the entities depending on the project support's aim and the capacities needed for the entity to deliver trade services in accordance with TFA obligations. A scorecard was developed at baseline for each type of entity to lay out the key capacity areas to improve and score the entity against. The specific capacity areas are discussed in detail later in this section. The midterm updated the scores in the scorecard to be compared to baseline scores. This section also explores changes in capacity in private sector cold chain logistics firms targeted by the project.

3.2.1 Overview of the Progress

The midterm evaluation found that 11 organizations have improved their performance by participating in the BTF project (see Table 08) for performance indicator “Number of organizations with increased performance improvement with USDA assistance”. To gauge the outcome of this indicator, two assessment approaches were employed by the study team for the respective government and private sector cohorts. The team used organizational capacity assessment scorecards to identify CAs and laboratories that showed improved performance due to BTF's interventions. For other government agencies and private sector actors without scorecards, KIIs were employed to evaluate the enhancement in organizational performance attributable to BTF's intervention.

Comparison between the baseline and midterm scorecards indicates that BFSA, PQW, DoF, DLS and BAEC supported by BTF have demonstrated enhanced performance since their initial assessment (see table 12). Additionally, among the nine laboratories assessed, QC Laboratory-DoF in Savar, Central Plant Quarantine Laboratory in Khamarbari, CDIL-DLS in Dhaka, AECD-BAEC, and AECC – BAEC have improved their performance.

Among the three other government agencies supported, only one was found to have improved its organizational practices according to KII findings. When asked about the improved organizational practices, MoC reported that they have submitted WTO notifications with BTF assistance. It was found that MoC examined and approved 65 notifications alongside stakeholders; however, only 8 notifications were eventually forwarded to the WTO portal due to incomplete validation by MoC officials, possibly influenced by the priority agenda of senior MoC leadership. Respondents from the MoC also emphasized that prior to BTF's intervention, they had no precedent for submitting WTO notifications. The National Board of Revenue (NBR), however, has indicated ongoing collaboration with BTF on legal reforms, risk management systems, access to and transparency of trade information, and automation. These interventions are in the implementation phase and are expected to begin impacting the agency within the next two years. Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM), on the other hand, has been working with BTF in developing the institutional capacity of its and CAs' staff, access to trade information, legal reformation, however, has reported not making any progress in its organizational performance improvement up to year 3.

BTF has also provided technical assistance or other inputs such as site assessments, facility design, or equipment specifications for more than 30 private sector TCL companies. However, the evaluation testing did not find private sector enterprises to have demonstrated improvements in performance. At the point of the evaluation, one of the companies—Bengal Meat Processing Industries—committed to a 125 cubic meters (25 MT) frozen and refrigerated TCL facility in Chattogram. This indicator will track the number of businesses that improve their performance once these cold chain facilities are operational, so Bengal Meat will be counted under this indicator at that time.

Table 8: Indicator 15 Number of organizations with increased performance improvement with USDA assistance.

Type of Organization	Target (Year 3)	Achieved
Private sector firms	2	0
Competent authorities	13	5
Other Government agencies		1
Laboratories		5
Total	15	11

Through the support to the CAs, and laboratories, BTF is providing capacity building to individual staff. As per the PMP, the estimation of the number of individuals who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance is to be determined through scorecards of supported GOB agencies and interview with businesses. However, it was not possible to arrive at a quantitative figure through interview and tool, as CA respondents could not provide an exact number of individuals from their department that could be used to estimate the indicator result. Therefore, the study team has only presented qualitative evidence on individuals who have undergone improved management practices, leaving the midterm year achievement as N/A (see Table 09).

During the interview session, representatives from the CAs were requested to illustrate the situation both before and after the capacity development sessions, aiming to comprehend the changes in their capacity and current management practices. When questioned about the effectiveness of the capacity-building session, nearly all representatives from CAs acknowledged that BTF has designated suitable resources for training and tailored the content according to stakeholders' requirements. Furthermore, respondents highlighted that they have already begun implementing the knowledge acquired from the capacity-building sessions within their respective organizations. For example, representatives from DLS indicated that following training from BAB, an initiative of BTF, they have completed the necessary documentation for ISO17025 accreditation with the help of BTF and are currently awaiting feedback from BAB. The respondents also noted that DLS officials who attended the RM training undertaken by BTF have already begun recording risk profiles of imported goods.

When questioned about the progress regarding individuals' adoption of the training session learnings, MoC representatives during the KII explained that MoC staff were not engaged in preparing WTO notifications; instead, the BTF technical team handled the process on behalf of MoC. However, BTF plans to conduct training sessions for MoC on the process to prepare WTO in the future. NBR and DAM clarified that they had not received dedicated training sessions but had participated in a training program aimed at enhancing the organizational capacity of CAs.

Table 9: Indicator 8 Number of individuals who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance.

Indicator	Target (Year 3)	Achieved
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Number of individuals who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance	280	N/A
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Regarding BTF's assistance to laboratories in obtaining certification (ISO 17025) with an international quality control institution, BTF provided an overview training to multiple CAs about accreditation requirements and the reviews and assessment process by the BAB, and BTF provided specific technical assistance and training support to AECC and CDIL-DLS laboratories. So far, the Plant Quarantine Reference Laboratory approved an action plan for ISO accreditation but did not pursue the opportunity and BTF provided only preliminary training. However, PRTC and BTF executed an MOU in September 2023, initiating the accreditation process and participation of PRTC in technical assistance and capacity-building activities. BTF's technical assistance includes assisting laboratories to conduct gap assessments, develop quality management programs, and to complete documentation and the application to BAB to seek ISO17025 certification. According to BAB, laboratories typically require an average of three years to obtain ISO17025 certification, as the certification process involves multiple layers of feedback from the certification authorities. Therefore, laboratories that received training in BTF program year 2-3 are awaiting approval from BAB for certification and don't expect to receive responses from the authorities until mid-2024. While at midterm, there has been no progress on the indicator: "Number of firms receiving USG assistance that have obtained certification with an international quality control institution in meeting minimum product standards" (table 10), the evaluation team expects that AECC and CDIL will receive ISO17025 certification by Year 4 of the project intervention timeline.

BTF is also actively advocating for certifications tailored to cold chain facilities, with a focus on Brand Reputation through Compliance Global Standards (BRCGS) certifications, which are specifically designed for storage and distribution or other food safety certification requirements, such as ISO 22000 Food Safety Management and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) that apply to warehousing and transportation logistics as well as food manufacturing. As of September 2023, none of the TCL firms had made progress in obtaining these certifications.

In addition, to address the lack of proficiency testing (PT) service providers in the country, BTF technical advisors revealed intentions to aid a national organization in becoming certified under ISO17043 Conformity Assessment as a PT provider. A laboratory's participation in a PT testing program is a requirement for ISO17025 and increasing/availing access to such services domestically in Bangladesh would facilitate more laboratories to seek and complete the accreditation process and would likely reduce the time and cost to achieve accreditation. BTF is also planning to sign agreements with Bangladesh Reference Institute for Chemical Measurements (BRiCM) and Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) to collaborate with the project and to pursue qualification and certification as a PT provider.

Table 10: Indicator 14 Number of firms receiving USG assistance that have obtained certification with (an) international quality control institution(s) in meeting minimum product standards.

Indicator	Target (Year 3)	Achieved
Obtained certification with an international quality control institution	3	0

3.2.2 Coordination and Communication with CAs and other stakeholders

To facilitate communication with CAs and streamline project implementation, BTF initially planned to engage through the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC). The committee is represented by officials from trade-related government agencies and the private sector and is chaired by the commerce minister. The committee has no staff and is fully supported by BRCP-1. BTF discovered that the NTFC was ineffective for initiating collaboration due to difficulties in scheduling meetings among CAs, other government agencies, and stakeholders. This challenge led BTF to seek alternative communication solutions. The adopted alternative communication methods are discussed below.

At the onset of the project, BTF endeavored to establish Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with each of the government agencies that it would work with. However, due to the prolonged process of bureaucratic review within Bangladeshi government agencies, BTF had to adapt to be able to start work in the absence of an MOU. BTF established Project Engagement Committees (PECs) in each supported entity to coordinate its efforts with them. There are one for each of six CAs (PQW, BFSA, DLS, DoF, BSTI, and BAEC), three other government agencies involved in trade (NBR, MoC, and DAM), and the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI). The PEC members assist BTF in communicating with and coordinating activities between the CAs and other relevant agencies associated with BTF. The members also play a key role in both supporting and leading the implementation of project activities. These committees meet regularly with BTF to discuss specific plans from the MoU, if one has been approved, and other tasks to help BTF reach its goals with the agencies. As of the end of Year 3, BTF has an official MOU with all the CAs except PQW (it was approved at MoA but not executed) and BAEC that states the areas of collaboration. At times, leadership changes at CAs, however, have interrupted the collaborative efforts. For example, when the director general (DG) of the WTO Wing of MoC changed in 2023, the frequent PEC meetings were suspended because the newly appointed DG did not choose to participate in BTF activities. Accordingly, BTF's communications with MoC and the WTO Wing were conducted through person-to-person discussions. When representatives of CAs were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the PECs, they mentioned that they often had to reschedule meetings because members of government cohorts were frequently engaged in ad-hoc official tasks, which in turn slowed down the progress of agency-specific interventions.

Regarding communication with relevant laboratory personnel across different CAs, BTF has adopted a top-down communication approach. This involves initially establishing connections with the DG of the CA and then extending communication to authorities relevant to achieving project targets. When asked about the effectiveness of BTF communication, representatives from laboratories suggested that having in-person meetings with the BTF team might be beneficial. This would provide them with an opportunity to express their major concerns regarding any initiatives, if they have any.

BTF also established a Project Advisory Council as requested by USDA to guide and facilitate BTF's implementation of activities to simplify procedures and processes related to cross-border trade in food

and agricultural goods and to assist the Government to achieve WTO Trade Facilitation measures. The Advisory Council consists of high-ranking officials from relevant Ministries, chambers and associations, and USDA. The Council's role is to help solve problems and to encourage coordination and collaboration amongst the CAs; however, it has not proven to be effective in meeting the purpose. Despite BTF's requests, only two meetings of the Advisory Council have been held. The senior secretary of MoC serves as chair of the Advisory Council with DG of WTO Wing identified as an alternate chair and BTF Project Director as member secretary. Due to the demanding schedules and challenges in coordinating with the chair and alternate chair, the Project Advisory Council has not been an effective tool to share learnings, set agendas, or address implementation challenges. This highlights a broader issue with high-level committees, where their functionality is often contingent on the personality, level of interest, and leadership approach of the appointed chair.

3.2.3 Competent Authorities

Throughout the first three years of the project BTF worked closely with PQW, BFSa, DLS, DoF, and BSTI. However, BAEC did not want to work with BTF as the chairman of authority did not agree to collaborate in BTF intervention areas and had particular disagreement concerning the concept of risk-based compliance approaches for imported goods. This section describes how the midterm evaluation measured changes in the CAs organizational capacity over the past three years for each of the 5 CAs that BTF supported. A scorecard with BAEC was also conducted to understand if there has been any progress even though BTF has not yet supported them.

The agency-specific scorecards, developed during the baseline study of the project, assess the impact of project initiatives on enhancing the organizational capabilities of CAs in delivering standardized trade services according to the prescribed measures of the TFA. Within each scoring parameter, individual criteria are assessed independently. To determine the overall score for each parameter in the scorecards, the study team computed the average score across these individual criteria.

Table 11: Rating scale for CA scorecard.

Rating scale	Description
No rating	In case any assessment criteria are not applicable for an agency, no rating score has been given.
0	0 is given if the agency is applicable for assessment under a parameter, but there is no existence of elements to support the activity.
1	1 is given if the agency owns structures/elements/acts to pursue the activity, but no progress has been observed yet.
2	2 is given if the agency owns structures/elements/acts to pursue the activity and has shown somewhat progress in pursuit.
3	3 is given if the agency owns structures/elements/acts to pursue the activity and has signs of completion of the activity.
4	4 is given if the agency has successfully completed the activity and has built the infrastructural/institutional capacity to continue and expand the activities.

The following nine criteria were explored for rating the CAs:

- **Legal Framework:** The adequacy of the regulatory laws empowering the CAs to fulfill their mission in alignment with the WTO TFA Agreement.
- **Trade Related Services:** The ability of CAs to efficiently manage import, export, and transit processes and formalities, considering any obstacles arising from redundant or unnecessary steps.
- **Information Technology:** CAs employ information technologies to improve the speed, efficiency, and transparency of the regulatory measures they implement.
- **WTO Notification Processes:** The ability of CAs' adherence to the WTO Notification provisions outlined in the TFA.
- **Private Sector Engagement:** The level of involvement of private sector stakeholders in CAs' policy decisions or outreach efforts aimed at educating the private sector about compliance issues.
- **Institutional Capacity:** The degree to which CAs possess the human and institutional capacity, excluding information technology, to fulfill their mandate.
- **Risk Management:** The degree to which CAs utilize and can implement risk-based management principles in executing their regulatory authority.
- **Laboratories and Testing Procedure:** The ability of CAs laboratories to adhere to their regulatory responsibilities in alignment with the WTO TFA and sufficiently cater to the service needs of traders.
- **Prioritization of Perishable Goods:** The degree to which CAs prioritize the inspection, testing, and certification of goods within their regulatory jurisdiction, both legally and in practice.

The baseline scorecard assessment revealed discrepancies where several CAs, which had components warranting a rating of 3 in certain parameters, received a rating of 2 or even 0 in the baseline CA scorecard assessment. Furthermore, some parameters not under the CA's jurisdiction were not assessed during the baseline scorecard assessment but were later reassessed by the midterm evaluation team.

Comparison of the baseline and midterm scorecards of the respective government agencies shows the organizational capacity changes since the project's inception. Table 12 below, shows a summary table of the baseline and midterm scorecards of the six competent authorities.

Among the six agencies assessed, BFSa stands out as the CA that improved the most, with its organizational assessment score escalating from 0.63 in the baseline to 3.14 in the midterm. It is important to highlight that certain scoring parameters on the assessment scorecard are not applicable to BFSa due to its restricted legislative mandate in monitoring and controlling the trade of agricultural products.

DoF demonstrates the second-highest performance improvement, with a change of 0.97 points from the baseline to the midterm assessment score. Also, PQW and DLS have improved 0.49 and 0.44 points, respectively, between their baseline and midterm assessment scores. BTF has extended most of its initiatives to four agencies, excluding BAEC and BSTI, as these two CAs declined to participate in most of BTF's intervention areas. Therefore, BAEC and BSTI show the least improvement among the six CAs, with gains of only 0.38 and 0.35 points, respectively. The details of contributing factors for each agency score value is discussed in the following sections.

Table 12: Baseline and Midterm score of competent authorities.

GoB Competent authorities	Baseline score	Midterm score	Changes
BFSA	0.63	3.14	2.51
PQW	2.14	2.63	0.49
DoF	1.47	2.44	0.97
DLS	1.64	2.08	0.44
BSTI	1.79	2.14	0.35
BAEC	1.33	1.71	0.38

Bangladesh Food Safety Authority

Since the initial phase of the program, BFSA has undergone significant reforms with support from BTF and the agency's own initiatives, resulting in notable advancements in the measured criteria. In the baseline scorecard, the evaluator did not assess four parameters because at the time in 2021 BFSA did not have a regulatory mandate or authority covering import and export of food products, did not issue any CLPOs related to international trade, and the agency does not operate laboratories. As of September 2023, BFSA's mandate has expanded (at the recommendation and with support from BTF) and the agency now is responsible for assessing and issuing Health Certificates, denoting that the food is “fit for human consumption”, for export of food products. The table below depicts the changes in BFSA's score from the baseline to the midterm.

Table 13: Scorecard of BFSA.

Components	Baseline Score	Midterm Score
Legal Framework	0.8	2.67
Trade Related Services	Not Assessed	4.00
Information Technology	0.00	2.00
WTO Notification Processes	1.00	3.50
Private Sector Engagement	Not Assessed	4.00
Institutional Capacity	1.33	2.67
Risk Management	0.00	0
Laboratories and Testing Procedure	Not Assessed	N/A
Prioritization of Perishable Goods	Not Assessed	N/A
Average Score	0.63	3.14

The following section discusses only the parameters where BTF has assisted BFSA in improving its organizational performance.

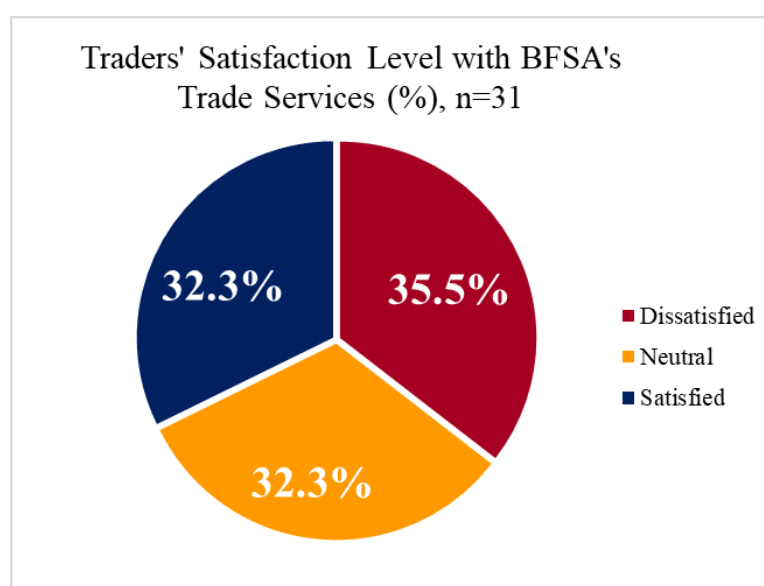
Legal framework: In terms of enhancing the policy, legal, and administrative framework, through BTF's technical support, BFSA underwent institutional reforms to consolidate its authority in issuing Export Health Certificates for processed foods, declaring the export of processed food products "fit for consumption". At the request of BFSA, in 2022, BTF reviewed the Food Safety Act 2013 and provided expert guidance on necessary areas that the Act should be modified. BTF then provided technical assistance to draft the Amendment to account for (i) extending the scope of the act by including issuance of export certificates, (ii) clarifying the definition of food, (iii) coordination with other regulatory bodies focusing on import and export, (iv) developing a database on harmful ingredients for human health, (v) developing a risk-based national food safety system, and (vi) detailing a sample collection and analysis process. BFSA approved the Amendment and submitted it to the Food Ministry in February 2023. Approval is pending by the Ministry and Cabinet. When asked if there are any additional regulations BTF is planning to work on that fall under BFSA's purview, the BTF technical advisor mentioned that they plan to create Electronic Governance of Safe Food Regulation for BFSA to define the role and scope of the agency in the import process, including issuance of No Objection Certificates and conducting risk assessment for food import items. Under this framework, BFSA seeks to facilitate risk-based food importation through the adoption of advanced and modern IT systems.

Trade related services: In the baseline study, BFSA was not evaluated in the trade-related services parameter because at the time, BFSA was not directly involved in regulating the import or export of food items and did not issue certificates. The Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) was directed by MoC to issue Health Certificates until a Government Order was issued in September 2022 to change the authority to issue Export Health Certificate for Food Items from EPB to BFSA. BFSA's high score in this area in the midterm evaluation reflects this significant change, the improvement in the trade environment to have the nation's food safety body attesting to "safe food", and the piloting of the E-certificate issuance process through BTF's assistance. Once the pilot is complete and online payments are enabled, food exporters can apply for Health Certificates online, digital lab test results will be issued, and the authenticity of the certificates can be verified by importing countries.

The evaluation team also attempted to determine the average time taken by BFSA to deliver various trade services through surveys with traders and C&F agents, aiming to identify areas where BTF intervention may be needed. The results of the survey reveal that traders typically spend an average of 159.7 hours, approximately equivalent to 6.65~7 days, to obtain different trade-related services (i.e. health certification of exported food, trade related information dissemination, training services led by BFSA, etc.). Notably, this timeframe is significantly shorter than the duration specified in the organization's citizen charter, which designates 15 working days. Note that BFSA's citizen charter establishes the timeframe for each service by accounting for the maximum days required to deliver the trade service and then adds an additional three days to the total¹⁶. This suggests that the agency can provide these services more quickly than outlined in its official guidelines.

¹⁶ KII with representatives of DLS

Figure 1: Trader's level of satisfaction with BFSA trade services.



Regarding the traders' experience of receiving different trade services from BFSA, around 32% of surveyed traders expressed satisfaction and an additional 32% remained neutral. However, 35% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with receiving trade services from BFSA. Through the survey and KIIs, the evaluation team has identified that a higher percentage of dissatisfaction among traders can be attributed to following reasons:

1. Bugs and technical errors in the system may have negatively impacted the overall user experience for the e-certificate.
2. Despite traders searching for labs through the online Laboratory Information Repository, the transportation of samples for testing remains the responsibility of the traders. This aspect also may contribute to dissatisfaction with the agency's trade services. This indicates that coordination with laboratories and their services require additional attention and resources.
3. The payment system for the e-Health Certificate has not been integrated into the certificate system. This necessitates manual payments by traders. However, the agency is actively working on automating the payment system, which will soon be available for traders.

These identified pain points underscore the potential for further improvements at the agency where BTF can provide assistance. However, there are positive signs of the organization adopting BTF's interventions, and the agency can improve significantly within the project tenure.

Information Technology: BTF assisted BFSA in developing the automated e-Health Certificate System and an online laboratory information repository. Initially, BFSA conducted the certification process manually. These certificates are issued only if the receiving country demands them for processed food. The transition to a digital process was aimed at enhancing this service delivery. BTF's efforts have improved BFSA's trade services, especially in the automated issuance of Health Certificates for exportable-food items. The pilot phase of the automated certification system will be completed in late 2023. During the interim, 15 BFSA users completed training on the system and BTF also built awareness and provided training to exporters on both the e-Health Certificate system and Laboratory Information Repository. The Laboratory Information Repository is embedded in the BFSA website and

features 44 registered labs along with details about accreditation status, available testing parameters, test fees, and contact details. Recently, the repository was updated to include import and export testing requirements. Over the past six months, 603 users have accessed the Laboratory Information Repository which indicates the acceptance and uptake of the new information hub. Previously, there was no information resource for traders and other customers about food and chemical laboratories.

Private sector engagement: The baseline study did not assess BFSA for this parameter citing that the agency is not issuing permits, taking samples, or doing testing related to international trade. However, given the agency's expanded role since the baseline assessment certifying the safety of exported food products, this element was fully assessed at midterm and BFSA earned a high score that indicates that the practices and structures to engage and consult with businesses and private sector stakeholders are fully operational and demonstrate signs of sustainability (staff training offered, expanded services, etc.). It was found that BFSA regularly conducts stakeholder meetings to gather feedback on trader-related issues, regulations, and capacity. Each regulatory or trade barrier change prompts at least one private sector consultation. Survey results indicate that 68% of traders participate in frequent consultations (more than twice a year), 3% engage annually, 23% participate occasionally (once every couple of years), and only 6% report no consultations. These findings align with KII results, confirming the regularity of BFSA's meetings with private sector stakeholders.

Institutional Capacity: Using the criteria from the scorecard tool, BFSA's institutional capacity was assessed to understand the extent to which BFSA has the human and institutional capacity to carry out its mandate. This required looking at if the agency possesses adequate human resource and facilities and equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate proportionate to the demand for services, and do the staff and officers employed currently possess sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities to accomplish the tasks associated the agency's mandate. BFSA officers participated in two types of capacity building activities. One was a training on cross-border trade food risk management, which was offered to 21 officials from all CAs and was delivered by an international expert in food regulation to build basic understanding about international standards and best practices. The second area involved specific training for BFSA staff to enhance skills in using the online lab repository and e-Health Certification system. The increase in the score from the baseline reflects that BFSA has adequate facilities and a capable cadre of food analysts and specialists. BFSA does not operate a laboratory but can utilize the Laboratory Information Repository to identify qualified and accredited labs to collaborate with and to assign to perform the food and chemical tests required to complete its mandate. Moreover, because the agency is a quasi-independent authority, these professionals do not rotate positions and BFSA can retain and grow professionals. Since the establishment of BFSA, many donor programs have offered capacity building support, which is evident in the overall improvement in its institutional capacity.

When queried about skills requirements for cross-border trade facilitation, BTF indicated a need for a structured training program to build a pool of experts at BFSA specialized in food safety risk assessments. With trained specialists, BFSA could then be called-upon as a resource to other agencies that primarily have expertise in agriculture, fisheries, and livestock—to conduct food risk assessments and support the development of food regulatory decisions: standards, guidelines, and other regulatory measures. In addition, further user training is required on the two systems introduced by BTF.

Risk Management: As of the reporting date of the evaluation study, BTF has not yet initiated a risk management capacity-building program for BFSA. Currently, BFSA lacks the legal authority to intervene in import consignments. BTF staff have indicated that they have collaborated with BFSA to

define the scope of BFSA's potential involvement in the food import process. This new mandate has been included in pending legislation. BTF plans to proceed with this mandate once the e-Governance of Safe Food (Import) Regulation is promulgated, anticipated in Year 4. If this progresses, BTF will support BFSA in establishing a Risk Management (RM) unit and introduce a training series similar to those undertaken by other CAs.

Plant Quarantine Wing

PQW within DAE has experienced significant changes from its baseline score to its midterm score in the measured criteria. These improvements have been facilitated by both BTF and the agency's own initiatives. The table below illustrates the changes in PQW's score from the baseline to the midterm.

Table 14: Scorecard of PQW.

Components	Baseline Score	Midterm Score
Legal Framework	1.60	2.40
Trade Related Services	1.67	3.67
Information Technology	2.33	2.33
WTO Notification Processes	2.00	3.00
Private Sector Engagement	4.00	3.00
Institutional Capacity	2.00	2.00
Risk Management	0.63	1.63
Laboratories and Testing Procedure	2.00	1.60
Prioritization of Perishable Goods	3.00	4.00
Average Score	2.14	2.63

The following section discusses only the parameters where BTF has assisted PQW in improving its organizational performance.

Legal framework: With support from BTF, PQW has crafted an SOP outlining inspection and sampling procedures for imported plants and plant products. Additionally, BTF arranged training sessions for PQW officials on the SOP, aimed at boosting their proficiency in guaranteeing the quality and safety of imported plant products. As per feedback gathered from KIIs with PQW officials, the newly developed SOP has progressed to the implementation stage and has proven beneficial. It furnishes comprehensive guidelines for inspecting and collecting samples from imported consignments, enhancing their effectiveness in this regard. For instance, respondents mentioned that once the SOP is implemented fully, it would enable officials working at the port to inspect goods with greater precision, thereby expediting the goods release process.

BTF extended technical assistance to PQW in restructuring its organizational framework to establish an RM and PRA unit within the agency. As a result of BTF's guidance and support, the Director General of PQW issued an office order to formally establish the RM unit, thereby enhancing the legal framework and organizational capacity of PQW to effectively implement risk management in monitoring and controlling cross-border trade of plant and plant products. Recognizing that the establishment of the RM

unit on the DG's order may not ensure long-term sustainability, BTF also proposed a draft amendment in mid-2023 to incorporate RM into the Plant Quarantine Act of 2011 and the Plant Quarantine Rules of 2018. PQW has formally submitted this draft amendment to the MoA for comprehensive review. When asked about the review's progress, the PQW representatives said they sent a letter emphasizing the urgency of making necessary changes. However, the evaluation team found, through KII with the BTF technical advisor, that PQW and DAE are exhibiting reluctance and are not actively advocating for the legislative reform that the Ministry intends to pursue. Regarding PRA for PQW, BTF made no progress during the assessment period.

BTF is also actively involved in the process of recognizing PQW as a semi-autonomous authority. Conducting research and preparing a benefit analysis, BTF has proposed transitioning PQW to a semi-autonomous Authority (or other entity) to enhance the capabilities and authority of the National Plant Protection Organization, to which PQW is appointed. This recommendation is in line with international best practices and is supported by the provisions of the Plant Quarantine Act.

Information Technology: PQW was the first agricultural CA in the GoB to automate the issuance of trade services and other documents, for example certificates, permits, etc. Although they do not always utilize all the functions, this initiative sets the agency apart from others. They have implemented a service contract method wherein the IT firm receives a portion of the fees for issuance. This e-system was created before BTF was initiated.

BTF initiated the development of an e-system for contract farming with PQW in May 2023 and anticipates its completion by year 4. The e-contract farming system for specific plants and plant products will be crucial for fulfilling the compliance requirements of major importing countries, including traceability and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). Additionally, this system will help lower the rejection rate of export consignments and enhance agricultural exports. This timeline accounts for the necessary piloting of the system and addressing any bugs before final implementation. Furthermore, PQW has recently implemented an online system for issuing Anchorage Permits, an initiative led by the PQW. This system is meant to allow quarantine offices at the ports to receive advance notifications about consignments, enabling them to prepare for inspections ahead of time. However, the current module does not feature all these stated functions. In this regard, BTF also plans to support PQW in upgrading the anchoring permit online system to ensure necessary data functions are included and any required modifications can be made.

Institutional Capacity: BTF has provided PQW with multiple training sessions on risk management system, import inspection, and sampling SOPs in the first three years of the project. Respondents from the PQW expressed satisfaction with the training sessions. However, they noted that the implementation of learned practices depends on the institutionalization of the training subjects, hence the score in midterm evaluation remains same as baseline. Representative of PQW also mentioned that due to the absence of a dedicated training section within the PQW, field officers and laboratory staff lack the necessary skills to fulfill their tasks effectively. Additionally, laboratory staff require training to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities in testing, ensuring that quarantine stations operate at their full capacity.

Risk Management: Acknowledging the necessity to enhance the capacity of PQW officials for RM implementation, BTF conducted inception and foundational training sessions on cross-border trade RM for PQW in September 2023. BTF has also provided a workshop on devising a RM action plan for PQW. The BTF technical advisor highlighted that a delegation from the CA, along with a representative

from the MoA and NBR, attended a Cross-border Trade Risk Management: Australia Best Practice Visit in November 2023. This visit aimed to familiarize them with international best practices and gain firsthand insights into RM implementation. These capacity-building initiatives from BTF have proven beneficial for the agency, enabling the CAs to enhance its overall risk management capabilities.

At present, PQW inspects 100 percent of imported plants and plant-based products, adopting specific consignment inspection approaches following the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs). Despite BTF's anticipation of reducing and rationalizing inspection and sampling rates through consultation and training with PQW on ISPM-32 risk-based principles, PQW has not adopted the ISPM-32 categorization standards. In terms of the RM system's automation, the preliminary activities of the automation process for PQW have been started by BTF.

Laboratories and Testing Procedure: The proposed assistance from BTF aimed to help the Plant Quarantine Reference Laboratory, Khamarbari in acquiring ISO 17025 accreditation. BTF conducted an initial gap assessment through a laboratory scoring process. BTF also provided technical assistance to develop an action plan for the lab. Despite PQW's approval of an action plan for this accreditation, the agency's leadership has not prioritized development of the lab and accordingly did not proceed with implementing the action plan, and BTF only delivered initial training. The evaluation confirmed that the Plant Quarantine Reference Laboratory, Khamarbari in Dhaka has not progressed from their baseline review with interviews revealing issues in infrastructure, staffing, insufficient funds for equipment maintenance, incomplete lab manuals, inadequate safety gear, and ineffective waste disposal procedures. The evaluator also confirmed the statement through in person inspection of its laboratory facilities.

Department of Fisheries

Since the commencement of the project, the DoF has shown notable progress, as reflected in its second-highest change in score from the baseline across the key criteria. With support from BTF, the agency has improved its organizational performance in several key implementation areas. The table below shows changes in its score from baseline to midterm (Table 15).

Table 15: Scorecard of DoF.

Components	Baseline Score	Midterm Score
Legal Framework	1.60	2.40
Trade Related Services	1.33	3.33
Information Technology	0.00	1.00
WTO Notification Processes	2.00	3.50
Private Sector Engagement	3.00	4.00
Institutional Capacity	1.33	2.00
Risk Management	0.00	0.63
Laboratories and Testing Procedure	3.00	3.11
Prioritization of Perishable Goods	1.00	2.00
Average Score	1.47	2.44

The below discussion exclusively focuses on the areas where BTF has aided the DoF in enhancing its organizational performance.

Legal Framework: With technical support from BTF, the DG issued an office order formalizing the establishment of an RM unit, consisting of personnel with additional organizational duties. Currently, this unit is undergoing capacity development with assistance from BTF, focusing on developing risk profiles and indicators. However, neither the National Fisheries Policy of 1993 nor the Fish and Fish Products (Inspection and Quality Control) Ordinance of 1983 mandates the DoF to conduct risk-based selective assessments of imported fish products. The agency also noted that sustaining RM practices may be challenging since they are not inherent in its mandate. In this regard, BTF is also engaging DoF to include RM in its Act. Additionally, BTF has developed a SOP to enhance the DoF's capacity to inspect fish and fish products at ports and ensure regulatory compliance. BTF has also drafted Fish Inspection Quality Control Rules and Fish Quarantine Rules, which have been submitted to the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL) for feedback.

Trade Related Services: BTF supported the DoF by developing an e-system for issuing CLPOs. However, this system has not yet had an impact as it is not functional. Despite this, a midterm assessment found that DoF's capacity in this area had improved compared to the baseline assessment, even though no other progress was made with BTF assistance or through independent initiatives. To evaluate the current quality of trade service delivery, the midterm assessment measured the time taken to process trade-related services provided by DoF through a survey and Key Informant Interviews (KII). According to the Citizen Charter, DoF issues import NOCs for fish feed and feed ingredients within 10 working days, while NOCs for importing live fish and hatchlings are issued within 30 working days. Export-related certifications (health certificates) and test results are also issued within 10 working days. During KIIs with DoF officials, it was noted that the agency prioritizes the prompt issuance of certificates, permits, and licenses. Survey data from the private sector indicated that the average time required to obtain trade-related services from the DoF is approximately 141.1 hours (about 6 days), or 5.87 days, which falls within the maximum time specified in the Citizen Charter. Additionally, 63% of traders surveyed reported being "satisfied" with the trade services received from the agency. Therefore, the actual time required to obtain these certificates, licenses, and permits aligns with the times specified in the Citizen Charter.

Information Technology: To streamline the issuance of certificates, licenses, and permits, BTF is assisting DoF in launching an online e-certification platform called the Quality Control (QC) e-certification System. With this online portal, traders will be able to apply for the issuance of Licenses, Health Certificates, country requirement-specific Additional Health Certificates, Import NOCs, Import Registration Certificates, and Import Release Letters online. Furthermore, to automate the process, workflow, and transfer of laboratory results, BTF is developing a Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) for the DoF Quality Control laboratories. The system will be integrated with QC's e-certification system and Customs ASYCUDA World, providing a seamless integration between the border regulatory authorities and the laboratories. These automated systems are expected to improve overall organizational efficiency and transparency in providing trade services. The QC e-certification System was launched for pilot tests in September 2023 and have yet to impact the trade facilitation process, and thus the score has not changed from baseline. Additionally, the system requires an e-payment gateway, which BTF is currently helping DoF implement. BTF has provided a list of private companies that could be considered for the payment gateway, but DoF has not yet responded to this proposal.

Institutional Capacity: The BTF project has significantly contributed to enhancing the institutional capacity of the DoF. Through targeted initiatives aimed at improving the skills and knowledge base of DoF officials, BTF has conducted multiple training sessions on RM, automation systems, e-certification systems, and import inspection and sampling SOPs as per DoF's requirements. Respondents from the DoF noted that the training sessions have enhanced their knowledge and highlighted that before the BTF intervention, officials had limited exposure to the training contents. However, they also mentioned that among the training contents, they can only apply the import inspection and sampling SOP, as the remaining components are yet to be institutionalized for the organization to implement.

Respondents from DoF noted that frequent personnel changes hinder the overall improvement of institutional capacity. The agency's current resources are insufficient to provide the necessary regular training for staff to enhance their skills and abilities. Additionally, the agency requires training to develop laboratory testing capacity, an area where it scored comparatively low but showed improvement from the baseline score.

Risk Management: With the support of BTF, DoF has established its RM unit through a DG order and appointed three staff on deputation. To enhance the capacity of DoF officials in practicing and implementing RM, BTF has conducted multiple training sessions. When asked about the effectiveness of the capacity-building sessions, officials agreed to the significant benefits of the orientation and training provided by BTF, which improved their understanding of RM practices. These capacity-building sessions played a crucial role in establishing the current RM unit within the agency. However, representatives of DoF mentioned that they are not yet ready to implement RM system for consignment inspection as they still need to observe how similar countries implement RM. BTF has also provided a template to DoF for recording non-compliance data. The template is assisting them in documenting risk parameters associated with imported fisheries, which will subsequently be integrated into the RM automation system. Representatives from DoF indicated that they have begun manually recording data using this template and have acknowledged the necessity of automating the recording process.

Laboratories and Testing Procedure: BTF is collaborating with QC DoF laboratories in Khulna and Chattogram to enhance their LIMS, automation of laboratory system, and develop SOP for sampling. Respondents from the DoF laboratories highlighted the introduction of the QC e-certification system as a significant improvement facilitated by BTF. They mentioned participating in the launch session of the e-certification system but expressed limited exposure to it. According to them, to utilize the automated system effectively, they would require a week-long training program and subsequent introduction to the system's pilot phase. Additionally, the respondents noted that for the system's installation, there are hardware requirements currently being discussed with BTF. As the system is not yet fully implemented and DoF has only received brief training on software usage, the scorecard shows only a slight improvement in baseline score.

Prioritization of Perishable Goods: BTF has not offered any assistance to DoF in this area. The midterm evaluator reassessed this parameter for DoF because the baseline score did not consider existing factors, such as the management of perishable goods. DoF representatives mentioned that before BTF intervention, they used freezers to maintain the quality of perishable goods and still following the same process, but there is currently no specific guideline or procedure for expediting the release of these goods. However, in practice, fish quarantine officials make efforts to expedite the release of perishable goods to maintain product integrity.

Department of Livestock Services

The DLS has shown significant progress since the baseline. A comparison of baseline and midterm assessment scorecards highlights the agency's overall improvement, attributed to interventions by BTF and the agency's own initiatives. The table below outlines the key impacted areas and their respective sources of intervention (Table 16).

Table 16: Scorecard of DLS.

Components	Baseline Score	Midterm Score
Legal Framework	1.20	2.00
Trade Related Services	1.67	2.33
Information Technology	1.33	1.33
WTO Notification Processes	2.00	2.50
Private Sector Engagement	3.00	3.00
Institutional Capacity	1.33	2.00
Risk Management	0.25	0.50
Laboratories and Testing Procedure	2.00	3.09
Prioritization of Perishable Goods	2.00	2.00
Average Score	1.64	2.08

The following section focuses exclusively on the areas where BTF has supported DLS in enhancing its organizational performance.

Legal framework: BTF supported the development of a legal framework for establishing a Trade Wing within the DLS, resulting in the issuance of an office order by the DG's office to establish the Trade Wing. This wing is responsible for implementing DLS mandates related to monitoring and controlling international trade of animals and animal products. Additionally, BTF assisted in the establishment of a RM Unit through another office order issued by the DG's office. Presently, only two agencies, namely DLS and DoF, have legislative provisions allowing them to access consignment status pre-customs clearance, which should ease RM implementation. However, these provisions are rarely utilized in practice. The BTF team is actively engaging with DLS to encourage enforcement of these legislative provisions for RM implementation. Furthermore, BTF reviewed the DLS National Guidelines for Good Livestock and Production Practices, aimed at ensuring the quality of products exported internationally. KIIs with the DLS officials indicate that the establishment of the Trade Wing has improved their capacity to implement its mandate of monitoring and controlling international trade of animals and animal products.

Institutional Capacity: BTF has equipped the recently established offices of the Trade Wing and the RM unit with essential furniture and equipment (i.e. bar code scanner, etc) enabling the agency to have adequate facilities and equipment capacity to fulfill its responsibilities. Furthermore, BTF has supplied two freezer vans to DLS's Livestock Research Institute (LRI), enhancing its logistical capabilities. Currently, these vehicles are being utilized for transporting livestock vaccines to remote areas, strengthening the agency's outreach and ensuring timely delivery of essential veterinary services. These

interventions have strengthened the agency's institutional capacity to effectively provide its services to the private sector stakeholders.

Risk Management: In addition to supporting the RM unit's establishment within the DLS, BTF organized necessary training and workshops for the RM officials to improve their knowledge, skill, and capacity for the implementation of RM. The inception and foundational training on cross-border risk management have proven particularly advantageous in enhancing the staff's capacity to conduct accurate risk profiling for the implementation of risk-based selectivity in inspecting imports of animal products. DLS officials have begun manually recording risk profiles but highlighted the need for a computerized format for this process. Furthermore, BTF conducted a workshop on risk-based compliance management and supplied a digital format for maintaining compliance records. This enables officials to monitor non-compliance rejections, aiding in the ongoing process of risk profiling of trade commodities and entities. DLS has not started any initiatives regarding this.

Laboratories and Testing Procedure: BTF has supported CDIL with ISO 17025 certification assistance, information management system implementation, and automation, while QC laboratory Savar has received support only for the information management system. Respondents from CDIL noted significant changes following their participation in the BAB training program on ISO17025 facilitated by BTF. However, QC lab has not witnessed similar advancements as it is still awaiting BTF's planned intervention. Consequently, the laboratories under DLS have shown slight improvement in the midterm evaluation compared to their baseline scores.

Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution

BSTI's organizational capacity for trade services has shown minimal improvement since the baseline assessment. The agency has received fewer BTF-assisted interventions than other CAs. The official collaboration between the agency and the project was formalized only in June 2023 through an MoU. The delay in signing the MoU occurred due to the chair of BSTI's reluctance to reach a mutual agreement with BTF. However, BTF plans to help BSTI with legal framework, trade related services, information technology, institutional capacity and risk management in the foreseeable period of the project. Findings from the midterm on changes in scores on the key criteria are reported in Table 17 below.

Table 17: Scorecard of BSTI.

Components	Baseline Score	Midterm Score
Legal Framework	1.50	1.00
Trade Related Services	1.67	2.67
Information Technology	0.33	1.33
WTO Notification Processes	2.50	3.50
Private Sector Engagement	4.00	2.00
Institutional Capacity	2.00	2.67
Risk Management	0.13	0.13
Laboratories and Testing Procedure	3.00	3.00
Prioritization of Perishable Goods	1.00	3.00

Components	Baseline Score	Midterm Score
Total Score	1.79	2.14

The noted improvements primarily stem from the initiatives undertaken by BSTI rather than direct efforts from BTF. For instance, BSTI launched an online portal called “e-Application Management System” in 2023 where traders can apply for some of the trade services online (license, permits, etc.). Additionally, BSTI is actively working on the development of a "BSTI License/Certificate/Test Report Information System," aimed at facilitating the transfer of lab reports and the verification of certificates and licenses. These internal initiatives signify a concerted effort to enhance the organization's IT infrastructure, subsequently leading to improvements in their provision of trade-related services.

Moreover, the agency has successfully boosted its institutional capacity by elevating the skills and knowledge of its officials through internal capacity building sessions, particularly those engaged in laboratory and testing responsibilities. Additionally, improvements in infrastructure capacity have been achieved, with proposals for two more buildings underway. These ongoing initiatives are poised to further enhance the agency's ability to deliver trade services. The changes in the agency's performance, as noted since its baseline assessment, can be predominantly attributed to these internal initiatives undertaken by BSTI.

Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission

BAEC has experienced minimal impact on its capacity to provide trade services from the interventions of the BTF project, attributed to the limited number of project activities at the agency. During the KII with BTF technical advisor, it was found that BTF plans to support BAEC in the institutional capacity thematic area. Upon comparing the baseline and midterm scorecards, a modest improvement in the agency's performance is evident. The agency's enhanced scores in the scorecard, specifically in the areas of WTO notification processes and institutional capacity for efficient trade services, primarily result from internal initiatives of the agency rather than direct influences of the project's activities.

Table 18: Scorecard of BAEC.

Components	Baseline Score	Midterm Score
Legal Framework	1.40	1.20
Trade Related Services	1.33	1.50
Information Technology	0.33	0.33
WTO Notification Processes	1.50	3.00
Private Sector Engagement	2.00	2.00
Institutional Capacity	2.00	2.33
Risk Management	0.38	0.13
Laboratories and Testing Procedure	2.00	2.88
Prioritization of Perishable Goods	1.00	2.00
Total Score	1.33	1.71

Owing to the lack of a MoU between the project and BAEC, BTF only engaged them in basic interventions. BTF organized workshops and training sessions to sensitize BAEC staff on RM. Respondents from BAEC acknowledged the helpfulness of the training, emphasizing the need for additional sessions to further enhance their skills.

When approached by the evaluation team for insights into RMS practices and RM unit establishment, BAEC conveyed that the primary requirement of RM is to increase awareness among the private sector involved in importing agricultural products. Once BAEC is sure of the private sector being sensitized, it will start working towards establishment of RM. While expressing the intention to gradually adopt RMS and establish an RM unit within the next two to three years, BAEC remains cautious due to observed malpractices by importers. Consequently, BAEC authorities advocate for the continuation of 100 percent inspection of consignments until behavioral changes are initiated by relevant stakeholders, including the government.

3.2.4 Laboratories

In the first three years, BTF collaborated with 8 laboratories, including the Central Plant Quarantine Laboratory in Khamarbari, the CDIL for DLS in Dhaka, the QC lab of DLS in Savar, the AECD Lab in Dhaka, AECC Lab in Chattogram, and the QC labs of DoF in Khulna, Chattogram, and Savar. These collaborations resulted in improvements in organizational performance for these laboratories. As BTF entered into an MoU with the Poultry Research and Training Centre (PRTC) laboratory in late 2023, it had no opportunity to offer any intervention until the third year of the project timeline.

To understand the impact of project activities on the organizational capacity of laboratories to deliver standard trade services, laboratory-specific scorecards were prepared at the baseline. In the midterm evaluation, a rating scale similar to that used for CAs was employed to assess laboratory performance (see Table 11 above). Parameters falling outside the laboratory's scope were marked as "Not Applicable (NA)", while those within were rated on a scale from 0 to 4 based on their presence in the laboratory system or structure.

- **Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting:** Laboratory employs computerized record keeping system, LIMS, electronic report transfer and skilled IT technical staff to complete its mandated tasks.
- **Sampling Procedures and Capabilities:** The laboratory maintains international standard sampling SOP, annual risk-based sampling plan and has sufficient skilled manpower to complete the sampling procedures.
- **Testing Capabilities:** Laboratory is equipped with the required equipment to perform available prescribed parameters, test methods that are validated, testing manuals and SOP, and skilled human resource to perform testing activities.
- **Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation:** The laboratory has ISO 17025 accreditation and has manpower who has sufficient knowledge on ISO17025.
- **Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries:** Certificates issued by laboratory are recognized in exporting countries.
- **Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment):** The laboratory maintains an adequate number of skilled personnel and is equipped with the necessary equipment to fulfill its mandate. It adheres to established laws and regulations and possesses internationally standardized infrastructure, including functional safety devices.

Comparing the baseline and midterm scorecard scores of the respective government and autonomous laboratories reveals the organizational capacity changes since the project's inception. As BTF initiated support for the QC- DoF Khulna, QC- DoF Chattogram, and CDIL laboratories after the baseline study commenced, their scorecards were not included in the baseline study. To evaluate the laboratories, the midterm evaluator used annual assessment score as baseline score to compare it with midterm score.

The table below presents an analysis of the scorecards from baseline to midterm, illustrating a general improvement in laboratory capacity for all labs supported. This increase in score may be attributed to the assessors' interpretation and, in some instances, the impact of BTF's intervention. Notably, AECD and AECC scored high in midterm evaluations, and the factors contributing to this improvement are discussed in the following section.

Table 19: Change of scores from Baseline to Midterm of the laboratories.

Laboratories	Baseline	Annual assessment score	Midterm	Change
QC, DoF, Savar	2.72	-	3.13	0.41
QC, DoF, Khulna	-	-	3.09	-
QC, DoF, Chattogram	-	3.15	3.09	-0.06
QC, DLS, Savar	3.24	-	3.51	0.27
Central Plant Quarantine Laboratory, Khamarbari	1.10	-	1.22	0.12
CDIL, DLS, Dhaka	-	2.54	2.56	0.02
AECD, BAEC, Dhaka	1.75	-	3.07	1.32
AECC, BAEC, Chattogram	1.75	-	2.45	0.70
PRTC Laboratory, CVASU	1.59	-	1.93	0.34 ¹⁷

Quality Control DoF Savar

The QC DoF Lab in Savar experienced significant improvements, attributed to both BTF's support and its proactive efforts. BTF has supported DoF Savar laboratory on Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting, and Laboratory's Institutional Capacity. BTF's commitment has led to slight advancements in key areas, as reflected in the midterm scorecard. This support is expected to create even more impact once all the support is delivered and operationalized.

Table 20: Score of QC DoF Savar.

Details	Baseline Score	Midterm Score
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting	0.25	1

¹⁷ BTF did not initiate any activities directed towards PRTC until after the midterm evaluation period. Therefore, the assessors did not include it as a lab that increased their capacity due to BTF.

Details	Baseline Score	Midterm Score
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities	3.33	2.67
Testing Capabilities	3.25	3.4
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation	3.00	4
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries	3.00	4
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)	3.50	3.6
Average Score	2.72	3.13

The following sections explain parameters where BTF has assisted QC DoF Savar in improving its organizational performance.

Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting: BTF is assisting the QC DoF laboratory in Savar by automating its report transfer process and certification system. To this end, BTF has conducted a feasibility study and developed plans to implement the automation systems in all DoF laboratories, including the QC laboratory in Savar. The development of the report transfer automation system has begun and is expected to be completed by the end of Year 4.

Within the DoF, the BTF project has introduced the QC Online Certification System, currently in its pilot phase. Representatives from DoF laboratories have noted that the system requires further enhancements, such as adding ledger or bookkeeping options for internal use. BTF has indicated their intention to extend the pilot phase until the end of 2024 and to conduct training sessions for both senior and junior staff to address bugs, technical issues, and necessary features.

Once fully operational, this system will offer a user-friendly platform for online registration, application submission, fee payment, and automated report issuance, greatly improving efficiency and transparency. The slight improvements in midterm scores indicate the presence of an online certification system.

Testing Capabilities: Until the midterm evaluation reporting period, BTF has not provided any support to the QC DoF Savar laboratory in this particular parameter. However, they plan to provide equipment support for inorganic arsenic testing. Respondents mentioned that while the laboratory has sufficient equipment for current demand, it lacks backup equipment. Some machines have exceeded their lifespan, and the existing funding does not cover machinery replacement, only reagent purchases. The minor changes in the score resulted from the laboratory's own initiatives, but equipment support from BTF is still needed.

Quality Control, DoF, Khulna and Chattogram

The baseline assessment of the BTF project did not include an evaluation of the DoF QC Laboratory in Khulna and Chattogram because the labs were not identified as a target laboratory for the project at that time. In 2022, BTF conducted annual assessment of QC Lab Chattogram and started working with both the quality control laboratories. The evaluators used the information from the original scorecard (annual assessment) of QC Chattogram and prepared midterm assessment scorecards for both labs to review laboratory capacity. BTF's work with the laboratories was limited to measures to introduce a LIMS and

connect the two labs to an overall automated system being introduced at DoF. Therefore, neither lab showed improvements in laboratory capacity due to BTF's involvement as of the midterm evaluation.

The evaluators provided both laboratories a total average score of 3.09. The midterm scores for each of the parameters assessed are shown in the table below. The midterm score for Chattogram show some change compared to the earlier annual assessment completed by BTF, while the scores for QC Khulna serve as the baseline/annual assessment for this lab. For QC Chattogram the midterm assessment scores were lower compared to the annual assessment, such as Sampling Procedures and Capabilities, Testing Capabilities, Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation, and Laboratory's Institutional Capacity, where BTF has not yet provided any assistance. The notable areas of change for QC Chattogram are outlined below.

Table 21: Score of QC DoF, Khulna and Chattogram.

Details	Annual assessment score	Midterm Score (Khulna)	Annual assessment score	Midterm Score (Chattogram)
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting	-	1	0.80	1
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities	-	2.67	3.00	2.67
Testing Capabilities	-	3.5	3.75	3.5
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation	-	4	3.50	4
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries	-	4	4	4
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)	-	3.4	3.83	3.4
Average Score	-	3.09	3.15	3.09

Similar to the DoF QC Laboratory-Savar, BTF is working with these two DoF labs on measures to improve capacity in Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting, and Laboratory's Institutional Capacity. The changes in the score for this parameter at QC Chattogram reflects only the pre-implementation impact of the automated certification system. Representatives from both QC laboratories stated that they have been informed about the various features of the online certification system developed by BTF. However, they believe that the service delivery process will significantly improve once they receive training and formally launch the system.

Quality Control Laboratory, DLS Savar

The QC Laboratory at DLS Savar showed an increase in the midterm evaluation compared to the baseline assessment. It emerged as one of the top-performing laboratories in the midterm evaluation, however, the score increase is attributed to external factors. BTF supported this laboratory in two thematic areas, Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting, and Sampling Procedures and Capabilities, however these improvements are yet to take effect. The changes in the midterm scores are shown in the table below.

Table 22: Score of QC Lab DLS Savar.

Details	Baseline Score	Midterm Score
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting	4.00	3.00
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities	3.50	2.67
Testing Capabilities	3.75	3.75
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation	2.50	4.00
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries	3.00	4.00
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)	2.67	3.67
Average Score	3.24	3.51

The following sections elaborate on parameters in which BTF has aided QC Lab, DLS, Savar in enhancing its organizational performance.

Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting: BTF is currently working on adding the report generation and transferring to QC Lab, DLS, Savar's existing LIMS. However, these plans have encountered obstacles as BTF needs to integrate the reporting system with the vendor's LIMS system. BTF has already been developing the report transferring system, expected to take effect by the end of year 4. However, BTF is currently facing challenges in reaching a mutual agreement with the DLS lab's LIMS vendor, as they have not been very responsive to BTF's efforts. Therefore, the change in score here does not reflect BTF intervention.

Sampling Procedures and Capabilities: BTF is also supporting SOPs development to streamline sample procedures, a move praised by the respondents. However, respondents noted that all SOPs need to be translated into Bangla to ensure easy accessibility, as the current versions are in English. The changes in score for this parameter do not reflect BTF intervention, as the finalized version of SOPs was not transferred to the laboratory.

Plant Quarantine Reference Laboratory, Khamarbari

The Central lab PQW has shown slight progress since the initial evaluation, owing to both BTF's support and its proactive efforts. In some scorecard parameters, a decline in score indicates that the sub-parameter of the scorecard has been assessed differently by the midterm evaluator. However, it does not necessarily mean that the decreased score is a result of BTF's intervention; rather, it may reflect the outcome of the re-evaluation of sub-parameters. The changes in the midterm score are shown in the table below.

Table 23: Score of Central lab Plant Quarantine Wing (PQW).

Details	Baseline Score	Midterm Score
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Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting	0.00	1
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities	2.00	0.33
Testing Capabilities	1.25	2.5
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation	0.00	0.5
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries	N/A	2
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)	2.25	1
Average Score	1.10	1.22

The following sections elaborate on parameters in which BTF has aided Central lab, PQW.

Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting: BTF initiated an IT project to create an interface between PQW's information system and Bangladesh Customs' ASYCUDA World and Bangladesh National Single Window (NSW) systems, enabling the automatic transfer of test reports. However, delays occurred in integrating lab report issuance with the NSW due to the overall Single Window project being behind schedule. BTF has maintained regular communication with the firm contracted to develop the NSW system, and it is expected that once the NSW is developed, the integration of lab test report transfers will be implemented in the laboratories. During the first three years of the project, the laboratory did not receive any support planned by BTF in the information technology thematic area. Additionally, the laboratory did not undertake independent activities to enhance its performance. Consequently, the changes in score indicate no progress being made due to BTF intervention but other factors.

Laboratory's Institutional Capacity: BTF conducted comprehensive training programs for officials and field inspectors to facilitate the Import Sampling SOP. This included training sessions with DAE and PQW officials at various land border posts to assist in implementing the SOP and introducing standardized forms and documentation requirements. Additionally, BTF conducted a three-day Training-of-Trainers (ToT) program for nine PQW officials to implement the SOP training activity at five border posts. However, laboratories are yet to develop and revise their SOP as per the instructions received from the BTF, hence no progress has been made.

Central lab Plant Quarantine Laboratory has participated in the introductory training on ISO/IEC 17025:2017 conducted by Bangladesh Accreditation Board (BAB) with support from BTF and developed basic understanding on ISO 17025 Accreditation. However, the existing laboratory infrastructure does not enable PQW to apply for ISO 17025 certification. Therefore, the insights gained from the training session cannot be implemented unless there is an investment in infrastructure. Due to BTF intervention, the parameter related to the capacity of technical staff score has improved. However, the overall score decreased in this parameter due to differences in the assessment of five sub-parameters from baseline scoring to midterm evaluation.

Central Disease Investigation Laboratory

The baseline study did not assess CDIL as it was not part of the initial intervention plan. However, BTF initiated its plan to assist CDIL in late 2022, prompting the staff conduct of an annual assessment of the

laboratory score. Consequently, the midterm evaluation team compared the annual assessment score with the midterm score. The changes in score are attributed to both the assessors' evaluation and BTF's intervention. The changes in score are given as follows.

Table 24: Score of CDIL

Details	Baseline Score	Annual assessment score	Midterm Score
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting	-	1.20	1.8
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities	-	3.00	2.3
Testing Capabilities	-	4.00	2.75
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation	-	1.00	1
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries	-	N/A	4
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)	-	3.50	3.5
Average Score	-	2.54	2.56

The following sections elaborate on parameters in which BTF has aided CDIL in enhancing its organizational performance.

Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting: BTF has conducted feasibility studies and established roadmaps for integrating automation systems across DLS laboratories, including participation from CDIL. However, these plans have encountered obstacles. Primarily, CDIL has already implemented the Bangladesh Animal Health Intelligence System (BAHIS) developed by FAO for data sharing with DLS. Unfortunately, BAHIS isn't compatible with Customs reporting requirements. As per Ministry directives, all laboratories require a unified platform for Customs reporting, necessitating either the integration of BAHIS or the adoption of a new Customs-compatible solution. CDIL has communicated its requirements to both BTF and FAO but awaits a decision from the Director General of DLS and may require funding from the MoFL. The change in midterm scores reflects BTF's pre-implementation of said system.

Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation: BTF is actively supporting CDIL in their pursuit of ISO accreditation for specific test parameters. The laboratory has identified the need for ISO 17025 validation for five tests. With BTF's collaboration, feedback on two of these tests has already been received, and CDIL is currently revising them to resend to BAB. Beyond BTF's involvement, the laboratory demonstrates continued efforts to enhance its testing capabilities. They regularly conduct Proficiency Testing (PT) on their own initiative, partnering with organizations like the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO Australia) and the AMR reference laboratory of the United Kingdom. The score remains the same as the laboratory has not acquired the accreditation.

Laboratory's Institutional Capacity: While BTF equipped CDIL with introductory training on ISO/IEC 17025:2017, the laboratory subsequently encountered internal knowledge gaps and commitment challenges despite actively forming a quality management team. To address these hurdles, BTF strategically developed awareness training and an informative explainer video to sensitize staff to

the accreditation process. This valuable tool was effectively launched at the Food and Chemical Laboratory Expo 2022, reaching a wider audience within the agro-trade sector. The change in score indicates the impact of BTF intervention.

Atomic Energy Center Dhaka (AECD) and Atomic Energy Center Chattogram (AECD)

The baseline study aggregated the scorecard of both the AECD and the AECC. Additionally, certain parameters of the scorecard were not assessed during the baseline study but were evaluated in the midterm study. This increase in score may be attributed to differences in assessors' interpretations and the impact of BTF's intervention. The changes in scores are depicted in the table below.

Table 25: Score of AEC Dhaka and AEC Chattogram.

Details	Baseline Score	Midterm Score (AECD)	Midterm Score (AECC)
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting	0.25	1	1.25
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities	N/A	2.67	2.67
Testing Capabilities	3	3.75	3.50
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation	1	4	1.50
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries	N/A	3	2.00
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)	2.75	4	3.80
Average Score	1.75	3.07	2.45

Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting: BTF has undertaken feasibility studies and developed implementation plans to integrate automation systems into BAEC laboratories, with AECD's and AECC's involvement. However, progress has been hindered by delays in decisions from higher officials within the laboratories. The change in score indicates the presence of automation component initiated by BTF.

Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation: BTF has not provided accreditation support to AECD laboratory as it is already accredited with ISO 17025 for all relevant parameters following a matrix-based certification. AECC, on the other hand, is currently moving towards accreditation process with BTF's assistance. The laboratory has applied for accreditation of two parameters (Milk powder and soil). Beyond BTF's involvement, the laboratory demonstrates continued efforts to enhance its testing capabilities. The laboratory has validated test methods from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). However, the laboratory faces difficulty finding PT providers for their specific type of tests. BTF conducted a gap analysis to assess the readiness of the Chattogram lab for ISO 17025 accreditation. The gap analysis was followed by a validation workshop to review the process maps for transferring laboratory test reports to the Customs ASYCUDA World system. The workshop was attended by officials from the BAEC laboratory and the Customs Modernization Unit. The laboratory has completed all the documentation processes for ISO certification and is expected to be certified by June 2024.

Laboratory's Institutional Capacity: Within the context of laboratory institutional capacity, AECC has received direct intervention from BTF. It has received training on ISO17025 resulted them to initiate ISO17025 documentation process and document submission to BAB. Additionally, AECD laboratory has proactively undertaken initiatives to enhance its capacity. The laboratory has passed a Research and Development (R&D) fund of 90 lac taka per year from the ministry. The R&D budget provides funds for equipment repair. However, the current budget does not fully cover the equipment replacement budget. Therefore, the midterm score indicates BTF's intervention on AECC.

Poultry Research and Training Center

BTF also completed a baseline evaluation of the PRTC at Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (CVASU) laboratory. BTF started intervention with PRTC in Year 3 after signing an MOU with the institute. Therefore, PRTC did not show any improvement in laboratory capacity due to BTF's involvement. Previously, the laboratory has, however, proactively undertaken initiatives to enhance its capacity through collaborations with other organizations, including FAO, Fleming Fund, CDC, WHO and icddr,b.

The midterm evaluation of the laboratory shows a score of 1.93. The evaluator aimed to pinpoint notable areas of changes compared to the earlier baseline for each of the parameters, shown in the table below.

Table 26: Score of PRTC

Details	Baseline Score	Midterm Score
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting	1.50	1.25
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities	N/A	4
Testing Capabilities	2.67	2.75
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation	0	0
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries	N/A	0
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)	2.20	3.6
Average Score	1.59	1.93

PRTC recognizes that there is a need for LIMS. Hence, they are having preliminary discussions with BTF to automate the service process. BTF has already visited and conducted a needs assessment to identify the scope of automation in the PRTC lab. BTF also plans to provide ISO17025 certification support through BAB in Year 4.

3.2.5 Private Sector

This subsection of the report delineates the project activities and their impact on the private sector. BTF's private sector stakeholders can be categorized into two cohorts; cold storage logistics enterprises, and agro-traders and associations. In addition to reporting the project's impact on these stakeholders, this section also contains the potential and existing challenges they encounter.

Cold Storage Logistics Enterprises

This subsection delves into the project's role in improving Bangladesh's cold storage landscape. Key activities include facilitating investments in the country's cold chain and TCL sector, supporting enterprises in securing funding from external sources, engaging stakeholders, and providing tailored assistance to bridge the gap between investors and operators. The study team examined the impact of these initiatives, documenting their progress, identifying potential challenges, and offering recommendations to enable the implementation team to fine-tune their future efforts. Given below is a summary of the BTF activities undertaken under this broad activity.

Activities Summary

Facilitate Investment in Cold Chain and TCL: To attract investments into Bangladesh's cold chain sector, BTF undertook a thorough market assessment encompassing import, export, and production data for critical perishable value chains such as fruits, vegetables, fish & fish products, dairy products, meat, frozen food, processed food and meat, and pharmaceuticals. This meticulous data mapping exercise identified promising growth areas within the market. Based on these insights, BTF's Investment Options Analysis provides an outlook of the market potential for cold chain services in Bangladesh, and provides investment recommendations, providing investors with a clear understanding of the sector's potential. These efforts have effectively captured the attention of potential investors, and local TCL enterprises providing third party logistics (3PL) services.

Additionally, BTF has been actively working to mobilize investments towards the development of the cold chain infrastructure of the country. The project collaborates with external investors (local and international) interested in supporting local cold chain enterprises and businesses within the food industry. These enterprises may either possess their own cold storage facilities or depend on third-party service providers that are looking to expand their existing businesses.

For effective collaboration between local businesses and investors, BTF identifies and provides support to reputable institutions for potential partnership with local cold chain enterprises and food businesses. Through the project's curated pool of potential partners, encompassing both local logistics companies and international specialists, investors are able to find a reliable shortlist of qualified businesses and specialists. This saves investors valuable time and resources in connecting with suitable collaborators effectively.

Beyond simply connecting investors with local cold chain enterprises and food businesses, BTF is supporting local businesses in expanding their operations. This support extends to refurbishing their existing facilities or constructing new cold storage facilities, providing expert guidance every step of the way. This includes conducting pre-feasibility studies, assessing sites, developing concept notes, and assisting companies in refining their vision while evaluating potential risks before making significant investments. Furthermore, tailored plans are crafted for each prioritized stakeholder, considering their individual needs, readiness and potential. These plans offer detailed guidance, leading individuals through the entire process—from conducting market research and evaluating equipment suppliers to developing business plans, securing investments, negotiating best deals for technology, and finally, implementing projects. For instance, Bengal Meat, a renowned meat producer and distributor installed two quick freezers with consultation from BTF that can be counted as infrastructural improvement.

Additionally, to facilitate investment in the development of cold chain infrastructure for perishable agricultural products, the project implementation team has been engaging with private sector stakeholders in the TCL industry. The project organized two awareness workshops aimed at educating relevant stakeholders about investment opportunities in cold storage and TCL in Bangladesh by

emphasizing the importance of high-quality cold chain facilities and presenting compelling business cases to spur investments in the country's cold chain infrastructure.

Continuing its support for private and public entities interested in investing in TCL warehousing and logistics services, BTF has maintained its outreach efforts to identify potential investors and TCL operators. The project has also collaborated with policy influencers to advocate for 3PL services. Notably, BTF played a key role in promoting the Bangladesh Cold Chain Conference 2023, which brought together over 200 investors, suppliers, operators, and stakeholders in the TCL industry. The conference yielded significant outcomes, with BTF leading a roadshow for an international corporation to assess investment opportunities in Bangladesh. The project facilitated connections with suppliers for two pilot TCL projects, organized an exposure visit for a company to observe top-tier operators in India, and provided direct access to training materials.

Support Cold Chain Enterprises to Procure Funding from External Sources: In addition to its endeavors to attract investments for developing cold chain infrastructure, BTF has provided technical support to private sector entities in accessing funding from both national and international institutions. Notably, the project assisted Bonton and A.K. Khan, cold chain and logistics service providers in Bangladesh, in applying for a USTDA grant to support the establishment and expansion of their cold storage facilities.

Furthermore, BTF has been actively engaging domestic financial institutions to raise awareness about the potential of the cold chain industry in Bangladesh. Efforts are underway to establish communication channels with private banks and other financial institutions in the country to facilitate funding for small and medium-scale enterprises in the cold chain sector. A significant milestone in this effort was the signing of an MoU with City Bank Capital (CBC), a financial service provider, on the 28th of March 2023. Under the MoU, CBC will identify, evaluate, and recommend investment opportunities in the TCL sector to its clients and investors, thereby enabling the enterprises to procure funding from domestic financial institutions.¹⁸

Support Communications/Advocacy for Industry Structuring and Representation: Recognizing the regulatory complexities in the early stages of cold chain development in the country, the project implementation team conducted a thorough review of relevant laws and regulations in 2020. This in-depth analysis, with an emphasis on potential hindrances to warehouse operations, provided the foundation for targeted interventions. Building on this knowledge, a pilot advocacy program was initiated in 2020 and subsequently implemented in 2021. This strategic initiative sought to facilitate dialogue between industry stakeholders and the government, advocating for regulatory reforms. These proactive endeavors aimed to cultivate a more supportive and streamlined business environment for the cold chain sector.

BTF has been assisting private sector cold chain enterprises by promoting collaboration among industry stakeholders, advocating for business cases, and navigating regulatory challenges to foster industry structuring and representation within the cold chain sector. The project's extensive stakeholder consultations refined the cold chain industry's representation model, promoting collaboration and a unified voice. BTF organized workshops and roundtables throughout 2022 that laid the groundwork for collaboration among diverse cold chain stakeholders, promoting knowledge exchange and a shared vision. These efforts led to successful advocacy campaigns by industry associations, resulting in key

¹⁸ <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/corporates/city-bank-capital-and-venture37-signs-mou-develop-cold-chain-infrastructure>

policy changes, including the 2022 tariff rationalization, a significant milestone in industry development.

Bridging the Knowledge Gap and Optimizing Warehouse Processes: The project has undertaken a comprehensive approach to enhance the cold chain sector, focusing on improving knowledge accessibility and adoption alongside targeted training and capacity building for the cold chain enterprises, and TCL facility and warehouse operators. BTF conducted interactive workshops and consultations with multilateral participants from private and government entities, as well as potential cold chain investors to facilitate industry-wide improvement, empowering participants to enhance their skills and contribute to the sector's progress.

To expand access to best practices in TCL operations, BTF translated ten Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA) manuals on perishable goods handling into Bangla. Additionally, a skills assessment guided the development of targeted training programs for the industry-wide associations and cold chain operators, supported by translated GCCA manuals to aid TCL operators in their learning. The topics of these training materials include: Cold Supply Chain overview, Cold Storage Facility Design, Energy Management, and Sanitary Transportation. BTF, in partnership with the GCCA, launched these training programs on May 31, 2023 on GCCA's website, enabling individuals from various private sector organizations to access these resources. So far, 25 individuals from 24 companies have utilized these training materials. Furthermore, to ensure sustained knowledge accessibility, BTF is also exploring collaborations with universities to integrate relevant modules into academic curricula, nurturing a continuous pipeline of skilled professionals.

Furthermore, under this activity, BTF team developed SOPs for Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) Cold Storage and Dhaka Airport's Import Cargo Complex to introduce streamlined processes and international standards. Through active engagement in workshops and consultations, these SOPs were refined, ensuring the efficiency and standardization of warehouse operations. These initiatives by BTF informed stakeholders about crucial TCL operational and food safety certifications, fostering trust and regulatory compliance within the sector.

Despite these efforts, there remains a significant shortage of skilled cold chain operators and workers in the country. KIIs with industry experts indicate that cold chain operators lack access to international SOPs for their day-to-day operations. Consequently, businesses are forced to continually train their workers and replace older workers with new recruits. To address this issue, private sector stakeholders suggest that BTF develop a local firm to provide necessary training for cold chain operators and workers, ensuring a sustainable supply chain of skilled workers to meet the demands of the local market. The study team has outlined a recommendation for this approach in the Private Sector Engagement section of the Recommendation chapter.

Progress

To date, BTF has assessed 90 partners, signed 11 non-disclosure agreements, completed 33 site assessments, aligned the visions for an investment project with 30 businesses, prepared eight concept notes with 11 more in progress, and completed four pre-feasibility studies with three more in progress.

Table 27: Activity Progress in Enhancing Cold Storage Infrastructure.

Activities	Completed	In Progress
Potential Partner Assessment	90	N/A
Site Assessment	33	N/A
Vision Alignment	30	N/A
Non-Disclosure Agreement	11	N/A
Concept Note	8	11
Pre-Feasibility Studies	4	3

At the beginning of Year 3, BTF awarded a cost-sharing grant to iFarmer Limited and Pacific Solar for a pilot project to demonstrate the viability of cold chain investment in first-mile distribution. The anticipated investment from these two businesses is \$125,000 but has not yet been realized by the end of year 3. Investment leveraged up to the end of year 3 include Bengal Meat Processing Industries Ltd. by leveraging an investment of \$132,112 for the development of a new 125 cubic meters (25 MT) frozen and refrigerated TCL facility in Chattogram.

Table 28: Target vs Achievement of installed storage capacity and investment mobilization.

Performance Indicator	Life of Project (LOP) Target	Midterm target	Midterm actual	Midterm achievement in %
Total increase in installed storage capacity as a result of USDA assistance (m ³)	60,000m ³	0m ³	125m ³	N/A
Value of new USG commitments and new public and private sector investment leveraged by USDA to support food security and nutrition	\$12,500,000	\$500,000	\$132,112	26.42%

Despite exceeding the project's performance targets for increased storage volume, the actual value of investments in the cold chain sector falls short of the Year 3 target of \$500,000. However, both the BTF implementation team and partners anticipate significant growth in leveraged investment in Year 4 and 5 as a total of 15 businesses plan to invest in TCL facilities.

Furthermore, BTF's activities during the reporting period demonstrate significant progress in fostering private-sector engagement in TCL. Observations by the evaluation team indicate that the project is actively engaging industry pioneers such as Bengal Meat, Bonton, and Ejab group to provide them with support in developing and expanding their cold chain facilities. Additionally, the program's ongoing stakeholder outreach, provision of technical assistance, and grant support all contribute to cultivating a pipeline of potential investors.

Despite the progress, BTF may face challenges engaging private sector cold chain enterprises in the next two years due to macroeconomic factors like price fluctuations and exchange rate issues. This upward trend in prices is expected to affect the demand for agricultural food products and value-added processed foods, both of which rely on a robust cold chain infrastructure. These challenges could affect investor

confidence in the cold chain industry. Furthermore, the lack of robust infrastructure including adequate storage capacities, reliable transportation networks, and consistent power supply in the country impedes investors and operators from investing in the establishment and expansion of cold chain facilities. On top of this, the sluggish pace of decision-making within certain large and legacy enterprises collaborating with BTF may prolong the process of investment and expansion in cold chain facilities beyond initial estimations.

Moreover, over-reliance on just a few private sector players to achieve two-thirds of the goal within the next two years creates a significant risk. Without diversifying the pool of investors, establishing alternative funding sources, and preparing for potential delays, it may become challenging for the project to meet its goals. Thus, expanding the project's engagement to include local cold chain SMEs and startups could prove beneficial. Engaging these entities can expand the project's scope and aid in fostering local innovative cold chain technologies, while also leveraging investments for the growth of these smaller businesses. The study team has outlined a recommendation to this effect in the Private Sector Engagement section of the Recommendation chapter.

Agro-traders and Associations

While BTF is focused on building the capacity of government agencies, laboratories and cold chain firms, the ultimate stakeholder of the work of BTF are the C&F agents, agriculture firms and associations that need to use the processes to trade their goods. This section of the report outlines the project activities involving these private sector actors, detailing their progress and impact, while also integrating findings from the private sector survey conducted by the evaluation team.

Activity Summary

Engagement with The Trade Associations: To effectively collaborate with the trading community, BTF signed an MOU in November 2022 with the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), the apex trade organization of Bangladesh playing a pivotal role in safeguarding the interest of the private sector traders. However, due to the initial delay in signing the MoU with the FBCCI, progress has been slow. Moreover, the project has also signed MOUs with other trade associations, namely the Bangladesh Fruits Vegetable and Allied Products Exporters Association (BFVAPEA) and the Bangladesh Foodstuffs Importers & Suppliers Association (BAFISA).

Activities with The Private Sector Representatives: BTF's direct interactions with the private sector primarily revolved around conducting meetings, workshops, training sessions, and conferences targeting traders, trade association officials, business owners, private lab representatives, and individuals from various private firms and organizations. For a comprehensive analysis of the project's engagements with the private sector, the study team categorized all the BTF-organized events with the private sector actors under three overarching categories: consultation/need assessment, validation, and capacity-building.

Table 29 provides a summary of the project's private sector engagement since the beginning of the project. A closer examination of BTF's event participation data reveals that until September 2023, out of a total of 81 events organized, private sector actors actively engaged in 39 of them. Notably, 445 unique individuals from private sector organizations participated in these events. A detailed list of all the BTF organized events is provided in Table A2 in Annexure A.

Table 29: Summary of BTF organized events with the private sector actors.

Event Category	No. of Events	No. of Participants
Consultation/need assessment	7	37
Validation	13	102
Awareness raising	19	306
Total	39	445

The consultation/needs assessment events are specifically designed to engage with private sector stakeholders to gather insights, identify their needs, and understand the challenges they face while conducting cross-border trade of agricultural and food products. The events that are conducted to engage the private sector for feedback and validation purposes fall under the Validation category of activities with the private sector. Validation workshops with the private sector stakeholders were particularly beneficial for the project as they allowed the implementation team to confirm the need and effectiveness of the project initiatives as well as reaffirm the private sector on the project's commitment to facilitate inclusive growth in international trade of agricultural goods. BTF has mostly focused its interactions with private sector stakeholders on awareness raising initiatives. This event category consists of events on conducting awareness workshops, organizing capacity building training and conferences for the traders, and other private sector beneficiaries. These awareness raising efforts are directed towards the private sector with the goal of enhancing the awareness and knowledge level of the private sector stakeholders on issues ranging from TFA, WTO notifications to the broad subject of economic implications of LDC graduation on the agricultural sector.

To further disseminate information on pertinent trade-related subjects, BTF created specialized communication tools and materials for the private sector and other stakeholders. To ensure broad accessibility, these materials were developed in Bangla and distributed through designated platforms. The table below illustrates these communication materials and their current status.

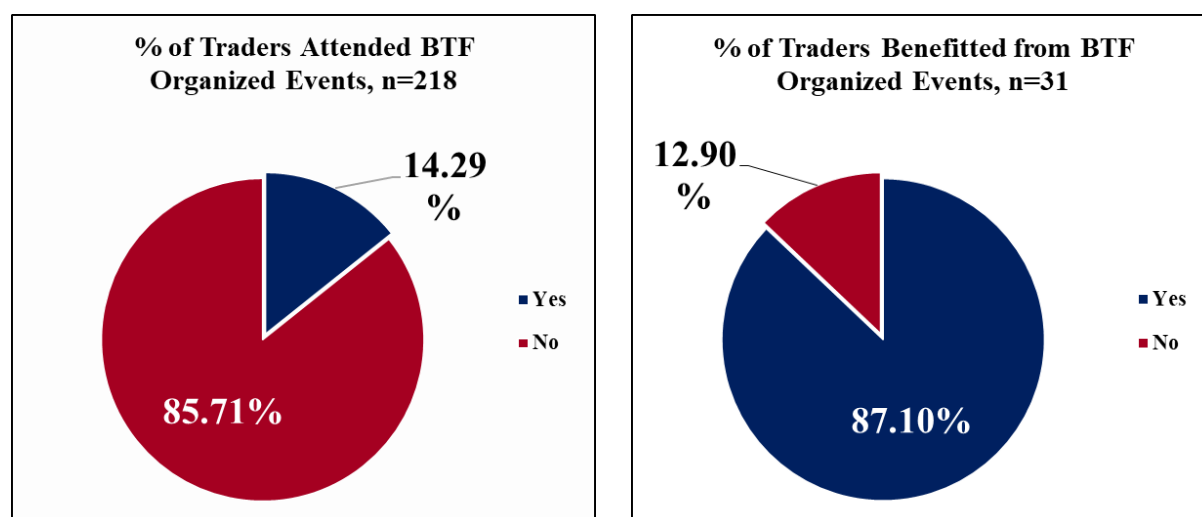
Table 30: Communication materials used by BTF project.

Comp onent	Communication materials	Platform to be covered	Progress
1	Contract Farming Process in Bangladesh animation video. ¹⁹	Land O'Lakes YouTube channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Video materials have been developed and are available on the YouTube platform.
	Infographic		
2	Risk Management animation video. ²⁰	Bangladesh Trade Portal, Customs Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Video materials have been developed and are available on the YouTube platform. Both communication materials are yet to be floated in the Bangladesh Trade Portal and Customs Portal.
	HS Code Repository video		
3	Lab Accreditation to Boost Import-export Trade animation video. ²¹	Land O'Lakes YouTube channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Video materials have been developed and are available on the YouTube platform. An e-version of the laboratory information book is available on the BFSA website.
	Bangladesh Food and Chemical Laboratory Information Book ²²	BFSA website	

Progress by Midterm

According to the survey, only 14.3% of traders have attended a BTF organized event. Therefore, the vast majority of the traders are unaware of the BTF project and its initiatives which puts them at a disadvantage in terms of conveying their message and creating awareness among the traders about various trade related issues and their solutions. Nevertheless, 87.1% of the traders who participated in the events reported that the events were beneficial for them in terms of enhancing their awareness of various trade-related issues and improving their understanding of agricultural trade. See Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Traders' perception of BTF organized events.



¹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnIXInFmtbQ>

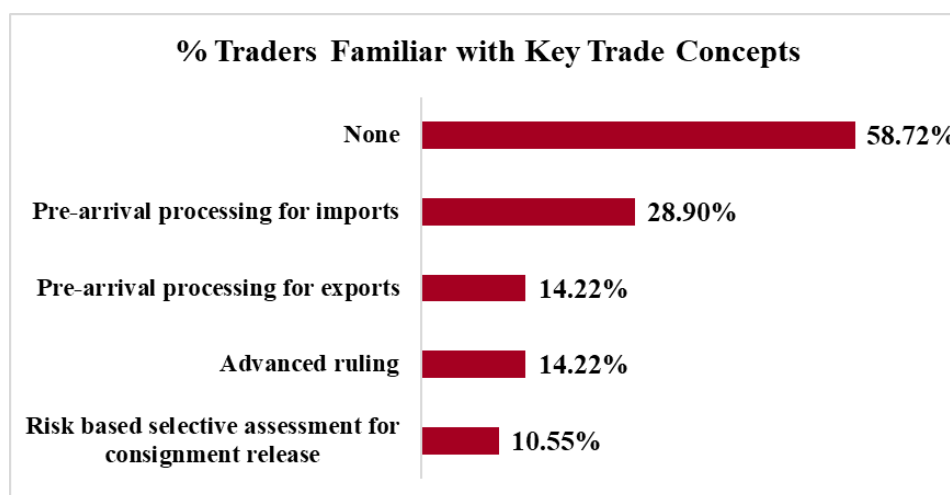
²⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbP87wj_60Y

²¹ <https://youtu.be/eeM4X2piaaY?feature=shared>

²² http://www.bfsa.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bfsa.portal.gov.bd/files/7830cbaa_318e_4ebe_b2ea_b42f14487507/2022-09-10-05-36-91f8cc25dbdd367f2afc0b2418bdcbbba.pdf

Through the survey, the midterm explored the knowledge and comprehension of traders and C&F agents of key trade concepts, including RM practices. The results revealed that a significant majority, 58.72%, of surveyed traders lack familiarity with trade concepts such as RM practices for consignment inspection, advanced ruling, and pre-arrival processes for exports and imports. Only 10.55% of the respondents demonstrated awareness of the RM practice of risk-based selective assessment for import consignment inspection. These findings highlight a notable gap in the awareness and understanding of RM practices among private sector stakeholders.

Figure 3: Percentage of traders who are familiar with key trade concepts.



While BTF did engage the private sector in awareness raising initiatives, as the survey data suggests, there is still a significant knowledge gap among traders regarding various trade concepts and TFA measures. Therefore, in the remaining project years, BTF may consider prioritizing initiatives towards launching awareness and knowledge-building campaigns tailored for traders and private sector stakeholders for narrowing the existing knowledge gaps through heightened awareness of these practices and a deeper understanding of the associated benefits. The detailed recommendation on this can be found in the Private Sector Engagement section of the Recommendation chapter.

Challenges Faced by Traders

Through the survey, private sector stakeholders shared different opinions regarding the challenges they face while conducting international trade of agricultural and food products. When inquired about the challenges encountered in conducting trade over the past three years, out of 218 survey respondents around 72.48% acknowledged facing various difficulties, whereas 27.52% indicated they did not face any challenges.

To ensure a comprehensive exploration of challenges faced by traders, the study employed open-ended questions in the survey, allowing for a broad spectrum of insights. The resulting survey data revealed a diverse array of trade-related issues. To streamline the analysis of qualitative data on trade challenges, the study team categorized similar challenges into specific themes. By calculating the frequency of challenges reported by respondents, the team identified the most prevalent and significant issues confronting traders in Bangladesh. The table below outlines the most pressing challenges encountered by agro-traders.

Table 31: Top challenges faced by agro traders.

#	Challenges	Frequency (n=158)	Subcategories
1	Dollar Crisis	79	Dollar shortage Exchange rate issues
2	Customs Clearance Issues	53	Delays in port clearance Unexpected VAT and unauthorized charges Custom authority harassment Different meanings of convincing customs Inaccurate implementation of bureaucracy Customs problems due to avoidable mistakes
3	Logistics and Transport Challenges	44	Transport issues Long time logistics challenges Traffic barriers and trade restrictions Supply chain disruption
4	Financial Issues	38	Financial and payment complexities High LC rates Lack of financial resources/capital shortages High-interest rates on bank loans
5	Quality Control and Technical Problems	29	Low product quality Technical difficulties in maintaining quality control Complicated testing procedures Lack of production variations
6	Market Access and Entry	18	Difficulty in entering new markets due to lack of market information Excessive competition in the international market Volatility in international market trends Difficulty in adopting to market trends
7	Regulatory and Bureaucratic Challenges	15	Restricting regulations hampering business growth Bureaucratic complications within the GoB agencies Lengthy bureaucratic processes License renewal delays

While some challenges, such as those stemming from macroeconomic and geopolitical factors such as exchange rate fluctuations and market access volatility fall outside the purview of the project objectives, many are within BTF's mandate. For instance, the project's initiatives to streamline and automate import and export processes at the ports is expected to alleviate many of the current customs clearance issues

faced by the traders at the ports. Additionally, the project's efforts to reform trade regulations and improve institutional processes within government bodies aim to mitigate regulatory hurdles, such as lengthy license renewal and certification processes, as well as bureaucratic barriers at GoB agencies. Moreover, BTF has some initiatives that help private sector producers and traders comply with export requirements support companies to implement improved quality control measures mandated by importers. Furthermore, the project's objective of enhancing cold chain infrastructure for agricultural products, which also aims to address the inadequacies in cold chain logistics services in the country, is expected to improve some of the logistics and transport related challenges faced by the traders.

3.3 System Level

This section of the report assesses the system level impact of the project by monitoring the shifts in trade flows of selected agricultural products since the project's initiation, as well as changes in the rejections of Bangladeshi agricultural export consignments by importing countries.

3.3.1 Trend in Trade of Agricultural Goods

BTF tracks trends in four context indicators on the value and volume of trade to provide additional information about the other project achievements. These are specifically designated as context indicators because the value and volume of trade, while influenced by project interventions, are also influenced by many external factors including inflations, exchange rates, natural disasters, etc. These four indicators are:

- Value of agricultural imports
- Value of agricultural exports
- Volume of agricultural imports
- Volume of agricultural exports

At baseline, BTF compiled a list of 125 exported agriculture products and 63 imported agricultural products. These selections were based on BTF's assessment of the potential impact of the project's interventions and other external changes on the trade of these products. The study team extracted and analyzed data from the World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS)²³ to examine the changes in these products. The table below provides a summary of the trade data.

Table 32: Value & Volume of Bangladeshi Agricultural Exports-Imports over the Years.

Year	Export		Import	
	Value (in Million USD)	Volume (in Metric Tons)	Value (in Million USD)	Volume (in Metric Tons)
2019	1,882.6	1,524,154.708	8,036.1	21,557,877.41
2020	2,108.1	1,356,330.865	9,866.4	22,164,873.81
2021	2,604.9	1,529,593.922	14,206.2	25,757,253.94
2022	1,922.5	1,407,947.498	10,542.5	21,445,022.97

- From 2019 to 2021, the value of both exports and imports of targeted agricultural products has increased. The value of exports increased steadily from 2019 to 2021, experiencing a substantial

²³ [World Integrated Trade Solutions \(WITS\)](#)

rise of 38% during this period. However, the value of imports has also increased within this period, with a significant rise of 77% between 2019 and 2021.

- In 2022, there was a notable decrease in the value of agricultural exports to \$1,922.5 million compared to \$2,604.9 million in 2021. Similarly, the value of imports has also decreased from \$14206.2 million in 2021 to \$10542.5 million in 2022.
- Export volume experienced heavy fluctuations from 2019 to 2022. There was a sharp decrease in agricultural product exports in 2020 by 11.01%, followed by a recovery to the 2019 level in 2021. However, this recovery was short-lived as there was a substantial decrease of 7.62% in 2022. Overall, Bangladeshi agricultural exports have witnessed a dramatic decrease in volume from 1.524 million metric tons in 2019 to 1.408 million metric tons in 2022.
- While the export value demonstrated growth, the volume of exports experienced a decline. This decline in volume can be attributed to the increase in prices of key export products such as jute yarn, Jute and other textile bast fibres, molluscs, crustaceans, and other aquatic products. The average prices of four key exportable goods from 2019 to 2022 are presented in the Figure 4. Industry insiders have also expressed similar opinions.²⁴
- The volume of imports was in an upward trend from 2019 to 2021, with a notable increase of 19.48% between these years. However, in 2021, the import volume decreased to 21,445,022.97 metric tons compared to 25,757,253.94 metric tons in 2020.

Figure 4: The average prices of four key exportable goods from 2019 to 2022.

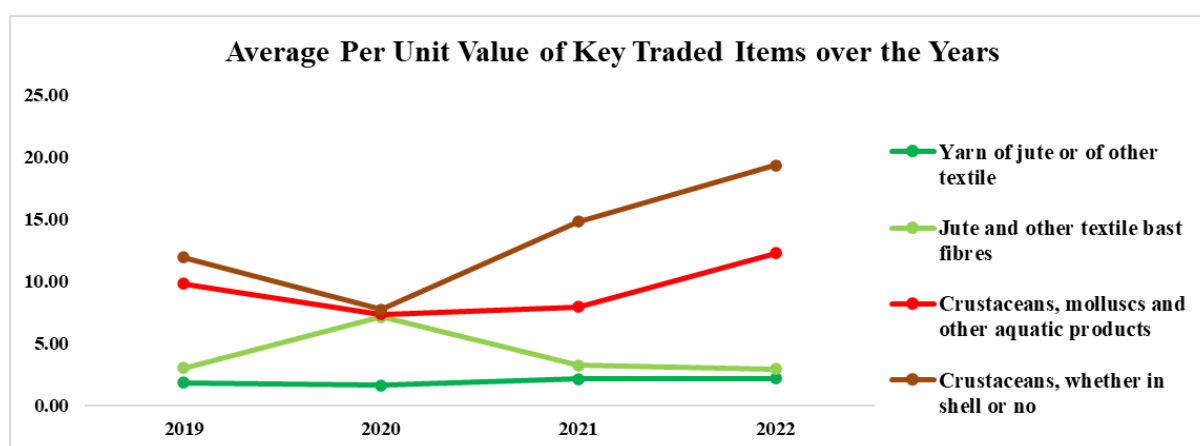
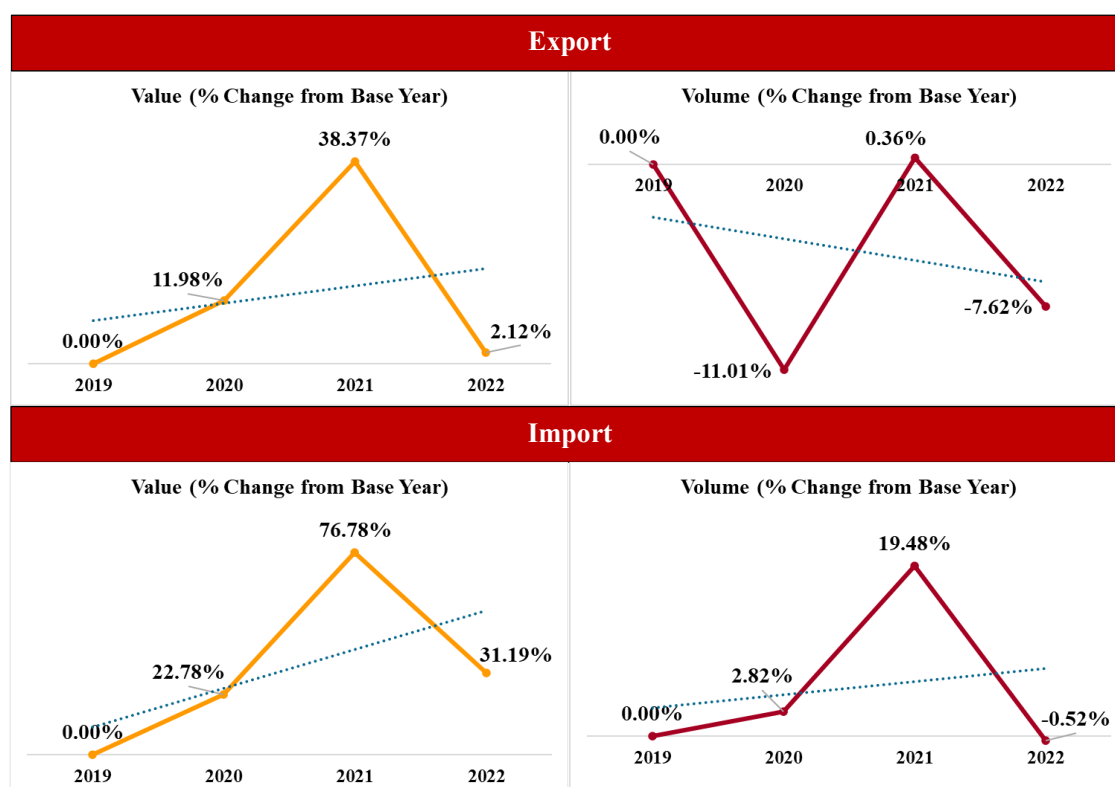


Figure 5 below depicts the trend in the value and volume of agricultural trade from 2019 to 2022. It shows that both the value of exports and imports have an upward sloped trendline, indicating an increase over the years, with imports demonstrating a steeper growth trajectory compared to exports. However, the trend for the volume of exports and imports does not show as robust a growth as the value of trade. Notably, the volume of exports has significantly decreased since 2019, with a negatively sloped trendline. On the other hand, the rise in import volume remained minimal, even though the trend was not negatively sloped.

²⁴ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/agri-export-suffers-sharpest-decline-7-years-3272516>

Figure 5: Trend in Trade Flows of Selected Agricultural Products.



The substantial decline in export volume in 2020 can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The pandemic resulted in a 16.23 percent reduction in the country's total exports in 2020 and has yet to fully recover²⁵. The impact of the pandemic also affected imports in 2020; however, unlike exports, imports have seen a surge in 2021, followed by another downturn in 2022 due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict²⁶. The situation was further exacerbated because of an unusual increase in global freight costs impacting the overall trade flow of the country²⁷. The post-pandemic global political and macroeconomic landscape, coupled with domestic economic conditions, including the dollar crisis, devaluation of the Taka, supply chain disruptions, increased freight costs, and food product inflation, have contributed to these fluctuations in trade. These adverse economic conditions have had repercussions on both the value and volume of agricultural product exports and imports.

3.3.2 Trend in Rejection of Exported Agricultural Goods

This context indicator provides a trend in the rejection rates of the exports consignments to the EU and US markets. Although this indicator may not directly reflect the project's performance, it serves as a crucial monitoring tool for assessing the broader landscape of agricultural trade and export dynamics.

To comprehend the changes in the rejections of export consignments of plant, animal, food, and feed products, the study team collected and analyzed data from the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) for the EU window and the United States Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) Import Refusal Report.

²⁵ <https://www.bb.org.bd/pub/research/policynote/pn2201.pdf>

²⁶ Dhaka Tribune, 2023

²⁷ <https://en.macromicro.me/charts/44756/drewry-world-container-index>

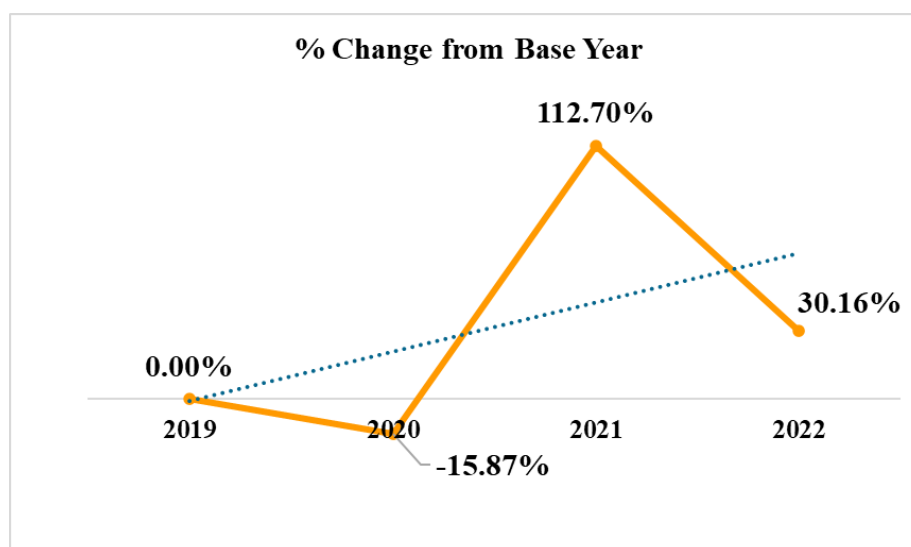
The total number of agricultural export rejections reported in EU and USA markets has fluctuated over the years, experiencing a sharp increase in 2021 to 134 compared to 63 in 2019. Although the number of rejections decreased to 82 in 2022, they remained 30% higher than the base year. The table below provides a summary of the rejection data:

Table 33: Number of Bangladeshi Export Consignment Rejections over the Years.

Year	RASFF	US FDA	Total
2019	8	55	63
2020	5	48	53
2021	4	130	134
2022	14	68	82

Moreover, the trendline for rejections since 2019 shows a positive slope, indicating an overall increase in the number of rejections of Bangladeshi agricultural export consignments.

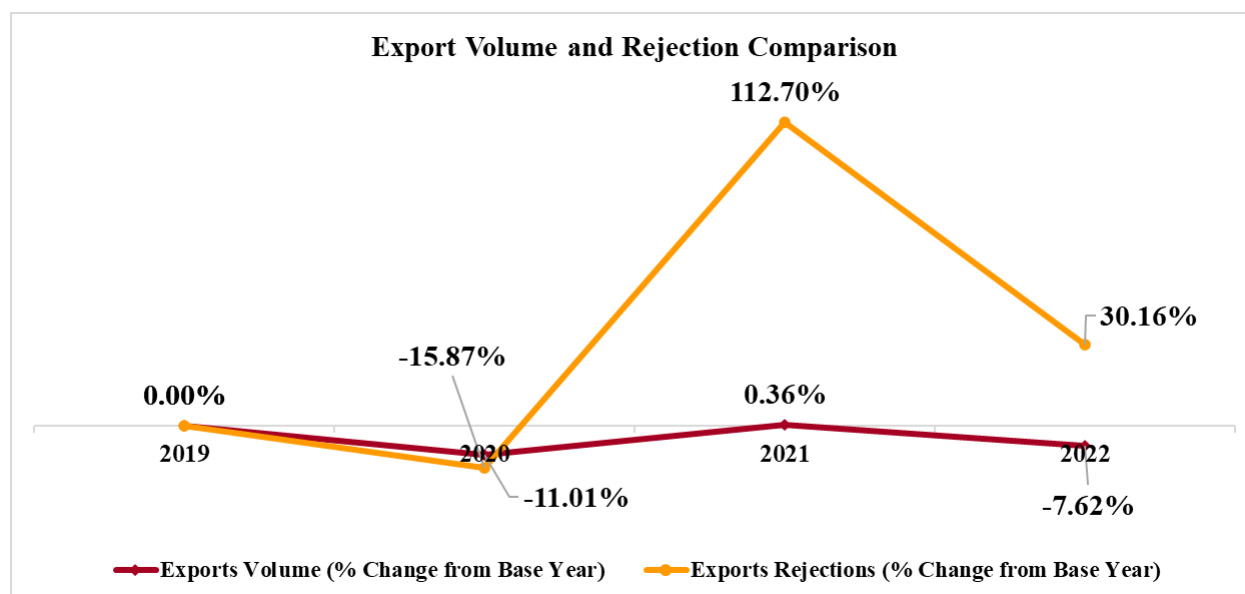
Figure 6: Trend in Rejection of Bangladeshi Export Consignments.



The analysis of data on export volume and rejection indicates a notable correlation between export volume rises and rejections. Specifically, in 2020, amidst an 11.01% decrease in export volume compared to the base year 2019, rejections decreased to 15.87% from the base year. Additionally, in 2021, with a 0.36% increase in export volume from the base year, rejections surged to 112.70% above the 2019 baseline.

However, despite a 7.62% decrease in exports in 2022, rejection showed a notable 30.16% increase from the base year figures. One contributing factor to this rise in rejections could be the increase in the number of smaller export consignments observed by the study team in the Shampur Central Packing House. Many Bangladeshi agricultural exports, especially vegetables and fruits, are targeted for ethnic markets abroad, resulting in smaller-sized consignments that have a limited impact on overall trade volume. Consequently, the increase in the number of these smaller consignments may also be driving the uptick in export consignment rejections.

Figure 7: Bangladeshi Agricultural Export Volume and Rejections from 2019 to 2022.



The rejections data indicate that most of the agro-export consignment rejections from 2019 to 2022 in the EU and US markets are caused by misbranding or mislabeling of the products, adulteration of the food products, chemical and microbial contamination and regulatory non-compliance. Table 34 lists these rejection reasons and the number of violations that occurred within the 2019-2022 timeframe.

Table 34: Causes of Bangladeshi Agro-export Consignment Rejections by the EU and US Markets.

Reasons for Rejection	Times
<i>Source: US FDA</i>	
Misbranding	154
Adulteration	149
Foreign Supplier Verification	19
Unapproved New Drug	9
Total	331
<i>Source: RASFF</i>	
Chemical Contamination	19
Heavy Metal Contamination	4
Microbial Contamination	3
Other Contaminants	4
General Quality Issues	4
Specific Product Issues	1
Total	35

To verify these causes of rejections, the study team engaged with the representatives from the agro-exporters associations. Representatives from the Bangladesh Fruits Vegetable and Allied Products Exporters Association (BFVAPEA) and the Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA) unanimously reported that the majority of the rejections were not due to compliance issues. Rather, according to the BFVAPEA informant, the inclusion of the rejections of personal carry agro-items at the ports inflate the actual number of non-compliance rejections. They emphasized that non-compliance rejections of their member exporters' consignments have decreased over the years, signaling a positive trend in terms of adherence to export regulations.

3.4 Implementation Level

This subsection of the report describes the evaluation findings of the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. Discussion of the project management practices, including human resource management, budgeting and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) practices by the implementation team, is also included in this section.

3.4.1 Relevance of the Project Interventions

BTF emerges as a critical initiative directly addressing key longstanding challenges hindering Bangladesh's agricultural trade growth. Its relevance stems from its alignment with both national trade policies and regulations, and international commitments as outlined by the TFA.

Aligned with national trade policies and regulations, BTF strategically supports two major policies as outlined in Figure 8, below. The Export Policy 2018-2021, revised in 2023²⁸, outlines the government's vision and strategies for boosting agricultural exports and expanding its footprint in international markets. Simultaneously, the Import Policy Order 2021-2024²⁹ governs the regulations and strategies for importing goods, encompassing agricultural products. Both the Export Policy and IPO underscore the need to enhance laboratory capacity and testing quality, aligning with one of the key activities of the BTF program focused on the improvement of laboratory and testing facilities.

In both policies, the government prioritizes increasing trade service-related transparency through automation, process improvement, strengthening CAs capacity, and investments in port infrastructures. These priorities resonate with the overarching goal of the BTF program, which is to support CAs and all relevant stakeholders in reforming necessary legal documents and launching automated services. This also includes facilitating investments to enhance cold chain logistics and contributing to the overall improvement of trade services. Moreover, in sync with the IPO, BTF aligns with the policy's emphasis on facilitating efficient customs clearance and trade facilitation measures. The project addresses port constraints and simplifies formalities, thereby reducing delays and administrative burdens associated with agricultural imports and exports.

²⁸ [The Export Policy 2018-2021](#)

²⁹ [The Import Policy Order 2021-2024](#)

Figure 8: BTF's alignment with the National Trade Policies.

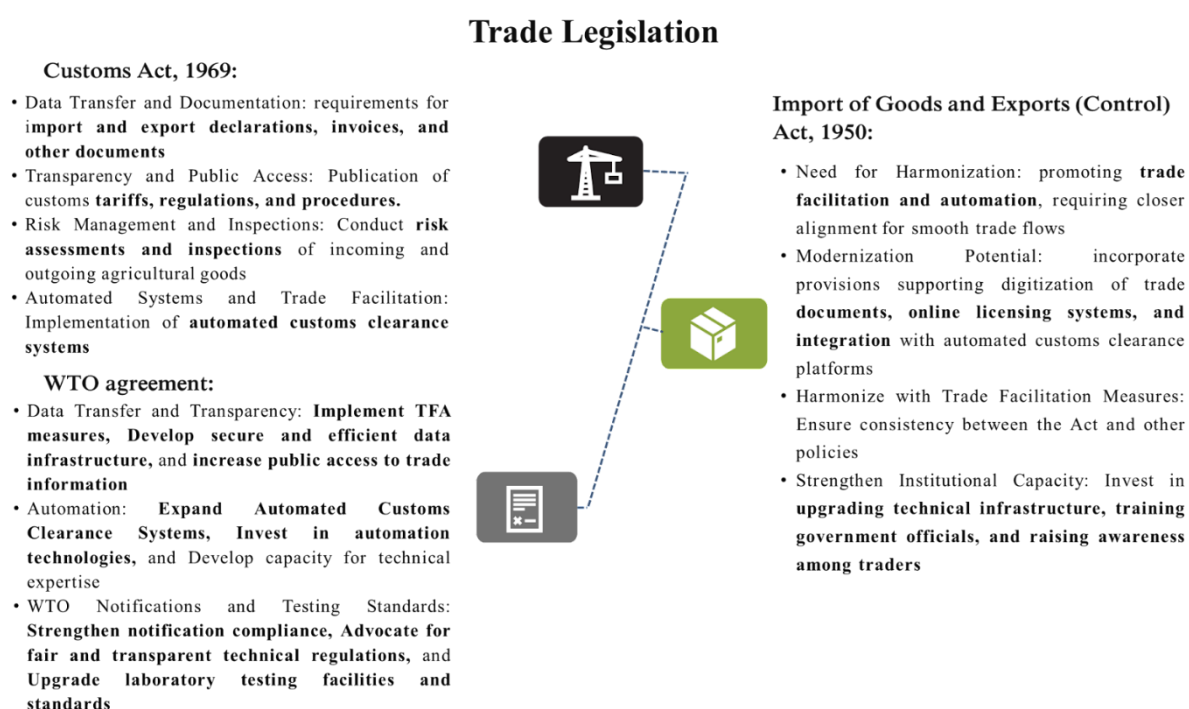


BTF's primary functions align with the country's trade regulations, as illustrated in Figure 9, provided below. The Customs Act of 1969³⁰ emphasizes the significance of risk assessments and inspections for agricultural goods, consistent with measures outlined in the TFA. Similarly, the Import of Goods and Export Act of 1950³¹ underscores the importance of enhancing technical infrastructure, training government personnel, and educating traders to leverage digital platforms and adhere to automated systems effectively. Each of these regulations also emphasizes the importance of automating trade services, thereby enhancing the efficiency of stakeholders involved in trade facilitation.

³⁰ [The Custom Act of 1969, The republic of Bangladesh](#)

³¹ [The Imports and Exports \(Control\) Act, 1950](#)

Figure 9: BTF's alignment with the Trade Legislations.



The requirements of the private sector are also evident in the project's activities, as it involves representatives from this sector in carrying out all five core program activities. Key areas for improving trade conditions mentioned below, frequently highlighted by private sector representatives in interviews during the midterm, are also incorporated into BTF's intervention plan.

- **Efficient and predictable trade environment:** Streamlined customs procedures, reduced administrative burdens, and transparent regulations are crucial for private sector actors in agricultural trade.
- **Improved infrastructure:** Modernization of ports, cold chain facilities, and logistics networks is essential for reducing post-harvest losses and ensuring quality of agricultural products.
- **Technical assistance and capacity building:** Training and support in areas like quality control, packaging, and marketing are important for private sector actors to meet international standards and compete effectively.
- **Access to information and market intelligence:** Timely and accurate data on market trends, prices, and regulations is crucial for informed decision-making and export-oriented production.

3.4.2 Assessment of Efficiency and Effectiveness of Project Implementation

The following section discusses project management, effectiveness, and the likelihood of reaching the set targets, utilization of budget, and the effectiveness of MEL to aid programmatic decisions, aiming to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the project.

Project Management

To evaluate the management of the project, the evaluation team first identified the project implementation team's key activities in relation to the work plan. Based on this, the study team analyzed

the key approaches the project implementation team took to achieve the set targets. The evaluation team also interviewed the project implementation team in two phases to understand their management practices. Further validation on the management practices has been obtained through interviews with the CAs as well.

The findings indicate that the project has demonstrated exceptional performance in project management to attain its targets. Trade facilitation projects inherently encounter challenges stemming from various macroeconomic, behavioral, and geopolitical factors beyond the project's control. The complexity of project implementation is further heightened for the BTF project, operating independently of any ministry within the GoB. Despite these challenges, the project team has successfully navigated the uncertain and intricate work environment, employing agile and creative project management techniques.

Continuous learning from project implementation empowers the project team to redesign future activities, leveraging the USDA's flexibility to adapt the work plan in alignment with project components. Following each fiscal year, the project team conducts a three-day session to evaluate the successes, failures, and lessons learned from the previous year. This formalized process of capturing insights and amending the work plan accordingly significantly facilitates the project in achieving its results and outcomes, notwithstanding some project targets not being achieved as initially planned, the details of which are enumerated in the next section.

Effectiveness and Likelihood of Meeting the Project Targets

BTF project includes 19 indicators (presented in Annex A1), which includes 4 context indicators tracking annual trends in import and export of agricultural products. To measure the achievement of the project, BTF has 15 performance result indicators most with associated annual targets and others require reporting only at midterm or the end of the project. Out of the 15 performance indicators, a total of 3 indicators has either been met or exceeded compared to the targets at Year 3. The evaluators calculated 8 of these 15 indicators as part of the evaluation process and results are reported in Table 35. The evaluators assessment of the likelihood that BTF will achieve the targets by the end of the project is also reported in Table 35, which does not include the context indicators, or the results compared to targets that the evaluator did not assess as a step in the midterm evaluation.

BTF achieved an unexpected increase in installed storage capacity, reaching 125 m³ against a target of zero as of Year 3. Similarly, progress in improving automation at CAs and laboratories surpassed expectations, with the indicator "Number of systems created or improved to automate trade documentation" reaching 4, exceeding the target of 1 by the end of Year 3. Although the indicator "percentage of agricultural import consignments inspected or tested" did not have a mid-term target, progress was not expected due to the legislative actions and significant capacity building required for implementing risk management. The likelihood of BTF meeting this LOP target depends on the traction gained in advancing these RM units. The evaluation anticipates that the project will be able to meet the LOP target for each indicator based on the pipeline and interviews with project staff and stakeholders.

However, the project did not meet the Year 3 targets for 5 of the 8 indicators measured in the midterm. Regarding the indicator related to the "number of firms receiving USG assistance in obtaining certification from an international quality control institution," none of the supported entities have achieved any progress against a target of 3. However, BTF is currently assisting four GoB labs in obtaining accreditation from national and international standard-setting bodies. Additionally, BTF is supporting cold chain enterprises to establish global standard cold chain facilities. Several cold chain

firms are in the process of investment. BTF support may enable them to obtain internationally recognized certification, indicating potential progress towards meeting the LOP targets for this indicator.

The indicator, “Number of CLPOs Issued Through Newly Supported Process Automation Systems” is also unlikely to achieve its target within the project's remaining duration. Despite BTF's support in developing 4 new automated systems for BFSA and DoF, these systems are still in the pilot phase and have not yet been used to issue CLPOs, achieving 0% of its midterm target.

Table 35: Indicator Summary.

#	Performance Indicator	LOP Target	Midterm Target	Midterm Actual	Midterm % achieved	Likelihood of Achieving LOP Target
9	Number of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement provisions supported by USG assistance	15	5	12	200.00 %	Likely The project has achieved addressing over 80% of the LOP targeted WTO TFA provisions. It is highly likely to achieve the remainder two provisions within the next two years
10	Percentage change (from baseline) in Bangladesh export consignments of agricultural products rejected by import countries	25%	10%	Increased by 30%	-30%	Indeterminate Varied every year from baseline to Year 3.
12	Percentage of agricultural import consignments inspected/tested	90%	100%	100%	N/A	Likely BTF is working on establishing national and organizational level legal measures mandating RM practices and their adoption by the CAs.
13	Total increase in installed storage capacity as a result of USDA assistance	60,000 m ³	0	125 m ³	N/A	Likely The substantial number of potential investors and the accelerated activities by the implementation team and partners suggest an increased likelihood of achieving the LOP target.
14	Number of firms receiving USG assistance that have obtained certification with (an) international quality control institution(s) in meeting minimum product standards	6	3	0	0.0%	Likely BTF is currently aiding four GoB laboratories in securing accreditation from national and international standard-setting bodies. Additionally, BTF is assisting a cold chain enterprise in mobilizing investment to establish a facility that meets global standards. These two initiatives

#	Performance Indicator	LOP Target	Midterm Target	Midterm Actual	Midterm % achieved	Likelihood of Achieving LOP Target
						are expected to materialize by the end of the project tenure which may help to achieve indicator's target at LoP.
15	Number of organizations with increased performance improvement with USDA assistance	20	15	11	73.33 %	Likely Target on track. With the project's increased assistance towards the private sector cold chain enterprises, it is likely for the project to achieve its LOP target within the next two years.
16	Number of policies, regulations, and/or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance.	60	35	28	80.00 %	Likely With the ongoing efforts, the project will likely reach its target by the end of the project.
17	Number of CLPOs (certificates, Licenses, Permits & Others) issued through the new project-supported process automation systems.	420,000	35,000	0	0.00%	Unlikely Despite supporting the completion of development of two new automated systems, it is unlikely that the developed systems will be able to issue 420,000 CLPOs within the project's remaining duration.
18	Number of systems created or improved to automate trade documentation	7	1	4	400.00 %	Likely Alongside the creation of four automated systems, BTF is also in the process of developing four additional automated systems for the CAs and labs. This effort increases the likelihood of the project achieving its LOP target.
19	Value of new USG commitments and new public and private sector investment leveraged by USDA to support food security and nutrition	\$12,500,000	\$500,000	\$132,112	26.42 %	Likely With the project's ongoing engagement and support towards cold chain industry pioneers in Bangladesh, a significant growth in leveraged investment is anticipated in Years 4 and 5. The continuous stakeholder outreach, technical assistance, and grant support further strengthens the pipeline of potential investors, increasing the likelihood of achieving the LOP target.

Optimum Usage of Human Resources

In understanding the strategic approaches and efficiency in utilizing the human resources for project implementation, the evaluation team analyzed the background, experience and technical expertise of the onboarded key experts. The evaluation team also utilized key informant interviews with the project implementation team to validate and clarify the engagement of the technical experts and the implementation team.

The analysis reveals that the project has excelled in its approach to human resources onboarding and management, showcasing a strategic recruitment process that prioritized the selection of technical advisors from within the government system. These individuals were meticulously chosen for their profound familiarity with the intricate culture and operational dynamics inherent in government institutions. For instance, BTF added a Technical Advisor - SPS on its team due to the cross-cutting nature of SPS issues across all five components. The lack of capacity and understanding regarding SPS in GoB, coupled with weak coordination, necessitated this timely addition. The new SPS position supported the implementation of activities like the PRA study and initiated the development of an institutional framework and capacity.

However, BTF faced staffing challenges in the Cold Chain Development and Laboratory Improvements components. As the Cold Chain Advisor roles shifted towards investment strategy with private companies from the port development, it necessitated the change in personnel. Unfortunately, early turnover in the newly appointed Advisor position resulted in a vacancy. LixCap provided crucial project management leadership during these transitions. In Laboratory Improvements, difficulty in finding qualified staff that had experience as lab technicians with strategic and managerial capacity led to turnover in this component's Technical Advisor role.

Notwithstanding these staffing challenges, BTF has been able to leverage the experience and deep insights from the technical experts which proved instrumental in steering the project towards its goals and objectives with remarkable efficacy. Their contributions have not only enriched the project's strategies but have also fostered a collaborative environment conducive to innovation and success.

Effective Utilization of Financial Resources

The project has demonstrated efficiency in the management of its financial resources, as evidenced by its ability to maintain an average expenditure rate of 45% up to the midterm evaluation. This commendable financial discipline reflects a judicious approach to resource allocation and utilization, ensuring that funds are utilized optimally to advance project objectives.

A key factor contributing to this efficiency is the project team's effective procurement strategies. These strategies have enabled the timely acquisition of necessary goods and services, thereby ensuring the smooth progress of project activities.

Of particular note is the project's focus on developing and automating systems, a critical activity aimed at enhancing operational efficiency in the trade process. While the implementation of these systems has presented challenges, such as the need for extensive user feedback and optimization, the project team has adeptly navigated these complexities. In doing so, they have effectively engaged with vendors to negotiate favorable terms that have facilitated the completion of activities within budgetary constraints. This proactive approach to vendor management has not only mitigated potential cost overruns but has also enabled the project to achieve its objectives in a timely and cost-effective manner.

The following table presents a detailed breakdown of the project's financial allocations and expenditures across various components. Each component is listed along with its allocated budget, actual utilization, and the percentage of utilization achieved. This comprehensive overview allows for a thorough assessment of how project resources have been allocated and utilized, providing valuable insights into the project's financial management.

Table 36: Utilization of budget up to Year 3.

Component	Budget	Actual up to Mid-term	Used In %
Component 1: Increase Harmonization of Processes and Formalities and Pre-Clearance Processing	\$2,678,858	\$1,050,917	39%
Component 2: Increase Transparency of Trade Information	\$1,366,312	\$500,985	37%
Component 3: Strengthen Risk Management System	\$2,857,825	\$1,270,770	44%
Component 4: Improve Laboratories and Testing Facilities	\$2,298,844	\$806,841	35%
Component 5: Enhance Cold Storage Infrastructure for Perishable Goods	\$3,184,899	\$1,886,072	59%
Total Activities Budget	\$12,386,738	\$5,515,585	45%

Utilization of Budget for Specialized Services

In the breakdown of component-wise budget allocations, the project has demonstrated strategic planning by allocating funds for specialized services, training, equipment, and grants. This allocation reflects a thoughtful consideration of project priorities and objectives. Remarkably, the project has exhibited commendable efficiency in the utilization of these allocated funds, ensuring that resources are maximized to achieve desired outcomes. Currently, there exists a notable sum of unutilized funds, presenting an opportunity for the project to further leverage its financial resources. Specifically, these unutilized funds can be directed towards acquiring specialized services, such as consultancy support, and allocating resources for essential equipment and grants. By strategically utilizing these unutilized funds, the project can enhance its capacity to expedite the realization of project targets and outcomes within the remaining project timeframe. Table 37 provides a component-wise breakdown of the budget usage.

Table 37: Highlights of some components of budget and utilization up to the mid-term evaluation.

Broad Activities	Specialized Services	Midterm	Utilization	Training Costs	Midterm	Utilization	Equipment and Grant Funds	Midterm	Utilization
1	1,151,662	137,961	12%	185,326	53,607	29%	302,273	157,350	52%
2	598,396	36,812	6%	113,111	9,855	9%			
3	994,237	151,214	15%	130,095	77,891	60%	52,273	18,497	35%
4	792,718	107,796	14%	133,957	47,158	35%	250,000		0%
5	469,688	91,135	19%	70,118	23,370	33%	1,000,000	16,507	2%
Total	4,058,050	524,918		735,524	229,016		1,604,545	192,354	

MEL Data Used for Programmatic Decisions

The evaluation team analyzed the MEL data management system and practices utilizing two cohorts of data sources: project-relevant documents and interviews with the BTF MEL team. The study team has thoroughly reviewed project documents including the baseline evaluation report, BTF semi-annual reports, the indicator tracking table, and Performance Monitoring Plans (PMP). Key questions identified during secondary research were answered by BTF MEL team during interview sessions. The evaluation team also shared periodic queries with the MEL team for prompt clarifications.

The study team observed that the MEL tools employed by the project effectively captured output and outcome-level impact to some extent. However, they proved inadequate in tracking certain aspects of project progress related to output and outcome.

A project modification was undertaken in 2023 to adjust indicators, targets, and tools. Despite this, further refinements are needed. For instance, Indicator 8 is the number of individuals practicing improved management practices through scorecards and interviews with CAs, labs, and private sectors. While these methods provide qualitative insights, they cannot quantify specific numbers, genders, and age distributions of individuals. Additionally, the opinions gathered from interview participants may be biased, necessitating validation through supplementary tools.

Moreover, while interventions like workshops, awareness training etc. have imparted significant knowledge on TFA-recommended trade practices among various trader communities, further government initiatives, such as legislative reform, may be necessary to fully utilize this acquired knowledge. Therefore, the number of traders who participated in these sessions, and tracking changes in traders' knowledge levels, could serve as valuable performance metrics currently absent in the project's PMP.

The dynamic nature of the project has led to adjustments in activities, making it challenging to trace in the work plan. Furthermore, semi-annual reports have not comprehensively covered the status of activities that have been dropped, prioritized, or deprioritized. Additionally, cross-cutting indicators further complicate tracking, necessitating thorough reviews of all activities during the specified reporting period.

Sustainability of the Project Activities and Benefits

Over the last three years, BTF has carried out 36 major activities. Table 38 presents the sustainability status of the project activities. Among these, 11 activities were executed sustainably, with benefits expected to persist beyond the project tenure. However, despite being executed sustainably, the remaining activities may not yield enduring benefits.

Among the nine activities targeted to achieve increased harmonization of processes and formalities, three (Initial Consultation, Enhanced Legal Framework, and Trade Manuals) were executed sustainably with extensive stakeholder engagement and multi-staged feedback, ensuring their benefits are likely to endure beyond the project tenure.

The formation of the Agro-Trade Working Group followed all necessary processes but lacked sustainability due to the NTFC's limited organizational authority and administrative capacity.

The transformation of the PQW into the Plant Quarantine Authority is uncertain due to insufficient organizational buy-in from relevant GoB agencies and the ministry.

Electronic systems were developed with a user-centric approach and significant private-sector engagement. However, sustainability plans for these IT systems within the agencies have not been observed up to Year 3.

Seven activities aimed at increasing the transparency of Trade Information and WTO Notification Compliance primarily focused on building the institutional capacity of various GoB agencies, including the MoC, the national contact point for the WTO. These activities engaged all relevant stakeholders through sufficient capacity-building sessions and government administrative decisions. However, respondents remain skeptical about the sustainability of these activities due to the ongoing lack of strong commitment from GoB agencies.



Six activities aimed at strengthening risk management systems focused on building the institutional capacity of agro-trade agencies. Despite significant capacity building and institutional reform, the benefits may not be sustained due to the absence of an institutional mandate for practicing RM.
















































Five activities aimed at improving laboratories and testing procedures for agro-trade. Four of these activities (initial assessment, improving sampling at the point of entry, building the capacity of laboratories to achieve ISO17025 accreditation, and increasing trust in private laboratories) were executed sustainably, and their benefits are likely to endure. However, the sustainability of lab report transfers largely depends on customs' willingness to provide access to the customs system (BSW/ASYCUDA World).

Ten activities aimed at enhancing cold storage infrastructure for perishable goods. Among these, five activities (assessing the cold chain industry, identifying and supporting potential investors and operators, engaging the private sector in cold storage infrastructure, and facilitating investment) were executed

sustainably, with benefits likely to endure. The remaining activities, while also executed sustainably, require proactive participation from GoB actors to ensure lasting benefits.

Table 38: Sustainability of the project activities.

	Less likely to sustain
	Likely to sustain

	Activity	Y1	Y2	Y3
Increase Harmonization of Processes, Formalities, and Pre-Clearance Processing				
1	Initial Consultation			
2	Enhance legal framework to reduce requirements for agro-trade			
3	Establish Agro-trade working group			
4	Support PQW to become Plant Quarantine Authority			
5	Expand, streamline, and automate certificate system			
6	Develop Trade Manuals			
7	Engage the private sector on an e-certificate system			
8	Research and studies for TFA			
Increase Transparency of Trade Information and WTO Notification Compliance				
9	Develop and support a coordinating body (with the purpose of collecting agro-trade information)			
10	Institutionalize the enquiry points [National Enquiry Point (NEP) for Trade and Customs] and trade facilitation coordinating structure			
11	Connect the National Enquiry Point (NEP), Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Enquiry Points			
12	Support MOC and NBR to develop agro-trade/customs clearance section of Trade Portal/Customs Portal			
13	Automation and operationalization of WTO Notification Systems, and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade Enquiry Points			
14	Develop WTO-TFA Implementation National Roadmap			
15	Implement a searchable HS Code document repository			
Strengthen Risk Management Systems				
16	Advance legal framework for Risk Management (RM) for agro-trade			
17	Need Assessment of the Agencies			
18	Create or strengthen RM units			
19	Create Information Technology (IT) infrastructure for RM			
20	Build capacity of GoB agencies in RM processes			
21	Engage the private sector in RM compliance			

	Activity	Y1	Y2	Y3
Improve Laboratories and Testing Procedures				
22	Initial consultation and assessment			
23	Automate laboratory reports and certificates			
24	Improve sampling at the point of entry			
25	Build capacity of laboratories, testing facilities, and certification bodies for implementing and accrediting against ISO17025 standards			
26	Increase trust in private laboratories			
Enhance Cold Storage Infrastructure for Perishable Goods				
27	Assess Cold Chain Industry			
28	Advance legal framework for warehouse operations			
29	Streamline warehouse processes through updated SOPs			
30	Identify and support potential investors and operators			
31	Engage the private sector on cold storage infrastructure			
32	Develop an operational auditing system			
33	Build capacity of certification bodies to certify against food safety management systems			
34	Develop Commodity-specific manuals for handling perishable goods			
35	Facilitate investment in Cold storage			
36	Develop investment-friendly environment			

3.4.3 Internal and External Factors that Influenced Project Performance

This section describes the key internal and external factors that influenced project performance.

1. **Absence of a lead implementing agency from GoB:** The BTF project implementation design did not involve any GoB agencies as a lead. Although in the proposal phase, BTF project was designed to support the NTFC, the apex body for trade facilitation, to address systematic constraints of cross-border trade, NTFC has been inactive during the implementation phase of the project. Consequently, BTF had to independently pursue all targeted agencies and activities. Having a lead agency, preferably a ministry, is pivotal in Bangladesh to positively influence GoB agencies and officials. BTF needed to overcome this challenge independently, convincing each agency separately. This complex and lengthy process makes project activity progress inefficient. Several respondents from CA agencies also expressed similar opinions during interviews.
2. **Difficulties in formalizing partnerships (MOU) with partner GoB Agencies:** BTF initiated engagement with partner GoB agencies before formalizing MoUs. However, some major interventions could not commence without formal MoUs. The finalization process was prolonged due to the lengthy bureaucratic review process of the GoB agencies. The MoU

signing process initiated for BFSa, BSTI, DAM, DLS, DOF, and MoC began on September 28, 2021; November 2, 2022; September 9, 2021; September 22, 2021; November 4, 2021; and September 13, 2021, respectively. However, the MoU process concluded on April 11, 2022; June 7, 2023; April 11, 2023; March 3, 2022; February 3, 2022; and November 18, 2021, respectively. On average, the MoU signing process with GoB agencies took around seven months. Nevertheless, MoUs with NBR and DAE (PQW) are yet to be completed due to a lack of response from their counterparts. In the absence of MoUs with the CAs, the PECs formed by BTF assisted the project in communicating with and coordinating activities between the CAs and other relevant agencies associated with BTF.

3. **Heavy reliance on senior leadership priority agenda:** The pace of project activity implementation is dictated by the partner agencies' senior leadership's priority agenda. Significant progress was achieved in agencies where senior leadership was well-acquainted with TFA measures. However, if they transferred from the position, the project implementation pace was hampered. For instance, BTF assisted the MoC in analyzing and preparing pending WTO notifications to enhance transparency.
4. **Inertia of MoC to implement WTO TFA:** MoC, designated as the lead agency for implementing the TFA of the WTO, has displayed a degree of inactivity in executing its obligations under the agreement. This inactivity can be attributed to competing organizational priority agendas within the ministry.
5. **Complex bureaucratic process for policy reformation:** Policy reformation requires involvement from multiple ministries to review and vet draft documents. The movement of documents between agencies and ministries prolongs the implementation time for each legal document. As informed by multiple government agency informants, an average of one year is required for the process, along with an additional year for the implementation of legal instruments such as acts and rules.
6. **Market Uncertainties:** Global and domestic market fluctuations, along with unforeseen economic disruptions, have impacted investor confidence and project timelines. Higher inflation and political uncertainties have prompted many investors to postpone their cold chain-related plans.
7. **Infrastructure Limitations:** The lack of adequate cold chain infrastructure, including storage facilities, reliable transportation networks, and power supply, has created significant bottlenecks. Recent increases in power outages and higher fuel costs have raised concerns among cold chain operators, increasing their operational costs.

4.0 Conclusion

The BTF project has been playing a key role in addressing some of the crucial challenges hindering the potential of agricultural trade growth in Bangladesh. Starting in 2020, the project aimed to support the legislative and administrative process of trade facilitation relevant to national and international commitments. The 5-year project aligned with Bangladesh's National Trade Act, policies and regulations by supporting the upgrades of trade policy documents, action plans, and regulations. The core functions of the project are relevant to the Customs Act of 1969 and Import of Goods and Export Act of 1950. The functions are also designed in accordance with the WTO trade facilitation agreement. BTF has also included the private sector stakeholders in its work plan to improve the overall agri-trade environment of the country.

As the project closes the third year's activities, this report presents the midterm evaluation outcome outlining the project's progress toward achieving its goals. Adapting to the emergence of COVID 19 from the project's inception, BTF has made significant strides in attaining set targets against the performance monitoring indicators. Among the 14 performance indicators, 5 indicators have shown significant progress and indicate that the activities are on track to achieve its target. However, it is important to highlight that the project needs to expedite some of the activities, such as certification of testing facilities, the number of CLPOs to be issued using the automated systems, to attain the life of program targets by end of the project.

Despite the macroeconomic, geopolitical, and bureaucratic complexities impeding the implementation of trade facilitation projects, BTF has shown exceptional project management traits in its first three years of activities. The agility and creative approach to project management have certainly been the highlight regarding performance measurement. The team promptly adjusted their intervention plan according to the needs of the beneficiaries, enabling them to stay on track with most of their targets. This has also led to optimum usage of relevant human resources and utilization of financial resources.

The evaluation found that some external and internal factors have influenced the project's overall performance. As BTF project has been implemented independently from any government agency, the project team needs to onboard and collaborate with each government agency separately. This also links to the long bureaucratic process prevalent in each of these agencies that BTF had to undergo for the project engagement activities. For targeted project activities, such as policy updates/reformation, bureaucratic delays have been evident as well. In addition, market uncertainties due to the global inflation situation and political turmoil have also put hurdles in the attainment of certain indicator targets.

5.0 Recommendations

The subsequent section outlines strategic recommendations concerning project implementation, MEL, and endline evaluation scopes. These recommendations were formulated based on the project intervention and trade facilitation challenges identified during the midterm evaluation study.

5.1 Facilitate Harmonization of Legislative Tools and Processes

Advocacy for a National Trade Facilitation Act for Bangladesh

Problem Statement: The implementation of WTO TFA provisions faces obstacles due to the absence of a fully operational NTFC.

Context: The NTFC's functionality is compromised due to a lack of proper organizational structure and legal mandate. Meetings are infrequent, typically occurring once a year rather than quarterly as mandated, with limited outcomes. Moreover, the NTFC lacks dedicated resources for its secretarial functions. The absence of a formal mandate and dedicated secretariat impedes the NTFC's intended roles in coordinating and overseeing TFA implementation.

Additionally, implementation efforts of TFA provisions by BTF face obstacles due to legislative gaps at the agency level. BTF is presently engaged in upgrading agency-specific acts and mandates to create a conducive environment for implementing TFA provisions. Modifying legislative documents at such length entails a complex bureaucratic process, resulting in delays and prolonged implementation timelines.

Recommendation:

The BTF project has recognized the necessity for legislation like a National Trade Facilitation Act and has already conveyed this concept to MoC through an official letter, expressing its readiness to provide support. However, a response from MoC is still pending. The delay in response may be attributed to the fact that the potential usefulness of such an overarching act has not yet been fully grasped by key government officials, including those within MoC. Therefore, considering the potential positive impact of a National Trade Facilitation Act, BTF should plan and implement further advocacy for an Act in various forums. Leveraging the influence of national dailies such as The Business Standard, The Daily Star, and government publications can effectively communicate the significance of promulgating a National Trade Facilitation Act.

Assist GoB agencies to enhance capacity to market expansion (export)

Problem statement: The market expansion initiatives undertaken by the GoB agencies lack effective coordination and exhibit potential for formalization.

Context:

MoC bears the primary responsibility for expanding the export market and has developed the Export Policy 2021-24 aimed at guiding agro-trade agencies in promoting the export of agricultural goods. Alongside these policies, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) crafted a roadmap for agricultural goods export in 2022. This roadmap not only identifies existing challenges but also offers solutions to address them while assigning specific responsibilities to various agencies. Despite these initiatives, the implementation of both the export policy and the road map has been notably lacking. The principal

reasons behind this slow-moving progress are attributed to the absence of effective coordination and institutional capacity gaps within the relevant agencies.

Additionally, market development is a comprehensive endeavor, necessitating engagement from stakeholders across both GoB and private sectors. Given that BTF is actively supporting policy reform and capacity building efforts within GoB institutions and the private sector, the following table outlines a model for market expansion. This model aims to pinpoint interventions that are in line with BTF's priority to establish the foundation for expanding export markets.

Table 39: Model for expanding export markets.

Tasks	Responsible entities	Existing capacity gaps	BTF's scope of interventions
Assure Quality and quantity Production (plant, fish, livestock) and farmer	MoA, DAE, PQW, MoFL, DLS, DOF	Good agricultural, aquacultural, and livestock practices are relatively neglected in Bangladesh, except for the World Bank-supported PARTNER project. This initiative aims to bring 260,000 hectares of land under GAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BTF may support the MoA and its relevant agencies in implementing GAP. The specific scope of this intervention is detailed below i. - BTF may support MOFL to increase awareness and capacity building in Good Aquacultural and Livestock practices to facilitate better access to the export market. - Additionally, BTF may support PQW in strengthening the capacity of central packing houses. Further details about these interventions' scope are discussed below.
Innovate Exportable varieties and Production techniques	Universities, research institutions (GoB and private), researchers	Absence of sufficient research fund	<p>The research outcome may lead to the development of exportable varieties, which could have a significant impact on the expansion of the export market. Several respondents from universities and research institutions suggested that individual fellowship programs/grants may be more effective than institutional grants.</p> <p>Considering the potential impact of this intervention, BTF may consider implementing a fellowship</p>

Tasks	Responsible entities	Existing capacity gaps	BTF's scope of interventions
			program for aspiring researchers.
Post-harvest loss reduction and ensure product integrity	DAM, Cold storage enterprise, treatment facilities	DAM and other GoB agencies have underutilized facilities and unused lands that may be used to establish cold storage.	The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for cold storage and treatment facilities can attract private investment in this sector. Discussions are underway between DAM and various private investors to explore and identify a suitable PPP investment model. Further details regarding the scope of this intervention are discussed below.
Provide trusted test reports	Laboratory (GoB and Private)	Lack of recognition of the test report.	Since BTF is supporting GoB laboratories to obtain ISO certification, the scope of this intervention is not discussed in detail.
Food safety	BFSA	Being an apex institution of food safety, BFSA intervenes in production facilities through random inspection. It may build the brand image of Bangladesh as an exporter if the inspection prioritizes export-oriented facilities ensures the following of the best practices, and communicates good practices of the facilities through different communication tools such as Press Releases (PR), Reports etc.	The intervention scopes are described below.
Market linkage and branding	EPB, MoC	There is scope for organizational capacity building to promote export.	The scope of intervention for EPB are discussed in the recommendation number 4.

Recommendation:

a) Assisting in developing SOPs to implement the Bangladesh GAP Policy

GAP practices are essential for market expansion as it ensures the production of goods is acceptable to global export markets. Despite the GoB efforts in projects such as the "Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition, Entrepreneurship, and Resilience

(PARTNER)," the capacity of key agencies involved, including the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Certification Body, and BAB, remains insufficient. The BTF could provide support to these agencies by aiding in the development of SOPs and guidelines for GAP implementation.

- b) **Developing guidelines/SOPs for National Food Safety Assurance Operations:** Enhancing the overall national food safety landscape is crucial for expanding export markets beyond ethnic markets. Given the pivotal role of the BFSA in this regard, the BTF could assist the BFSA in developing operational guidelines/SOPs for monitoring and inspection of agricultural goods production and processing plants. This would improve BFSA's ability to ensure the quality of agricultural goods exported abroad.
- c) **Assisting in Developing an Operational Manual for the Shyampur Packing House:** The inefficiencies at the sole packing house in the country can be mitigated through the development of SOPs and training programs tailored for independent packing laborers. These SOPs would encompass the processes and steps required for sorting and packing, along with the necessary qualifications and safety measures to be adhered to. Implementing comprehensive SOPs and training systems for independent laborers at the Shyampur packing plant could facilitate operational excellence, thereby fostering trust in the facilities and stimulating growth in the export market for Bangladeshi agricultural goods.
- d) **Supporting the Development of a PPP Business Case for Cold Storage Facilities:** In the agricultural goods export roadmap for 2022, the necessity for cold storage facilities was recognized, assigning the DAM the responsibility of exploration. Recently, DAM has been in discussions with several potential investors to explore potential investments opportunities in treatment plants, including cold storage. Both DAM and potential investors indicated that the PPP model seems viable. However, a detailed business case has yet to be developed. The BTF could assist DAM in crafting a PPP business case and providing transaction advisory services in collaboration with the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA).

Advocate for/Lead the Formation of a Non-binding Forum for Trade Facilitation

Problem statement: The absence of an effective collaboration network among various trade facilitation actors hinders the reform of necessary policies.

Context: With multiple donor-funded trade facilitation projects underway, there are instances of duplicated interventions, ultimately impacting the efforts of all project stakeholders, including government authorities. Additionally, the potential for resource optimization remains unrealized due to a lack of collaboration among the ongoing projects. One of the important donors of the trade facilitation project also emphasized that the absence of coordination platforms among trade facilitation problems is a constraint on trade facilitation activities in the country.

Recommendations:

BTF may explore the possibility of establishing a non-binding network comprising trade facilitation actors, including donors, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), trade facilitation projects, local NGOs, and academic institutions. This network can be organized into two groups. The core group may consist of representatives from bilateral and multilateral donors and multilateral organizations. During core group meetings, discussions can focus on areas of work and challenges, and the capacities of each participant can be leveraged to drive policy reform. For instance, the World Bank has instruments beyond technical assistance, such as soft loans, which can expedite policy reform

agendas. This forum can serve as a platform to discuss and prioritize policy reform agendas, leveraging the strengths of donors, INGOs, and projects. The second layer of the group can be designated as a working group for trade facilitation, comprising representatives from local NGOs, academic institutes, and the private sector. These entities can effectively contribute to implementing project activities and generate positive awareness for necessary policy reforms. The formation of the forum can be facilitated through the following steps:

- (a) Organize an idea-sharing workshop involving donors, INGOs, and implementation partners of trade facilitation projects.
- (b) Form a convener committee tasked with preparing a document outlining the charter and Terms of Reference for the network.
- (c) Facilitate and actively participate in the sessions to ensure effective communication and collaboration among all stakeholders.

5.2 Improve Access and Transparency of Trade Information

Address the Ownership and Continuity of the Bangladesh Trade Portal and the embedded Agro-Trade Gateway/Agro-Trade Section

Problem Statement: The lack of sustainability planning for the agro-trade section.

Context: The Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project (BRCP-1), funded by the World Bank, supports the national trade portal's development and operation. In parallel, BTF is providing assistance for the creation of the agro-trade section (Gateway) within the portal. However, the MoC has yet to decide on the operating agency for both the trade portal and agro-trade gateway following the conclusion of the BRCP-1 and BTF projects. Presently, MoC is considering two options: the EPB and the Tariff Commission (TC). However, both EPB and TC lack the necessary skills and experience to manage such a dynamic website effectively. This shortfall in expertise may impede the continued operation of both the trade portal and agro-trade gateway beyond the conclusion of the projects.

Recommendation:

To ensure the smooth transition and sustainability of the trade portal beyond the BRCP-1 and BTF projects, collaboration between the MoC and the BRCP-1 project is imperative to formalize the decision regarding the portal's operating agency. Given its exposure to international trade and organizational strength, the EPB emerges as a viable option for operating the trade portal. Collaborative efforts with EPB can enhance their capacity to effectively manage such systems/portals.

Engagement with EPB can begin with the following initiatives:

- a) **Assisting EPB in updating the Handbook:** Collaborate with EPB to revise the "Rohtani Ritinito o Kolakoushol" handbook, a comprehensive guideline for exporters. EPB aims to ensure the book reflects updates since its last revision. Before starting this endeavor, BTF may assess the handbook's usefulness.
- b) **Assisting in the Development of EPB's Market Intelligence Website:** Provide support for developing EPB's market intelligence website (Browse Export Markets - EPB Market Intelligence Portal -epb-bangladesh-export.com), akin to the trade portal. EPB seeks technical support, including content development, from BTF for this website. Exploring the possibility of merging the trade portal and market intelligence website is advisable, given their similar audience and content.

- c) **Developing SOPs for the agro-trade portal:** Collaborate with EPB or the chosen agency to establish SOPs for maintaining the agro-trade portal, ensuring its smooth functioning.
- d) **Assisting in organizational reform:** Support EPB or the selected agency in necessary organizational reforms to ensure adequate human resources and funds for effective portal operation.

Facilitating implementation of risk-based compliance process

Advocate and support GoB to introduce RM legislative mandates/pertinent administrative orders that would obligate the agency to implement and practice risk-based compliance.

Problem statement: Risk Management cannot be implemented without the inclusion of legislative provisions in the agency's legal documents or any overarching document, such as the IPO

Context: Currently, there is no provision for risk-based selective inspection in any legislative document of the agencies. Consequently, achieving the reduction of consignment inspections—a crucial objective of the BTF project—may be impeded during the project tenure.

Recommendation: Except the DLS, other agencies have not shown interest in availing support to incorporate legal mandates in the legislative documents of the respective agencies. BTF may consider a two-pronged approach to incorporate legal mandates. Firstly, advocate and support GoB agencies to introduce risk management in an overarching legislative document such as the IPO, and proposed National Trade Facilitation Act. This approach may be particularly useful for the agencies whose legislative documents are silent regarding risk-based selective assessment, such as the PQW. Secondly, advocate and support GoB agencies to initiate and expedite the amendment of legislative mandates for agencies that specifically mandate 100% inspection, such as the BSTI.

Conduct a Business Process Analysis (BPA) of the release process of CAs

Problem statement: The challenge lies in determining how and to what extent BTF interventions can effectively reduce the time required to release agricultural goods.

Context: One of the targets of the BTF project is to reduce the time required for releasing agricultural products at the ports. However, achieving this goal within the project's tenure faces challenges, particularly due to the lack of implementation of risk-based sampling. Consequently, measuring the impact of the project intervention becomes challenging.

To address this issue, BTF conducted a Time Release Study (TRS) in Year 1/2 and plans to conduct another before the project concludes. While the TRS conducted in Year 1/2 developed basic process flows, additional studies, such as the BPAs conducted by the USAID Trade Activity in 2021/2, primarily focused on customs and port measures. However, these studies did not comprehensively cover the processes of agro-trade agencies.

To bridge this gap, it is recommended to conduct a BPA with a special focus on agro-trade agencies, ports, and customs to identify potential interventions that could help reduce release time at the port. This BPA can be conducted concurrently with the TRS planned by BTF in Year 4/5. By including agro-trade agencies in the analysis, a more comprehensive understanding of the processes involved in releasing agricultural products at the ports can be gained, leading to more effective interventions.

Recommendation: It is recommended to conduct a BPA specifically focusing on agro-trade agencies to identify gaps where BTF interventions could be expanded. Incorporating both ex-ante and ex-post approaches in the BPA report will enable the identification of potential impacts of interventions, aiding BTF in prioritizing newly identified interventions.

Computerize activities of the Risk Management Units

Problem statement: Risk monitoring activities in the agencies are being carried out manually, which poses challenges for efficient data retrieval.

Context: With BTF's assistance, DLS, PQW, and DoF have established RM units, responsible for monitoring news and websites for potential risk hazards and recording consignment rejection data. However, the manual recording process makes retrieving historical hazardous data inconvenient. Furthermore, the proposed RM system may face challenges if the recording method remains non-digital and lacks uniform structure.

Recommendation: Develop a standardized digital record-keeping system that aligns with the proposed risk management software for mapping hazards and tracking consignment rejections. This record-keeping structure may be integrated with the RM software once it is operational.

5.3 Improving Laboratories and Testing Facilities

Advocate for a 'laboratory network system' to enhance the nation's laboratory infrastructure and to optimize resources across food and chemical laboratories.

Problem statement: Some labs experience underutilizations of resources, while others face a shortage, creating an imbalance in resource distribution across laboratories.

Context: In certain laboratories, there is an underutilization of valuable resources including equipment and infrastructure, while others face significant resource constraints. This imbalance occurs because traders are required to use specific government-mandated labs for certain types of imported goods, leading to higher demand at those labs. Additionally, for imported goods not subject to these mandates, traders typically choose labs closest to the ports, further contributing to the uneven distribution of lab utilization.

Procuring new resources for labs with limitations is challenging due to complex procurement processes and economic considerations. Some labs have resorted to collaborative efforts, such as sharing equipment for testing or outsourcing tests. Additionally, there are instances of sharing infrastructure like effluent treatment plants (ETP) among laboratories.

Recommendations: It is recommended for BTF to support and advocate the GoB to create a 'Laboratory Network System (LNS)' to optimize the utilization of laboratory resources nationwide. Under this framework, all laboratories in the country should formalize their collaboration through agreements such as an MoU. This collective agreement will facilitate the sharing of technical expertise, infrastructure, and human resources among laboratories, thereby enhancing their overall capacity to deliver high-quality services. BFSa is proposed to oversee the management of this system, like the Indian Food Laboratory Network (InFoLNet) established by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.

The LNS will function as a Track & Trace national Lab Network, enabling comprehensive tracking of samples allocated to different labs and streamlining the sample testing process across various stages. The Laboratory Management System (LMS) will serve as the backbone of this network, seamlessly integrating with other BFSA core IT systems such as Licensing & Registration, Quick Access, and Food Safety Training and Certification. The centralized data obtained through this system can be leveraged for Risk Analysis, Standard Enrichment, and Training & Capacity Building initiatives.

Potential benefits of the LNS include:

- Uniform Parameter Testing based on Product
- Enhanced Surveillance
- Enrichment of Standards
- Management Information System Reporting
- Sample Tracing
- Centralized Data Repository

Given the existing Lab Information Repository developed by BTF, extending this IT infrastructure to integrate an additional module designed for laboratory administration is both feasible and beneficial and could enhance collaboration and efficiency across the laboratory network.

Establish a training and technical support system for laboratories.

Problem statement: Laboratories face a deficiency in accessing skill development training.

Context: For the efficient operation of the laboratory, hands-on training on test methods, instrumental technical training, etc. is essential. However, most labs reported being unable to attend such training sessions in the last 1-2 years, negatively impacting their operational efficiency.

Recommendation:

1. Conduct a comprehensive training needs assessment of labs to evaluate training requirements, encompassing the skills and competencies necessary for various roles within food safety laboratories. This assessment should cover technical skills related to laboratory testing, analytical techniques, equipment operation, and soft skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Each laboratory must assess the training needs of laboratory personnel across various levels of expertise and specialization. These assessments should be conducted through third-party entities to impartially identify gaps in knowledge, skills, and competencies that need to be addressed through tailored training programs.
2. Then, develop tailored training programs based on the identified needs assessment. These programs should encompass a wide range of topics, including laboratory techniques for various food matrices, equipment operation, quality assurance, safety protocols, and regulatory compliance. Consideration should be given to both theoretical and hands-on practical training sessions, including in-house training, external training, certification programs, continuous professional development, and on-site technical assistance. Implementing this need-based training and technical support can enhance the capabilities of food safety laboratories in Bangladesh, ensuring they meet international standards and contribute to safeguarding public health.

The list provided below offers potential training providers that BTF may consider for matchmaking.

Laboratory to be accredited require following training	Training Providers/ Institutes/Academies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Management System ISO 17025 • Laboratory quality control • Documentation, SOP, Validation, and PT • Internal Audit and quality control. • Automation of Laboratory activities and linking to ASYCUDA • Laboratory waste management and Biosafety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biosafety training providers (i.e. Bangladesh Biosafety and Biosecurity Society) • ISO service provider companies in Bangladesh (i.e. Bureau Qualitas Certifications, UNiCERT) • Laboratory personnel of Academic institutions/Research organization • IAEA enlisted laboratories

Establish Proficiency Test provider for Chemical and Microbiological contaminants in Bangladesh

Problem statement: The lack of reliable PT providers significantly impacts Bangladesh's laboratory landscape.

Context: Proficiency testing providers are pivotal in assessing the competence of laboratories and testing facilities across various industries. To uphold the integrity and reliability of PT programs, these providers must adhere to specific criteria and standards. While BTF is in discussions with BRICM as a potential PT provider, it's important to note that BRICM can only offer PT services for chemicals. This limitation arises because the stability of chemical compounds in a food matrix allows for proficiency testing in this domain.

However, PT for microbiology presents unique challenges and considerations. Given the unstable nature of microorganisms in a food matrix, microbiology PT providers require specialized expertise in food microbiology. Additionally, access to control and reference strains, adherence to pathogen safety protocols, proficiency in handling indicator organisms, and proper sample processing and distribution are essential. It's imperative that samples containing potentially harmful microorganisms are managed in accordance with biosafety standards to ensure participant safety and prevent inadvertent pathogen release. A food laboratory that meets all the standards could be designated as a PT provider for microbiology.

Recommendation:

The Biological Hazard and Health Research Laboratory (BHHR) of CARS, DU, or Waffan, a private food microbiology testing facility, could be excellent candidates for a PT provider for food microbiology.

5.4 Private Sector Engagement

Enhance Private Sector Involvement in Trade Harmonization for the Remainder of the Project

Problem statement: Inadequate engagement with the private sector to enhance their capacity.

Context: In the initial three years, BTF primarily collaborated with the private sector, involving them in consultation and validation processes, except for 16 capacity-building events targeted at potential investors in cold storage, private firms, organizations, and trade associations. With the project nearing completion, most outputs, such as the BFSa lab repository and e-health certification system, are ready for utilization, while others, like the Fish Inspection and Quality Control (FIQC) automated system, are in the pilot phase. The agro-trade gateway is anticipated to be launched soon. Going forward, apart from BTF's plan to engage with associations, additional activities should be considered to enhance private sector involvement for the remainder of the project.

Recommendation:

- 1) **Build awareness among users (traders) regarding the usefulness and process flow of the systems/portals.**
 - a) For the engagement activities of year 4, BTF may consider utilizing Audio-Visual Materials (AVM) to demonstrate the benefits of the system and its process flow. Installation of TV screens at prominent locations such as the premises of ports, CA agencies and trade associations can be considered. Partner with these entities to display AVMs, similar to the practice of displaying service guidelines in the lobby of the DoF Dhaka office where paper-based descriptive notices are used to convey the process flow to the service recipients. Explore opportunities to install TV screens at other relevant locations such as the premises of other CA agencies and associations like BFVAPEA and FBCCI.
 - b) For the engagement activities of year 5, present success stories of BTF-supported systems/portals using AVMs through the channels mentioned earlier. Leveraging the social media channels of associations and CA agencies may further enhance engagement.
- 2) **Awareness and knowledge building for available trade measures/TFA recommended trade measures.**

The trader survey revealed that 58.72% of surveyed traders lack familiarity with trade concepts such as RM practices for consignment inspection, advanced ruling, and pre-arrival processes for exports and imports. BTF may consider conducting awareness campaigns for traders to enhance their awareness of available trade measures/TFA recommended trade measures. Utilize tools such as leaflets, banners, billboards, and AVMs. Since these concepts are relatively new to the traders' community, awareness building alone may not suffice. Providing knowledge-level training and communication collateral such as booklets and AVMs explaining the details of these measures would be beneficial.

Increase Direct Support for Cold Chain Industry

Problem statement: Cold Chain Industry Requires Broader Support to Grow and Innovate.

Context: Up to this point, BTF has collaborated with cold chain companies to attract investment, but it has yet to implement specific capacity-building sessions tailored for the cold chain sector. Conversely, only a few development partners have initiated small-scale cold chain applications for SMEs. Involving SMEs in such initiatives could significantly improve the overall state of the cold chain industry in Bangladesh.

Recommendation:

1. Addressing cold chain technical skill gaps within the market

Interviews with the industry experts reveal that for day-to-day cold chain operations they do not have access to international SOPs. Which means continuous upskilling of workers involved in the day-to-day operations of cold chain is difficult, the veteran workers of the cold chain facilities are hard to replace with new staff. Most of the workers in the cold chain currently get on-the-job training but standardized onboarding can make the process faster. Technical manpower such as cold chain technicians, electricians and food safety managers are scarce in the market. If a pipeline of these kinds of workforce could be developed, it would be beneficial for the private cold chain actors. Some large private sector actors, impressed with the cold chain consultants provided by the BTF, suggested development of a local firm with adequate capacity to serve the local market after the project tenure has ended.

2. Arrange a challenge grant competition for the local cold chain entrepreneurs and SMEs

Around the world there has been an ushering of new technologies in small-scale cold chain applications, especially using renewable energy. In Bangladesh, areas like hill tracts, char areas, and haors have many smallholder farmers producing various horticultural products that could benefit from these innovations and technologies. Although the Feed the Future Food Innovation Labs project by USAID is working on the local small-scale initiatives in safe and effective technologies, support for the local cold chain SMEs and startups have been minimal in Bangladesh. BTF can organize a competition for local entrepreneurs and SMEs to showcase and promote their cold chain technologies. This competition could offer challenge grants to small startups to develop innovative technologies and expand their businesses. Since BTF is already supporting the investors by awarding cost-sharing grants for the development of TCL pilot projects, it can extend similar financial support to promising startups emerging from the competition.

5.5 MEL and Endline Evaluation Recommendation

Recommendation for effective tracking of project progress and performance.

Problem statement: There is room for improvement in the PMP and the incorporation of a new indicator to monitor the project's progress.

Context: The project's MEL tools partially capture output and outcome-level impacts but lack comprehensive tracking in certain areas. Despite adjustments in 2023, further refinements are necessary, particularly in quantifying the number and demographics of individuals practicing improved management practices.

Recommendation:

1. To comprehensively evaluate the impact of support provided by the BTF on cold-chain enterprises, it is imperative to conduct a firm-level survey. This survey aims to assess the organizational-level changes resulting from the assistance extended by the BTF. BTF should undertake this firm-level survey as an integral component of the end-line evaluation process, focusing on cold chain enterprises that have benefited from the project's support. It is imperative to ensure representation from various types of enterprises, including those that have not successfully implemented changes. This inclusive approach will facilitate the identification of factors contributing to the non-implementation of new management practices received from the BTF. Understanding the underlying reasons for the non-adoption of these practices is essential for discerning both facilitators and obstacles in implementing standard management practices. Such insights are pivotal for refining future support strategies and fostering a more effective uptake of management innovations within the cold-chain industry.
2. Incorporating supplementary tools is essential to accurately identify the reliable number of individuals practicing improved management practices. Two key tools can be utilized for this purpose:
 - a. **Disaggregation of Individuals by sex and age:** BTF utilizes the IMPACTS system, a customized electronic data collection tool, to track the unique individuals among the training participants. To further enhance monitoring capabilities and capture participants' perspectives on the application of their learning and its organizational benefits post-training assessment, an additional monitoring tool should be considered. This tool would facilitate the disaggregation of participants by age and gender, in alignment with the existing Project Management Plan (PMP). Alternatively, conducting a representative survey among training participants could also fulfill the requirement for disaggregation by sex and gender.
 - b. **Cross validates the findings:** Employ an observational tool during the end-line evaluation to validate the findings of the KIIs with a CA organizational representative and monitoring tool. A transect walk, for instance, can be conducted at various service points of the CA organizations to assess the actual status of improved management practices. This tool provides valuable insights into enabling factors, challenges, and lessons learned.
 - c. **Representative survey on trainee:** Conduct a representative survey with BTF participants during the end-line or final evaluation that could serve to validate the data obtained from the KII and enhance overall understanding. The survey instruments should be semi-structured to capture reasons behind the non-adoption of management practices. The insights gained from this process would be valuable for informing the design of interventions in future projects or initiatives, including those undertaken by USDA, aimed at improving management practices.
3. The midterm evaluator employed both quantitative and qualitative data in scoring CAs and laboratories, following a systematic approach to review relevant policies, rules, regulations, SOPs, agency/laboratory webpages, and other parameters of the scorecard. Due to the lack of methodological explanation for CA and lab scoring in the baseline and identified data gaps in the baseline score assessment, the evaluation team suggests using the midterm score as the initial data point for comparison with the endline score. The following steps could be followed to measure the score of CAs in the endline evaluation:
 - a. **Survey Traders:** Utilize surveys with traders to cross-validate data provided by CAs and laboratories on trade services.

- b. Document Review: Check all documents provided by BTF to identify improvements attributed to BTF interventions.
 - c. Systematic Review: Conduct a thorough review of all policies, rules, regulations, GoB portals, websites, and other platforms to verify the presence of each parameter component.
- 4. **Revise targets for Indicator 17 “Number of CLPOs issued through the new project-supported process automation systems” targets.** During the target-setting stage, BTF set their targets based on the automation of specific services, including Import Permits and Phytosanitary certificates. However, these automations happened prior to BTF intervention. Additionally, the number of lab reports assumed was higher than the average reports issued from PRTC and DLS QC LAB. After considering all these factors, the study team estimated that the number of CLPOs issued through the new project-supported process automation systems would be around 30,000 during the project tenure.
- 5. **A new indicator is proposed to measure changes in the knowledge level of the trader community.** It has been observed that interventions such as training, workshops, etc., by BTF have led to significant knowledge enhancement on several TFA-recommended trade practices among trader communities, including buyers, importers, exporters, C&F agents, and associations. However, applying the acquired knowledge may require certain government initiatives such as legislative reform. Therefore, tracking changes in the traders' knowledge level can serve as an effective tool for measuring the project's performance. Hence, it is recommended that BTF incorporates a new performance indicator called “Percentage of changes in the knowledge level on TFA-recommended trade measures with the support of USDA-supported activities/BTF”. BTF can conduct pre- and post-tests on the knowledge level after each knowledge-building intervention targeting the trader community, and report to USDA annually. Additionally, these changes can be captured through representative surveys during the final evaluation.
- 6. **Extend Project Timeline by One Year**

BTF may achieve targets for other performance indicators except for the "Number of CLPOs (certificates, licenses, permits & others) issued through the new project-supported process automation systems" if it is granted an additional year for implementation. This extension could potentially enhance the chances of sustainability of project intervention benefits as well. Several respondents of the KII also shared the same view during the interviews.

Annexure A: Indicator Summary Table

#	Performance Indicator	Disaggregation		LOP Target	Midterm Target	Midterm Actual	Midterm % achieved	Comments
1	Value of agricultural imports (in million USD)	Total		N/A	N/A	10,542.5	N/A	These are context indicators. As many other factors may influence these factors, no targets were set at the baseline.
2	Value of agricultural exports (in million USD)	Total		N/A	N/A	1,922.5	N/A	
3	Volume of agricultural imports (in metric tons)	Total		N/A	N/A	21,194,352	N/A	
4	Volume of agricultural exports (in metric tons)	Total		N/A	N/A	1,407,947.50	N/A	
5	Number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training as a result of USDA assistance	Total		850	500	220	44.00%	Target underachieved.
		Sex	Male	638	375	184	49.07%	
			Female	212	125	36	28.80%	
			Unknown Sex	0	0	0	N/A	
		Duration	New	850	480	220	45.83%	
			Continuing	0	20	0	0.00%	
		Type of Participants	People in Government	490	331	191	57.70%	
			People in firms	350	164	27	16.46%	
			People in Civil Society	10	5	2	40.00%	
			Others	0	0	0	N/A	
			Unknown Type	0	0	0	N/A	
6	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs	Total		11000	8,500	841	9.89%	Target underachieved.
		Sex	Male	8800	6,800	720	10.59%	
			Female	2200	1,700	121	7.12%	
			Unknown Sex	0	0	0	N/A	
		Age	15-29 years old	220	170	24	14.12%	
			30+ years old	10780	8,330	574	6.89%	
			Unknown Age	0	0	243	N/A	
		Type of Participants	People in Government	1000	630	619	98.25%	
			Proprietors of USDA-assisted private sector firms	9990	7,865	216	2.75%	
			People in Civil Society	10	5	5	100.00%	
			Unknown Type	0	0	1	N/A	
7	Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	Total		360000	288,000	16,458	5.71%	Target underachieved.

#	Performance Indicator	Disaggregation		LOP Target	Midterm Target	Midterm Actual	Midterm % achieved	Comments
8	Number of individuals who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance	Total		638	280	TBD	TBD	This indicator was not measured at midterm but will be updated by BTF before the end of Year 4.
9	Number of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement provisions supported by USG assistance	Total		15	5	13	200.00%	Target exceeded. The set target was achieved, and 5 additional provisions were supported during the implementation of the project's activities.
10	Percentage change (from baseline) in Bangladesh export consignments of agricultural products rejected by import countries	Total		25% decrease	10% decrease	30.16% increase	N/A	The percentage of rejections of Bangladeshi agricultural products by importing countries has 30.16% increase from the base year of 2019 falling short of the midterm target.
11	Average time to release agricultural products at the ports	Total		15% decrease	N/A	N/A	N/A	
		Port	Chittagong Sea Port-Import	149.6 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			Chittagong Sea Port-Export	80.4 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			Benapole Land Port-Simplified-Import	8 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			Benapole Land Port-Non Simplified-Import	142.8 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			Benapole Land Port-Export	103 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			Dhaka Airport-Import	19.9 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			Dhaka Airport-Export	40.5 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
		Agency	PQW at Sea Port-Import	7.3 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			DLS at Sea Port-Import	81.6 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			DoF at Sea Port-Import	18.4 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			BSTI at Sea Port-Import	122.4 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			BAEC at Sea Port-Import	8.6 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			PQW at Benapole-Import	0.85 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			DLS at Benapole-Import	61.2 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			DoF at Benapole-Import	0.5 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	

#	Performance Indicator	Disaggregation			LOP Target	Midterm Target	Midterm Actual	Midterm % achieved	Comments
			BSTI at Benapole-Import		285.6 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			BAEC at Benapole-Import		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			PQW at Benapole-Import		0.7 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			DLS at Airport		1.3 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			DOF at Airport		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			BSTI at Airport		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			BAEC at Airport		122.4 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	
12	Percentage of agricultural import consignments inspected/tested	Percentage			90%	100%	100%	N/A	No change was targeted until year 3, thus all six agencies are still inspecting 100% of the consignments.
13	Total increase in installed storage capacity as a result of USDA assistance	Total (in cubic meters)			60,000 m3	0	125	N/A	Target exceeded. BTF supported the development of a frozen and refrigerated TCL facility in Chattogram of 125 cubic meters (25 MT) through a grant of \$132,112.
14	Number of firms receiving USG assistance that have obtained certification with (an) international quality control institution(s) in meeting minimum product standards	Total			6	3	0	0.0%	Fell short of the midterm target. To date no laboratories/testing facilities have obtained ISO 17025 certificates due to BTF assistance.
15	Number of organizations with increased performance improvement with USDA assistance	Total			20	15	11	73.33%	Target is on track
		Type of Organization	Private sector firms		2	2	0	0.00%	Based on the scorecards, all the CAs and five laboratories have improved performance.
			Government agencies		18	13	11	85.61%	

#	Performance Indicator	Disaggregation		LOP Target	Midterm Target	Midterm Actual	Midterm % achieved	Comments
16	Number of policies, regulations, and/or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance	Total		60	35	28	80.00%	Target on track. 28 legal documents have been impacted by the BTF project's intervention out of the targeted 35. With the ongoing efforts, the project will likely reach its target by the end of the project. However, the bureaucratic process requires significant time to implement the changes which should be considered for the rest of the project tenure.
17	Number of CLPOs (Certificates, Licenses, Permits & Others) issued through the new project-supported process automation systems .	Total		420,000	35,000	0	0.00%	Target underachieved. No CLPOs have been issued through the new project-supported process automation systems until September 2022. The automated systems developed by BTF project needs to go fully functional before starting to issue CLPOs.
18	Number of systems created or improved to automate trade documentation	Total		7	1	4	400.00%	Target exceeded. BTF project has successfully developed 4 systems in comparison to the target 1 system.
19	Value of new USG commitments and 'new public and private sector investment leveraged by USDA 'to support food security and nutrition	Total		\$12,500,000	\$500,000	\$132,112	26.42%	Target underachieved.
		Type of Investment	Host Government	\$500,000	\$75,000	\$0	0%	
			Other public sector	\$0	\$0	\$0	N/A	
			Private Sector Firms	\$12,000,000	\$425,000	\$132,112	31.09%	
			New USG commitments	\$0	\$0	\$0	N/A	

Table A2: BTF organized events attended by the private sector stakeholders.

#	Event name	Component	Type	No. of participants
Consultation/need assessment				

#	Event name	Component	Type	No. of participants
1	Workshop on Product Selection for Export-Import Manuals	1	Workshop	7
2	Stakeholder Consultation Wheat Import Manual	1	Meeting	2
3	Stakeholder Consultation Mango Export Manual	1	Meeting	4
4	Focus Group Discussion with DCCI - Agro Trade Section on Trade Portal	2	Meeting	5
5	Focus Group Discussion with BAPA - Agro Trade Section on Trade Portal	2	Meeting	13
6	Workshop on Improving Operational Efficiency & Sustainability of National Enquiry Points for Trade	2	Workshop	4
7	Inter-agency Meeting to Understand Interface and Integration with Single Window and risk management systems	3	Meeting	2
Total				37
Validation				
8	Validation Workshop on Agro-Based TRS at Chattogram Seaport	1	Workshop	3
9	Validation Workshop on Agro-based TRS at Benapole Land Port.	1	Workshop	15
10	Validation Wheat Import Guidelines and Manual	1	Workshop	8
11	Validation Mango Export Guidelines and Manual	1	Workshop	5
12	Validation Workshop on Agro-based Time Release Study (TRS) at Dhaka Airport	1	Workshop	19
13	Validation Workshop for "Draft Bangladesh Cold Storage Licensing, Construction and Operation Regulations, 2022"	1	Workshop	2
14	Validation Workshop on National Guidelines for Good Livestock Husbandry Practices	1	Workshop	4
15	Validation Workshop on Agro Trade Section of Bangladesh Trade Portal	2	Workshop	13
16	Validation Workshop on Food Testing Lab Information Repository	4	Workshop	13
17	Validation Workshop on Standard Operating Procedure for Import and Sampling of Fish and Fisheries Products	1	Workshop	5
18	Validation Workshop on Smart ImpEx Repository at Dhaka	2	Workshop	3
19	Validation Workshop on Smart Imp/Exp Repository (Chittagong)	2	Workshop	6
20	Validation Workshop on Smart Imp/Exp Repository (Benapole)	2	Workshop	6
Total				102
Awareness raising				
21	Automation & Implementation of Contract Farming & Traceability System for Potato Export	1	Workshop	9

#	Event name	Component	Type	No. of participants
22	Automation & Implementation of Contract Farming & Traceability System for Mango Export	1	Workshop	7
23	Seminar on "Impacts of LDC Graduation on the Agri-Sector and Way Forward"	1	Workshop	14
24	Training Workshop on Product Development and Export Promotion of Tilapia and Pangasius	1	Training	20
25	Training on HS Classification of Fish and Fish Products: Integrating with Potential Data Resources	3	Training	27
26	Training on HS-Classification for Animal and Animal Products: The Harmonized commodity Description and coding system	3	Training	1
27	Training on Cross-border Trade Food Risk Management: International Standards and Best Practices	3	Training	1
28	Food and Chemical Lab Expo 2022	4	Conference	52
29	Awareness Workshop on the use of e-Health Certification System and Lab Information Repository	4	Workshop	16
30	Training on the Laboratory Information Management and Report Transfer process at DoF Chattogram	4	Training	3
31	Training on the FIQC Export-Import e-Certification System at DoF, Chattogram	4	Training	11
32	Training Session on "Lab Information Repository" for BFSa	4	Training	6
33	Training for BFSa Officials on the usage of the e-health certification system	4	Training	4
34	ASHRAE Cold Chain Conference 2023	5	Conference	56
35	Workshop - Opportunities to Develop 3PL Cold Storage in Bangladesh	5	Workshop	11
36	Webinar-Opportunities to Develop and Invest in Cold Storage and TCL in Bangladesh	5	Workshop	24
37	Training on the FIQC Export-Import e-Certification System at FIQC, DoF Khulna	4	Training	5
38	Training on the Laboratory Information Management and Report Transfer process, at DoF Khulna	4	Training	4
39	Awareness Workshop on the Automation of Export-Import Certification and Lab Information Management Systems	4	Workshop	35
Total				306
Grand Total				445

Annexure B: BTF Assisted Policies

SL	Trade Services Enabling Environment: Legal, Policy, and Administrative Outputs	Stage
1	Import Policy Order ('21-'24)	5
2	Export Policy	5
3	Good Livestock Production Practices (GLPP) for DLS	5
4	GoB Order to Change Authority to Issue Export Health Certificate for Food Items from Export Promotion Board to BFSA	5
5	SOP for Inspection and Sampling Procedures for Import of Plant and Plant Products	5
6	SRO on Tariffs Rationalization related to Import of Cold Storage and Freezer Equipment	5
7	Issue SRO to Nominate Laboratories for Issuance of Fit for Human Consumption Certificates to Clarify Article 23(24) in IPO 2021-2024	5
8	SRO on Tariffs Rationalization related to Shrimp Hatchery Industry	5
9	GoB Order to organize a Trade Wing at Department of Livestock Services (DLS)	4
10	Establishment of Risk Management Unit at DLS	4
11	Establishment of Risk Management Unit at DoF	4
12	Establishment of Risk Management Unit at DAE-PQW	4
13	Establishment of Risk Management Unit at BSTI	4
14	Cold Storage Regulations for DAM	3
15	Bangladesh Food Safety Act-2013 Modification	3
16	Amendment of Plant Quarantine Act 2011	3
17	Regulation to Establish a Plant Quarantine Authority as National Plant Protection Organization	3
18	Fish Quarantine Rules	3

SL	Trade Services Enabling Environment: Legal, Policy, and Administrative Outputs	Stage
19	Notification Covering Automation of Export Health Certificate and Import License Issuance for Fish and Fish Products	3
20	Fish Inspection Quality Control Rules	3
21	Customs Inspection and Sample Management Rules	3
22	Pesticide Rules 2023	3
23	Notification Change for Reporting on Contract Farming and Traceability Compliance	2
24	Notification Governing Establishment of Inland Container Terminals	2
25	SOP for Inspection and Sampling Procedures for Import of Fish and Fish Products	2
26	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Policy	1
27	Electronic Governance of Safe Food Import 2023	1
28	Animal and Livestock Products (Inspection and Quality Control Act)	1

Annexure C: Key Informant List

Sl.	Informant Name	Position	Organization
GoB Competent Authorities			
1	KH. Mahbubul Haque	Director General	Department of Fisheries
2	Md. Serajul Islam	Senior Assistant Director (Attached Head Office, Fisheries Inspection & Quality Control)	Department of Fisheries
3	Md. Jewel Shaik	Chief Fisheries Extension Officer	Department of Fisheries
4	Dr. Md. Emdadul Haque Talukder	Director General	Department of Livestock Services
5	Dr. Malay Kumar Sur	Director (Planning Section)	Department of Livestock Services
6	Dr. Sharmin Samad	Deputy Director (Risk Management)	Department of Livestock Services
7	Dr. B.M. Jafar Ahammed	Upazila Livestock Officer	Department of Livestock Services
8	Md. Kawserul Islam Sikder	Additional Deputy Director (Statistics and information)	Bangladesh Food Safety Authority
9	Sourav Kumar Singha	Scientific Officer	Bangladesh Food Safety Authority
10	Enamul Hoque	Deputy Director (Agriculture and Food), Standards Wing	Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution
11	Mohammad Arafat Hossain Sarker	Assistant Director (CM)	Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution
12	Enamul Hoque	Deputy Director (Agriculture and Food), Standards Wing	Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution
13	Dr. Shemshed Begum Quraish	CSO & Head Chemistry Division	Bangladesh Atomic Energy Centre
14	Dr. Md. Rezaul Karim	Director	Plant Quarantine Wing, DAE
15	Kbd. Ziaul Islam	Additional Deputy Director (Rules, Policy, and Laboratory)	Plant Quarantine Wing, DAE
16	Kbd. Muhaiminur Islam	Additional Deputy Director (Import)	Plant Quarantine Wing, DAE

Sl.	Informant Name	Position	Organization
Other GoB Agencies			
17	Omar Md Imrul Mohsin	(Market Linkage, Research, Export Development and Agribusiness Development) (Additional Charge) (Joint Secretary)	Department of Agricultural Marketing
18	Kishore Kumar Saha	Assistant Director (Training)	Department of Agricultural Marketing
19	Md. Sanwar Hossain	Assistant Director (Training)	Department of Agricultural Marketing
20	Md. Hafizur Rahman	Former Director General (WTO Cell)	Ministry of Commerce
21	Mohammad Ileas Mia	Director (WTO Cell)	Ministry of Commerce
22	Md Abdur Rahim Khan	Additional Secretary Export Wing	Ministry of Commerce
23	Md. Tarek Mahmud	Deputy Director (Central Intelligence Cell)	National Board of Revenue
24	Imam Gazzali	Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs, AIR	National Board of Revenue
25	Md. Mijanur Rahman	Project Director (Joint Secretary)	BRCP-1
26	Kazi Mohammad Anisur Rahman Khan	Executive Officer, APBPC	BPC
27	Kumkum Sultana	Director (Policy and Planning)-Current Charge	Export Promotion Bureau
28	Abu Noman Faruq Ahmmed	Professor and Chairman, Department of Plant Pathology Faculty of Agriculture	Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
29	Md. Masud Rana	Assistant Professor, Department of Fishing and Post-Harvest Technology, Faculty of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Science	Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Laboratories/Testing Facilities			
30	Dr. Shemshed Begum Quraish	CSO & Head Chemistry Division Atomic Energy Centre, Dhaka	Atomic Energy Center, Dhaka
31	Dr. Shahadat Hossain	Chief Scientific Officer	Atomic Energy Centre, Chittagong

Sl.	Informant Name	Position	Organization
32	Ziaul Islam	Additional Deputy Director	Central Plant Quarantine Laboratory-PQW, Dhaka
33	Dr. Md. Al- Amin	Senior Scientific Officer (SSO)	QC Lab-DLS, Savar
34	Dr. Md. Golam Azam Chowdhury	Principal Scientific Officer	CDIL-DLS, Dhaka
35	Shilpi Dey	Quality Assurance Manager	QC Lab-DoF, Savar
36	Md. Zillur Rahman	Senior Assistant Director and Quality Manager	QC Lab-DoF, Khulna
37	Md. Ahsan Hasib Khan	Quality Assurance Manager	QC Lab-DoF, Chattogram
38	Dr. Himel Barua	Professor and Director	PRTC, Chattogram
Trade Associations			
39	Mr. Md. Mamunur Rahman	Additional Secretary General, General Affairs Wing	FBCCI- Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry
40	Mr Mohammad Borhan E Sultan	President	BAFISA- Bangladesh Foodstuff Importers and Suppliers Association
41	Mr. Monjur Hossain	Advisor	BFVAPEA- Bangladesh Fruits, Vegetables & Allied Products Exporter's Association
42	Shaikh Sohel Pervej	Secretary	BFEEA- Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association
43	Md. Golam Sarour	Director	BCSA- Bangladesh Cold Storage Association
44	Mr. Ashraful Haque Khan Swapan	Custom Affairs Secretary, Chattogram Customs Agents Association	C&F (Chattogram)
Cold Chain Investor			
45	Mr. Krishantha Wijesooriya	General Manager, Production and Supply Chain	Bengal Meat
46	Shamim Ahamed	CEO	Bonton Foods
47	Mahabubul Alom	Manager, Operations	Paragon

Sl.	Informant Name	Position	Organization
48	H U Shahed	Director Supply Chain	Chaldal
59	Abdul Wadud	Sr. Business Analyst	AK Khan & Co.
50	Eshtiaque Ahmed	Managing Director	Ejab Group
51	Captain M Asaduzzaman (ND), AFWC, psc, BN	Member (Harbour and Marine)	Mongla Port Authority
52	Mr. Asad	GM	Khalil's Food
Donor/Peer Organization			
53	Sarah Gilleski	International Agriculture Program Specialist, Foreign Agriculture Service	USDA
54	Tanvir Mahmud Bin Hossain	Agricultural Specialist, Foreign Agricultural Service	USDA
55	Nusrat Nahid Babi	Senior Transport Specialist, South Asia	World Bank
BTF Staff & Implementing Partners			
56	Michel J. Parr	Chief of Party	BTF
57	Fuad Md. Khalid Hossen	Deputy Chief of Party	BTF
58	Nuzhat Zaman	Data Management Coordinator	BTF
59	Bushra Haque	Legal Analyst	BTF
60	Mohammad Mahbubur Rahaman Patwary	Senior Advisor	BTF
61	AAM Aminul Ehsan Khan	Senior Technical Advisor	BTF
62	Nahrin Rahman Swarna	Technical Coordinator	BTF
63	Abu Saleh Mohammad Saifullah	Agriculture Specialist	BTF

Sl.	Informant Name	Position	Organization
64	Nabeel Khan	Technical Coordinator	BTF
65	Mohamed Saad El Jai	Project Manager & Senior Economist	LixCap

Annexure D: Scorecards

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Bangladesh Food Safety Authority		
Structure/Ministry:	Independent Government organization. Ensures citizen's right to access safe food by coordinating with each organization related to food production, import, processing, storage, supply, and sales activities.		
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	BFSA is tasked with coordinating activities among various agencies and organizations engaged in maintaining food safety. Although BFSA is mandated to regulate and monitor activities related to the import of food items, the Import Policy Order does not require BFSA's involvement, and the agency does not issue clearance certificates. There is no list of food items that require monitoring or testing by BFSA before import. BFSA issues food safety certificates upon request for exporters of food items when the receiving country requires certification. Currently, BFSA does not operate any testing laboratories; instead, it coordinates with various authorized laboratories based on the product type. BSTI primarily tests and issues certificates for imported processed food items. The primary legislation instructing BFSA includes the Food Safety Act, 2013, and the Food Sample Collection, Testing, and Analysis Regulations, 2017.		
Date of Assessment:	14-Dec-23		
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team		
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation		Score	Remarks
<u>Legal Framework</u>			
<i>The extent to which the laws that give the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) its regulatory mandate are adequate for it to accomplish its mission in compliance with the WTO TFA Agreement.</i>			
CA has adequate national legislation for compliance, function, accountability and transparency of the protocols and measures.	Yes	2	BFSA is mandated to ensure the safety of food products consumed by the citizens of Bangladesh. To fullfil this responsibility, BFSA is equipped with necessary legislations to apply their mandated tasks.

CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 5.3 Test Procedures	Yes	2	Under Article 5.3 of the trade facilitation agreement, three provisions are included, two of which are based on second testing, while the remaining provision focuses on providing non-discriminatory and easily accessible information about the laboratories available for testing. Although BFSA does not have any second testing option according to the mandate, it has built a Laboratory Information Repository with the support of the BTF project, which allows traders to easily access relevant lab information.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 7.4 Risk Management	Not applicable		Under Article 7.4 of the trade facilitation agreement, provisions related to Risk Management are included. Currently, BFSA does not have any legal mandate to conduct risk-based inspection at the borders. Thus, these provisions are not applicable to the agency.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 7.9 Perishable Goods	Not applicable		Under Article 7.9 of the trade facilitation agreement, provisions related to perishable goods are included. According to the existing mandate of BFSA, the agency does not handle any inspection of imported products to authorize entry or exit points. Thus, this criteria is not applicable to the agency.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 10.1 Formalities	Yes	4	Under Article 10.1 of the trade facilitation agreement, four provisions related to minimizing trade formalities and simplifying cross-border documentation are included. Currently, BFSA only issues Health Certificates to facilitate export trade activities. With the assistance of the BTF project, BFSA has adopted automation of the issuance process of Health Certificates to reduce the time and cost of compliance for traders.
	Average score	2.67	
<u>Trade Related Services</u>			
<i>The capacity of BFSA to effectively process import, export, and transit procedures and formalities, including hindrances caused by redundant or unnecessary steps.</i>			

Certificates, permits, licenses, and approvals, etc. are issued in a timely manner (per measure).	Yes	4	According to the publicly available information, the time stated to complete the certification process for issuing the Health Certificate matches the actual time required to provide the certificate. The private sector survey data reveal that the average time required for obtaining trade-related service from the BFSA is around 159.7 hours or 6.65 days, which is under the maximum time specified for issuing the export Health Certificate in the agency's citizen charter. Therefore, the specified times in the Citizen Charter align with the actual duration required for obtaining trade services from the BFSA.
CA adheres adequately to formalities associated with trade-related services and has demonstrable ability to issue certificates on site and in a timely manner. (per measure)	Not applicable		According to the existing mandate of BFSA, the agency does not have the authority to issue certificates at entry or exit points. Thus, this criteria is not applicable to the agency.
Private sector has appropriate level of awareness on CA requirements as they relate to certificates, permits, approvals, clearance related procedures.	Yes	4	Traders can access the information for applying to receive Health Certificate from the agency's website, the e-health certification System platform (developed with the assistance of BTF project), and direct communication with designated officers from BFSA. Findings from the private sector show that 80.65% of the respondent traders utilize BFSA's website to access trade service related information.
	Average score	4.00	
<u>Information Technology</u>			
<i>To what extent the BFSA utilizes information technologies that enhance the speed, efficiency, and transparency of the regulatory measures it applies.</i>			
CA utilizes electronic portals for submission of e-forms.	Yes	2	In the e-health certification System platform (developed with the assistance of BTF project), traders can apply for Health Certificate online.

CA uses automated systems to support its processes (i.e., communication/notification of other agencies, transmission of reports/test results).	Yes	2	Through the e-health certification System, BFSA can use the automated system to receive the test reports from the labs. However, the system is yet to successfully run due to technical issues.
CA utilizes automated systems to accept pre-arrival data for advanced processing related to its regulatory mandate.	Not applicable		According to the existing mandate of BFSA, the agency does not handle inspection of any imported and exported products. Thus, this criteria is not applicable to the agency.
	Average score	2.00	
<u>WTO Notification Processes</u>			
<i>To what extent BFSA is in compliance with the provisions of the WTO Notifications provisions of the TFA.</i>			
Engagement with Enquiry Point - CA feeds information to the relevant WTO Enquiry Point to inform the trading community of new regulatory measures that might impact trade and provide the trading community and WTO members ample time to comment on proposed changes?	Yes	3	There is a designated staff for the Enquiry Point with other organizational responsibilities. The official is assigned to answer National Enquiry Point queries on behalf of BFSA and handles queries regularly. They are also responsible to coordinates with other agencies and experts as per necessity to provide responses on the queries.

Publicized Trade Information - CA has published the following: (a) procedures for importation, exportation, and transit (including port, airport, and other entry-point procedures), and required forms and documents; (b) fees and charges imposed on or in connection with importation, exportation or transit; (c) import, export or transit restrictions or prohibitions; (d) penalty provisions for breaches of import, export, or transit formalities; (e) procedures for appeal or review; and (f) agreements or parts thereof with any country or countries relating to importation, exportation, or transit.	Yes	4	BFSA only issues Health Certificate to facilitate export trade activities of Bangladesh. The required forms and documents and information on fees are publicly available through the agency's citizen charter document on their website.
	Average score	3.50	
<u>Private Sector Engagement</u>			
<i>The extent to which BFSA includes private sector stakeholders in its policy decisions or conducts outreach efforts to edify private sector on compliance issues.</i>			
Consultations with Private Sector - CA consults with private sector to gain insight and feedback into issues facing traders relating to trade services, capacity, or laws/regulations? If so, are consultations held regular and frequently (i.e., 2 or more times a year)?	Yes	4	BFSA regularly holds stakeholder meetings to gain insight and feedback into issues facing traders relating to trade services, capacity, or laws/regulations. For each regulatory and trade-barrier changes, at least one private sector consultation is arranged. According to the private sector survey, 68% of traders affirm frequent consultations (more than twice a year), 3% report annual engagements, 23% occasional consultation (once in a couple of years), and only 6% state no consultations. These findings align with the KII results, confirming the regularity of meetings between BFSA and private sector stakeholders.

	Average score	4.00	
<u>Institutional Capacity</u>			
<i>The extent to which BFSA has the human and institutional capacity (except for IT) to carry out its mandate.</i>			
CA human resources currently possesses sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities capacity to accomplish tasks associated within the mandate of the CA proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	2	The agency does not have sufficient knowledge, skills, and capacity to accomplish its tasks. There is a need for focused training to promote in-house capacity building.
CA possesses adequate human resource levels to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of BFSA proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	2	The designated field officers are responsible for collecting samples from the producer's premise, distribution point, or sales point for any sample testing (Sample Collection for Testing and Analysis Regulations, 2027). Due to a shortage of manpower, currently, traders have to submit the samples for tests themselves at the district office. Field Officers then carry forward the samples for sending to the testing facilities. Moreover, BFSA currently does not have the in-house capacity to maintain the BTF project interventions, e-Health certification system, and Lab Repository Management System after the project completion period.
CA has adequate facilities and equipment capacity to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of BFSA proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	As BFSA is authorized to ensure the safety of exported food products, the CA can conduct tests from any approved testing facility. The agency has district level office presence to accomplish the tasks associated with their mandate.
CA has adequate cold storage capacity to apply its regulatory mandate in a way that adequately provide service coverage to traders.	Not applicable		According to the existing mandate of BFSA, the agency does not handle inspection of any imported and exported products. Thus, this criteria is not applicable to the agency.

	Average score	2.67	
<u>Risk Management</u>			
<i>The extent to which and the capacity of BFSA to exercise risk-based management principles in the application of its regulatory mandate.</i>			
CA possesses adequate legislative, regulatory (i.e. SRO) and policy instruments to enable risk-based selectivity for treatment and control application.	Not applicable		According to the existing mandate of BFSA, the agency does not handle inspection of any imported and exported products. Thus, this criteria is not applicable to the agency.
CA has a RM framework in alignment with contemporary Intl best practices (i.e. ISO 31000 – WCO RM Framework).	Not applicable		
CA has an organizational structure with dedicated personnel to support risk-based selectivity (e.g. RM Unit or other functional organizational components dedicated to RM).	Not applicable		
CA utilizes compliance management and maintain historical compliance records to determine commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk levels.	0		
CA currently has adequate personnel capacity to apply risk-based selectivity.	Not applicable		
CA has sufficient level of automation / digitization to support risk-based selectivity.	Not applicable		

CA collaborates with other agencies (e.g. NBR Customs) to develop and maintain commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk-based profiles for treatment / control selectivity.	Not applicable		
CA cooperates with other agencies to prioritize agro-based shipments selected for risk treatments or controls (e.g. Service Level Agreement / Citizen Charter) and communicate results as appropriate.	Not applicable		
	Average score	0	
<u>Laboratories and Testing Procedure</u>			
<i>The capacity of BFSA's laboratories to apply its regulatory mandate in a way that is consistent with the WTO TFA and can adequately provide service coverage to traders.</i>			
Criteria will reflect overall average metrics as defined in Laboratories Scorecard.	Not applicable		According to the existing mandate of BFSA, the agency does not handle inspection of any imported and exported products. Thus, this criteria is not applicable to the agency.

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Department of Fisheries
Structure/Ministry:	Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	The Department of Fisheries (DoF) holds vital responsibilities in enforcing quality control measures for exportable fish items and ensuring the safety of imported fish products by issuing NoCs for imported fish products and feed, along with licenses and health certificates for exported goods. This active involvement contributes significantly to maintaining a robust regulatory framework and ensuring the quality of products in the fisheries trade. To support these efforts, DoF operates three fish inspection and quality control stations dedicated to fulfilling its mandate in overseeing the international trade of fisheries and fish products.
Date of Assessment:	14-Dec-23
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team

Assessment Responses:		Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments.	
Agricultural Trade Facilitation		Score	Remarks
<u>Legal Framework</u>			
<i>The extent to which the laws that give the Department of Fisheries (DoF) its regulatory mandate are adequate for it to accomplish its mission in compliance with the WTO TFA Agreement.</i>			
CA has adequate national legislation for compliance, function, accountability and transparency of the protocols and measures.	Yes	3	The National Fisheries Policy of 1993, the Fish and Fish Products (Inspection and Quality Control) Ordinance of 1983, Fish Quarantine Rules 2018, and the Fish Feed and Animal Feed Rules 2010 adequately outline DoF's current mandate. However, as per DoF officials, there are no distinct rules or guidelines specifically for the importation of aquaculture products, as these fall within the agency's regulatory mandate.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 5.3 Test Procedures	Yes	3	As per the Section 9, Articles 5, 6 of Fish Feed Rules 2011, the Department of Fisheries (DoF) is authorized to permit second testing and third testing for imported consignments of fish feed and feed ingredients if the initial test results are unsatisfactory to the importer. Additionally, the agency's website features a link to its online Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS), providing access to the lab repository system that includes a list of all alternative labs for second testing. However, accessing the names of these alternative labs for second testing may prove to be challenging to the traders as it requires extensive search efforts.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 7.4 Risk Management	Yes	1	According to Article 7.4 of TFA, the Department of Fisheries (DoF) adheres to clauses 1 and 2 (partially). The DoF has formalized Risk Management (RM) by setting up a RM unit, comprising personnel from within the DoF who also handle other organizational responsibilities. This unit is presently in a capacity development phase, with support from BTF they are also creating risk profiles and a list of risk indicators. However, both the National Fisheries Policy of 1993 and the Fish and Fish Products (Inspection and Quality Control) Ordinance of 1983 does not contain any clause mandating DoF for the provision of risk-based selective assessment of imported fish products.

CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 7.9 Perishable Goods	Yes	2	The CA agency lacks a specific guideline for managing perishable goods. The existing regulations, including the Fish and Fish Products (Inspection and Quality Control) Ordinance of 1983, Fish Quarantine Rules 2018, and the Fish Feed and Animal Feed Rules 2010, do not contain provisions for the expedited release of imported perishable goods or instructions for prioritizing their inspection and testing. Although the agency is not obligated to offer cold storage facilities at ports, with limited capacity, the DoF uses freezers set at -18 degrees to preserve perishable items while under their custody. Additionally, traders have the flexibility to arrange their own cold storage logistics provided they are approved by the authority.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 10.1 Formalities	Yes	3	In order to streamline and automate the certification issuance process, reduce turnaround time, and improve overall efficiency of trade related formalities, the DoF, with the assistance from BTF, has launched an online e-certification portal called the 'FIQC e-certification System'. This portal allows traders to apply online for the issuance of Licenses, Health Certificates, country requirement-specific Additional Health Certificates, Import NOCs, Import Registration Certificates, and Import Release Letters. Even though DoF has undergone significant automation and simplification efforts, there is no formal committee to review these procedures to ensure they live up to the spirit of TFA provision 10.1.
	Average score	2.40	
<u>Trade Related Services</u>			
<i>The capacity of DoF to effectively process import, export, and transit procedures and formalities, including hindrances caused by redundant or unnecessary steps.</i>			
Certificates, permits, licenses, and approvals, etc. are issued in a timely manner (per measure).	Yes	4	As per the Citizen Charter, DoF issues import NOC for fish feed and feed ingredients within 10 working days and NOC for importing live fish and hatchling are issued within 30 working days. Moreover, export related certification (health certificates) and test results are issued within 10 working days. According to the KIIs with the DoF officials, the agency prioritizes the issuance of certificates, permits and licenses as soon as possible. The private sector survey data reveal that the average time required for obtaining trade-related services from the DoF is around 141.1 hours or 5.87 days, which is under the maximum time specified in the agency's citizen charter. Furthermore, 63% of the traders from the survey responded "Satisfied" when asked about their satisfaction of receiving trade

			services from the agency. Therefore, the specified times in the Citizen Charter align with the actual duration required for obtaining these certificates, licenses, and permits.
CA adheres adequately to formalities associated with trade-related services and has demonstrable ability to issue certificates on site and in a timely manner. (per measure)	Yes	2	DoF issues export permit, licenses, import NOC, release letter and health certificates for exports of fish and fish products. However, apart from some lab test certificates, e.g. formalin tests, the agency does not have the ability to issue all CLPOs related to the export-import of fisheries on site.
Private sector has appropriate level of awareness on CA requirements as they relate to certificates, permits, approvals, clearance related procedures.	Yes	4	Traders can obtain information regarding certificates, permits, approvals, and clearance procedures by visiting the DoF website. The Citizen Charter and the Fish and Fish Products (Inspection and Quality Control) Ordinance of 1983 provide detailed insights into the documentation requirements for availing trade-related services from the agency. Additionally, the CA agency's website features links to both its FIQC e-certification System and LIMS portal, accompanied by user manuals and video tutorials to guide users through the application processes and system functionalities. Findings from the private sector show that 71.43% of the respondent traders utilize DoF's website to access trade service related information.
	Average score	3.33	
<u>Information Technology</u>			
<i>To what extent the DoF utilizes information technologies that enhance the speed, efficiency, and transparency of the regulatory measures it applies.</i>			
CA utilizes electronic portals for submission of e-forms.	Yes	3	DoF has launched an online e-certification platform, FIQC e-certification System, with the assistance from BTF, where traders can apply for the issuance of Licenses, Health Certificates, country requirement-specific Additional Health Certificates, Import NOCs, Import Registration Certificates, and Import Release Letters online.

CA uses automated systems to support its processes (i.e., communication/notification of other agencies, transmission of reports/test results).	No	0	At present, DoF lacks an automated system for inter-agency communication. While their FIQC e-certification System is linked to their QC labs information management system to streamline lab testing and inspection, it is not integrated with other agencies' systems to enable the automated sharing of lab reports and test results
CA utilizes automated systems to accept pre-arrival data for advanced processing related to its regulatory mandate.	No	0	DoF does not accept pre-arrival data for advanced processing related to its regulatory mandate. Customs notify them of any import consignment after it enters the ports.
	Average score	1.00	
WTO Notification Processes			
<i>To what extent DoF is in compliance with the provisions of the WTO Notifications provisions of the TFA.</i>			
Engagement with Enquiry Point - CA feeds information to the relevant WTO Enquiry Point to inform the trading community of new regulatory measures that might impact trade and provide the trading community and WTO members ample time to comment on proposed changes?	Yes	3	DoF has designated staffs with other organizational responsibilities for responding to the queries regarding trade related information from the WTO Cell of MoC. However, this is done manually through time-consuming formal official letters and notices.
Publicized Trade Information - CA has published the following: (a) procedures for importation, exportation, and transit (including port, airport, and other entry-point procedures), and required forms and documents; (b) fees and charges imposed on or in connection with importation, exportation or transit; (c) import, export or transit restrictions or prohibitions; (d) penalty provisions for breaches of import, export, or transit formalities; (e) procedures for appeal or review; and (f) agreements or parts thereof with any country or countries	Yes	4	The CA agency has made available key regulatory documents, such as the Fish Quarantine Rules 2018, the Fish Feed and Animal Feed Rules 2010, the Fish and Fish Products (Inspection and Quality Control) Ordinance of 1983, and the citizen charter on their website. These documents encompass details on procedures for imports, exports, and transit, along with the necessary forms, documents, and associated fees. Moreover, the Fish and Fish Products (Inspection and Quality Control) Ordinance of 1983 outlines penalty provisions for violations of import, export, or transit procedures. Findings from the private sector show that 71.43% of the respondent traders utilize DoF's website to access trade service related information.

relating to importation, exportation, or transit.			
	Average score	3.50	
<u>Private Sector Engagement</u>			
<i>The extent to which DoF includes private sector stakeholders in its policy decisions or conducts outreach efforts to edify private sector on compliance issues.</i>			
Consultations with Private Sector - CA consults with private sector to gain insight and feedback into issues facing traders relating to trade services, capacity, or laws/regulations? If so, are consultations held regular and frequently (i.e., 2 or more times a year)?	Yes	4	The KIIs with a DoF official indicate that the agency tries to conduct regular stakeholder meetings with private sector actors, but in recent years, these meetings have become irregular as they are no longer considered mandatory. According to the private sector survey, 46% of traders affirm frequent consultations (more than twice a year), 7% report annual engagements, 25% occasional consultation (once in a couple of years), and 21% state no consultations. These findings align with the KII results, confirming the regularity of meetings between DoF and private sector stakeholders.
	Average score	4.00	
<u>Institutional Capacity</u>			
<i>The extent to which DoF has the human and institutional capacity (except for IT) to carry out its mandate.</i>			

CA human resources currently possesses sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities capacity to accomplish tasks associated within the mandate of the CA proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	3	DoF officials possess sufficient knowledge and skills to accomplish tasks associated within its mandate. However, due to frequent changes in personnel, the overall institutional capacity is not improving. The current resources at the agency are inadequate to provide required regular trainings for the staff to improve their skills and abilities. However, the Quality Control manager, technical officers and scientists are well capable to accomplish tasks associated with their mandate and demand for services at the CA labs.
CA has adequate facilities and equipment capacity to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of DoF proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	2	DoF laboratories possess sufficient capabilities to conduct a wide range of export-related tests. However, limitations exist for import-related tests, specifically concerning fish feeds and ready-made tests. Additional machines and capacity are needed in the aquaculture test laboratories to enhance their capabilities
CA has adequate cold storage capacity to apply its regulatory mandate in a way that adequately provide service coverage to traders.	Yes	1	As per DoF's mandate, the agency is not required to provide cold storage services to the traders at the ports. However, the agency uses freezers set at -18 degrees to preserve perishable items while under their custody at the labs. Additionally, traders have the flexibility to arrange their own cold storage logistics provided they are approved by the authority. As per the private sector survey, all 18 respondents who availed lab services from QC Lab Chattogram confirm the lab's sufficient cold storage capacity. Additionally, for QC Lab Dhaka and QC Lab Khulna, 71% of 14 respondents and 30% of 27 respondents respectively acknowledge the labs' adequacy in cold storage capacity to fulfill their needs.
	Average score	2.00	
<u>Risk Management</u>			
<i>The extent to which and the capacity of DoF to exercise risk-based management principles in the application of its regulatory mandate.</i>			
CA possesses adequate legislative, regulatory (i.e. SRO) and policy instruments to enable risk-based selectivity for treatment and control application.	Yes	3	The RM unit at the DoF was established through an office order from the Director General of the department. This regulatory instrument allows the agency to conduct risk-based selectivity for treatment and control of imported consignments.
CA has a RM framework in alignment with contemporary Intl best practices (i.e. ISO 31000 – WCO RM Framework).	No	0	To date, DoF does not have a risk management framework that aligns with ISO 31000 and WCO RM framework. .

CA has an organizational structure with dedicated personnel to support risk-based selectivity (e.g. RM Unit or other functional organizational components dedicated to RM).	Yes	1	Event though a designated wing for Risk Management has been established within DoF, developed with the assistance of BTF project, the wing lacks a structured organogram and dedicated personnel to support risk-based selectivity. However, the wing is collaborating with BTF to develop risk profiles and a list of risk indicators to support risk-based selectivity of imported consignments at the ports.
CA utilizes compliance management and maintain historical compliance records to determine commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk levels.	Yes	1	The CA agency gets notified regarding non-compliance rejections and maintain historical compliance records. However, they do not utilize the compliance records to determine commodity and trade entity risk profiles.
CA currently has adequate personnel capacity to apply risk-based selectivity.	No	0	The Department of Fisheries (DoF) lacks the necessary human resources to effectively implement risk-based selectivity for consignment inspection.
CA has sufficient level of automation / digitization to support risk-based selectivity.	No	0	DoF does not have an automated or digitalized system to facilitate risk-based selectivity for inspection of consignments.
CA collaborates with other agencies (e.g. NBR Customs) to develop and maintain commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk-based profiles for treatment / control selectivity.	No	0	DoF does not collaborate with NBR Customs or other regulatory agencies to establish or maintain risk based profiles
CA cooperates with other agencies to prioritize agro-based shipments selected for risk treatments or controls (e.g. Service Level Agreement / Citizen Charter) and communicate results as appropriate.	No	0	There is no coordination between DoF and other cross-border regulatory agencies concerning the prioritization of shipments selected for treatments or controls.
	Average score	0.63	
<u>Laboratories and Testing Procedure</u>			
<i>The capacity of DoF's laboratories to apply its regulatory mandate in a way that is consistent with the WTO TFA and can adequately provide service coverage to traders.</i>			
Criteria will reflect overall average metrics as defined in Laboratories Scorecard.	Yes	3.11	This is the average score of the overall mark QC DoF Khulna and Chattogram labs received in their respective scorecards.

	Average score	3.11	
<u>Prioritization of Perishable Goods</u>			
<i>The extent to which DoF through law and through practice prioritizes the inspection, testing, and certification of goods under its regulatory authority.</i>			
CA has adequate procedures to enable the release of perishable goods in a manner that preserves product integrity.	Yes	2	While the agency utilizes freezers to maintain the quality of perishable goods, there is currently no distinct guideline or procedure for expediting the release of these goods. Nevertheless, in practice, fish quarantine officials make efforts to expedite the release of perishable goods to ensure the integrity of the products.
	Average score	2.00	
Department of Fisheries			
ASSESSMENT SCORE	Average score	2.44	

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Department of Livestock Services		
Structure/Ministry:	Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries		
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	DLS primarily regulates the import of live animals, livestock feed and meat and milk products. In addition, a DLS certificate is required for all animal-based exportable products. DLS manages animal quarantine stations; a quality control laboratory, and poultry research and training center. Animal-source food products are tested at other agency labs.		
Date of Assessment:	14-Dec-23		
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team		
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Not Assessed, Enter Comments.		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation	Score	Remarks	
<u>Legal Framework</u>			
<i>The extent to which the laws that give the Department of Livestock (DLS) its regulatory mandate are adequate for it to accomplish its mission in compliance with the WTO TFA Agreement.</i>			

CA has adequate national legislation for compliance, function, accountability and transparency of the protocols and measures.	Yes	2	The CA agency adheres to the Bangladesh Animal and Animal Products Quarantine Act of 2005 and the Animal Feed Regulation 2013 for fulfilling its designated responsibilities. However, these regulations lack comprehensive implementation guidelines. To mitigate this issue, the Department of Livestock Services (DLS) proposed amendments in 2022 to incorporate certain sections related to international trade into the Bangladesh Animal and Animal Products Quarantine Act of 2005, currently under consideration by the MOC. Additionally, to address existing regulatory gaps, the CA agency has formulated the National Guidelines for Good Livestock Practices, which has received ministry approval.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 5.3 Test Procedures	Yes	2	As outlined in Section 8, Articles 4, 5, 6, and 7 of the Animal Feed Rules 2013, the DLS is mandated to authorize second and third testing from other government-approved Quality Control (QC) laboratories for imported shipments of animal feed and feed ingredients if the initial test results prove unsatisfactory to the importer. However, information regarding the specific alternative QC labs is not accessible on the agency's website or in the available legislative documents published online.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 7.4 Risk Management	Yes	2	Despite the absence of a specific clause in the Bangladesh Animal and Animal Products Quarantine Act of 2005 mandating the DLS to conduct risk-based selective assessments of imported animal products, the agency has set up a temporary Risk Management (RM) unit through the Director General's office order. The agency has proposed an organizational setup to the ministry for approval. Currently, with BTF's support, the unit is actively engaged in creating risk profiles and compiling a list of risk indicators to facilitate risk-based selectivity for the inspection of imported animal products.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 7.9 Perishable Goods	Yes	2	Article 7.9 of the TFA encompasses four provisions related to the handling and release of perishable goods, with the Department of Livestock Services adhering to provisions one, two, and three. Although regulations and rules lack specific prioritization instructions for perishable goods, in practice, quarantine officials prioritize the testing and release of such goods within the shortest possible time, contingent on the completion of required documentation and formalities. Additionally, DLS is not mandated to provide cold storage facilities during the quarantine and testing process, but they allow importers to arrange suitable storage for perishable goods pending release. There is no established practice at DLS for communicating reasons for any significant delay in releasing perishable goods.

CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 10.1 Formalities	Yes	2	DLS aligns with provision one of Article 10.1 of the TFA. The agency implemented simplification measures through the NOC Management System (NMS) portal, allowing traders to apply for NOCs online and subsequently decreasing the time and cost of compliance. However, there lacks a formal committee to review these automated procedures in line with the spirit of TFA provision 10.1.1 (a-d). Additionally, there is no established information-sharing mechanism for acquiring or disseminating knowledge on the best practices followed by other WTO members.
	Average score	2.00	
<u>Trade Related Services</u>			
<i>The capacity of DLS to effectively process import, export, and transit procedures and formalities, including hindrances caused by redundant or unnecessary steps.</i>			
Certificates, permits, licenses, and approvals, etc. are issued in a timely manner (per measure).	Yes	4	According to the Citizen Charter, DLS issues health certificates for the import-export of animals and animal products within 3 working days. The issuance of NOCs for the trade of live animals takes 60 working days. Furthermore, for the issuance or renewal of licenses for importing animal feed, DLS requires 48 working days to provide these services to traders. However, according to the DLS officials, they try to issue the CLPOs as soon as they can according to the traders' needs. The private sector survey data reveal that the average time required for obtaining trade-related services from the DLS is around 2.60 days or 62.5 hours, which is under the maximum time specified in the agency's citizen charter. Furthermore, 71% of the traders from the survey responded "Satisfied" when asked about their satisfaction of receiving trade services from the agency. Therefore, the specified times in the Citizen Charter align with the actual duration required for obtaining these certificates, licenses, and permits from DLS.
CA adheres adequately to formalities associated with trade-related services and has demonstrable ability to issue certificates on site and in a timely manner. (per measure)	No	0	DLS does not have the capability to issue certificates on-site. However, they do adhere to the formalities associated with their trade measures.

Private sector has appropriate level of awareness on CA requirements as they relate to certificates, permits, approvals, clearance related procedures.	Yes	3	The website of the CA agency features the Animal Feed Rules of 2013, along with the Citizen Charter, providing essential information regarding the DLS's requirements for issuing certificates, licenses, and permits. Additionally, the agency's website contains a link to the Quality Control labs webpage, which also includes information on the documentation and requirements for availing services from the lab. However, the published information is not readily accessible and requires extensive searching, potentially discouraging private sector actors from seeking information on their website. Findings from the private sector show that only 35.59% of the respondent traders utilize DLS's website to access trade service related information.
	Average score	2.33	
<u>Information Technology</u>			
<i>To what extent the DLS utilizes information technologies that enhance the speed, efficiency, and transparency of the regulatory measures it applies.</i>			
CA utilizes electronic portals for submission of e-forms.	Yes	2	They have both e-forms and manual submission process. Findings from the survey indicate that approximate 48% of the traders utilize the DLS electronic portal (NMS) to submit application for NOCs. Whereas about 41% of the traders submit application manually and about 11% of the traders utilize a mixed method, combining both digital and manual methods, to submit application for trade services at DLS.
CA uses automated systems to support its processes (i.e., communication/notification of other agencies, transmission of reports/test results).	Yes	2	They possess an internal automated system to facilitate their internal operations; however, the generated reports are not shared with external agencies. The report generation system is currently under development and will be integrated with the existing automation system.
CA utilizes automated systems to accept pre-arrival data for advanced processing related to its regulatory mandate.	No	0	DLS does not have any automated system for processing pre-arrival data of goods. They are trying to develop a software with Customs with the assistance from BTF that will notify them for any pre-arrival data of goods. But due to BTF and DLS's workload this task has not progressed much.
	Average score	1.33	

<u>WTO Notification Processes</u>			
<i>To what extent DLS is in compliance with the provisions of the WTO Notifications provisions of the TFA.</i>			
Engagement with Enquiry Point - CA feeds information to the relevant WTO Enquiry Point to inform the trading community of new regulatory measures that might impact trade and provide the trading community and WTO members ample time to comment on proposed changes?	Yes	2	The CA agency interacts with the enquiry point, but they haven't assigned specific personnel for addressing NEP enquiries. Currently, officials from different sections of the DLS handle Enquiry Points as needed. Dedicated personnel will be assigned to address NEP enquiries once the organizational setup is approved
Publicized Trade Information - CA has published the following: (a) procedures for importation, exportation, and transit (including port, airport, and other entry-point procedures), and required forms and documents; (b) fees and charges imposed on or in connection with importation, exportation or transit; (c) import, export or transit restrictions or prohibitions; (d) penalty provisions for breaches of import, export, or transit formalities; (e) procedures for appeal or review; and (f) agreements or parts thereof with any country or countries relating to importation, exportation, or transit.	Yes	3	The CA agency has made available key regulatory documents such as the Bangladesh Animal and Animal Products Quarantine Act of 2005, the Animal Feed Rules 2013 and its citizen charter on their website. These documents encompass details on procedures for imports, exports, and transit, along with the necessary forms, documents, and associated fees. Moreover, the Bangladesh Animal and Animal Products Quarantine Act of 2005 outlines penalty provisions for violations of import, export, or transit procedures. However, the published documents are not readily accessible and requires extensive searching, potentially discouraging private sector actors from seeking information on their website. Findings from the private sector show that only 35.59% of the respondent traders utilize DLS's website to access trade service related information.
	Average score	2.50	
<u>Private Sector Engagement</u>			
<i>The extent to which DLS includes private sector stakeholders in its policy decisions or conducts outreach efforts to edify private sector on compliance issues.</i>			

Consultations with Private Sector - CA consults with private sector to gain insight and feedback into issues facing traders relating to trade services, capacity, or laws/regulations? If so, are consultations held regular and frequently (i.e., 2 or more times a year)?	Yes	3	The CA agency conducts meetings with the private sector upon reaching a specific number of NoC applications for imports in order to gather insights and feedback on trade service-related issues. Additionally, DLS arranges training sessions for private sector actors to familiarize them with the new software and online application systems. According to the private sector survey, 58% of traders affirm occasional consultation (once in a couple of years), 10% report annual engagements, and 8% frequent consultations (more than twice a year) and 24% state no consultations. These findings align with the KII results, confirming the irregularity of meetings between DLS and private sector stakeholders.
	Average score	3.00	
<u>Institutional Capacity</u>			
<i>The extent to which DLS has the human and institutional capacity (except for IT) to carry out its mandate.</i>			
CA human resources currently possesses sufficient number, knowledge, skills and abilities capacity to accomplish tasks associated within the mandate of the CA proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	2	The Department of Livestock Services (DLS) faces a shortage of skilled human resources, with current personnel carrying additional organizational responsibilities that hinder their effective task execution. Moreover, both the Quality Control (QC) lab and the Central Disease Investigation lab (CDIL) lack sufficient manpower to meet their operational needs, posing challenges to their overall efficiency. Furthermore, DLS requires additional human resources for setting up a field team to expedite its work.
CA has adequate facilities and equipment capacity to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of DLS proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	BTF has provided essential equipment and furniture for the recently established offices of the Trade Wing and the RM unit, enabling the agency to fulfill its mandated responsibilities. Moreover, BTF has supplied two reefer vans to DLS's RM unit, enhancing the agency's logistical capabilities. Currently, these vehicles are being utilized for transporting vaccines for livestock. Furthermore, the QC laboratory at DLS and CDIL has sufficient equipments. Furthermore, CDIL maintains backup equipments; for instance, they have three PCR machines that are used in rotation. In addition, the QC laboratory has signed MOU with the QC laboratory at DoF, nearby its premise, for necessary equipment support if required.
CA has adequate cold storage capacity to apply its regulatory mandate in a way that adequately provide service coverage to traders.	No	0	DLS lacks adequate cold storage facilities at the ports to apply its regulatory mandate.

	Average score	2.00	
<u>Risk Management</u>			
<i>The extent to which and the capacity of DLS to exercise risk-based management principles in the application of its regulatory mandate.</i>			
CA possesses adequate legislative, regulatory (i.e. SRO) and policy instruments to enable risk-based selectivity for treatment and control application.	No	0	The CA agency lacks the necessary legislative, regulatory and policy instruments to enable risk-based selectivity of consignments. The current Bangladesh Animal and Animal Products Quarantine Act of 2005 and the Animal Feed Regulation 2013 does not include any provision from risk-based selectivity of treatment and control application of imported animal and animal products. However, DLS have submitted proposals to incorporate TFA 7.4, 7.8, and other articles related to RM and TFA test procedures into the Quarantine Act. Upon approval from the ministry, these proposed modifications will be included in the new act, integrating legal provisions for RM.
CA has a RM framework in alignment with contemporary Intl best practices (i.e. ISO 31000 – WCO RM Framework).	No	0	To this date, DLS does not have a risk management framework that aligns with ISO 31000 and WCO RM framework.
CA has an organizational structure with dedicated personnel to support risk-based selectivity (e.g. RM Unit or other functional organizational components dedicated to RM).	Yes	1	Even though a designated wing for Risk Management has been established within DoF, developed with the assistance of BTF project, the wing lacks a structured organogram and dedicated personnel to support risk-based selectivity. However, the wing is collaborating with BTF to develop risk profiles and a list of risk indicators to support risk-based selectivity of imported consignments at the ports.
CA utilizes compliance management and maintain historical compliance records to determine commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk levels.	Yes	2	The current regulations and rules do not mandate the DLS for compliance management and maintaining historical compliance records. However, since the establishment of the RM unit within the department, they have done some training on risk profiling and have been maintaining compliance records in limited capacity. Presently, the agency is notified of any non-compliance rejections, though not through official channels, and maintains records of compliance data in a digital format provided by BTF.
CA currently has adequate personnel capacity to apply risk-based selectivity.	Yes	1	The RM unit within the DLS has been established with five DLS officials with other organizational responsibilities. The current number of personnel assigned in the RM unit is not adequate to apply risk-based selectivity effectively. However, the staffs at the RM unit have received RM inception and foundation training from

			BTF, which enhanced their knowledge, skill and capacity for implementing risk management.
CA has sufficient level of automation / digitization to support risk-based selectivity.	No	0	DLS currently lacks an automated or digitalized system for facilitating risk-based selectivity in consignment inspections. However, BTF is in the process of developing an RM software for DLS.
CA collaborates with other agencies (e.g. NBR Customs) to develop and maintain commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk-based profiles for treatment / control selectivity.	No	0	At this time, DLS does not collaborate with NBR Customs or other regulatory agencies to establish or maintain risk based profiles. However, BTF is in the process of developing an RM software for DLS. This software will be integrated with the Customs RM software, also in development, through the NSW, automating DLS's RM operations.
CA cooperates with other agencies to prioritize agro-based shipments selected for risk treatments or controls (e.g. Service Level Agreement / Citizen Charter) and communicate results as appropriate.	No	0	There is no coordination between DLS and other cross-border regulatory agencies concerning the prioritization of shipments selected for treatments or controls.
	Average score	0.50	
<u>Laboratories and Testing Procedure</u>			
The capacity of DLS's laboratories to apply its regulatory mandate in a way that is consistent with the WTO TFA and can adequately provide service coverage to traders.			
Criteria will reflect overall average metrics as defined in Laboratories Scorecard.	Yes	3.09	This is the average score of the overall mark CDIL and QC lab received in their respective scorecards.
	Average score	3.09	
<u>Prioritization of Perishable Goods</u>			
The extent to which DLS through law and through practice prioritizes the inspection, testing, and certification of goods under its regulatory authority.			

CA has adequate procedures to enable the release of perishable goods in a manner that preserves product integrity.	Yes	2	Currently, DLS lacks adequate procedure to enable the release of perishable goods within the shorter possible time. In addition to the lack of adequate cold storage facilities at the ports, there is currently no distinct guideline or procedure for expediting the release of the perishable goods. Nevertheless, in practice, the animal quarantine officials make efforts to expedite the release of perishable goods to ensure the integrity of the products.
	Average score	2.00	
Department of Livestock Services			
ASSESSMENT SCORE	Average score	2.08	

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Plant Quarantine Wing		
Structure/Ministry:	Independent Government organization under the Department of Agricultural Extension, Ministry of Agriculture. Regulates import and export of plants or plant products, pests, beneficial organisms and packing materials.		
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	As a signatory of the WTO, PQW commits to adhering to the WTO-SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures) Agreement when engaging in the import and export of plants and plant products to ensure compliance with international trade standards. PQW is responsible for preventing harmful pests and diseases from entering the country along with plants, seeds, and plant-based products that are imported. PQW is also the regulatory authority overseeing the export of plants and plant-based products. PQW operates 30 plant quarantine stations at ports in the country. PQW officers inspect import consignments for plants and plant products and issue clearance certificates. In addition, PQW issues SPS certificates prior to the export of plant products. The primary legislation instructing PQW is the Plant Quarantine Act of 2011, the Plant Quarantine Rules of 2018, and the Import Policy Order.		
Date of Assessment:	14-Dec-23		
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team		
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation	Score	Remarks	
Legal Framework			

The extent to which the laws that give the PQW its regulatory mandate are adequate for it to accomplish its mission in compliance with the WTO TFA Agreement.

CA has adequate national legislation for compliance, function, accountability and transparency of the protocols and measures.	Yes	2	The Plant Quarantine Act, 2011, Plant Quarantine Rules 2018, and Destructive Insect and Pest Rules 1966 (Amended 1989) outline the functions and performance of its mandate. When it comes to the lab, there are no separate guidelines or SOPs for the labs that detail the lab functionality and procedures. However, the sampling protocol of imported consignments and fees and charges for import permits, release orders, phytosanitary certification, and fumigation are outlined in the Plant Quarantine Rules 2018. Furthermore, with the support from BTF, PQW has developed and implemented an SOP for inspection and sampling procedures for the imports of plants and plant products.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 5.3 Test Procedures	Yes	2	Under Article 5.3, PQW partially complies with the First and Third parameters. Even though they are not mandated to practice the first and third parameters, in practice, they allow exports and imports to undergo secondary testing from accredited and government-approved laboratories. However, there is no indication that PQW follows the second parameter of Article 5.3, which states that the CA must either publish, in a non-discriminatory and easily accessible manner, the name and address of any laboratory where the test can be carried out, or provide this information to the importer.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 7.4 Risk Management	Yes	2	Under the Plant Quarantine Act 2011, PQW lacks the mandate for conducting risk-based selectivity of consignments for inspection at entry-exit points. While the agency is obligated to perform pest risk analysis and management, there is currently no set criteria for selectivity in assessing high-risk and low-risk consignments in accordance with Article 4 of TFA 7.4's legal framework on Risk Management. Additionally, the Plant Quarantine Rules 2018 do not specify the agency's role in risk-based selectivity for enforcing border controls on high-risk consignments and expediting the release of low-risk consignments. However, the agency has set up a temporary Risk Management (RM) unit through an official order from the Director of NPP. Currently, with BTF's support, the unit is actively engaged in creating risk profiles and compiling a list of risk indicators to facilitate risk-based selectivity for the inspection of imported plants and plant products.

CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 7.9 Perishable Goods	Yes	3	PQW gives high priority to releasing perishable goods. As per the Citizen Charter, PQW provides Phytosanitary Certificates (PC) for perishable goods within 24 hours, contingent on the completion of documentation, consignment testing, and treatment. Subsequently, they aim to issue Release Orders (RO) promptly within this 24-hour timeframe. Under its jurisdiction, PQW is not responsible for providing cold storage facilities at the ports. However, they allow importers and exporters to arrange suitable storage for perishable goods until their release.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 10.1 Formalities	Yes	3	PQW has automated three certifications—Import Permit (IP), Phytosanitary Certificate (PC), and Release Order (RO)—allowing traders to apply for and receive these certificates online via their website. Additionally, efforts are underway to incorporate the issuance of export permits into their online portal, aiming to streamline the export process and reduce associated time and costs. Furthermore, a recent development includes the implementation of an online system for issuing Anchorage Permits to expedite the swift release and clearance of goods.
	Average score	2.40	
Trade Related Services			
<i>The capacity of PQW to effectively process import, export, and transit procedures and formalities, including hindrances caused by redundant or unnecessary steps.</i>			
Certificates, permits, licenses, and approvals, etc. are issued in a timely manner (per measure).	Yes	4	As per the Citizen Charter, PQW issues Import Permits (IP) within 7 days of receiving the application, Phytosanitary Certificates (PC) for food items in 2-3 days, and with fumigation, PC is issued in 4-5 days. The Release Order (RO) and Anchorage Permit for plant and plant product imports are issued in a timeframe called "Minimum Reasonable Time," which varies based on the nature of the products undergoing fumigation. The private sector survey data reveal that the average time required for obtaining trade-related services from PQW is around 2.41 days or 58 hours, which is under the maximum time specified in the agency's citizen charter. Furthermore, KII with the traders associations reveal that PQW, in general, provides their services on time and 65% of the traders from the survey responded "Satisfied" when asked about their satisfaction of receiving trade services from the agency. Therefore, the

			specified times in the Citizen Charter align with the actual duration required for obtaining these certificates, licenses, and permits.
CA adheres adequately to formalities associated with trade-related services and has demonstrable ability to issue certificates on site and in a timely manner. (per measure)	Yes	4	PQW issues PC from all of their service points (30 plant quarantine stations) and issues RO at the ports of entry within the timeframe stated in their Citizen Charter.
Private sector has appropriate level of awareness on CA requirements as they relate to certificates, permits, approvals, clearance related procedures.	Yes	3	Traders have access to information and can apply for Import Permit (IP) and Phytosanitary Certificate (PC) through the agency's website. The website offers a tutorial video guiding users on creating accounts for PQW's online application portal. Detailed instructions for the application process and information on fees and required documentation are outlined in the Citizen Charter and the agency's rules, accessible on their website. However, the published information is not readily accessible and requires extensive searching, potentially discouraging private sector actors from seeking information on their website. Findings from the private sector shows that only 24% of the respondent traders utilize PQW's website to access trade service related information.
	Average score	3.67	
<u>Information Technology</u>			
<i>To what extent the PQW utilizes information technologies that enhance the speed, efficiency, and transparency of the regulatory measures it applies.</i>			
CA utilizes electronic portals for submission of e-forms.	Yes	4	Traders can apply for import permit, phytosanitary certificate and release order from the Plant Quarantine WIng's online platform.

CA uses automated systems to support its processes (i.e., communication/notification of other agencies, transmission of reports/test results).	No	0	At present, PQW lacks an automated system to facilitate its processes and communication with other pertinent agencies. Additionally, the CPQ laboratory depends on an external IT team for support related to agency IT needs and lacks an automated system for transferring lab reports and test results.
CA utilizes automated systems to accept pre-arrival data for advanced processing related to its regulatory mandate.	Yes	3	PQW facilitates the issuance of import permits and anchorage permits before consignments arrive at the ports. They have recently introduced an online system for issuing anchorage permits, enabling quarantine offices at the ports to receive advance notification about consignments and make preparations for inspections.
	Average score	2.33	
WTO Notification Processes			
<i>To what extent PQW is in compliance with the provisions of the WTO Notifications provisions of the TFA.</i>			
Engagement with Enquiry Point - CA feeds information to the relevant WTO Enquiry Point to inform the trading community of new regulatory measures that might impact trade and provide the trading community and WTO members ample time to comment on proposed changes?	Yes	3	PQW has designated staffs with other organizational responsibilities for responding to the queries regarding trade related information from the WTO Cell of MoC. However, this is done manually through time-consuming formal official letters and notices. The WTO cell is responsible for disseminating WTO notifications to other WTO members and trading communities.
Publicized Trade Information - CA has published the following: (a) procedures for importation, exportation, and transit (including port, airport, and other entry-point procedures), and required forms and documents; (b) fees and charges imposed on or in connection with importation, exportation or transit; (c) import, export or transit restrictions or prohibitions; (d) penalty provisions for breaches of import, export, or transit formalities; (e) procedures for appeal or review; and (f) agreements or parts thereof	Yes	3	PQW's website contains Plant Quarantine Rules 2018 citizen charter document that includes information required for forms and documents and fees for availing services related to importation and exportation of plant and plant products. Their website also features a YouTube tutorial video that provides step-by-step guidance on creating user accounts for PQW's online application portal. However, the published information is not readily accessible and requires extensive searching, potentially discouraging private sector actors from seeking information on their website. Findings from the private sector shows that only 24% of the respondent traders utilize PQW's website to access trade service related information.

with any country or countries relating to importation, exportation, or transit.			
	Average score	3.00	
<u>Private Sector Engagement</u>			
<i>The extent to which PQW includes private sector stakeholders in its policy decisions or conducts outreach efforts to edify private sector on compliance issues.</i>			
Consultations with Private Sector - CA consults with private sector to gain insight and feedback into issues facing traders relating to trade services, capacity, or laws/regulations? If so, are consultations held regular and frequently (i.e., 2 or more times a year)?	Yes	3	According to the findings from the KII with PQW officials, PQW conducts annual meetings with both exporters and importers to gather valuable insights and feedback regarding the challenges they encounter in trade services, capacity, and legal regulations. Additionally, the CA agency arranges ad hoc meetings with traders to address urgent matters as they arise. However, the survey results highlight that just 30% of traders agree that they are occasionally consulted (once in a couple of years) by the PQW, with 20% citing annual consultations and only 4% reporting more frequent engagements (more than 2 times a year). A significant 46% responded that PQW has never sought their input.
	Average score	3.00	
<u>Institutional Capacity</u>			
<i>The extent to which PQW has the human and institutional capacity (except for IT) to carry out its mandate.</i>			

CA human resources currently possesses sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities capacity to accomplish tasks associated within the mandate of the CA proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	2	As the CA agency does not have a dedicated training section within their organization, the field officers and the laboratory stuffs have lack of skills to properly accomplish the tasks within their mandate. Moreover, Laboratory stuffs require training to enhance knowledge, skills and abilities on testing to make the quarantine stations fully operational.
CA has adequate facilities and equipment capacity to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of PQW proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	2	Among the 30 quarantine stations, PQW has laboratory instruments installed in 15 of them. However, there is a requirement for regular calibration services to ensure the accuracy of these instruments. Additionally, the necessary chemicals and reagents are needed to make these laboratories fully operational.
CA has adequate cold storage capacity to apply its regulatory mandate in a way that adequately provide service coverage to traders.	Yes	2	The CA agency lacks sufficient cold storage capacity to fulfill its regulatory responsibilities in inspecting and overseeing the trade of perishable plant products. This limitation arises because PQW is not mandated to provide cold storage facilities. However, the agency allows traders to store their consignments in temperature-controlled containers at the ports and has temperature-controlled facilities in the labs to store the samples of perishable goods for testing. Furthermore, the Shyampur Packing House under the jurisdiction of PQW provides water-cooled cold storage services, in limited capacity, to the exporters to store and treat their consignments before exporting.
	Average score	2.00	
<u>Risk Management</u>			
<i>The extent to which and the capacity of PQW to exercise risk-based management principles in the application of its regulatory mandate.</i>			
CA possesses adequate legislative, regulatory (i.e. SRO) and policy instruments to enable risk-based selectivity for treatment and control application.	Yes	2	Even though the PQW rules and regulations do not clearly mention the provision of risk based inspection, they follow the ISPM guidelines (ISPM 23) for inspections of consignments. The guidelines include the provision of RM by allowing the agency to conduct risk-based selectivity for treatment and control application. Furthermore, PQW obtained an official order from the Director of Plant Quarantine Wing to establish a Risk Management (RM) unit within the wing.
CA has a RM framework in alignment with contemporary Intl best practices (i.e. WCO RM Framework).	No	0	To this date, PQW does not have a risk management framework that aligns with ISO 31000 and WCO RM framework. .

CA has an organizational structure with dedicated personnel to support risk-based selectivity (e.g. RM Unit or other functional organizational components dedicated to RM).	Yes	2	With support from BTF, PQW obtained an official order from the Director of Plant Quarantine Wing to establish a Risk Management (RM) unit within the wing. However, despite having an organizational structure (established through an office order) for the RM unit, the wing lacks dedicated officials to facilitate risk-based selectivity, and currently assigning personnel with other organizational responsibilities to the newly established RM unit.
CA utilizes compliance management and maintain historical compliance records to determine commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk levels.	Yes	3	PQW collects compliance data on a regular basis. The central agency collects and maintains data on non-compliance of trade entities (mainly from EU countries) and shares the data with the Central Packing House to determine and update trade entity risk levels on a regular basis. However, the whole process is completely manual and they do not have any automated system to maintain the historical compliance records.
CA currently has adequate personnel capacity to apply risk-based selectivity.	Yes	2	PQW lacks sufficient personnel capacity to implement risk-based selectivity, as all members of the RM unit are PQW officials with additional organizational responsibilities.
CA has sufficient level of automation / digitization to support risk-based selectivity.	No	0	PQW does not have an automated or digitalized system to facilitate risk-based selectivity for inspection of consignments.
CA collaborates with other agencies (e.g. NBR Customs) to develop and maintain commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk-based profiles for treatment / control selectivity.	Yes	2	Currently, PQW lacks a mechanism to formulate a risk-based profile for selecting consignments for treatment and control. Despite being mandated to perform pest risk analysis and pest risk management, their organizational rules do not necessitate collaboration with other agencies to establish a risk profile for the import of plant and plant products. However, in practice, the CA agency collaborates with the Customs authority in a limited capacity to monitor and control trade of agricultural commodities.
CA cooperates with other agencies to prioritize agro-based shipments selected for risk treatments or controls (e.g. Service Level Agreement / Citizen Charter) and communicate results as appropriate.	Yes	2	There are no service level agreement between PQW and other cross-border regulatory authorities. However, in practice, PQW cooperates with the port authority and the customs concerning the treatment of selected consignments on an ad hoc basis.
	Average score	1.63	
<u>Laboratories and Testing Procedure</u>			

The capacity of PQW's laboratories to apply its regulatory mandate in a way that is consistent with the WTO TFA and can adequately provide service coverage to traders.			
Criteria will reflect overall average metrics as defined in Laboratories Scorecard.	Yes	1.6	In its current office-based setup, the Central PQW lab in Dhaka has inadequacy in infrastructure designed for a laboratory. Additionally, the lab has a shortage of human resources, lack of funds for equipment maintenance, lab manual, lack of safety equipment and proper waste disposal procedures. The lab stores test data on selected devices but lacks a Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS). The lab is presently focusing on the phytosanitary requirements of import products, recognized under IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention), and is in the initial phases of developing export SOPs as part of their long-term goal for ISO 17025 accreditation. However, currently, The CPQ lab is not actively pursuing accreditation due to the need for infrastructural refurbishment at the current facility, even though the lab has identified seven parameters for potential ISO accreditation.
	Average score	1.60	
<u>Prioritization of Perishable Goods</u>			
The extent to which PQW through law and through practice prioritizes the inspection, testing, and certification of goods under its regulatory authority.			
CA has adequate procedures to enable the release of perishable goods in a manner that preserves product integrity.	Yes	4	As per the Citizen Charter, PQW provides Phytosanitary Certificates (PC) for perishable goods within 24 hours, contingent on the completion of documentation, consignment testing, and treatment. Subsequently, they aim to issue Release Orders (RO) promptly within this 24-hour timeframe.
	Average score	4.00	
Plant Quarantine Wing			
ASSESSMENT SCORE	Average score	2.63	

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute		
Structure/Ministry:	Ministry of Industries		
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	As per the Import Policy Order, all processed foodstuffs imported into Bangladesh must undergo mandatory testing by BSTI, and the agency issues clearance certificates to Customs. BSTI operates three labs, with the food-bacteriological and chemical labs being most relevant for food and agricultural trade. The food division tests approximately 75 products, while the chemical division tests around 136 products.		
Date of Assessment:	14-Dec-23		
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team		
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comment		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation		Score	Remarks
Legal Framework			
The extent to which the laws that give the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI) its regulatory mandate are adequate for it to accomplish its mission in compliance with the WTO TFA Agreement.			
CA has adequate national legislation for compliance, function, accountability and transparency of the protocols and measures.	Yes	4.00	The CA adheres to the "Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Law, 2018," which outlines the responsibilities under the jurisdiction of the institute. The Act includes export and import-related functions to maintain standards of products in international trade. However, the current act does not accommodate provisions for second testing or risk-based assessment of imported goods.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 5.3 Test Procedures	No	0.00	Article 5.3 of the trade facilitation agreement includes three provisions, two of which are based on second testing, while the remaining provision focuses on providing non-discriminatory and easily accessible information about available testing laboratories. In practice, BSTI allows for second testing if traders request re-testing upon receiving unsatisfactory results from initial testing. However, this is not specified as a provision under the institute's mandate. Additionally, there is a lack of referral labs available to conduct second testing if traders opt for a third-party lab test. Since there is no provision for conducting a second confirmatory test in case of an adverse result from the first one, BSTI does not publish any information about labs where second testing can be conducted. Lastly, although BSTI considers the

			results of second tests in practice, this practice is not aligned with the obligations of the TFA due to the lack of mandate.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 7.4 Risk Management	Yes	1.00	Article 7.4 of the trade facilitation agreement includes provisions related to RM. BSTI has established an RM unit with the assistance of BTF, comprising personnel from within the organization who also handle other organizational responsibilities. This unit is currently in a capacity development phase. However, the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Act (2018) does not include any provision or clause that mentions risk-based assessment of food products in border trade management.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 7.9 Perishable Goods	Yes	0.00	Under Article 7.9 of the trade facilitation agreement, provisions related to perishable goods are included.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 10.1 Formalities	Yes	0.00	Under Article 10.1 of the trade facilitation agreement, four provisions related to minimization of trade formalities and simplifying cross-border documentation are included.
	Average score	1.00	
Trade Related Services			

The capacity of BSTI to effectively process import, export, and transit procedures and formalities, including hindrances caused by redundant or unnecessary steps.

Certificates, permits, licenses, and approvals, etc. are issued in a timely manner (per measure).	Yes	3.00	As per the Citizen Charter, BSTI issues release letter for imported agricultural and food products within 5 working days, without accounting for the time required for lab testing. Moreover, it takes BSTI 12 working days for the issuance and renewal of CM license. KIIs with the BSTI officials reveal that it takes around 5-6 working days to issue RO for imported consignments at the ports and for testing it generally takes the agency 12-14 working days. The private sector survey data reveal that the average time required for obtaining trade-related services from the BSTI is around 127 hours or 5.3 days, which is similar to the maximum time specified in the agency's citizen charter. However, only 55% of the traders from the survey responded "Satisfied" when asked about their satisfaction of receiving trade services from the agency. Therefore, even though the specified times in the Citizen Charter align with the actual duration required for obtaining trade services from the agency, there are scopes of improvement regarding the provision of trade services at the agency.
CA adheres adequately to formalities associated with trade-related services and has demonstrable ability to issue certificates on site and in a timely manner. (per measure)	Yes	2.00	BSTI issues RO for imported consignments under its jurisdiction. Typically, the agency takes 5 working days to issue an RO, excluding the time needed for laboratory testing. This occasionally results in extended waiting periods for the release of goods from the ports, causing dissatisfaction among traders. Additionally, BSTI faces challenges in logistical capacity, hindering the expeditious issuance of RO on-site. Traders are required to arrange their own transportation and storage facilities for transporting samples of their consignments for lab testing, adding an extra layer of complexity to the process.

Private sector has appropriate level of awareness on CA requirements as they relate to certificates, permits, approvals, clearance related procedures.	Yes	3.00	Traders can obtain information regarding CM license and import release letter by visiting BSTI's website. The Citizen Charter and Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Regulations 2022 provide detailed insights into the documentation requirements for availing trade-related services from the agency. Additionally, the CA agency's website features detailed steps of the issuance and renewal of CM license and the issuance of RO for imported agricultural and food products. Furthermore, the website also includes lists of all the mandatory products under the jurisdiction of BSTI and their associated lists of standards. Findings from the private sector show that 57.69% of the respondent traders utilize BSTI's website to access trade service related information.
	Average score	2.67	
<u>Information Technology</u>			
<i>To what extent the BSTI utilizes information technologies that enhance the speed, efficiency, and transparency of the regulatory measures it applies.</i>			
CA utilizes electronic portals for submission of e-forms.	Yes	2.00	BSTI accepts applications submitted through the e-application management system. Traders can register in the system and add their organization. However, 100% application of the system is yet to be implemented due to bugging issues. As of now, only a few applications can be received through the online portal.
CA uses automated systems to support its processes (i.e., communication/notification of other agencies, transmission of reports/test results).	Yes	2.00	BSTI currently accepts applications through an e-application management system in a limited capacity. Traders can register and include their organization in the system; however, communication primarily occurs via email or through electronic and hardcopy printouts. Unfortunately, there is no centralized mechanism for sharing information with other agencies.
CA utilizes automated systems to accept pre-arrival data for advanced processing related to its regulatory mandate.	No	0.00	BSTI does not accept pre-arrival data for advanced processing related to its regulatory mandate.
	Average score	1.33	
<u>WTO Notification Processes</u>			

<i>To what extent BSTI is in compliance with the provisions of the WTO Notifications provisions of the TFA.</i>			
Engagement with Enquiry Point - CA feeds information to the relevant WTO Enquiry Point to inform the trading community of new regulatory measures that might impact trade and provide the trading community and WTO members ample time to comment on proposed changes?	Yes	3.00	The CA agency interacts with the enquiry point and responds to queries on a regular basis. However, they do not have dedicated personnel for addressing NEP enquiries. Currently, officials with additional organizational responsibilities handle NEP enquiries on a need basis.
Publicized Trade Information - CA has published the following: (a) procedures for importation, exportation, and transit (including port, airport, and other entry-point procedures), and required forms and documents; (b) fees and charges imposed on or in connection with importation, exportation or transit; (c) import, export or transit restrictions or prohibitions; (d) penalty provisions for breaches of import, export, or transit formalities; (e) procedures for appeal or review; and (f) agreements or parts thereof with any country or countries relating to importation, exportation, or transit.	Yes	4.00	The CA agency has made available key regulatory documents, such as the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Law 2018, Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Regulations 2022, The Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Ordinance of 1985, and the citizen charter on their website. These documents encompass details on procedures for imports of agricultural and food products along with the necessary forms, documents, and associated fees. Moreover, the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Law 2018 outlines penalty provisions for violations of import procedures. Findings from the private sector show that 57.69% of the respondent traders utilize BSTI's website to access trade service related information.
	Average score	3.50	
<u>Private Sector Engagement</u>			
<i>The extent to which BSTI includes private sector stakeholders in its policy decisions or conducts outreach efforts to edify private sector on compliance issues.</i>			

Consultations with Private Sector - CA consults with private sector to gain insight and feedback into issues facing traders relating to trade services, capacity, or laws/regulations? If so, are consultations held regular and frequently (i.e., 2 or more times a year)?	Yes	2.00	KIIs with a BSTI official reveal that the agency organizes two stakeholder meetings annually with private sector participants. However, findings from a private sector survey paint a different picture, with 42% of traders stating that BSTI rarely holds consultation meetings with them (once in a couple of years), while only 5% report annual engagements. Merely 19% confirm regular meetings with BSTI (more than twice a year), while 34% claim no consultations at all. These results suggest that a significant proportion of traders are not regularly consulted on issues pertaining to trade services or updates in laws and regulations.
	Average score	2.00	
<u>Institutional Capacity</u>			
<i>The extent to which BSTI has the human and institutional capacity (except for IT) to carry out its mandate.</i>			
CA human resources currently possesses sufficient number, knowledge, skills and abilities capacity to accomplish tasks associated within the mandate of the CA proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	3.00	The CA agency faces a shortage of human resources necessary to fulfill their mandated tasks. Additionally, there is an imbalance in the skills of officials between the Dhaka headquarters and port offices. Regional offices frequently rely on the Dhaka office due to their limited knowledge and skills capacity. However, in the case of laboratories, BSTI possesses sufficient human resources to conduct tests and issue certifications for all products. Those working in BSTI labs hold international certification in accordance with ISO 17025 standards and generally possess strong skills in their respective roles.
CA has adequate facilities and equipment capacity to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of BSTI proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	3.00	According to the BSTI officials, the agency possesses sufficient infrastructure. Moreover, proposals for two additional buildings are also ongoing. However, even though port labs have good equipment capacity, not all of the labs under the BSTI are well-equipped.

CA has adequate cold storage capacity to apply its regulatory mandate in a way that adequately provide service coverage to traders.	Yes	2.00	As per BSTI's mandate, they are not required to provide cold storage facilities to the traders at the entry-exit points. However, for the testing of perishable products, the CA laboratory provides cold storage services at limited capacity. The traders are responsible for the transportation of the samples of the perishable products via temperature controlled logistics.
	Average score	2.67	
<u>Risk Management</u>			
<i>The extent to which and the capacity of BSTI to exercise risk-based management principles in the application of its regulatory mandate.</i>			
CA possesses adequate legislative, regulatory (i.e. SRO) and policy instruments to enable risk-based selectivity for treatment and control application.	No	0.00	The CA agency lacks the necessary legislative, regulatory, and policy instruments to enable risk-based selectivity of consignments. The current "Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Act, 2018" does not include any provision for risk-based selectivity of treatment and control application of imported food products.
CA has a RM framework in alignment with contemporary Intl best practices (i.e. ISO 31000 – WTO RM Framework).	No	0.00	BSTI does not have a risk management framework that aligns with ISO 31000 and WCO RM framework.
CA has an organizational structure with dedicated personnel to support risk-based selectivity (e.g. RM Unit or other functional organizational components dedicated to RM).	Yes	1.00	BSTI has formed an RM Unit consisting of nine members with the assistance of BTF project. However, the unit is not operational yet and lacks the capacity to practice risk-based assessment at the borders without significant capacity building.
CA utilizes compliance management and maintain historical compliance records to determine commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk levels.	No	0.00	Till date BSTI does not maintain any historical compliance records to determine commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk levels.
CA currently has adequate personnel capacity to apply risk-based selectivity.	No	0.00	The current number of personnel assigned in the RM unit is not adequate to apply risk-based selectivity effectively. The assigned personnel cannot adopt or maintain a risk management system. Some of the personnel from the CA have attended workshops on Risk-based Compliance Management, but these would not be sufficient compared to the required expertise level.

CA has sufficient level of automation / digitization to support risk-based selectivity.	No	0.00	CA does not have any automated process to support risk-based selectivity.
CA collaborates with other agencies (e.g. NBR Customs) to develop and maintain commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk-based profiles for treatment / control selectivity.	No	0.00	BSTI does not collaborate with border management agencies, specifically Customs, to develop and apply risk-based profiles.
CA cooperates with other agencies to prioritize agro-based shipments selected for risk treatments or controls (e.g. Service Level Agreement / Citizen Charter) and communicate results as appropriate.	No	0.00	BSTI does not collaborate with other agencies to prioritize agro-based shipments to conduct risk-based assessment.
	Average score	0.13	
<u>Laboratories and Testing Procedure</u>			
<i>The capacity of BSTI's laboratories to apply its regulatory mandate in a way that is consistent with the WTO TFA and can adequately provide service coverage to traders.</i>			
Criteria will reflect overall average metrics as defined in Laboratories Scorecard.	Yes	3.00	As the midterm evaluation does not cover the assessment of the BSTI lab, the evaluation team retained the assessment score from the baseline study. However, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with BSTI officials indicate that the BSTI lab holds accreditation for 400 parameters. They maintain both electronic and manual records, with data recorded on computers. Reports are shared with Customs online through the ASYCUDA World System, and are also sent to Customs via email.
	Average score	3.00	
<u>Prioritization of Perishable Goods</u>			
<i>The extent to which BSTI through law and through practice prioritizes the inspection, testing, and certification of goods under its regulatory authority.</i>			

CA has adequate procedures to enable the release of perishable goods in a manner that preserves product integrity.	Yes	3.00	Even though BSTI citizen charter mentions a period of 5 days (excluding time required for lab testing) for issuing release order and 5-14 days for chemical testing. In practice BSTI prioritizes perishable goods for immediate release. On an average, 5-6 days is the maximum time limit for releasing food products by BSTI including lab testing report for the release of perishable goods. BSTI only considers ice cream, chocolate and yogurt/curd as perishable food products. These product samples are always received in specific ice boxes and transferred to BSTI labs. BSTI labs have efficient refrigeration system where the samples are transferred and kept under required temperature.
	Average score	3.00	
Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute			
ASSESSMENT SCORE	Average score	2.14	

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission		
Structure/Ministry:	Autonomous Government Organization		
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	Related to international trade of agricultural products, BAEC provides elemental analysis and laboratory testing for identification of heavy metals and radiation. BAEC operates 4 labs at sea ports and uses university labs near Dhaka. BAEC receives samples from exporters, importers, and Customs. BAEC then conducts necessary analysis and shares the test reports with the relevant agencies. Eradiation services (Cobalt-60 gamma) for products such as fruits and vegetables, cut flowers are done as required by importing countries. Labs in Dhaka and Savar are capable to test heavy metal (lead, arsenic, chromium) (ISO affiliated) and animal origin products are tested for natural toxins and microbial residual. The primary legislation instructing BAEC are the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Act, 2012 and the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Control Rules, 1997.		
Date of Assessment:	14-Dec-23		
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team		
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation	Score	Remarks	
<u>Legal Framework</u>			
<i>The extent to which the laws that give the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) its regulatory mandate are adequate for it to accomplish its mission in compliance with the WTO TFA Agreement.</i>			
CA has adequate national legislation for compliance, function, accountability and transparency of the protocols and measures.	Yes	3	The Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Act of 2012 and the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Control Rules of 1997 delineate BAEC's authority over the regulation of export-import, as well as the inspection and testing of agricultural products and food items to detect radioactive contamination. Section 41 of the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Control Rules outlines restrictions, requirements, and provisions for testing radionuclide contamination levels in imported food items, beverages, fodder for consumption by poultry, fish, or cattle, as well as agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides. Additionally, Schedules 8 and 13 of the rules specify the accepted contamination level, sampling procedures and fees for the radiation testing of imported agricultural products and food items. However, the legislations do not contain any guidelines for laboratory operations and management.

CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 5.3 Test Procedures	Yes	2	BAEC's rules and regulations do not include provisions for second testing upon request of the traders. The specific procedure for second test is not prescribed in any official document or mandate. However, in practice BAEC accepts second tests if the traders raise any issue with the test results within one month of the initial tests.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 7.4 Risk Management	No	0	At present, BAEC's rules and regulations does not require BAEC to implement risk management. Even though the agency is responsible for arranging radioactivity tests for specified imported food and agricultural products, they are not mandated by their current rules and regulations to conduct risk-based selectivity of consignments for inspection at the ports.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 7.9 Perishable Goods	No	0	The Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Act of 2012 and the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Control Rules of 1997 does not include any separate guideline for the handling of perishable food items or any expedited processes for the release of the items. Furthermore, the mandate of the CA does not include any article for the provision of cold storage services to the traders to safeguard product integrity of the perishable food items.
CA adheres to WTO TFA legal framework 10.1 Formalities	Yes	1	Even though BAEC has undergone some simplification efforts, namely as it relates to automation, however, there is no formal committee to review these procedures to ensure they live up to the spirit of TFA provision 10.1.1 (a-d), nor is there an information sharing mechanism, which could be housed under this committee, to gain or share knowledge with other WTO Members information on best practices.
	Average score	1.20	
<u>Trade Related Services</u>			
<i>The capacity of BAEC to effectively process import, export, and transit procedures and formalities, including hindrances caused by redundant or unnecessary steps.</i>			

Certificates, permits, licenses, and approvals, etc. are issued in a timely manner (per measure).	Yes	1	The CA's service profile book, available on its website, outlines the commitment to provide testing certificates for imported consignments within 24 hours of receiving testing samples. Contrarily, data from a private sector survey indicate that the average time for obtaining trade-related services from the BAEC is approximately 95.6 hours, equivalent to 3.98 or 4 days. This notable disparity between the stated commitment and the actual average processing time suggests a gap between expectations and the observed performance in service delivery by BAEC.
CA adheres adequately to formalities associated with trade-related services and has demonstrable ability to issue certificates on site and in a timely manner. (per measure)	Not applicable		BAEC is solely responsible for performing radioactivity tests on imported consignments. Due to the nature of these tests, these cannot be conducted at the ports of entry for the issuance of NoCs to release goods. Moreover, BAEC encounters logistical challenges that impedes the timely issuance of certificates on-site. Traders need to manage their own transportation and storage facilities to convey consignment samples for laboratory testing, introducing an additional layer of complexity to the overall process.
Private sector has appropriate level of awareness on CA requirements as they relate to certificates, permits, approvals, clearance related procedures.	Yes	2	Traders can access information regarding the CA requirements of certificates and approvals related procedures from the BAEC's website. The website hosts relevant regulatory and policy documents informing traders the procedures, required forms and documents, penalty for breaches of import, export, and procedures for appeal or review related to availing trade services from the agency. Furthermore, the Sample Analysis Service Policy, 2018, published on the agency's website, includes detailed sampling procedure, fee and the names of the service points for the traders to avail testing services as well. However, the BAEC Citizen Charter is not published on their website and the page is currently under construction. Moreover, some of the published information from the website is not readily accessible and requires extensive searching, potentially discouraging private sector actors from seeking information on their website. Findings from the private sector shows that only 10% of the respondent traders utilize BAEC's website to access trade service related information.
	Average score	1.50	

<u>Information Technology</u>			
<i>To what extent the BAEC utilizes information technologies that enhance the speed, efficiency, and transparency of the regulatory measures it applies.</i>			
CA utilizes electronic portals for submission of e-forms.	No	0	BAEC does not utilize electronic portals for submission of e-forms. Currently all the application procedures are done manually.
CA uses automated systems to support its processes (i.e., communication/notification of other agencies, transmission of reports/test results).	No	1	The Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) is not employed in the AECD laboratory due to the absence of a server system. The report are now shared through email.
CA utilizes automated systems to accept pre-arrival data for advanced processing related to its regulatory mandate.	No	0	The BAEC's all trade related services are manual.
	Average score	0.33	
<u>WTO Notification Processes</u>			
<i>To what extent BAEC is in compliance with the provisions of the WTO Notifications provisions of the TFA.</i>			
Engagement with Enquiry Point - CA feeds information to the relevant WTO Enquiry Point to inform the trading community of new regulatory measures that might impact trade and provide the trading community and WTO members ample time to comment on proposed changes?	Yes	4	BAEC headquarters usually responds to any questions and inquiries from NEP. They have an information office that handles all the day to day queries including NEP queries..

Publicized Trade Information - CA has published the following: (a) procedures for importation, exportation, and transit (including port, airport, and other entry-point procedures), and required forms and documents; (b) fees and charges imposed on or in connection with importation, exportation or transit; (c) import, export or transit restrictions or prohibitions; (d) penalty provisions for breaches of import, export, or transit formalities; (e) procedures for appeal or review; and (f) agreements or parts thereof with any country or countries relating to importation, exportation, or transit.	Yes	2	BAEC website hosts relevant regulatory and policy documents informing traders the procedures, required forms and documents, penalty for breaches of import, export, and procedures for appeal or review related to availing trade services from the agency. Furthermore, the Sample Analysis Service Policy, 2018, published on the agency's website, includes detailed sampling procedure, fee and the names of the service points for the traders to avail testing services as well. However, some of the published information from the website is not readily accessible and requires extensive searching, potentially discouraging private sector actors from seeking information on their website. Findings from the private sector shows that only 10% of the respondent traders utilize BAEC's website to access trade service related information.
	Average score	3.00	
<u>Private Sector Engagement</u>			
<i>The extent to which BAEC includes private sector stakeholders in its policy decisions or conducts outreach efforts to edify private sector on compliance issues.</i>			
Consultations with Private Sector - CA consults with private sector to gain insight and feedback into issues facing traders relating to trade services, capacity, or laws/regulations? If so, are consultations held regularly and frequently (i.e., 2 or more times a year)?	Yes	2	Coordination meetings are usually held on a yearly basis. However, in the case of any incidence, the meetings are held on a ad hoc basis. However, findings from the private sector survey indicate that BAEC does not hold regular consultation meetings with the private sector actors or traders. The survey results highlight that just 17% of traders agree that they are consulted only once a year, while 6% responded that they are occasionally consulted (once in a couple of years) by the BAEC. The majority, 78%, responded that BAEC has never sought their input into the issues related to BAEC's trade services. These results suggest that a significant proportion of traders are not regularly consulted on issues pertaining to trade services or updates in laws and regulations.
	Average score	2.00	

<u>Institutional Capacity</u>			
<i>The extent to which BAEC has the human and institutional capacity (except for IT) to carry out its mandate.</i>			
CA human resources currently possesses sufficient number, knowledge, skills and abilities capacity to accomplish tasks associated within the mandate of the CA proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	2	The manpower at the BAEC laboratories are sufficiently skilled and well-acquainted to conduct the existing tests at the laboratories. Regular in-house and external trainings have equipped the laboratory personnels with necessary skills and capacity to accomplish the tasks associated with their mandate. However, BAEC does not have extra manpower to do other job except lab tasks.
CA has adequate facilities and equipment capacity to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of BAEC proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	3	The current equipment of the lab, although some are outdated, still remains functional, and there are essential backups available to ensure the provision of services.
CA has adequate cold storage capacity to apply its regulatory mandate in a way that adequately provide service coverage to traders.	No	2	BAEC does not have any cold storage facilities for the traders at the ports. However, they have facility Inside the labs. Traders or C&F agents need to manage their own cold storage logistics to deliver the samples to the labs.
	Average score	2.33	
<u>Risk Management</u>			
<i>The extent to which and the capacity of BAEC to exercise risk-based management principles in the application of its regulatory mandate.</i>			
CA possesses adequate legislative, regulatory (i.e. SRO) and policy instruments to enable risk-based selectivity for treatment and control application.	No	0	BAEC does not have specific legislative, regulatory or policy instruments in place that enable or support RM.
CA has a RM framework in alignment with contemporary Intl best practices (i.e. ISO 31000 – WTO RM Framework).	No	0	At this time, a risk-based selectivity methodology is not being applied and a RM framework aligned with ISO 31000 is not in place

CA has an organizational structure with dedicated personnel to support risk-based selectivity (e.g. RM Unit or other functional organizational components dedicated to RM).	No	0	Currently BAEC does not follow any risk-based selectivity approach for consignment inspection and the agency lacks an organizational structure to implement RM.
CA utilizes compliance management and maintain historical compliance records to determine commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk levels.	Yes	1	BAEC officials report historically high compliance levels in Bangladesh concerning radioactivity contamination, alleviating the necessity for the agency to maintain extensive compliance records. However, the agency does keep historical compliance records manually, but these records are not used to assess risk levels associated with trade entities.
CA currently has adequate personnel capacity to apply risk-based selectivity.	No	0	As BAEC does not practice any risk-based selectivity approach for consignment inspection, they do not have adequate personnel capacity to apply risk-based selectivity.
CA has sufficient level of automation / digitization to support risk-based selectivity.	No	0	BAEC does not have an automated or digitalized system to facilitate risk-based selectivity for inspection of consignments.
CA collaborates with other agencies (e.g. NBR Customs) to develop and maintain commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk-based profiles for treatment / control selectivity.	No	0	BAEC does not collaborate with any other govt authorities to develop and maintain commodity, conveyance and trade entity risk-based profiles for treatment / control selectivity.
CA cooperates with other agencies to prioritize agro-based shipments selected for risk treatments or controls (e.g. Service Level Agreement / Citizen Charter) and communicate results as appropriate.	No	0	BAEC usually notifies that perishable products must be tested first. However, no risk assessment for radioactivity check of the sample are in place. Thus, all imported samples are tested for radioactivity, except products from SAARC countries.
	Average score	0.13	
<u>Laboratories and Testing Procedure</u>			
<i>The capacity of BAEC's laboratories to apply its regulatory mandate in a way that is consistent with the WTO TFA and can adequately provide service coverage to traders.</i>			

Criteria will reflect overall average metrics as defined in Laboratories Scorecard.	Yes	2.88	This is the average score of the overall mark AECD and AECC labs received in their respective scorecards.
	Average score	2.88	
<u>Prioritization of Perishable Goods</u>			
<i>The extent to which BAEC through law and through practice prioritizes the inspection, testing, and certification of goods under its regulatory authority.</i>			
CA has adequate procedures to enable the release of perishable goods in a manner that preserves product integrity.	No	2	The Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Act of 2012 and the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Control Rules of 1997 does not include any separate guidelines or procedures for the handling of perishable food items and expedite the release of the items in order to preserve product integrity. However, in practice, the agency usually prioritizes testing of the perishable goods for the expedited release of the consignments.
	Average score	2.00	
Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission			
ASSESSMENT SCORE	Average score	1.71	

Laboratory Scorecards

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Atomic Energy Center Lab Chittagong (AECC), Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC)
Structure/Ministry:	BAEC- Autonomous Government Organization
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	BAEC established the Radioactivity Testing and Monitoring Laboratory (RTML) in Chittagong to assess and control radioactivity levels in food materials. The RTML

	meticulously monitors the levels of radioactivity in imported and exportable food, as well as allied materials.		
Date of Assessment:	6-Dec-23		
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team		
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation		Score	Remarks
Scorecard Parameter			
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting			
All information and record keeping is computerised	Yes	4.00	All the information and record-keeping are computerized. Only the documents for sample receiving and report sharing are conducted manually.
Lab is implementing a LIMS system	No	0.00	The lab is not implementing a LIMS system.
Lab has automated IT-based system for on-line transmission of lab reports (including to Customs)	No	0.00	The lab transmits reports to customs via email.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on IT and computerised systems	Yes	1.00	Current manpower in the laboratory has knowledge, skills, and abilities in IT and computerized systems. However, the laboratory does not have IT personnel and requires IT personnel along with their capacity development.
Lab is analysing data and providing to parent Department	Not applicable		They are not required to share their reports and produce papers with other agencies and the parent department.
Total		1.25	
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities			
Sampling SOPs based on international standards are being implemented across labs	Yes	4.00	The parameters for ISO 17025 certification have been documented. AECC and BTF could not find relevant consultants; as a result, the documentation process was facilitated by AECD, with session arrangement support from BTF.
Annual risk-based sampling plans developed and implemented	No	0.00	AECC does not conduct annual risk-based sampling. The Bangladesh Government also does not want to adapt to a risk-

			based sampling plan for BAEC, as all goods should be tested for radioactive materials.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on sampling methodologies	Yes	4.00	Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in sampling methodologies, as the lab conducts all regularly scheduled in-house trainings. The laboratory feels the need for training for a resource person on bio-safety level and Radioactive Control Officer (RCO).
Total		2.67	
Testing Capabilities			
All required equipment to test for prescribed parameters available	Yes	3.00	AECC has all required equipment to test for prescribed parameters. However, the laboratory does not have sufficient backup for all equipment to ensure sustainability.
All test methods available and validated	Yes	4.00	The laboratory follows International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) methods for sample testing.
Testing manual and SOPs developed and implemented	Yes	4.00	AECC has all the testing manuals and SOPs developed and documented.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on testing	Yes	3.00	Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in testing, as AECC conducts regular in-house training sessions for sustainable skills and abilities of manpower. Annually the laboratory has to conduct 20,000 tests with only seven technical manpower.
Total		3.50	
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation			
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on ISO 17025	Yes	2.00	Manpower in the laboratory is gathering knowledge, skills, and abilities on ISO 17025 through their in-house sessions. Since 2021, to develop sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities on ISO, the laboratory has developed a roadmap. Following the roadmap, the laboratory is adapting necessary steps. Now the laboratory has its own certified ISO assessor. However, the laboratory requires a well-acquainted consultant for ISO accreditation.

ISO 17025 Implemented and lab accredited for all relevant parameters	Yes	1.00	The laboratory has completed all the documentation processes for ISO certification and is expected to be certified by June 2024. The laboratory has identified two parameters for ISO accreditation (Milk powder and Soil). The laboratory could not conduct PT as well as ILC as relevant experts were not found.
Total		1.50	
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries			
Test certificates of labs recognised in countries (exports)	Yes	4.00	Test certificates of the laboratory are recognized, as the laboratory is part of the IAEA method.
Test certificates of exporting countries is recognised as a risk-basis while developing sampling plan for imports	No	0.00	AECC feels the need to conduct 100% testing to ensure prevention of radioactivity.
Total		2.00	
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)			
Level of capacity of current personnel numbers and capability to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of this laboratory proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4.00	The laboratory has a sufficient number of personnel to accomplish tasks associated with the mandate and meet service requests.
Capacity of the laboratory equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4.00	The laboratory has sufficient equipment as well as backup equipment in place.
Funding sources available to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4.00	Current funding of the laboratory is sufficient to accomplish tasks associated. After ISO accreditation, the laboratory, upon request to the ministry, would receive further funds to maintain the accreditation.
Laws/ Regulations are in place to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Not applicable		Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Act 2012, Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission Order 1973, Nuclear Safety and Radiation Control Act 1993, Environmental Clearance, Food Radiation Act 1983. Along with these, the laboratory has gadgets and would require to develop SROs for further enhancement.

Facility infrastructure in terms of the layout, size, age, and structural conditions are sufficient. There is adequate back-up electric power, constant water supply, and waste management.	Yes	3.00	The laboratory has sufficient facility infrastructure, with electric backup power through a generator. However, the laboratory does not have ETP in place. Currently, the laboratory stores hazardous wastes and sends them to Savar for disposal, and non-hazardous chemicals are collected by Chottogram City Corporation.
Laboratory has functional safety devices (fume hoods, emergency showers, eye douche, fire extinguishers, fire blanket, first aid kits, etc.)	Yes	4.00	The laboratory has all the required functional safety devices in place, which are annually updated.
Total		3.80	
Overall marks		2.45	

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Atomic Energy Center Lab Dhaka (AECD), Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC)		
Structure/Ministry:	BAEC- Autonomous Government Organization		
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	There are several divisions within the AECD laboratory including Accelerator Facilities Division, Chemistry Division, Electronics Division, Material Science Division, and Experimental Physics Division. The main objective of the lab is to ensure protection against ionizing radiation through monitoring and measurement of radioactivity in environmental samples, food stuffs, imported and exportable samples.		
Date of Assessment:	1-Nov-23		
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team		
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation		Score	Remarks

Scorecard Parameter

Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting

All information and record keeping is computerised	Yes	4	In AECD, all the information and record-keeping are computerized; AECD retains laboratory reports in both digital and hard copy formats.
Lab is implementing a LIMS system	No	0	LMIS is not being implemented due to the absence of a server.

Lab has automated IT-based system for on-line transmission of lab reports (including to Customs)	No	0	AECD shares reports with the respective clients through hard copy or email. The automation of the process system developed by the GoB is already in place for installation. This is expected to be functional in 6 months.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on IT and computerised systems	No	0	The workforce in AECD has knowledge of computerized skills and abilities only. As the system of automation is not in place, the evaluator has given "zero."
Lab is analysing data and providing to parent Department	Not applicable		They are not required to share their report and produce papers with other agencies and the parent department.
Total		1	
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities			
Sampling SOPs based on international standards are being implemented across labs	Yes	4	AECD has established sampling SOPs. The lab does not perceive the need for new SOPs.
Annual risk-based sampling plans developed and implemented	No	0	AECD has not developed a Risk-Based sample plan as it is the responsibility of the regulatory Authority.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on sampling methodologies	Yes	4	They have 4 staff (experimental officers) who are trained to develop samples for any given tests under their purview.
Total		2.67	
Testing Capabilities			
All required equipment to test for prescribed parameters available	Yes	4	They have sufficient equipment to conduct mandated tests; however, a few equipment need to be replaced in the upcoming year. Currently, they test 4000-5000 samples per year.
All test methods available and validated	Yes	4	Test methods are validated as per ISO 17025. The methods are also validated by peer authorities from home or abroad.
Testing manual and SOPs developed and implemented	Yes	4	They have all SOPs and manuals developed and stored.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on testing	Yes	3	AECD, being ISO 17025 accredited, requires all the staff to be skilled and knowledgeable.
Total		3.75	

Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation			
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on ISO 17025	Yes	4	Since 2010, accredited from India. In 2012, the lab got accredited when ISO was nationalized.
ISO 17025 Implemented and lab accredited for all relevant parameters	Yes	4	The laboratory is accredited with ISO 17025 for all relevant parameters following a matrix-based certification.
Total		4	
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries			
Test certificates of labs recognised in countries (exports)	Yes	3	Radiology is accepted. Members of IAE will accept radiology certificates of BAEC. But other tests may not be recognized or there is a possibility to accept those given that they are ISO-accredited.
Test certificates of exporting countries is recognised as a risk-basis while developing sampling plan for imports	Not applicable		This is not applicable for AECD as it falls under customs jurisdiction.
Total		3	
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)			
Level of capacity of current personnel numbers and capability to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of this laboratory proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	Have sufficient staff but they require technical training to skill up their operational excellence.
Capacity of the laboratory equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	Equipment in the AECD lab is accredited on ISO matrix-based accreditation. The lab also has backup equipment to accomplish associated tasks. Some equipment is old but can accomplish associated tasks. Replacement of equipment is in a slow process due to budget constraints.
Funding sources available to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	They receive Research and Development budget of 90 lac taka per year. The R&D budget provides funds for equipment repair. However, the current budget does not fully cover the equipment replacement budget.

Laws/ Regulations are in place to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Not applicable		Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Act 2012, Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission Order 1973, Nuclear Safety and Radiation Control Act 1993, Environmental Clearance, Food Radiation Act 1983.
Facility infrastructure in terms of the layout, size, age, and structural conditions are sufficient. There is adequate back-up electric power, constant water supply, and waste management.	Yes	4	In order to be accredited, the lab has to ensure sufficient infrastructure, including adequate backup electric power, constant water supply, and waste management.
Laboratory has functional safety devices (fume hoods, emergency showers, eye douche, fire extinguishers, fire blanket, first aid kits, etc.)	Yes	4	Have all safety devices in place; however, eye douche is old and needs to be upgraded.
Total		4	
Overall marks		3.07	

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Plant Quarantine Wing		
Structure/Ministry:	Independent Government organization under the Department of Agricultural Extension, Ministry of Agriculture. Regulates import and export of plants or plant products, pests, beneficial organisms and packing materials.		
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	PQW is responsible for preventing harmful pests and diseases from entering the country along with plants, seeds, and plant-based products that are imported. PQW is also the regulatory authority overseeing export of plants and plant-based products. PQW implements sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements in accordance with international agreements. PQW operates 30 plant quarantine stations at ports in the country. PQW officers inspect import consignments for plants and plant products and issues clearance certificates. In addition PQW issues SPS certificates prior to export of plant products. The primary legislation instructing PQW is the Plant Quarantine Act of 2011, the Plant Quarantine Rules of 2018, and the Import Policy Order.		
Date of Assessment:	13/11/2023		
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team		
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation		Score	Remarks

Scorecard Parameter			
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automatation and Online Reporting			
All information and record keeping is computerised	Yes	2	Central PQW digitally stores the test data on selected devices, but the reports are manually stored and shared via email.
Lab is implementing a LIMS system	No	0	The Central PQW lab does not have any LIMS, and there is no existing structure for LIMS in place.
Lab has automated IT-based system for on-line transmission of lab reports (including to Customs)	No	0	The laboratory does not have an automated IT-based system for online report transmission.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on IT and computerised systems	Yes	1	Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in IT. However, they need training to implement a computerized system.
Lab is analysing data and providing to parent Department	Yes	2	Upon requirement, Central PQW shares reports with the plant quarantine wing of DAE.
Total		1	
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities			
Sampling SOPs based on international standards are being implemented across labs	No	0	Sampling SOPs based on international standards are not being implemented. However, Central PQW has developed its own procedure to draw samples of imported goods.
Annual risk-based sampling plans developed and implemented	No	0	Central PQW does not have risk-based sampling plans.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on sampling methodologies	Yes	1	Individuals who received training previously have been transferred, and there is a high frequency of transferring trained staff within a year. This situation indicates a need for improvement in the skills of the technicians.
Total		0.33	
Testing Capabilities			
All required equipment to test for prescribed parameters available	Yes	4	Central PQW has all equipment in place, which was bought in 2018.

All test methods available and validated	Yes	2	Test methods and procedures are in place at Central PQW but need validation.
Testing manual and SOPs developed and implemented	Yes	2	SOPs for import are developed according to Bangladesh Gazette of 26 May 1994 but not according to ISO 17025.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on testing	Yes	2	The manpower has inadequate knowledge, skills, and abilities in testing. Hence, they require training to attain an optimum knowledge and skill level.
Total		2.5	
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation			
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on ISO 17025	Yes	1	The Central PQW of Dhaka has a basic understanding as they have received introductory training on ISO 17025.
ISO 17025 Implemented and lab accredited for all relevant parameters	No	0	
Total		0.5	
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries			
Test certificates of labs recognised in countries (exports)	Yes	4	Under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the test reports of Central PQW are recognized in exporting countries.
Test certificates of exporting countries is recognised as a risk-basis while developing sampling plan for imports	No	0	The Central PQW is presently focusing on import products and their phytosanitary requirements. Currently, the laboratory is not involved in dealing with export products. They have planned and are in the initial phase of developing export SOPs, which align with their long-term goal of ISO 17025 accreditation.
Total		2	
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)			
Level of capacity of current personnel numbers and capability to accomplish tasks associated	Yes	3	Currently, there is no dedicated staff assigned for the laboratory. Hence, some staff from other departments are assigned to the laboratory as additional responsibilities.

with mandate of this laboratory proportionate to demand for services.			
Capacity of the laboratory equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	2	The laboratory has sufficient equipment to fulfill its demand for services. However, the lab does not have sufficient funds to regularly calibrate equipment. The last calibration was conducted in 2018.
Funding sources available to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	1	The existing fund of the laboratory does not cover the expenses for equipment calibration, reagents, and chemicals.
Laws/ Regulations are in place to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	2	Central PQW has Plant Quarantine Rules 2018, Plant Quarantine Act 2011, and Destructive Insect and Pest Rules 1966 (Amended 1989). However, the lab currently lacks a well-functional organogram and a lab functional manual, which are essential for improving the lab's functionality and facility.
Facility infrastructure in terms of the layout, size, age, and structural conditions are sufficient. There is adequate back-up electric power, constant water supply, and waste management.	No	0	The current infrastructure at Central PQW was not initially designed for a laboratory. As a result, the existing PQW lab's facilities do not adequately support its functions.
Laboratory has functional safety devices (fume hoods, emergency showers, eye douche, fire extinguishers, fire blanket, first aid kits, etc.)	No	0	To date, the lab lacks safety equipment and proper waste disposal procedures. As mentioned earlier, the laboratory was established in an office premises and does not have adequate facilities for a laboratory. Additionally, there is no designated waste disposal procedure, and wastes are disposed of in a general manner without considering any treatments.
Total		1.33333333	
Overall marks		1.28	

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Poultry Research and Training Centre (PRTC)
Structure/Ministry:	Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (CVASU)

Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	The lab was established in 2008 with the vision of providing institutionalized supports in research, training and laboratory services for safer and increased livestock production in Bangladesh. PRTC. The lab has four facilities Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, Zoonotic Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, Feed Analysis Laboratory, and Food Safety Laboratory. Currently two facilities are active namely, Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory and Feed Analysis Laboratory. Initially the laboratory was not developed for customs services rather for supporting university research facilities at CVASU. Later the government designated PRTC laboratory to provide service for imported animal products testing.		
Date of Assessment:	5-Dec-23		
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team		
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation		Score	Remarks
Scorecard Parameter			
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting			
All information and record keeping is computerised	Yes	4	Information, records, and reports are computerized and manually stored. All digital devices for record-keeping were found functional.
Lab is implementing a LIMS system	No	0	PRTC recognizes that there is a need for LIMS. Hence, having preliminary discussions with BTF to automate the service process. BTF has already visited and conducted a needs assessment to identify the scope of automation in the PRTC lab.
Lab has automated IT-based system for on-line transmission of lab reports (including to Customs)	No	0	Currently, they do not have any automation system in place. Hence, the reports are delivered to Customs and DLS via email or hard copy.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on IT and computerised systems	Yes	1	PRTC does not have any dedicated IT resources. However, the current technical officers/lab staff have received a demonstration session on the automated system.
Lab is analysing data and providing to parent Department	Not applicable		PRTC is an assigned lab by DLS; PRTC only shares reports with DLS when samples are collected through them (DLS). It also shares reports with customs when sample requests are placed from Customs. Apart from this, C&F agents also place requests for sample testing and reports.

Total		1.25	
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities			
Sampling SOPs based on international standards are being implemented across labs	Not applicable		The PRTC lab does not have sampling SOPs and does not have a mandate for sampling. They receive samples upon service requests from Customs and individuals.
Annual risk-based sampling plans developed and implemented	Not applicable		The PRTC lab has four sections (Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab, Feed Analysis Lab, Zoonotic Disease Diagnostic Lab, and Food Safety Lab), where two are active. Some tests that fall under the unoperational labs are being performed by the labs that are currently functional. Having said that, PRTC does not see any requirement to create a risk-based sampling plan, given that the number of risk parameters is very high.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on sampling methodologies	Yes	4	As PRTC is part of CVASU, professors in charge and scientists participate in internal skill development initiatives. Sampling methodologies are also being validated following all the guidelines applicable for autonomous laboratories.
Total		4	
Testing Capabilities			
All required equipment to test for prescribed parameters available	Yes	4	PRTC has all updated testing equipment in place. Calibration takes place based on the need. To ensure all equipment is functional, PRTC ensures its regular use either through university students or interns.
All test methods available and validated	Yes	2	Test methods are available; however, PRTC has recently started validating them through Interlaboratory Comparison (ILC). Till date, they have conducted three ILCs and plan to continue in upcoming years. As not all test methods are validated, it indicates limited operation of the laboratory.
Testing manual and SOPs developed and implemented	Yes	1	The existing testing manuals and SOPs are developed for internal consumption. PRTC realizes that these manuals and SOPs should be standardized and restructured, for which they need support.

Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on testing	Yes	4	Currently, they have one principal scientific officer, two senior technical officers, two technical officers, and one assistant to conduct mandated tasks of the laboratory. For providing existing services, the laboratory does not feel the need for new technical officers along with immediate up-skill trainings. However, for new tests, there is a need for additional technical officers.
Total		2.75	
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation			
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on ISO 17025	No	0	The laboratory lacks knowledge on ISO accreditation and seeks consultant support from BTF. It has identified 10 parameters for ISO accreditation and is currently in discussion with BTF. Manpower in the laboratory is not well aware of the proper documentation and process of ISO 17025 accreditation. They would require training on ISO accreditation process.
ISO 17025 Implemented and lab accredited for all relevant parameters	No	0	The laboratory does not have any ISO certification.
Total		0	
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries			
Test certificates of labs recognised in countries (exports)	Not applicable		Currently, the laboratory has no such provision.
Test certificates of exporting countries is recognised as a risk-basis while developing sampling plan for imports	No	0	Test certificates of exporting countries are recognized but not on a risk basis, as all meat products are to be tested in Bangladesh.
Total		0	
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)			
Level of capacity of current personnel numbers and capability to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of this laboratory proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	3	The currently operational two laboratories have sufficient scientists. However, for the near future, the lab does not have sufficient manpower for the current non-operational labs. Additionally, the director and lab in charge are additional in charge. To ensure sustainability, the lab requires additional staff.

Capacity of the laboratory equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	The laboratory has sufficient equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate.
Funding sources available to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	PRTC has funding from Fleming Fund, FAO, and DAI. The laboratory maintains its costs from its revenue through providing services.
Laws/ Regulations are in place to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Not applicable		PRTC being under an academic institution CVASU. No hard and fast rule would be applicable for the Laboratory.
Facility infrastructure in terms of the layout, size, age, and structural conditions are sufficient. There is adequate back-up electric power, constant water supply, and waste management.	Yes	3	The current lab infrastructure was developed in a poultry shed. However, with proper renovation, the lab has ensured its functionality and operation. The laboratory has limited space and feels the need for extending its size as it will be required when the two non-operational sections would be functional. The lab also has a generator for back-up electric power and an Automatic Voltage Regulator (AVR) for machine safety. But the laboratory does not have any waste management mechanism.
Laboratory has functional safety devices (fume hoods, emergency showers, eye douche, fire extinguishers, fire blanket, first aid kits, etc.)	Yes	4	The laboratory has functional safety devices, including fire extinguisher, emergency shower, and emergency exit, which are annually updated.
Total		3.6	
Overall marks		1.93	

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Central Diseases Investigation Laboratory, CDIL, DLS, Dhaka
Structure/Ministry:	Department of Livestock Services (DLS), Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	Being a research wing of the Department of Livestock Services, CDIL is involved in diagnosis and surveillance of animal diseases and improving the livestock resources of Bangladesh. CDIL has 5 different labs: Bacteriology Lab, Virology Lab, Serology Lab, Molecular Technique Lab, and Postmortem and Autopsy Lab. The samples of exported/imported animal products were tested here before. However, they are now transferred to the DLS QC lab. Currently, imported/exported animal skin is received here for testing.
Date of Assessment:	1-Nov-23

Facilitated By:	Inspira Team		
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation		Score	Remarks
Scorecard Parameter			
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting			
All information and record keeping is computerised	Yes	2	The test results are stored on the selected device/computer. Result reports of the past three years are stored in hardcopy.
Lab is implementing a LIMS system	Yes	2	The laboratory partially uses the LIMS system developed by FAO.
Lab has automated IT-based system for on-line transmission of lab reports (including to Customs)	No	0	The existing LIMS system of the laboratory does not support report transmission to other agencies. Hence, the laboratory requested support from BTF regarding report transmission.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on IT and computerised systems	Yes	1	Manpower in the laboratory has knowledge and abilities to operate the IT and computerized system. However, the laboratory does not have dedicated staff for IT support and automation systems. The laboratory requires training on IT and computerized systems to enhance capacity.
Lab is analysing data and providing to parent Department	Yes	4	Currently, they are using the Bangladesh Animal Health Intelligence System (BAHIS) to share data with the parent department.
Total		1.8	
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities			
Sampling SOPs based on international standards are being implemented across labs	Yes	4	Essential SOPs for sampling were developed in CDIL. All the staff, including field staff, are well acquainted with the sampling procedure.
Annual risk-based sampling plans developed and implemented	No	0	CDIL believes that creating annual risk-based sampling plans is not essential for their operations.

Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on sampling methodologies	Yes	3	CDIL maintains a systematic approach to sampling, which is partially documented and requires proper documentation. The laboratory provides specific guidelines for each type of sample to sample collectors, and it's crucial to emphasize that CDIL has a strict policy of rejecting any samples that do not conform with the SOP.
Total		2.3	
Testing Capabilities			
All required equipment to test for prescribed parameters available	Yes	4	In addition to sufficient equipment, CDIL maintains backup equipment; for instance, they have three PCR machines that are used in rotation.
All test methods available and validated	Yes	1	CDIL has developed the necessary test methods, and they are in the process of validation.
Testing manual and SOPs developed and implemented	Yes	3	The majority of the SOPs are developed, but there is also scope to develop new SOPs if necessary.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on testing	Yes	3	Four scientists are well acquainted with the testing knowledge and skills.
Total		2.75	
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation			
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on ISO 17025	Yes	2	The laboratory staff has knowledge of ISO 17025. However, they require skill enhancement to implement ISO 17025 in the laboratory.
ISO 17025 Implemented and lab accredited for all relevant parameters	No	0	The laboratory is in the process of availing ISO 17025. The consultant is preparing documents for applying ISO 17025 accreditation.
Total		1	
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries			
Test certificates of labs recognised in countries (exports)	Yes	4	DLS is responsible for certifying veterinary products according to the World Organization for Animal Health.

Test certificates of exporting countries is recognised as a risk-basis while developing sampling plan for imports	Yes	4	CDIL acknowledges the test certificates of exporting countries on a risk basis.
Total		4	
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)			
Level of capacity of current personnel numbers and capability to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of this laboratory proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	The current staff has the technical capability to handle their assigned tasks, but due to a shortage of manpower, they need to work beyond office hours. Hence, additional technical staff are required to efficiently fulfill the mandated tasks of the laboratory.
Capacity of the laboratory equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	The laboratory has sufficient equipment to meet its mandate and is proportionate to the demand for services.
Funding sources available to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	3	Funds received from GoB sources for regular maintenance and upgrading are insufficient. However, occasionally, the laboratory receives technical assistance (e.g., reagents) from donors and other organizations as donations/gifts to maintain and upgrade its service capacity.
Laws/ Regulations are in place to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	Animal Disease Act, 2005, Guidelines on Animal Vaccine 2018, Wildlife Act 2012, Fish Feed and Animal Feed Act, 2010.
Facility infrastructure in terms of the layout, size, age, and structural conditions are sufficient. There is adequate back-up electric power, constant water supply, and waste management.	Yes	3	The laboratory has installed some IPS for specific designated machines, ensuring that these machines are safeguarded from sudden shutdowns caused by load shedding. However, it's important to note that the laboratory does not have generator support to provide backup power for all the machines in the entire laboratory. It has functional ETP and incineration.
Laboratory has functional safety devices (fume hoods, emergency showers, eye douche, fire extinguishers, fire blanket, first aid kits, etc.)	Yes	4	The lab has functional safety devices following ISO 9001. The lab is also facilitated by functional emergency exits.
Total		3.666666667	

Overall marks		2.59	
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Name of Cooperating Agency:	Quality Control Lab-DLS		
Structure/Ministry:	Department of Livestock services (DLS), Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock		
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	Quality control Laboratory for Livestock Inputs and its food Products (QC Lab) is the apex analytical laboratory for analytical and microbial testing of livestock inputs and its products. The laboratory is providing testing facilities of livestock feed, additives, biologics as well as livestock products to domestic and exporting livestock inputs and products manufacturing community for controlling food safety, promoting livestock production and facilitating export.		
Date of Assessment:	14-Nov-23		
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team		
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation		Score	Remarks
Scorecard Parameter			
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting			
All information and record keeping is computerised	Yes	4	In the QC lab, DLS, all information, including test reports and test request data, is digitally stored and managed in the LIMS.
Lab is implementing a LIMS system	Yes	4	An LIMS system, Labware 7, is in place in the QC Laboratory.
Lab has automated IT-based system for on-line transmission of lab reports (including to Customs)	No	0	The existing LIMS system of the laboratory does not support report transmission to other agencies. Hence, the laboratory requested support from BTF regarding report transmission.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on IT and computerised systems	Yes	3	The current staff at the QC lab possesses adequate knowledge and skills in IT and computerized systems. However, no dedicated staff is available to maintain the IT and Computerized system. Currently, the system is overseen by the Principal Scientific Officer (PSO). In case of significant software issues, the lab relies on an external consultant from ICDDR.
Lab is analysing data and providing to parent Department	Yes	4	The QC lab at DLS shares the analyzed data with the parent department, DLS via email as the existing LIMS system does not support automated sharing. Subsequently, DLS further forwards this data to customs if required.

Total		3	
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities			
Sampling SOPs based on international standards are being implemented across labs	Yes	4	Essential sampling SOPs are developed according to international standards. All the staff, including the field staff, are well-acquainted with the sampling procedure.
Annual risk-based sampling plans developed and implemented	No	0	Risk-based sampling is not currently being implemented.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on sampling methodologies	Yes	4	The existing manpower possesses adequate knowledge, skills, and abilities regarding sampling methodologies. However, the Quality Control (QC) lab faces a shortage of human resources. But recently the laboratory has got approval for 8 permanent positions to work.
Total		2.67	
Testing Capabilities			
All required equipment to test for prescribed parameters available	Yes	4	The QC laboratory at DLS has all the required equipment for providing services for prescribed parameters. In addition, the laboratory has signed an MOU with the QC laboratory at DoF, nearby its premises, for necessary equipment support if required.
All test methods available and validated	Yes	4	The QC lab at DLS has achieved ISO 17025 accreditation for 18 product tests, each comprising multiple parameters. All essential tests conducted by the lab are covered by these 18 product tests. While the lab has considered accrediting three more product tests, it deems them less necessary. The lab does not anticipate expanding the number of accredited tests, as all necessary tests are already accredited. Additionally, the lab performs 106 more tests, all validated according to the guidelines of EC, EOH, and EU.
Testing manual and SOPs developed and implemented	Yes	4	The QC lab at DLS validates tests through proficiency tests conducted by FAPAS UK. The lab holds ISO 9001 and 17025 accreditation. Additionally, the lab follows guidelines from various scientific journals and adheres to standards set by the EC, EOH, and EU to ensure scientific standards and compliance.

Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on testing	Yes	3	At present, the QC lab at DLS has a team of six scientists who are well-equipped with sufficient knowledge and abilities in testing. Sustainability could not be ensured as manpower in the laboratory are in deputation and their posting changes over time.
Total		3.75	
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation			
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on ISO 17025	Yes	4	Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities to implement ISO 17025.
ISO 17025 Implemented and lab accredited for all relevant parameters	Yes	4	The QC lab at DLS has a matric-based ISO certification, and specifically, 18 products have received accreditation under ISO 17025.
Total		4	
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries			
Test certificates of labs recognised in countries (exports)	Yes	4	Hence, the QC lab of DLS holds accreditation under ISO 17025, test certificates of QC lab are recognized in countries (export). In addition, test results are accepted by the auditors of USFDA, EU organizations, Australia, Korea, etc.
Test certificates of exporting countries is recognised as a risk-basis while developing sampling plan for imports	Yes	4	The test certificates from exporting countries are acknowledged based on government regulations (Gadget). Nonetheless, it's observed that the module of the government gadget deviates from the ISO 17025 standard. There is a need for further development of the sampling plan in the QC lab at DLS.
Total		4	
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)			
Level of capacity of current personnel numbers and capability to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of this laboratory proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	3	Presently, only one scientist is available for each section, where at least two scientists are required to provide seamless services.
Capacity of the laboratory equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	The QC lab at DLS maintains sufficient backups of laboratory equipment to fulfill associated tasks and has an MOU with DoF for testing support. Additionally, the lab performs annual calibrations of machines to ensure accuracy and reliability.

Funding sources available to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	The lab receives sufficient funds from its parent organization to fulfill specific needs covering all aspects, including technical requirements.
Laws/ Regulations are in place to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	3	Various laws govern the QC lab at DLS, such as the Animal Feed Rule 2013, Animal Slaughter and Meat Quality Control Act 2011, Fish Feed and Animal Feed Act 2010, Guidelines for Quality Control Laboratory of DLS, 2022 (Draft), and Quality Control Laboratory Policy of DLS 2021. Additionally, there is a Quality Policy Statement in place. However, the acknowledgment of the organogram is still pending.
Facility infrastructure in terms of the layout, size, age, and structural conditions are sufficient. There is adequate back-up electric power, constant water supply, and waste management.	Yes	4	The ISO 17025-accredited QC lab has a standard layout, size, and structure for its operation. It has an on-grid solar system of 110 KVA, a gas substation for laboratory machinery, a dormitory for 24 scientists and supporting staff, a fire detection and protection system, and a pneumatic sample transfer system. Backup electrical support is provided by two diesel generators, each 100 KVA, and a power substation of 500 KVA. The lab also has an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP).
Laboratory has functional safety devices (fume hoods, emergency showers, eye douche, fire extinguishers, fire blanket, first aid kits, etc.)	Yes	4	The QC lab is ISO 17025 accredited. Hence, it undergoes yearly maintenance of safety devices such as fume hoods, emergency showers, eye douches, fire extinguishers, fire blankets, first aid kits, etc.
Total		3.67	
Overall marks		3.51	

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Department of Fisheries DoF
Structure/Ministry:	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	The laboratory was first established as a part of Fish Inspection and Quality Control (FIQC) under Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. The primary objective of the lab is to analyse food safety hazards associated with exportable fish and fishery products and environmental samples related to fish production and processing establishments.
Date of Assessment:	20-Dec-23
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team

Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation		Score	Remarks
Scorecard Parameter			
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automatation and Online Reporting			
All information and record keeping is computerised	Yes	4	All information and records are computerized.
Lab is implementing a LIMS system	No	0	LIMS is not in place in the laboratory.
Lab has automated IT-based system for on-line transmission of lab reports (including to Customs)	No	0	The lab shares reports with customs via email and hard copy.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on IT and computerised systems	No	0	Manpower requires training, and the laboratory does not have designated manpower for IT and computerized systems.
Lab is analysing data and providing to parent Department	Not applicable		The laboratory is not required to share its reports and produce papers with other agencies and the parent department.
Total		1	
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities			
Sampling SOPs based on international standards are being implemented across labs	Yes	4	The laboratory, being ISO accredited since 2013, implements sampling SOPs. Thirty-eight parameters are accredited.
Annual risk-based sampling plans developed and implemented	No	0	Annual risk-based sampling plans are not developed.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on sampling methodologies	Yes	4	Manpower in the laboratory has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in sampling methodologies. Manpower in the laboratory has also participated in training on BTSF on Sampling & Analysis Course in Italy.
Total		2.67	
Testing Capabilities			
All required equipment to test for prescribed parameters available	Yes	3	The laboratory has sufficient equipment to test for prescribed parameters, which are annually calibrated. However, the laboratory does not have backup equipment. There is one functional LC-MS machine and there is need for another one.

All test methods available and validated	Yes	4	38 out of 42 test parameters are ISO 17025 accredited. The other four parameters were newly added and will soon be accredited.
Testing manual and SOPs developed and implemented	Yes	4	Testing manuals and SOPs are developed and revised as necessary. The testing manuals are validated by the European Union.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on testing	Yes	3	Manpower in the laboratory has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in testing and participates in regular training.
Total		3.5	
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation			
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on ISO 17025	Yes	4	Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in ISO 17025, as the laboratory is accredited since 2013.
ISO 17025 Implemented and lab accredited for all relevant parameters	Yes	4	The laboratory has been ISO 17025 accredited since 2013. The laboratory has 38 accredited parameters.
Total		4	
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries			
Test certificates of labs recognised in countries (exports)	Yes	4	Test certificates of the laboratory are recognized in countries as the tests follow European Commission guidelines and are validated by the European Union.
Test certificates of exporting countries is recognised as a risk-basis while developing sampling plan for imports	Not applicable		This is not applicable to the laboratory as it falls under customs jurisdiction.
Total		4	
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)			
Level of capacity of current personnel numbers and capability to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of this laboratory proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	Quality control manager, technical officers, and scientists are well capable of accomplishing tasks associated with the mandate and demand for services.
Capacity of the laboratory equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	3	The laboratory has sufficient equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to the demand for services. However, the laboratory does not have backup equipment, and some machines are old.

Funding sources available to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	3	The existing fund in the laboratory is sufficient to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to the demand for services. However, the existing fund from DoF does not accommodate machine replacement, as some do not have any backups, namely LC-MS, IPC, etc.
Laws/ Regulations are in place to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Not applicable		The laboratory was developed under the ordinance "Fish and Fish Products (Inspection and Quality Control) Ordinance, 1983 (Ord. XX of 1983)," and later developed the "Fish Product (Inspection and Quality Control) Rules, 1997," which was amended in 2008. However, being a government laboratory, it does not require laws/regulations to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate.
Facility infrastructure in terms of the layout, size, age, and structural conditions are sufficient. There is adequate back-up electric power, constant water supply, and waste management.	Yes	4	In order to be accredited, the lab has to ensure sufficient infrastructure, including adequate backup electric power and a constant water supply. However, the laboratory does not have an ETP. The laboratory has signed an MOU with the QC laboratory DLS and uses its ETP for liquid wastes. An organization called PRISM Bangladesh collects solid waste from the laboratory.
Laboratory has functional safety devices (fume hoods, emergency showers, eye douche, fire extinguishers, fire blanket, first aid kits, etc.)	Yes	4	The laboratory has all the required functional safety devices in place, which are annually updated.
Total		3.6	
Overall marks		3.13	

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Department of Fisheries DoF
Structure/Ministry:	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	<p>The laboratory is mainly involved in testing of quality and safety parameters (Chemical, Microbiological, PCR, Physicochemical) of shrimp, fish & fishery products, water, ice, surface swab, feed etc. in view of sustaining Bangladesh export performance in world seafood markets through integration of qualified personnel, standard methods, appropriate equipment and quality assurance system are in place for necessary testing and interpretation of tested results. The main objectives of QC Lab, DoF, Chattogram are:</p> <p>-To support export/ import certification issued by Fish Inspection and Quality Control (FIQC) through providing credible test results and to ensure the quality of fish and fishery product for</p>

	promoting exports and public health. -To ensure the quality of fish and fishery product for promoting exports and public health.		
Date of Assessment:	6-Dec-23		
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team		
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments		
Agricultural Trade Facilitation		Score	Remarks
Scorecard Parameter			
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting			
All information and record keeping is computerized	Yes	4	All information and records are computerized.
Lab is implementing a LIMS system	No	0	LIMS is not in place; the software is still under development by BTF.
Lab has automated IT-based system for on-line transmission of lab reports (including to Customs)	No	0	The lab shares reports with customs via email.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on IT and computerised systems	No	0	Manpower requires training, and the laboratory does not have designated manpower for IT and computerized systems.
Lab is analysing data and providing to parent Department	Not applicable		They are not required to share their reports and produce papers with other agencies and the parent department.
Total		1	
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities			
Sampling SOPs based on international standards are being implemented across labs	Yes	4	The laboratory, being ISO accredited since 2014, implements sampling SOPs. Twenty-seven parameters are accredited.
Annual risk-based sampling plans developed and implemented	No	0	Annual risk-based sampling plans are not developed.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on sampling methodologies	Yes	4	Manpower in the laboratory has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in sampling methodologies.
Total		2.67	
Testing Capabilities			

All required equipment to test for prescribed parameters available	Yes	3	The laboratory has sufficient equipment to test for prescribed parameters, which are annually calibrated. However, the laboratory does not have backup equipment, and some machines are old.
All test methods available and validated	Yes	4	Test methods are validated as per ISO 17025 accreditation.
Testing manual and SOPs developed and implemented	Yes	4	Testing manuals and SOPs are developed, validated, and revised as necessary.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on testing	Yes	3	Manpower in the laboratory has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in testing. However, for continuous skill improvement, the laboratory feels the need for continuous skill improvement trainings.
Total		3.5	
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation			
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on ISO 17025	Yes	4	Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in ISO 17025, as the laboratory is accredited since 2014.
ISO 17025 Implemented and lab accredited for all relevant parameters	Yes	4	The laboratory is ISO 17025 accredited since 2014. The laboratory has 27 parameters accredited.
Total		4	
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries			
Test certificates of labs recognised in countries (exports)	Yes	4	Test certificates of the lab are recognized in countries. The test results are accepted by auditors of USFDA, EU organizations, Australia, Korea, etc.
Test certificates of exporting countries is recognised as a risk-basis while developing sampling plan for imports	Not applicable		This is not applicable for the laboratory as it falls under customs jurisdiction.
Total		4	
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)			
Level of capacity of current personnel numbers and capability to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of this laboratory proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	Quality control manager, technical officers, and scientists are well capable of accomplishing tasks associated with the mandate and demand for services.
Capacity of the laboratory equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	3	The laboratory has sufficient equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to the demand for

			services. However, the laboratory does not have backup equipment, and some machines are old.
Funding sources available to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	2	The existing fund from DoF does not accommodate machine replacement as some machines' lifetime has expired, namely LC-MS, UPLC, and IPMC.
Laws/ Regulations are in place to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Not applicable		
Facility infrastructure in terms of the layout, size, age, and structural conditions are sufficient. There is adequate back-up electric power, constant water supply, and waste management.	Yes	4	In order to be accredited, the lab has to ensure sufficient infrastructure, including adequate backup electric power and constant water supply. However, the laboratory does not have ETP and a Nitrogen gas generator.
Laboratory has functional safety devices (fume hoods, emergency showers, eye douche, fire extinguishers, fire blanket, first aid kits, etc.)	Yes	4	The Laboratory has all the required functional safety devices in place, which are annually updated.
Total		3.4	
Overall marks		3.09	

Name of Cooperating Agency:	Department of Fisheries DoF
Structure/Ministry:	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
Summary of role in agricultural trade facilitation:	<p>The main responsibility of the labs is to ensure safety and quality of fish and fish products (for domestic or export). Number of facilities-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Chemical Laboratory -Microbiological Laboratory <p>The labs conduct various kinds of tests including 8 OIE listed pathogens, heavy metals, and proximate analysis for protein fat, fiber fat to ensure fish feed are tested in the labs.</p>
Date of Assessment:	20-Dec-23
Facilitated By:	Inspira Team
Assessment Responses:	Yes, No, Not Applicable, Enter Comments

Agricultural Trade Facilitation		Score	Remarks
Scorecard Parameter			
Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation and Online Reporting			
All information and record keeping is computerised	Yes	4	All information and records are computerized.
Lab is implementing a LIMS system	No	0	LIMS is not in place; the software is still under development by BTF.
Lab has automated IT-based system for on-line transmission of lab reports (including to Customs)	No	0	The lab shares reports with customs via email.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on IT and computerised systems	No	0	Manpower requires training, and the laboratory does not have designated manpower for IT and computerized systems.
Lab is analysing data and providing to parent Department	Not applicable		They are not required to share their reports and produce papers with other agencies and the parent department.
Total		1	
Sampling Procedures and Capabilities			
Sampling SOPs based on international standards are being implemented across labs	Yes	4	The laboratory, being ISO accredited since 2014, implements sampling SOPs. Twenty-nine parameters are accredited.
Annual risk-based sampling plans developed and implemented	No	0	Annual risk-based sampling plans are not developed.
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on sampling methodologies	Yes	4	Manpower in the laboratory has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in sampling methodologies.
Total		2.67	
Testing Capabilities			
All required equipment to test for prescribed parameters available	Yes	3	The laboratory has sufficient equipment to test for prescribed parameters, which are annually calibrated. However, the laboratory does not have backup equipment, and some machines are old.
All test methods available and validated	Yes	4	The test results are accepted by auditors of USFDA, EU organizations, Australia, Korea, etc.
Testing manual and SOPs developed and implemented	Yes	4	Test methods are validated as per ISO 17025 accreditation.

Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on testing	Yes	3	Manpower in the laboratory has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities to conduct testing. However, the laboratory analysts require regular training to ensure knowledge transfer and sustainability.
Total		3.5	
Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation			
Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on ISO 17025	Yes	4	Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in ISO 17025, as the laboratory is accredited since 2014.
ISO 17025 Implemented and lab accredited for all relevant parameters	Yes	4	The laboratory is ISO 17025 accredited since 2014. The laboratory has 29 parameters accredited.
Total		4	
Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries			
Test certificates of labs recognised in countries (exports)	Yes	4	Test certificates of the lab are recognized in countries. The test results are accepted by auditors of USFDA, EU organizations, Australia, Korea, etc.
Test certificates of exporting countries is recognised as a risk-basis while developing sampling plan for imports	Not applicable		
Total		4	
Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)			
Level of capacity of current personnel numbers and capability to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of this laboratory proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	4	Quality control manager, technical officers, and scientists are well capable of accomplishing tasks associated with the mandate and demand for services.
Capacity of the laboratory equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	3	The laboratory has sufficient equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to the demand for services. However, the laboratory does not have backup equipment, and some machines are old.
Funding sources available to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Yes	2	The existing fund from DoF does not accommodate machine replacement, as some machines' lifetime has expired. Machines for testing heavy metals have been non-functional since 2019. ICP-MS, ICP-OES instruments are required.

Laws/ Regulations are in place to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.	Not applicable		
Facility infrastructure in terms of the layout, size, age, and structural conditions are sufficient. There is adequate back-up electric power, constant water supply, and waste management.	Yes	4	In order to be accredited, the lab has to ensure sufficient infrastructure, including adequate backup electric power and constant water supply. However, the laboratory does not have ETP.
Laboratory has functional safety devices (fume hoods, emergency showers, eye douche, fire extinguishers, fire blanket, first aid kits, etc.)	Yes	4	The laboratory has all the required functional safety devices in place, which are annually updated.
Total		3.4	
Overall marks		3.09	

Annexure E: Data Collection Tools

Set 1: Questionnaire for BTF Staff & Partners

Set 1.1: KII Checklist for BTF Technical Advisor

Introduction:

Inspira Advisory and Consulting Ltd has been entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the midterm evaluation of the Bangladesh Trade Facilitation (BTF) project. This evaluation will serve in assessing the project's mid-term progress against key indicators while evaluating the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to the project's efforts. Your insights, experiences, and perspectives will guide us to find actionable recommendations that can shape the project's future trajectory.

We have prepared a detailed questionnaire to guide our discussion. This questionnaire should take approximately **90 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview.

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to Contact us at +880 1817759728 or email: hello@inspira-bd.com

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Note for the interviewee:

1. *We followed the workplan to understand as to what activities have been implemented so far/or are in the implementation process. In the questionnaire if you see reference to an activity which has not been implemented yet, you can discuss the 'apprehended' impact instead of 'realized' impact.*
2. *Some questions may get answered as part of preceding discussion, the interviewer shall skip such queries to avoid duplication.*

General questions

1) Can you please elaborate on your role in the BTF project?

2) We will go through a series of questions at activity level. Before we dive in, would you kindly provide an overview of the project's journey under your activity since you joined? You observed some activities present in work plan of year 1 and 2 but not mentioned in the work plan of year 3. Would you please explain, how have the transformation occurred?

(Guide for response:

- You can focus on the key activities, milestones, challenges, and any notable developments since the project's inception?

- This response shall create the base of our understanding as to how to move forward with the next line of queries, so you can take a bit of time in elaborating your answer)

Activity-wise questions for designated personnel:

Activity 1: Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing³²

- 1) What gaps did you observe during the initial consultation with Cooperating GOB agencies in their harmonisations of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing?
 - a) How did you prioritize the interventions you conducted in this area?
- 2) What are a few instances of advancements you've observed in the specific government departments in enhancing the coordination of their procedures, pre-clearance processes and formalities?
- 3) We have seen from the Y3H2 performance report that a total of 21 Legislative and Policies are at different stages of development. In your opinion, which ones are having a significant impact on the agri trade? Why?
 - a) Have you experienced any significant success or challenge in process streamlining due to changes in regulations/policies/SoPs? Can you please elaborate on this?
 - b) How are you planning to build the capacity of stakeholders to implement the policy or reform instruments on the cooperating agency level?
- 4) What is the current status of the NTFC Agro-working group's functionality? Is there any challenge the project team has been facing in activating the group? How are you addressing the challenges?
- 5) Please describe the ongoing efforts to achieve system automation for issuance of CLPO (Certificates, Licenses, Permits & Other) and compliance requirements.
 - a) What is the current status of the system automation activities (reference list mentioned below) with each agency?

Automated systems	Status	Challenges	Adaptation plan
BFSA export product health certificate- Develop and Operationalize the system			
DoF export product health certificate and import certifications			
DAE pesticide license			
Automation of e-traceability and contract farming system at DAE			
Development of EU Traces Registration and e-traceability system for DLS			
Support automated rapid disease response system at DLS			

- b) How are you planning to disseminate the knowledge of the system automation on the user end?
How would you measure the effectiveness of the selected awareness-building activities?

- 6) Has there been any progress on the following:

Institutionalization/Operationalization	Status	Challenges	Adaptation plan
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³² For Senior Technical Advisors of SPS and Trade Formalities and WTO Notifications, project CoP, and DCoP, and coordinators

Transformation of the Plant Quarantine Wing to the National Plant Quarantine Authority			
Institutionalize Trade Wing at the Department of Livestock Services			

- a) What were the specific challenges you have faced regarding the implementation of the abovementioned activities? What mitigation strategies have been applied as of yet?
- 7) How many trade manuals have been developed and disseminated? How was the selection of specific products for trade manuals done? How are you measuring the effectiveness of the developed manuals?
- 8) How did BTF plan to streamline the process of addressing legal barriers and facilitating trade by offering direct support to the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) in drafting the next Import Policy Order and Export Policy in 2024?
- 9) How did the BTF overcome the challenge of sourcing professionals with the required expertise, particularly in the complex field of legislative reforms involving agriculture and trade-related policies, and what strategies are employed to bridge the knowledge gaps in these areas?
- 10) Wagro-trade academies and private sector associations play in achieving the long-term capacity development goal?

Activity 2: Increase transparency of trade information and WTO notification compliance

1. What progress has there been on the operationalize of WTO Notifications across agencies, SPS Enquiry Points and TBT?
 - a. How far along is the project in completing the inventory of WTO notification history? What progress has been made in supporting the Ministry of Commerce to issue notifications?
 - b. How far along is the development of the curriculum for focal points at agencies and SPS and TBT Enquiry Points?
 - c. What is the current status of the IT project implementation, including the development of SOPs and training? Has the pilot phase with selected users been initiated, and insights have been utilized to upgrade this?
2. Can you share the current update on the agro-trade section of the trade portal of MoC?
 - a. What initiatives have been undertaken to launch the platform including processes for section testing, validation with selected users?
 - b. How do you think the agro-trade section would help in creating transparency in trade information exchange?
 - c. How do you plan to ensure the sustainability of the intervention?
3. What is the current status of the content development of the agricultural customs clearance section of Customs Portal?
 - a. How will the section be updated beyond the project timeline?
4. How are you planning to build awareness among the agro-trader community members regarding the usage of the added section on trade portal and content update of Customs Portal?
5. What progress has been made in assessing the knowledge gap among agricultural trade associations, chambers, and top individual traders involved in both export and import activities?
 - a. Could you provide updates on the creation and support of the forum for private-sector advocacy?
 - b. What key milestones or achievements have been reached in fostering private sector involvement and advocacy in trade facilitation efforts?

6. How far along is the project in drafting the WTO-TFA Implementation Roadmap for selected agro-trade agencies?
 - a. What feedback and validation have been received from agencies, ministries, and the Agro Trade Working Group regarding the Roadmap?
 - b. What challenges did you experience during the development and implementation of the WTO-TFA Implementation Roadmap and how did you mitigate that?
7. What progress has been made in the development of the TFA implementation dashboard for monitoring TFA progress? Has the dashboard been validated with users, and what have been the outcomes?
 - a. Which agency will own the dashboard website? What is the transfer process of the dashboard website?
8. Can you elaborate on the current status of the implementation of the searchable HS Code document repository? To what extent the HS code has been integrated with ASYCUDA World, Trade Portal, and Customs Portal?
9. What are the plans to build awareness among individual or institutional users of
 - a. export-import data about the benefits of using HS code repository?

Activity 3: Strengthen Risk Management Systems

1) How did you assess the needs of the six agencies (PQW-DAE, DoF, DLS, BAEC, BFSA, BSTI) at the beginning? What were the key findings for each of the agencies from RM point of view?

Note: you can reflect on the preliminary need-gaps in line with legal, institutional, IT, coordination with NBR/other agencies, and capacity gaps of agencies

- 2) What steps have been taken to establish the RM institutional framework for the cooperating agencies?
- 3) What challenges did you face/are facing now in terms of sensitizing CAs on RM?
- 4) Have all the agencies developed risk criteria, indicators, and risk profiles? How has BTF provided the assistance in the development process?
- 5) How are you supporting the CAs in developing legislative rules and SOPs covering functions of RM institutional framework?
- 6) Which agencies have an operational RM unit now? What are the key challenges you are facing in operationalizing the RM units?
- 7) What has been the progress (agency wise) so far in terms of Risk Management Software Development?
- 8) Have you started the data exchange interface process with ASYCUDA/BSW/Other agency RM systems? What challenges do you envision (when you start the process) in achieving that data integration?
- 9) In Year 2 work plan, there was no mention of 'Implement a Risk Management Training System', why did you feel the need for a training system in year 3? What has been the progress in this regard?
- 10) As part of the system, you have a plan to partner with Government agro-trade academy so that they include RM curriculum. Have you started any initial assessment as to which academies to partner with/what would be the model of collaboration?
- 11) What activities did you undertake to communicate/build awareness among private sector around the benefits of Risk Management compliance? In your opinion how effective have those activities been in generating the awareness?

12) How has the project enhanced coordination among border agencies, and what measures have been taken to achieve this?

- a. How did you use the findings of TRS undertaken in year 1 in achieving border coordination?
- b. Could you provide insights into the development of inspection and sample management protocols in cooperation with Customs?

Activity 4: Improve Laboratories and Testing Procedures

- 1) In automating laboratory reports and test certificate transfer procedures, can you share the current update on each government laboratory's progress?
 - a) In how many labs, the process map has been finalized? What would be the next step in those labs for achieving automated reporting system?
- 2) BTF project planned to develop SOPs for collection and handling of samples across all labs dealing with import and export goods. Have these SoPs been approved through the agency protocols?
- 3) How would the SoPs help in improving sampling and inspection procedures at the point of entry and exit? Are the SoPs different for each type of laboratories (considering different types of products being handled at different testing facilities)?
 - a) Are there any specific challenges faced during the implementation of developed SoPs with the relevant agencies? How have the challenges been mitigated?
- 4) How many of the participating government testing facilities have achieved ISO 17025 certification within the last three years of project implementation tenure?
- 5) In terms of technical capacity development of each lab, how are you planning to ensure the activity knowledge under this activity level is being effectively transferred?
- 6) In terms of the activities planned with private laboratories, how would you measure the achievement of those?
- 7) Considering BTF's vision to enhance the accreditation capacity, can you provide an assessment of the progress made so far? What specific strategies have been effective, and what challenges have you encountered?

Activity 5: Enhance cold storage infrastructure for perishable goods³³

1. What is the present situation of temperature-controlled logistics in Bangladesh?
(Probe: market dynamics, size, key segments and players, investor interest)
2. What is the current progress of the facilitation of cold storage investment activities?
(Probe: How did you select the private sector partners at the beginning? How many investors have been onboarded? Would you please state the status of the onboarded investors to mobilize investment?)
3. What steps do you follow in supporting public/private sector actors for mobilizing investment into TCL projects?
 - a. In each of the above-mentioned steps, what facilitation services are you providing to the potential investors? How does the service need vary between public and private investors?
 - b. In the Investment Options Analysis (IOA) Report, you have identified 10 priority business sectors for TCL investment mobilization. Is there any difference among the private sector investors based on the business sector? Please explain some notable insights about the differences.

³³ For Private-Public Engagement Advisor and Senior Advisor - Cold Chain Investment

4. What challenges have been hindering the private sector partners (whom you are assisting) from investing in cold chains?
5. What is the status of DAM Cold Storage Regulations?
Probe: Is it somehow affecting private sector investment decisions?
6. How does the tariff and tax rationalization of cold storage machinery import impact private investment?
7. The project is lagging in installed storage capacity as a result of USDA assistance indicator. What do you think are the major reasons? Do you think the targets can be met in the next two years?
8. Do you think TCL business can pick up in /a short (1-2 year) or mid (2-5 year) term time horizon?
9. What is the status of cold storage PPP projects with HSIA and Chittagong Port? Are there any challenges?
10. What is the status of cold storage project of Benapole, Mongla, other ports?
11. In the Investment Options Analysis (IOA) Report, you have ranked 10 identified business sectors for TCL investment mobilization. Based on the current market scenario, would you change the sectoral rank? Which sector has been the most forthcoming in terms of interest for TCL investment? Why?
12. What skill gaps have been identified and validated in regard to the technical and management capacity development initiative for cold storage and TCL industry?
13. How impactful were the workshops conducted under the project? How many of the major attendees showed interest to invest? If they lose interest over time, why is it so?
14. Regarding the establishment of standards and procedures for industry operation, what progress has been made so far?
 - a. How are you promoting business case for investment and improvement in cold chain?
 - b. What activities have been performed to increase consumer and retail awareness about the importance of high-quality cold chain?
 - c. How are you supporting diverse industry to develop structure for 3PL service industry representation?
 - d. How are you supporting industry to advocate for improvement of business environment?
15. According to the year 2 work plan of the project, a commodity-specific manual for handling perishable goods was planned to be developed and disseminated. Has the manual been developed?
 - a. Who were the recipients of the manual if it has been disseminated already?
 - b. How are you measuring if the relevant stakeholders have been using the manual for standardization?
16. In regard to updating SoPs for streamlining warehouse processes with BADC and Biman, what are the current progress?
 - a. Have you achieved the planned activity? Are the intervention recipients using the SoP?
 - b. Have you faced any pushback/resistance from the intervention recipients in using the developed SoPs?
 - c. Have the technical team of BADC and Biman been given training on the application of the designed SoPs?

d. Have you measured any improvement in the procedures due to the updated SoPs?

17. In your view, what has been the biggest achievement under Activity 5 in the first three years of the project implementation?

General challenges, Future opportunities & Recommendations

- 1) How did you use MEL data (monitoring, evaluation, and learning) in taking programmatic decisions? Can you share an example?
- 2) What initiatives do you take to ensure timely delivery of work under your activity?
 - a) Has there been any significant delay in any planned work?
- 3) We have discussed several activities under your component so far. Will these activities sustain as planned when BTF project tenure is over?
 - a) Could you generate an adequate level of ownership/interest among the senior leadership of cooperating agencies/higher-level stakeholders?
 - b) What measures do you take while handing over the diverse outputs of the BTF project (system/process/SOP etc.) to the GoB officials so that the changes can be sustained in the long run?
 - c) What measures can BTF take to sustain its initiatives beyond the project period?
- 4) As part of your activity, have you collaborated with any other trade facilitation projects that are ongoing in BD? How have you coordinated that to avoid potential duplication of efforts?
- 5) Has there been any instance where your activity led to an unexpected/unintended outcome? How did that affect the intervention?
- 6) Would you recommend any additional intervention under your activity that BTF should prioritize under the Year 4/Year 5 work plan?
- 7) Is there any other topic that you want to discuss that we may have missed out on but would benefit the midterm evaluation report?

Set 1.2: Discussion Guide for the Deputy Chief of Party

Introduction:

Inspira Advisory and Consulting Ltd has been entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the midterm evaluation of the Bangladesh Trade Facilitation (BTF) project. This evaluation will serve in assessing the project's mid-term progress against key indicators while evaluating the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to the project's efforts. Your insights, experiences, and perspectives will guide us to find actionable recommendations that can shape the project's future trajectory.

We have prepared a detailed questionnaire to guide our discussion. This questionnaire should take approximately **90 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview.

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to Contact us at +880 1817759728 or email: hello@inspira-bd.com

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Note for the interviewee:

1. *We followed the workplan to understand as to what activities have been implemented so far/or are in the implementation process. In the questionnaire if you see reference to an activity which has not been implemented yet, you can discuss the 'apprehended' impact instead of 'realized' impact.*
2. *Some questions may get answered as part of preceding discussion, the interviewer shall skip such queries to avoid duplication.*
3. This questionnaire is grouped into **four sections** as mentioned below:

Sections	Purpose	Remarks
Introductory Questions	Understand project status at an overview level	This will help us shape the follow-up sequence of discussion
Component 1 Questions	Understand component activities, challenges, and achievement in a detailed manner	Since the new technical advisor for component 1 has joined very recently, we would rely on this interview to gather relevant insights
Component 3,4,5 Questions <i>Note: Component 2 has been intentionally kept aside as we are scheduled to sit with you again on Wednesday to discuss exclusively on this.</i>	Understand overview level updates/feedback on these 3 components	We are sitting with component leads in separate interviews for detailed discussion, but we would like to hear your thoughts as a DCOP
Questions to address selected EQs (Evaluation Questions)	Certain evaluation questions can be responded by the COP-DCOP in a comprehensive manner	

Introductory questions

- 1) Can you please elaborate on your role in the BTF project?

(Guide for response:

- Key activities that you perform, changes in your role over time)

- 2) We will go through a series of questions at activity/component level. Before we dive in, would you share your general remarks on project performance so far? What have been some of the key milestones that the project has achieved in the first three years? What are the key gaps and improvement areas?

(Guide for response:

- *You can respond on milestones and gaps against each activity/component of the project*
- *This response shall create the base of our understanding as to how to move forward with the next line of queries, so you can take a bit of time in elaborating your answer)*

3) The LOP activities are in alignment with Y3 (year 3) activities of the work plan but the activities under Y2 and Y1 are structured in a different manner. Could you please clarify the rationale?

(Probe: Has there been any significant change in the project from preliminary design stage to actual implementation stage?)

Component 1 questions

Component 1: Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing

11) What gaps did you observe in the legal framework of agro-trade agencies/CAs during your initial assessment/consultation? How did you prioritize the interventions you conducted in this area?

(Guide for response:

- *You can either share agency wise specific gaps that you identified, or you can share the general/common legislative gaps/reform needs that you have experienced at the beginning)*

2) We have seen from the Y3H1 semi-annual report that a total of 21 legislative and process reform interventions (relevant to food and agricultural trade) are at various stages of development.

a. Six policies are under stage 5 (completed): What are these completed reform interventions? What kind of impact/transformation (streamlined process of CA, trader's satisfaction) do you see in the agricultural trade owing to these reforms?

b. The number of policies under each stage of development did not change from Y3H1 to Y3H2 (whereas significant changes took place from Y2H1 to Y2H2). Could you please explain why?

c. What challenges do you experience in undertaking this policy/process reforms? How do you mitigate those challenges?

d. Is there any agency/agencies where you have faced multiple/continuous roadblocks? What could be the reason for such roadblocks?

e. Over the course of LOP you are planning undertake 60 such report interventions, what are the next planned interventions? How do you identify these needs as you go forward with project implementation?

3) How are you building the capacity of stakeholders to implement the policy or reform instruments on the cooperating agency level?

4) You planned to Conduct study/research on several aspects of trade facilitation (LDC graduation, Mutual Recognition Agreement) throughout the better part of the implementation period (2022-2025). How many studies have been undertaken so far? What impact could it generate as of now?

5) How effectively could you institutionalize Agro-trade working group in the MoC? Has the group been activated and operating in full swing? If not, what challenges are you facing?

6) Please clarify as to how BTF project is assisting to 'maintain the sustainability of the NTFC' as mentioned in the work plan?

7) How far have you progressed in terms of supporting the MoA and MoFL for Trade Facilitation Working Group?

8) Under activity 1, you are focusing on three streams of automation: automation for issuance of CLPO, automation of export compliance requirement and automation of rapid disease system at DLS. What is the current status of the system automation activities (reference list mentioned below) with each agency?

Note: In case the automated system has been operational already, we are curious to understand if traders are using it, what kind of challenges are GoB stakeholders are facing post launch, How BTF is planning to ensure sustainable transfer of the systems to GoB CA etc.

Automated systems	Clarify/Key activities undertaken/status	Challenges	Challenge mitigation plan
BFSA export product health certificate-Develop and Operationalize the system			
DoF export product health certificate and import certifications			
DAE pesticide license			
Automation of e-traceability and contract farming system at DAE			
Development of EU Traces Registration and e-traceability system for DLS			
Support automated rapid disease response system at DLS			

9)What has been the impact of the following Institutional reform/transformation activities?

- A. Transformation of the Plant Quarantine Wing to the National Plant Quarantine Authority
- B. Institutionalize Trade Wing at the Department of Livestock Services

10) How many trade manuals have been developed and disseminated? How was the selection of specific products for trade manuals done? How are you measuring the effectiveness of the developed manuals?

11) Semi-annual report suggests that “to address the legal barrier holistically, BTF will offer direct support to MoC drafting the next Import Policy Order and Export Policy, due in 2024, which will address major trade facilitating issues.” How will this benefit your work on legislative reform initiatives?

12) Semi-annual report suggests that “It has been difficult to find professionals with the necessary experience, especially in the area of legislative reforms, which require both technical knowledge on

agriculture and as well as exposure on trade-related policies.” How are you planning to overcome this challenge?

13) Would you recommend any additional intervention under component-1 that BTF should prioritize under the Year 4/Year 5 work plan?

Component 3,4,5 Questions

- 1) What progress has been made in strengthening the Risk Management Systems within the cooperating agencies?
- 2) What challenges have you experienced in establishing operational RM Units/developing RM software and integration in each agency?
- 3) To what extent has BTF project been successful in supporting the target laboratories in building their capacity?

(Probe:

- *Progress in terms of automation of laboratory reports and test certificate transfer procedure*
- *Progress In terms of Improvement of sampling and inspection procedures at point of entry/exit*
- *Progress In terms of Building capacity of laboratories, testing facilities, and certification bodies for implementing and accrediting against ISO17025 standards*
- *Progress In terms of building trust in private laboratories)*

4) What is the current progress of the facilitation of cold storage investment activities? What challenges have been hindering private sector partners from investing in cold chains

Questions to address selected EQs

- 1) How did you use MEL (monitoring, evaluation, and learning) data in taking programmatic decisions? Can you share an example?
- 2) Has there been any significant delay in any planned work? What initiatives do you take to ensure timely delivery of work under different activities?
- 3) What is your assessment on the project management approach? How are the Project Advisory/Steering Committee and PECs performing? What could be done to improve their role in better management of the project?
- 4) We have discussed several activities so far. Will these activities sustain as planned when BTF project tenure is over?
 - a) Could you generate an adequate level of ownership/interest among the senior leadership of cooperating agencies/higher-level stakeholders?
 - b) What measures do you take while handing over the diverse outputs of the BTF project (system/process/SOP etc.) to the GoB officials so that the changes can be sustained in the long run?
 - c) What measures can BTF take to sustain its initiatives beyond the project period?
- 4) Has there been any instance where any of the project activities led to an unexpected/unintended outcome? How did that affect the intervention?
- 5) What are some of the recurring/critical challenges that you foresee in achieving the project objectives going forward? How prepared is the BTF project to address these challenges?

- 6) Have you collaborated with other donors active in the agricultural trade landscape? From your experience what are the effective models of collaboration among donors, private sector, partners, academic institutions and NGOs?
- 7) Has there been any coordination/duplication challenge while working with different GoB counterparts who are recipients of assistance from multiple donors? How effectively is the BTF project managing this challenge?
- 8) Could the project allocate resources for different activities in an effective manner? To what degree has the project implemented activities/interventions within a planned budget? Is there any improvement area that can be addressed going forward?
- 9) Is there any other topic that you want to discuss that we may have missed out but would benefit the midterm evaluation report?

Set 1.3: KII Checklist for Implementing Partners (Lixcap/GCCA)

Study Background:

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

The midterm evaluation of the BTF (Bangladesh Trade Facilitation) project serves to measure the project's short-term progress towards achieving key indicators while evaluating the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to the project's efforts. Ultimately, the study will guide to find actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this survey?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Respondent Information

Sl	Name	Designation	Organization name	Organization address	Contact info
1					

Questions for Lixcap/GCCA

- 1) The BTF project is lagging behind in the mobilized investments indicator? What do you think are the major reasons? Do you think the targets can be met in the next two years?
- 2) Based on the current scenario, would you change any sectoral rank? Which sector has been the most forthcoming in terms of interest for TCL investment? Why?
- 3) How impactful were the workshops conducted under the project? How many of the major attendees showed interest to invest? If they have fallen off from their interest, why is it so?
- 4) Following BTF's suggestion on tariff and tax rationalization of cold storage machinery import, NBR has implemented the suggestions in the 2022-2023 national budget. Has there been any significant aftermath?
- 5) Has any 'Cold Chain Connections' been organized? Has any informal alliance between exporters facilitated?
- 6) What is the current status of temperature-controlled logistics in Bangladesh? Since Lixcap conducted an assessment on the TCL sector of Bangladesh, major global events such as the Ukraine-Russia war and local events such as Taka devaluation, lowering of dollar reserves, unreliable electricity supply etc. have happened. How do these events affect the long-term prospect of TCL in Bangladesh?
- 7) Some of the major recommendations involved PPP projects with HSIA and Chittagong Port. Despite the apparent economic and social benefits, these two organizations did not seem keen to invest in TCL. Can you elaborate why it may be the case?
- 8) Some of the recommendations for expanding TCL in Bangladesh are structural in nature, such as ease of doing business, regulations, contract enforcement, switching cost, low willingness to pay, macro-economic scenario squeezing potential end users etc. Do you think TCL business can pick up in /a short (1-2 year) or mid (2-5 year) term time horizon? What are some of the multi-organization coordination risks for TCL?
- 9) Following the overall TCL assessment, BTF has been working one-on-one with private sector actors and offering assistance such as pre-feasibility studies to facilitate investment in TCL. How effective do you think this approach is to facilitating investment in TCL operations? What are the gaps in their model?
- 10) Have you done any assessment on the funding source and cost of funds for TCL business in Bangladesh? What has been your experience in analysing different fund sources in Bangladesh.
- 11) Do you think that the TCL market in Bangladesh will continue to grow when BTF has ended?

Set 2: Questionnaire for Cas

Set 2.1: KII Checklist for PQW

Project Background

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

Objective of Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to gain insight from various stakeholders engaged in importing, exporting, regulating, studying, or effecting change in the trade of agricultural or agro-processed goods in Bangladesh. The results of this questionnaire will be compiled into data and used as the basis of a comprehensive trade review of the Bangladeshi agricultural trade sector. This review will play a central role in finding actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Respondent Information			
Name		Contact	
Designation		Address	
Organization		Date	

1. What is your current role in the organization?
2. Could you kindly give us a point of contact in your organization to follow up if there are any additional questions or clarification needed?
3. Are you familiar with the BTF project interventions at PQW? What are the specific BTF project activities that you have taken part in?

BTF Activity-wise Question:

Interviewer Guide: Under each activity the initial questions are aimed at addressing scorecard parameters which gradually move towards sub-activity wise evaluation questions relevant for each specific agency.

Activity 1: Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing

1. Have there been any recent SROs/acts concerning PQW activities? Could you please share those with us?
2. What certificates, licenses or permits do you issue? Could you please help us in understanding the process/time requirement for the different types of certificates/permits/licenses as per the table below:

Name of the Permit/license/certificate issued by you for import/export	Actual Processing Time (days)	Point of service delivery: Online Vs. on-site Vs. Central (Dhaka)

3. Where should a trader look for information pertaining to regulatory requirements, processing time (information mentioned in the above table) etc?
4. Does PQW need to reform any process or regulation to provide hassle-free services to the traders?
5. What is the key policy/SOP reform programs that PQW has undertaken over the course of the last three years to improve trade of agriculture and other products?
6. Do you think any area of the Plant Quarantine Act, 2011 needs to be updated to strengthen the PQW's roles?
7. In your opinion, after transformation from wing to authority as per Plant Quarantine Act, what sort of opportunities and challenges may arise regarding plants and plant-product trade?
8. What is the status of developing the e-traceability system of PQW? What are the challenges currently faced in the manual e-traceability system? What challenges will be faced while adopting the developed e-traceability system, and how this developed system can improve meeting the export compliance requirement?
9. Have you received any support in developing any manuals? If not, what sort of content would be beneficial for trade facilitation?
10. How Agro-trade working group (under the national trade facilitation committee) can work in improving cross-border trade facilitation? Being a member of the Agro-trade working group, how agencies should collaborate such as yourself?
11. Can you suggest measures that PQW could develop or adapt to enhance the export and ease the import of plant products?
12. Do you have a system/committee to periodically review formalities and documentation requirements to minimize complexity, time, and cost? How do you inform the traders about these updated requirements?
13. Does the application of SOP for sampling and inspection of plant and plant products simplify the sampling and inspection process?

Activity 2: Increase transparency of trade information and WTO notification compliance

1. Does your organization generate and share WTO notification alerts or lookouts with other government and international organizations? How is this information shared?
2. Do you have dedicated personnel for answering NEP enquiries? What has been the contribution of BTF project in collaboration with BRCP-1 to ensure efficiency in NEP operation within PQW?
3. Are you aware of the new section development named agro-trade in the Bangladesh Trade portal and content development on agro trade clearance process in Bangladesh Customs?

- a. To your opinion, what cross-border trade-related challenges would be addressed by the development of these portals?
 - b. How do you see your organization to be engaged in the process of updating content beyond the project life?
4. How does your organization track the WTO TFA progress and communicate with other agencies, especially with the Ministry of Commerce?
 - a. Are you aware of the Ministry of Commerce's plan to develop a web-based WTO TFA implementation dashboard development?

Activity 3: Strengthen Risk Management Systems

1. What is the current status of the risk management system development project, and how well does it align with the identified risk management needs of your organization?
2. Do you have any legal/legislative provision or RM framework to classify the traded items on the basis of risk management principles? How effective was BTF intervention in terms of establishing/strengthening your RM framework?
3. Do you have a Risk Management Committee/unit? To what extent has the BTF project's contribution to establishing/reorganizing the RM unit within your organization been effective?
4. Are you familiar with the international best practices followed by different countries for risk-based control of consignments?
 - a. Is the RM framework aligned with contemporary international best practices (i.e., WCO RM Framework)?
5. In your opinion, how will the *Risk Management Action Plans* co-developed with BTF, contribute to the development of the RM units?
6. Do you have an adequate number of skilled staff to apply risk-based selectivity? What has been the impact of the capacity development interventions of BTF project for enhancing PQW's personnel capacity in line with RM compliance management?
7. Does your agency have a list of commodities or firms considered to be high risk? Do you maintain statistics/records on the number of shipments inspected, say, by product category, and violations discovered from them?
 - a. How far along is the development of the product-wise risk profiling matrix, and what are the preliminary findings or insights gained from the process?
8. Have the traders raised any issues on the inspection of all consignments during the customs clearance process? What are the issues that have been frequently raised?
9. How do you collaborate with NBR and Customs or other regulatory agencies to establish or maintain risk-based selectivity profiles to determine shipments for inspection or controls?
10. What challenges are you experiencing in developing the RM system?

Activity 4: Improve Laboratories and Testing Procedures

1. How many labs that PQW manages are present at border (land/air/sea) entry/exit points? Are all necessary tests performed on-site or are samples taken off site to perform necessary tests?

2. To what extent has BTF project contributed to the development of SOPs for collection and handling of samples (import) at the point of entry/exit? Are the PQW officials being able to effectively apply this SOP now?
3. Do you take the findings of confirmatory tests into consideration for the release and clearance of goods
4. How far have you progressed in automating the laboratory reports/certificates system? What has been the value-add of the BTF project in this regard?

Activity 5: Enhance cold storage infrastructure for perishable goods

1. What steps do you take to prevent avoidable loss/deterioration of perishable goods (when under your control)? Any policy framework to release perishable within the shortest possible time?

General challenges, Future opportunities & Recommendation

1. In your opinion, how effective was BTF's general work approach with your organization? Would you change any particular coordination mechanism?
2. Did the project undertake interventions in alignment with your organizational/government priorities?
3. Were project activities carried out in a timely manner? Has there been any execution level delay that may have potentially affected the quality of the intervention?
4. As we know, there are more than one trade facilitation relevant projects ongoing currently with the common agencies. These projects frequently collaborate with government agencies to achieve their goals. Can you share examples of ideal collaboration models that have been successful in achieving intended goals for trade facilitation?
5. Which of the BTF activities do you think will continue beyond the project timeline?
 - a) How does the BTF project handing over the diverse outputs to the authorities/GoB agencies?
 - b) Has there been any specific intervention so far which requires an adjustment in approach/planning to sustain beyond the project timeline?
6. Additionally, what other areas of support from BTF would you like to see in developing system and process automation in the future?
7. Is there any other topic that you want to discuss that we may have missed out on but would benefit the BTF project implementation plan?

Set 2.2: KII Checklist for DoF

Project Background

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

Objective of Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to gain insight from various stakeholders engaged in importing, exporting, regulating, studying, or effecting change in the trade of agricultural or agro-processed goods in

Bangladesh. The results of this questionnaire will be compiled into data and used as the basis of a comprehensive trade review of the Bangladeshi agricultural trade sector. This review will play a central role in finding actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Respondent Information			
Name		Contact	
Designation		Address	
Organization		Date	

1. What is your current role in the organization?
2. Could you kindly give us a point of contact in your organization to follow up if there are any additional questions or clarification needed?
3. Are you familiar with the BTF project interventions at DoF? What are the specific BTF project activities that you have taken part in?

BTF Activity-wise Question:

Interviewer Guide: Under each activity the initial questions are aimed at addressing scorecard parameters which gradually move towards sub-activity wise evaluation questions relevant for each specific agency.

Activity 1: Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing

1. Have there been any recent SROs/acts concerning DoF activities? Could you please share those with us?
2. What certificates, licenses or permits do you issue? Could you please help us in understanding the process/time requirement for the different types of certificates/permits/licenses as per the table below:

Name of the Permit/license/certificate issued by you for import/export	Processing Time (days)	Point of service delivery: Online Vs. on-site Vs. Central (Dhaka)

- What are the key reform programs that DoF has undertaken over the course of the last three years with the support of BTF and how do they impact?
- What is the status of the developing e-certification system? What challenges will be faced while adopting the developed e-certification system, and how this developed system can improve meeting the export compliance requirement?
- How Agro-trade working group (under the national trade facilitation committee) can work in improving cross-border trade facilitation?
- Do you have a system/committee to periodically review formalities and documentation requirements to minimize complexity, time, and cost? How do you inform the traders about these updated requirements?
- Do you receive any support from BTF on export promotion of fish products?

Activity 2: Increase transparency of trade information and WTO notification compliance

Specific Questions:

- Does your organization generate and share WTO notification alerts or lookouts with other government and international organizations? How is this information shared?
- Do you have dedicated personnel for answering NEP enquiries? What has been the contribution of BTF project in collaboration with BRCP-1 to ensure efficiency in NEP operation within DoF?
- Are you aware of the new section development named agro-trade in the Bangladesh Trade portal and content development on agro trade clearance process in Bangladesh Customs?
 - To your opinion, what cross-border trade-related challenges would be addressed by the development of these portals?
 - How do you see your organization to be engaged in the process of updating content beyond the project life?
- How does your organization track the WTO TFA progress and communicate with other agencies, especially with the Ministry of Commerce?
 - Are you aware of the Ministry of Commerce's plan to develop a web-based WTO TFA implementation dashboard development?

Activity 3: Strengthen Risk Management Systems

Specific Questions:

- What is the current status of the risk management system development project, and how well does it align with the identified risk management needs of your organization?

2. Do you have any legal/legislative provision or RM framework to classify the traded items on the basis of risk management principles? How effective was BTF intervention in terms of establishing/strengthening your RM framework?
3. Do you have a Risk Management Committee/unit? To what extent has the BTF project's contribution to establishing/reorganizing the RM unit within your organization been effective?
4. Are you familiar with the international best practices followed by different countries for risk-based control of consignments?
 - a. Is the RM framework aligned with contemporary international best practices (i.e., WCO RM Framework)?
5. In your opinion, how will the *Risk Management Action Plans* co-developed with BTF, contribute to the sustainability of the RM units?
6. Do you have an adequate number of skilled staff to apply risk-based selectivity? What has been the impact of the capacity development interventions of BTF project for enhancing DoF's personnel capacity in line with RM compliance management?
7. Does your agency have a list of commodities or firms considered to be high risk? Do you maintain statistics/records on the number of shipments inspected, say, by product category, and violations discovered from them?
 - a. How far along is the development of the product-wise risk profiling matrix, and what are the preliminary findings or insights gained from the process?
8. Have the traders raised any issues on the inspection of all consignments during the customs clearance process? What are the issues that have been frequently raised?
9. How do you collaborate with NBR and Customs or other regulatory agencies to establish or maintain risk-based selectivity profiles to determine shipments for inspection or controls?
10. What challenges are you experiencing in developing the RM system?

Activity 4: Improve Laboratories and Testing Procedures

Specific Questions:

1. How many labs that DoF manages are present at border (land/air/sea) entry/exit points? Are all necessary tests performed on-site or are samples taken off site to perform necessary tests?
2. To what extent has BTF project contributed to the development of SOPs for collection and handling of samples (import) at the point of entry/exit? Are the DoF officials being able to effectively apply this SOP now?
3. Do you grant permission to conduct a second test? Do you take the findings of confirmatory tests into consideration for the release and clearance of goods?
4. What's the current process of transferring the lab reports from your organization to Bangladesh Customs, National Board of Revenue, ASYCUDA World System? How far have you progressed in automating the laboratory reports/certificates system? What has been the value-add of the BTF project in this regard?

Activity 5: Enhance cold storage infrastructure for perishable goods

Specific Questions:

1. What steps do you take to prevent avoidable loss/deterioration of perishable goods (when under your control)? Any policy framework to release perishable within the shortest possible time?

General challenges, Future opportunities & Recommendation

1. In your opinion, how effective was BTF's general work approach with your organization? Would you change any particular coordination mechanism?
2. Did the project undertake interventions in alignment with your organizational/government priorities?
3. Were project activities carried out in a timely manner? Has there been any execution level delay that may have potentially affected the quality of the intervention?
4. As we know, there are more than one trade facilitation relevant projects ongoing currently with the common agencies. These projects frequently collaborate with government agencies to achieve their goals. Can you share examples of ideal collaboration models that have been successful in achieving intended goals for trade facilitation?
5. Which of the BTF activities do you think will continue beyond the project timeline?
 1. How does the BTF project handing over the diverse outputs to the authorities/GoB agencies?
 2. Has there been any specific intervention so far which requires an adjustment in approach/planning to sustain beyond the project timeline?
6. Additionally, what other areas of support from BTF would you like to see in developing system and process automation in the future?
7. Is there any other topic that you want to discuss that we may have missed out on but would benefit the BTF project implementation plan?

Set 2.3: KII Checklist for DLS

Project Background

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

Objective of Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to gain insight from various stakeholders engaged in importing, exporting, regulating, studying, or effecting change in the trade of agricultural or agro-processed goods in Bangladesh. The results of this questionnaire will be compiled into data and used as the basis of a comprehensive trade review of the Bangladeshi agricultural trade sector. This review will play a central role in finding actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

- Yes

- No

If yes, let us begin!

Respondent Information			
Name		Contact	
Designation		Address	
Organization		Date	

1. Are you familiar with the BTF project interventions at DLS? What are the specific BTF project activities that you have taken part in?

BTF Activity-wise Question:

Interviewer Guide: Under each activity the initial questions are aimed at addressing scorecard parameters which gradually move towards sub-activity wise evaluation questions relevant for each specific agency.

Activity 1: Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing

Specific Questions:

1. From the trade facilitation Point of view, what could have been improved in the current regulatory framework? Is there any pressing need for a particular policy/legal reform initiative that BTF should undertake in association with DLS?
 - a. How can BTF expedite the process of reform/policy change (who should they partner with, what mechanisms etc)
2. What initiatives have been taken by DLS in terms of documentation requirements, business practices, and clearance processes to reduce trade formalities?
 - a. What service activities of DLS can be automated with the support of BTF?
 - b. For perishable goods management (WTO TFA legal framework 7.9) in port or service points, what initiatives have been taken by DLS?
3. Do you have a process/committee to periodically review formalities and documentation requirements to minimize its incidence, complexity, time, and cost.?
4. Do you have any information sharing mechanism to be informed about the best practices of member countries of WTO?
5. How do you communicate any new updates to the private sector? Does your agency meet with private sector stakeholders on a regular basis? What is the general frequency? Are those meetings/agenda pre-scheduled/ad hoc?
6. How an Agro-trade working group (under the national trade facilitation committee) can work in improving cross-border trade facilitation?

Activity 2: Increase transparency of trade information and WTO notification compliance

Specific Questions:

1. We know that currently DLS shares information with the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) as per MoC's request for WTO notifications. What initiatives can be taken to simplify the WTO notification process from the perspective of DLS ?
2. Do you have all the requisite information published on the Bangladesh Trade Portal under the Ministry of Commerce (MoC)? What are some 'yet to be' updated information (if any)? What is your process of updating the information in a recurrent manner?
3. What is your opinion on the new section development named agro-trade in the Bangladesh Trade portal? What benefit/impact will it have on cross-border trade facilitation?
 - a. How do you see your organization being engaged in the process of updating content beyond the project life?

Activity 3: Strengthen Risk Management (RM) Systems

Specific Questions:

1. As previously mentioned RM was established temporarily with the DG's office order. What initiatives have been taken to make the RM unit functional to ensure sustainability?
2. What type of capacity development interventions are still required to implement the RM system?
3. Have the traders raised any issues on the inspection of all consignments during the customs clearance process? What are the issues that have been frequently raised?
4. How do you collaborate with NBR and Customs or other regulatory agencies to establish or maintain risk-based selectivity profiles to determine shipments for inspection or controls?

Activity 4: Improve Laboratories and Testing Procedures

Specific Questions:

1. To what extent has BTF project contributed to the development of SOPs for collection and handling of samples (import) at the point of entry/exit? Are the DLS officials being able to effectively apply this SOP now?
2. Do you grant permission to conduct a second test? Do you take the findings of confirmatory tests into consideration for the release and clearance of goods?

Activity 5: Enhance cold storage infrastructure for perishable goods

Specific Questions:

1. What steps do you take to prevent avoidable loss/deterioration of perishable goods (when under your control)? Any policy framework to release perishable within the shortest possible time?

General challenges, Future opportunities & Recommendation

- 1) In your opinion, how effective was BTF's general work approach with your organization? Would you change any particular coordination mechanism?
- 2) Did the project undertake interventions in alignment with your organizational/government priorities?
- 3) Were project activities carried out in a timely manner? Has there been any execution level delay that may have potentially affected the quality of the intervention?
- 4) In addition to BTF/funded by USDA, is there any other donor-funded trade facilitation project ongoing at your agency? Do you face any challenge in the collaboration process of working with multiple projects?
- 5) Which of the BTF activities do you think will continue beyond the project timeline?

- a) How does the BTF project hand over the diverse outputs to the authorities/GoB agencies?
- b) Has there been any specific intervention so far which requires an adjustment in approach/planning to sustain beyond the project timeline?
- 6) Additionally, what other areas of support from BTF would you like to see in developing system and process automation in the future?
- 7) Is there any other topic that you want to discuss that we may have missed out on but would benefit the BTF project implementation plan?

Set 2.4: KII Checklist for BSTI

Project Background

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

Objective of Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to gain insight from various stakeholders engaged in importing, exporting, regulating, studying, or effecting change in the trade of agricultural or agro-processed goods in Bangladesh. The results of this questionnaire will be compiled into data and used as the basis of a comprehensive trade review of the Bangladeshi agricultural trade sector. This review will play a central role in finding actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Respondent Information			
Name		Contact	
Designation		Address	
Organization		Date	

1. What is your current role in the organization?
2. Could you kindly give us a point of contact in your organization to follow up if there are any additional questions or clarification needed?
3. Are you familiar with the BTF project interventions at BSTI? What are the specific BTF project activities that you have taken part in?

BTF Activity-wise Question:

Interviewer Guide: Under each activity the initial questions are aimed at addressing scorecard parameters which gradually move towards sub-activity wise evaluation questions relevant for each specific agency.

Activity 1: Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing

1. Have there been any recent SROs/acts concerning BSTI activities? Could you please share those with us?
2. What certificates, licenses or permits do you issue? Could you please help us in understanding the process/time requirement for the different types of certificates/permits/licenses as per the table below:

Name of the Permit/license/certificate issued by you for import/export	Actual Processing Time (days)	Point of service delivery: Online Vs. on-site Vs. Central (Dhaka)

3. Where should a trader look for information pertaining to regulatory requirements, processing time (information mentioned in the above table) etc?
4. Do you see any requirement for automation in your current service provision? If yes, why do you perceive the automation would be beneficial?
5. How Agro-trade working group (under the national trade facilitation committee) can work in improving cross-border trade facilitation?
6. Do you have any recommendation for government measures (such as acts, rules, regulations, policies, etc.) that can improve the cross-border agri trade?
7. Do you have a system/committee to periodically review formalities and documentation requirements to minimize complexity, time, and cost? How do you inform the traders about these updated requirements?

Activity 2: Increase transparency of trade information and WTO notification compliance

Specific Questions:

- 1) Does your organization generate and share WTO notification alerts or lookouts with other government and international organizations? How is this information shared?

- 2) Do you have dedicated personnel for answering NEP enquiries? What has been the contribution of BTF project in collaboration with BRCP-1 to ensure efficiency in NEP operation within BSTI?
- 3) Are you aware of the new section development named agro-trade in the Bangladesh Trade portal and content development on agro trade clearance process in Bangladesh Customs?
 - a) To your opinion, what cross-border trade-related challenges would be addressed by the development of these portals?
 - b) How do you see your organization to be engaged in the process of updating content beyond the project life?
- 4) How does your organization track the WTO TFA progress and communicate with other agencies, especially with the Ministry of Commerce?
 - a) Are you aware of the Ministry of Commerce's plan to develop a web-based WTO TFA implementation dashboard development?

Activity 3: Strengthen Risk Management Systems

Specific Questions:

1. What is the current status of the risk management system development project, and how well does it align with the identified risk management needs of your organization?
2. Do you have any legal/legislative provision or RM framework to classify the traded items on the basis of risk management principles? How effective was BTF intervention in terms of establishing/strengthening your RM framework?
3. Do you have a Risk Management Committee/unit? To what extent has the BTF project's contribution to establishing/reorganizing the RM unit within your organization been effective?
4. Are you familiar with the international best practices followed by different countries for risk-based control of consignments?
 - a. Is the RM framework aligned with contemporary international best practices (i.e., WCO RM Framework)?
5. In your opinion, how will the *Risk Management Action Plans* co-developed with BTF, contribute to the sustainability of the RM units?
6. Do you have an adequate number of skilled staff to apply risk-based selectivity? What has been the impact of the capacity development interventions of BTF project for enhancing BSTI's personnel capacity in line with RM compliance management?
7. Does your agency have a list of commodities or firms considered to be high risk? Do you maintain statistics/records on the number of shipments inspected, say, by product category, and violations discovered from them?
 - a. How far along is the development of the product-wise risk profiling matrix, and what are the preliminary findings or insights gained from the process?
8. Have the traders raised any issues on the inspection of all consignments during the customs clearance process? What are the issues that have been frequently raised?
9. How do you collaborate with NBR and Customs or other regulatory agencies to establish or maintain risk-based selectivity profiles to determine shipments for inspection or controls?
10. What challenges are you experiencing in developing the RM system?

Activity 4: Improve Laboratories and Testing Procedures

Specific Questions:

1. How many labs that BSTI manages are present at border (land/air/sea) entry/exit points? Are all necessary tests performed on-site or are samples taken off site to perform necessary tests?
2. To what extent has BTF project contributed to the development of SOPs for collection and handling of samples (import) at the point of entry/exit? Are the BSTI officials being able to effectively apply this SOP now?
3. Do you grant permission to conduct a second test? Do you take the findings of confirmatory tests into consideration for the release and clearance of goods?
4. What's the current process of transferring the lab reports from your organization to Bangladesh Customs, National Board of Revenue, ASYCUDA World System? How far have you progressed in automating the laboratory reports/certificates system? What has been the value-add of the BTF project in this regard?

General challenges, Future opportunities & Recommendation

1. In your opinion, how effective was BTF's general work approach with your organization? Would you change any particular coordination mechanism?
2. Did the project undertake interventions in alignment with your organizational/government priorities?
3. Were project activities carried out in a timely manner? Has there been any execution level delay that may have potentially affected the quality of the intervention?
4. As we know, there are more than one trade facilitation relevant projects ongoing currently with the common agencies. These projects frequently collaborate with government agencies to achieve their goals. Can you share examples of ideal collaboration models that have been successful in achieving intended goals for trade facilitation?
5. Which of the BTF activities do you think will continue beyond the project timeline?
 1. How does the BTF project handing over the diverse outputs to the authorities/GoB agencies?
 2. Has there been any specific intervention so far which requires an adjustment in approach/planning to sustain beyond the project timeline?
6. Additionally, what other areas of support from BTF would you like to see in developing system and process automation in the future?
7. Is there any other topic that you want to discuss that we may have missed out on but would benefit the BTF project implementation plan?

Set 2.5: KII Checklist for BAEC

Project Background

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

Objective of Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to gain insight from various stakeholders engaged in importing, exporting, regulating, studying, or effecting change in the trade of agricultural or agro-processed goods in Bangladesh. The results of this questionnaire will be compiled into data and used as the basis of a comprehensive trade review of the Bangladeshi agricultural trade sector. This review will play a central role in finding actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Respondent Information			
Name		Contact	
Designation		Address	
Organization		Date	

1. What is your current role in the organization?
2. Could you kindly give us a point of contact in your organization to follow up if there are any additional questions or clarification needed?
3. Are you familiar with the BTF project interventions at BAEC? What are the specific BTF project activities that you have taken part in?

BTF Activity-wise Question:

Interviewer Guide: Under each activity the initial questions are aimed at addressing scorecard parameters which gradually move towards sub-activity wise evaluation questions relevant for each specific agency.

Activity 1: Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing

1. Have there been any recent SROs/acts concerning BAEC activities? Could you please share those with us?
2. What certificates, licenses or permits do you issue? Could you please help us in understanding the process/time requirement for the different types of certificates/permits/licenses as per the table below:

Name of the Permit/license/certificate issued by you for import/export	Processing Time (days)	Point of service delivery: Online Vs. on-site Vs. Central (Dhaka)

3. Do you see any requirement for automation in your current service provision? If yes, why do you perceive the automation would be beneficial?
4. How Agro-trade working group (under the national trade facilitation committee) can work in improving cross-border trade facilitation?
5. Do you have any recommendation for government measures (such as acts, rules, regulations, policies, etc.) that can improve the cross-border agri trade?
6. Do you have a system/committee to periodically review formalities and documentation requirements to minimize complexity, time, and cost? How do you inform the traders about these updated requirements?

Activity 2: Increase transparency of trade information and WTO notification compliance

1. Does your organization generate and share WTO notification alerts or lookouts with other government and international organizations? How is this information shared?
2. Do you have dedicated personnel for answering NEP enquiries? What has been the contribution of BTF project in collaboration with BRCP-1 to ensure efficiency in NEP operation within BAEC?
3. Are you aware of the new section development named agro-trade in the Bangladesh Trade portal?
 1. To your opinion, what cross-border trade-related challenges would be addressed by the development of these portals?
 2. How do you see your organization to be engaged in the process of updating content beyond the project life?
4. How does your organization track the WTO TFA progress and communicate with other agencies, especially with the Ministry of Commerce?
 1. Are you aware of the Ministry of Commerce's plan to develop a web-based WTO TFA implementation dashboard development?

Activity 3: Strengthen Risk Management Systems

1. What is the current status of the risk management system development project, and how well does it align with the identified risk management needs of your organization?
2. Do you have any legal/legislative provision or RM framework to classify the traded items on the basis of risk management principles? How effective was BTF intervention in terms of establishing/strengthening your RM framework?
3. Do you have a Risk Management Committee/unit? To what extent has the BTF project's contribution to establishing/reorganizing the RM unit within your organization been effective?

4. Are you familiar with the international best practices followed by different countries for risk-based control of consignments?
 1. Is the RM framework aligned with contemporary international best practices (i.e., WCO RM Framework)?
5. In your opinion, how will the *Risk Management Action Plans* co-developed with BTF, contribute to the sustainability of the RM units?
6. Do you have an adequate number of skilled staff to apply risk-based selectivity? What has been the impact of the capacity development interventions of BTF project for enhancing BAEC's personnel capacity in line with RM compliance management?
7. Does your agency have a list of commodities or firms considered to be high risk? Do you maintain statistics/records on the number of shipments inspected, say, by product category, and violations discovered from them?
 1. How far along is the development of the product-wise risk profiling matrix, and what are the preliminary findings or insights gained from the process?
8. Have the traders raised any issues on the inspection of all consignments during the customs clearance process? What are the issues that have been frequently raised?
9. How do you collaborate with NBR and Customs or other regulatory agencies to establish or maintain risk-based selectivity profiles to determine shipments for inspection or controls?
10. What challenges are you experiencing in developing the RM system?

Activity 4: Improve Laboratories and Testing Procedures

1. How many labs that BAEC manages are present at border (land/air/sea) entry/exit points? Are all necessary tests performed on-site or are samples taken off site to perform necessary tests?
2. To what extent has BTF project contributed to the development of SOPs for collection and handling of samples (import) at the point of entry/exit? Are the BAEC officials being able to effectively apply this SOP now?
3. Do you grant permission to conduct a second test? Do you take the findings of confirmatory tests into consideration for the release and clearance of goods?
4. What's the current process of transferring the lab reports from your organization to Bangladesh Customs, National Board of Revenue, ASYCUDA World System? How far have you progressed in automating the laboratory reports/certificates system? What has been the value-add of the BTF project in this regard?

General challenges, Future opportunities & Recommendation

1. In your opinion, how effective was BTF's general work approach with your organization? Would you change any particular coordination mechanism?
2. Did the project undertake interventions in alignment with your organizational/government priorities?
3. Were project activities carried out in a timely manner? Has there been any execution level delay that may have potentially affected the quality of the intervention?
4. As we know, there are more than one trade facilitation relevant projects ongoing currently with the common agencies. These projects frequently collaborate with government agencies to achieve their

goals. Can you share examples of ideal collaboration models that have been successful in achieving intended goals for trade facilitation?

5. Which of the BTF activities do you think will continue beyond the project timeline?
 1. How does the BTF project handing over the diverse outputs to the authorities/GoB agencies?
 2. Has there been any specific intervention so far which requires an adjustment in approach/planning to sustain beyond the project timeline?
6. Additionally, what other areas of support from BTF would you like to see in developing system and process automation in the future?
7. Is there any other topic that you want to discuss that we may have missed out on but would benefit the BTF project implementation plan?

Set 2.6: KII Checklist for BFSA

Project Background

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

Objective of Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to gain insight from various stakeholders engaged in importing, exporting, regulating, studying, or effecting change in the trade of agricultural or agro-processed goods in Bangladesh. The results of this questionnaire will be compiled into data and used as the basis of a comprehensive trade review of the Bangladeshi agricultural trade sector. This review will play a central role in finding actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Respondent Information			
Name		Contact	
Designation		Address	
Organization		Date	

1. What is your current role in the organization?
2. Could you kindly give us a point of contact in your organization to follow up if there are any additional questions or clarification needed?
3. Are you familiar with the BTF project interventions at BFSA? What are the specific BTF project activities that you have taken part in?

BTF Activity-wise Question:

Interviewer Guide: Under each activity the initial questions are aimed at addressing scorecard parameters which gradually move towards sub-activity wise evaluation questions relevant for each specific agency.

Activity 1: Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing

1. Have there been any recent SROs/acts concerning BFSA activities? Could you please share those with us?
2. What certificates, licenses or permits do you issue? Could you please help us in understanding the process/time requirement for the different types of certificates/permits/licenses as per the table below:

Name of the Permit/license/certificate issued by you for import/export	Actual Processing Time (days)	Point of service delivery: Online Vs. on-site Vs. Central (Dhaka)

3. What are the key reform programs that BFSA has undertaken over the course of the last three years with the support of BTF and how do they impact?
4. How Agro-trade working group (under the national trade facilitation committee) can work in improving cross-border trade facilitation?
5. Can you suggest measures that BFSA could develop or adapt to enhance the export and ease the import of plant products?
6. Do you have a system/committee to periodically review formalities and documentation requirements to minimize complexity, time, and cost? How do you inform the traders about these updated requirements?

Activity 2: Increase transparency of trade information and WTO notification compliance

1. Does your organization generate and share WTO notification alerts or lookouts with other government and international organizations? How is this information shared?
2. Do you have dedicated personnel for answering NEP enquiries? What has been the contribution of BTF project in collaboration with BRCP-1 to ensure efficiency in NEP operation within BFSA?
3. Are you aware of the new section development named agro-trade in the Bangladesh Trade portal and content development on agro-trade clearance process in Bangladesh Customs?

- a. To your opinion, what cross-border trade-related challenges would be addressed by the development of these portals?
 - b. How do you see your organization to be engaged in the process of updating content beyond the project life?
4. How does your organization track the WTO TFA progress and communicate with other agencies, especially with the Ministry of Commerce?
 - a. Are you aware of the Ministry of Commerce's plan to develop a web-based WTO TFA implementation dashboard development?

Activity 3: Strengthen Risk Management Systems

1. What is the current status of the risk management system development project, and how well does it align with the identified risk management needs of your organization?
2. Do you have any legal/legislative provision or RM framework to classify the traded items on the basis of risk management principles? How effective was BTF intervention in terms of establishing/strengthening your RM framework?
3. Do you have a Risk Management Committee/unit? To what extent has the BTF project's contribution to establishing/reorganizing the RM unit within your organization been effective?
4. Are you familiar with the international best practices followed by different countries for risk-based control of consignments?
 1. Is the RM framework aligned with contemporary international best practices (i.e., WCO RM Framework)?
5. In your opinion, how will the *Risk Management Action Plans* co-developed with BTF, contribute to the sustainability of the RM units?
6. Do you have an adequate number of skilled staff to apply risk-based selectivity? What has been the impact of the capacity development interventions of BTF project for enhancing BFSA's personnel capacity in line with RM compliance management?
7. Does your agency have a list of commodities or firms considered to be high risk? Do you maintain statistics/records on the number of shipments inspected, say, by product category, and violations discovered from them?
 1. How far along is the development of the product-wise risk profiling matrix, and what are the preliminary findings or insights gained from the process?
8. Have the traders raised any issues on the inspection of all consignments during the customs clearance process? What are the issues that have been frequently raised?
9. How do you collaborate with NBR and Customs or other regulatory agencies to establish or maintain risk-based selectivity profiles to determine shipments for inspection or controls?
10. What challenges are you experiencing in developing the RM system?

General challenges, Future opportunities & Recommendation

1. In your opinion, how effective was BTF's general work approach with your organization? Would you change any particular coordination mechanism?
2. Did the project undertake interventions in alignment with your organizational/government priorities?

3. Were project activities carried out in a timely manner? Has there been any execution level delay that may have potentially affected the quality of the intervention?
4. As we know, there are more than one trade facilitation relevant projects ongoing currently with the common agencies. These projects frequently collaborate with government agencies to achieve their goals. Can you share examples of ideal collaboration models that have been successful in achieving intended goals for trade facilitation?
5. Which of the BTF activities do you think will continue beyond the project timeline?
 1. How does the BTF project handing over the diverse outputs to the authorities/GoB agencies?
 2. Has there been any specific intervention so far which requires an adjustment in approach/planning to sustain beyond the project timeline?
6. Additionally, what other areas of support from BTF would you like to see in developing system and process automation in the future?
7. Is there any other topic that you want to discuss that we may have missed out on but would benefit the BTF project implementation plan?

Set 3: Questionnaire for Other GoB Agencies

Set 3.1: KII Checklist for DAM

General KII Questions

1. Are you familiar with the initiatives carried out by the Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project?
2. What activities have been initiated with your organization by BTF and how were you involved?

Activity 1: Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing

[Semi Annual Report 5: Cold Storage Regulations for DAM is on stage 3]

1. What is the current status of the draft Cold Storage Licensing and Operations Regulations 2022? What has been the contribution of the BTF project in drafting this regulation?
 - a. What are the major components of the regulation?
 - b. How do you believe this regulation would benefit the private sector?
 - c. Would private sector require less time to acquire certifications/permits from GoB departments after the regulation?

Activity 5: Enhance cold storage infrastructure for perishable goods

1. What has been the contribution of the BTF project in developing commodity-specific handling manuals of perishable products?
2. Have you received any support from BTF in having a product-handling manual in place? Did the manual align with industry standards?

Recommendation section:

1. In your opinion, how effective was BTF's general work approach with your organization? Would you change any particular coordination mechanism?
2. Did the project undertake interventions in alignment with your organizational/government priorities?
3. Were project activities carried out in a timely manner? Has there been any execution level delay that may have potentially affected the quality of the intervention?

4. As we know, there are more than one trade facilitation relevant projects ongoing currently with the common agencies. These projects frequently collaborate with government agencies to achieve their goals. Can you share examples of ideal collaboration models that have been successful in achieving intended goals for trade facilitation?
5. Which of the BTF activities do you think will continue beyond the project timeline?
 - a. How does the BTF project handing over the diverse outputs to the authorities/GoB agencies?
 - b. Has there been any specific intervention so far which requires an adjustment in approach/planning to sustain beyond the project timeline?
6. Additionally, what other areas of support from BTF would you like to see in developing system and process automation in the future?
7. Is there any other topic that you want to discuss that we may have missed out on but would benefit the BTF project implementation plan?

Set 3.2: KII Checklist for NBR

Project Background

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

Objective of Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to gain insight from various stakeholders engaged in importing, exporting, regulating, studying, or effecting change in the trade of agricultural or agro-processed goods in Bangladesh. The results of this questionnaire will be compiled into data and used as the basis of a comprehensive trade review of the Bangladeshi agricultural trade sector. This review will play a central role in finding actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Respondent Information

Name		Contact	
Designation		Address	
Organization		Date	

General KII Questions

- 1) Are you familiar with the initiatives carried out by the Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project?
- 2) What activities have been initiated with your organization by BTF and how were you involved?
- 3) Could you kindly give me a point of contact in your organization to follow up if there are any additional questions or clarification needed, or forms, documents, organizational charts, etc.?

Activity 1: Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing

- 1) What additional legal supports and frameworks are required to reduce requirements of the inspection and streamline the process for agricultural trade?
- 2) What laws/rules/policies/plans/SOPs of NBR have been revised or reviewed in the last 3 years with the support of BTF and how do they impact? (Regarding specific activities done with the agency such as; Customs inspection and sampling Rules)?
 - a) How do you evaluate the effectiveness of regulatory reformation, capacity-building sessions on the reformation, and implementation of those in your organization?
- 3) How agro-trade working group (under the national trade facilitation committee) Can work in improving cross-border trade facilitation?
- 4) Do you have any recommendation for government measures (such as acts, rules, regulations, policies, etc.) that can improve the cross-border agri trade?

Activity 2: Increase transparency of trade information and WTO notification compliance

1. What progress have you achieved to submit WTO notification with the support of BTF?
 - a. What challenges have your organization been experiencing in submitting the WTO notification in collaboration with the agro-trade related agencies? How can the automation of this system address those challenges?
 - b. What kind of technical support MoC need to submit the notification to WTO regularly?
2. How does your organization track the WTO TFA progress and communicate with other agencies?
 - a. How could the development of agency specific roadmap support to achieve WTO TFA target measures?
 - b. Are you aware of the Ministry of Commerce's plan to develop a web-based WTO TFA implementation tracking tool?
 - c. What improvement areas do you see in the dashboard and how BTF should incorporate them in their upcoming annual implementation plan?
3. Are you aware of the new section development named agro-trade in the Bangladesh Trade portal?
 - a. In your opinion, what cross-border trade-related challenges would be addressed by the development of this portals?
 - b. How do you see your organization to be engaged in the process of updating content beyond the project life in this section?

Activity 3: Strengthen Risk Management Systems

- 1) To enhance border agency coordination, what inspection and sample management protocols have been developed in cooperation with customs?
 - a) What challenges did you experience in implementing inspection and sample management protocols?
- 2) How the integration of the RM system and ASYCUDA World will create an impact on the agricultural goods clearance process?
 - a) Do you think the integration of this process may create any complexity in the trade clearance process? If yes, what would you recommend?
- 3) Do you have a Risk Management Committee/unit? To what extent has the BTF project's contribution to establishing/reorganizing the RM unit within your organization been effective?
 - a) In your opinion, how will the *Risk Management Action Plans* co-developed with BTF, contribute to the sustainability of the RM units?
- 4) Are you familiar with the international best practices followed by different countries for risk-based control of consignments?
- 5) In your opinion, how will the *Risk Management Action Plans* co-developed with BTF, contribute to the sustainability of the RM units?
- 6) How do you collaborate with other agro-trade related regulatory agencies to establish or maintain risk-based selectivity profiles to determine shipments for inspection or controls?
- 7) Have the traders raised any issues on the inspection of all consignments during the customs clearance process? What are the issues that have been frequently raised?
- 8) What challenges are you experiencing in developing the RM system? How do you think the automation of the RM system can help resolve the challenges?

Activity 4: Improve Laboratories and Testing Procedures

- 1) To what extent reporting, lab test reports, certification, and information transmission activities are integrated into the ASYCUDA World system?
 - a) What constraints are still present in laboratory service provision automation?
- 2) How do sampling and inspection SOP of other agencies may affect the performance of customs?

General challenges, Future opportunities & Recommendation

- 1) In your opinion, how effective was BTF's general work approach with your organization? Would you change any particular coordination mechanism?
- 2) Did the project undertake interventions in alignment with your organizational/government priorities?
- 3) Were project activities carried out in a timely manner? Has there been any execution level delay that may have potentially affected the quality of the intervention?
- 4) As we know, there are more than one trade facilitation relevant projects ongoing currently with the common agencies. These projects frequently collaborate with government agencies to achieve their goals. Can you share examples of ideal collaboration models that have been successful in achieving intended goals for trade facilitation?
- 5) Which of the BTF activities do you think will continue beyond the project timeline?
 - a. How does the BTF project handing over the diverse outputs to the authorities/GoB agencies?
 - b. Has there been any specific intervention so far which requires an adjustment in approach/planning to sustain beyond the project timeline?
- 6) Additionally, what other areas of support from BTF would you like to see in developing system and process automation in the future?

- 7) Is there any other topic that you want to discuss that we may have missed out on but would benefit the BTF project implementation plan?

Set 3.3: KII Checklist for MoC- WTO Wing

Project Background

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

Objective of Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to gain insight from various stakeholders engaged in importing, exporting, regulating, studying, or effecting change in the trade of agricultural or agro-processed goods in Bangladesh. The results of this questionnaire will be compiled into data and used as the basis of a comprehensive trade review of the Bangladeshi agricultural trade sector. This review will play a central role in finding actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Respondent Information			
Name		Contact	
Designation		Address	
Organization		Date	

General KII Questions

- 1) Are you familiar with the initiatives carried out by the Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project?
- 2) What activities have been initiated with your organization by BTF and how were you involved?

Activity 1: Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing

- 1) Is there any need to reform any process or regulation to provide hassle-free services to the traders?
 - a) Do you think an overarching trade facilitation act will foster cross-border trade activities in Bangladesh?
- 2) What types of policy and legal guidelines/rules of MoC have been revised or reviewed by the BTF project in the last 3 and how do they impact?
 - a) To what extent policy and legal reformation activities have taken place and been communicated or implemented?
 - b) How do you evaluate the effectiveness of regulatory reformation, capacity-building sessions on the reformation, and implementation of those in your organization?
 - c) What additional legal supports and frameworks are required to reduce requirements and streamline the process of agriculture trade?
- 3) How do you evaluate the functionality of the agro-trade working group?
 - a) To what extent the agro-trade working group was able to execute its mandated tasks (e.g., workshop, seminar, quarterly meeting, regulatory reformation suggestions, etc.)?
 - b) What would you recommend ensuring the effective implementation of the agro-trade working group?
- 4) Do you have any recommendations for government measures (such as acts or umbrella acts for trade facilitation, rules, regulations, policies, etc.) that can improve the cross-border agri trade?
 - a) Do you think an overarching trade facilitation act will foster cross-border trade activities in Bangladesh?

Activity 2: Increase transparency of trade information and WTO notification compliance

- 1) What progress have you achieved to submit WTO notification with the support of BTF?
 - a) What challenges have your organization been experiencing in submitting the WTO notification in collaboration with the agro-trade related agencies? How can the automation of this system address those challenges?
 - b) How do you plan to continue the submission of WTO notifications beyond the BTF project timeline?
- 2) How does your organization track the WTO TFA progress and communicate with other agencies?
 - a) How do you evaluate the development of agency specific roadmap to achieve WTO TFA targets?
 - b) Are you aware of the WTO TFA implementation dashboard development?
 - c) What improvement areas do you see in the dashboard and how BTF should incorporate them in their upcoming annual implementation plan?
- 3) Are you aware of the new section development named agro-trade in the Bangladesh Trade portal?
 - a) In your opinion, what cross-border trade-related challenges would be addressed by the development of this portals?
 - b) How do you see your organization to be engaged in the process of updating content beyond the project life in this section?

Activity 4: Improve Laboratories and Testing Procedures

1. What issues/suggestions have been raised/proposed by BTF in testing protocols and the second testing procedure of the Import Policy order (IPO)?
 - a) Has there been any update on the incorporation of suggestions made on the second testing procedure?

General challenges, Future opportunities & Recommendation

1. In your opinion, how effective was BTF's general work approach with your organization? Would you change any particular coordination mechanism?
2. Did the project undertake interventions in alignment with your organizational/government priorities?
3. Were project activities carried out in a timely manner? Has there been any execution level delay that may have potentially affected the quality of the intervention?
4. As we know, there are more than one trade facilitation relevant projects ongoing currently with the common agencies. These projects frequently collaborate with government agencies to achieve their goals. Can you share examples of ideal collaboration models that have been successful in achieving intended goals for trade facilitation?
5. Which of the BTF activities do you think will continue beyond the project timeline?
 1. How does the BTF project handing over the diverse outputs to the authorities/GoB agencies?
 2. Has there been any specific intervention so far which requires an adjustment in approach/planning to sustain beyond the project timeline?
6. Additionally, what other areas of support from BTF would you like to see in developing system and process automation in the future?
7. Is there any other topic that you want to discuss that we may have missed out on but would benefit the BTF project implementation plan?

Set 3.4: KII Checklist for BRCP-1

Study Background:

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

The midterm evaluation of the BTF project serves to measure the project's short-term progress towards achieving key indicators while evaluating the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to the project's efforts. Ultimately, the study will guide to find actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation study. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this questionnaire. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Part A: Respondent Information

Sl	Name	Designation	Organization Name	Organization Address	Contact info	Experience/employment duration
1						

Part B: General KII Questions

- 1) Are you familiar with the initiatives carried out by the Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project?
- 2) What activities have been initiated with your organization by BTF and how were you involved?
- 3) In your opinion, what activities under the BTF project have the highest potential to transform the agricultural trade landscape in Bangladesh?
- 4) What is your assessment of the effectiveness of the interventions being implemented by the BTF project?
- 5) Are there any specific areas where the BTF project could enhance its performance? Please elaborate.
- 6) Could you share three key learning pointers from your experience of undertaking the BRCP-1 projects over the course of the last five years that the BTF project can leverage/use going forward?

Activity 1: Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing

- 1) What initiatives have you taken in association with BTF to activate focal points for the National Enquiry Point (NEP) for Trade? How are you ensuring sustainability of the system beyond the BRCP-1 project period?
- 2) To what extent have your joint initiatives with BTF (aimed at activating the NEP focal points) been successful so far?
(Prompt: could you build awareness, facilitate intra-agency interaction and set the way focal points and NEP respond to trade enquiries received).
- 3) What support did you receive from BTF in developing the agro-trade section in the Bangladesh trade portal?
 - a) What challenges have you experienced during the implementation?
 - b) With the ensuing closure of your project, how are you ensuring sustainability of the portal?

Activity 2: Increase transparency of trade information and WTO notification compliance

- 4) What constraints did you encounter in streamlining agro-trade group formation (e.g., organizing agro-trade focused workshops/seminars/meetings, etc.)?
- 5) What would you recommend increasing the effectiveness of the agro-trade working group-mandated activities?
- 6) How do you evaluate the partnership between your organization and BTF?

Set 4: Questionnaire for Labs

Set 4.1: KII Checklist for Labs

Study Background:

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

The midterm evaluation of the BTF project serves to measure the project's short-term progress towards achieving key indicators while evaluating the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to the project's efforts. Ultimately, the study will guide to find actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **90 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Laboratory/respondent identification queries			
Name of the cooperating agency			
Name of laboratory			
Location and address of the Laboratory			
Name of informant			
Designation			
Date of the interview			
Number of personnel		Number of supervisory/ Managerial staff	
Number of technical staff		Gender-wise breakdown of personnel/ratio	

General Queries

Laboratory's Institutional Capacity (Skills of Personnel, Quality of Infrastructure, Appropriateness of Equipment)

1) Level of capacity of current personnel numbers and capability to accomplish tasks associated with mandate of this laboratory are proportional to demand for services.

- a) What are the primary tasks associated with the mandate of the laboratory?
- b) Please mention the list of tests that are being conducted by your laboratory.
- c) How many staff can accomplish the mandated task without assistance? Are there any specific challenges the personnel face in accomplishing tasks effectively and efficiently?

2) Capacity of the laboratory equipment to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.

- a) Can you provide an overview of the types of equipment available and their specific functionalities?
- b) Have there been any challenges in accomplishing tasks due to limitations in the current equipment (Probe: Capacity utilization, Outdated machine, lack of required machineries)?
- c) Is the current equipment technologically up-to-date and in line with industry needs?

3) Funding sources available to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.

- a) What are the primary sources of funding for the laboratory's operations and tasks?
- b) How well do the current funding sources align with the laboratory's mandate and objectives?
- c) How adaptable is the funding structure to accommodate increased demand for specific services?
- d) Are there contingency plans in place to secure additional funding if demand significantly exceeds current projections?

4) Laws/ Regulations are in place to accomplish tasks associated with its mandate and proportionate to demand for services.

- a) What specific laws and regulations define the mandate of the laboratory?
- b) What permits or licenses are required for the laboratory to operate within its mandate? How often are these permits and licenses renewed, and what is the process for obtaining them?
- c) Has the laboratory ever faced challenges in obtaining or renewing permits or licenses?

5) Facility infrastructure in terms of the layout, size, age, and structural conditions are sufficient. There is adequate back-up electric power, constant water supply, and waste management.

- a) How well does the layout of the laboratory facility accommodate the current tasks associated with the mandate? Is the size of the facility adequate for the present operations, and does it allow for future expansion if needed?

b) Are there any areas within the facility that require immediate repairs or upgrades?

c) What measures are in place to ensure the safety and stability of the facility's structure?

d) Does the laboratory have a constant and reliable water supply? Are there any challenges related to water shortages or quality? Is there a reliable backup electric power source in case of power outages? How long can the facility operate on backup power?

e) How is waste management handled within the facility? Is there a systematic approach for the disposal of both hazardous and non-hazardous waste?

6) Laboratory has functional safety devices (fume hoods, emergency showers, eye douche, fire extinguishers, fire blanket, first aid kits, etc.)

a) How many fume hoods are there in the laboratory, and what is their current operational status?

- b) Are there emergency showers and eyewash stations strategically located throughout the laboratory? Is there a documented procedure for using emergency showers and eyewash stations, and are staff members trained in their proper usage?

- c) How many fire extinguishers and fire blankets are available in the laboratory? Are they placed in easily accessible locations, and are their locations clearly marked? Are regular fire drills conducted, and do staff members know how to use fire extinguishers and fire blankets effectively?

- d) How many first aid kits are present in the laboratory, and what supplies do they contain? Are the first aid kits regularly checked and restocked to ensure they are equipped for emergencies? Are there trained personnel who know how to administer first aid in case of injuries or accidents?

- e) Are all safety devices compliant with relevant safety standards and regulations? Is there a designated safety officer or team responsible for ensuring compliance with safety standards?

- f) How often are safety devices and protocols reviewed to ensure they align with the latest safety guidelines?

Sampling Procedures and Capabilities

1) Across labs, sampling procedures (SOPs) based on worldwide standards are being implemented

- a) Does the laboratory have a written SOP for each type of test as per the international standards?

- b) Does the laboratory have a risk-based sampling plan for identifying sampling size for the products tested? Is it accepted by exporting/ importing countries?

- c) What has been the progress in implementing a sampling SOP? What has been the progress of implementing a sampling SOP at entry/exit point? Could you share the challenges in implementing the sampling SOP?

- d) What is the process for drawing samples? (Prompts: How many samples are tested per consignment? Who draws the sample?)

- e) Does your lab develop an annual risk-based sampling plan? To what extent is the plan executed?

2) Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on sampling methodologies

a) Do the employees have sufficient knowledge and skill in sampling methodology? (Prompt: Do the employees have previous experience or training on sampling procedures?)

b) Is/ was this training conducted with BTF assistance? (Prompt: Impacts of the training sessions, process of knowledge/ skills transferred in case of replacement of trained personnel)

i) To what extent has the training created an impact on your organizational performance?

ii) Where do you see changes or improvements required?

Testing Capabilities

1) **All of the equipment needed to test for the specified criteria is available**

a) Does the laboratory have ISO certification?

b) Does the lab have sampling procedures and necessary equipment for the following tests? Is the equipment used appropriately? Does the lab have sufficient equipment to test?

	Parameters tested in lab	Sampling procedure (yes/no)	Necessary equipment required	Number of existing equipment
Chemical test				
Radioactivity test				
Microbiology test				

	Parameters tested in lab	Sampling procedure (yes/no)	Necessary equipment required	Number of existing equipment

c) Is all testing equipment calibrated on a regular basis?

d) Is there any written protocol/SOP/Manual for testing? To what extent, protocol/SOP/Manual is used? How do you ensure it?

2) All test methods are accessible and have been validated

a) What procedures are used for different tests? Are these validated? What is the process of validation?

b) Is the laboratory's ISO certification matrix-based?

c) Does the laboratory utilize in-house test comparison where ISO certification has not yet been obtained?

d) Does the laboratory conduct inter-laboratory comparisons for test result verification?

e) Does the laboratory participate in matrix-based proficiency testing?

3) Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on testing

a) Is the manpower sufficiently skilled in conducting tests?

b) Are there subject matter technicians in place to test specific parameters?

c) Does the staff receive training on testing when product-specific ISO is revised?

Information Technology Systems, Level of Automation, and Online Reporting

1) All information and records are computerized.

a) Is more than 75% of laboratory information digitally recorded? Is data in digital platforms updated daily/weekly?

b) For how long is digital data stored and used for day-to-day data entry?

2) Is the Laboratory using a LIMS system?

a) Can applicants submit their testing requests and necessary documentation online?

b) Are test results generated digitally and saved in digital space by technicians?

c) Does the LIMS manage more than 75% of information management and report transmission activities?

d) Does the laboratory send reports, related documents, and data to the supervising agency? How do you share the information?

e) In the laboratory portal, does the laboratory update and upload processed documents following validation from the laboratory management department?

3) The laboratory has an automated IT-based mechanism for online lab report transmission (including to Customs)

a) Have you received a finalized process map for automation of lab reports and test certificates transfer procedure from BTF?

b) What will be the potential impacts of implementing this process map?

c) Is the process map aligned with your organizational needs and procedures? Were there any other challenges you have faced?

d) What are the anticipated impacts in implementing the LIMS and its connectivity with ASYCUDA and National Single Window? What are the anticipated challenges?

4) Manpower has sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in information technology and computerized systems

a) Have the personnel received training in digital record keeping, information technology, and LIMS systems?

b) When the LIMS system or electronic systems are updated, do employees undergo training?

c) Do IT personnel receive training on newly produced software or system software? Are employees being trained in digital transmission?

Implementation of Management Systems and Accreditation

1) Quality Control and Management staff has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities on ISO 17025

- a) Are the personnel involved in quality control and management sufficiently skilled in following ISO prescribed management activities? (i.e., comply with compliance requirements, usage of equipment, etc)

- b) Have all the quality control management staff participated in training on ISO 17025 management?

- c) Have you received an action plan on the implementation of ISO 17025 from BTF? What will be the potential impact of implementing this plan? What will be the potential challenges?

Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements with Countries

- 1) Does your laboratory meet all relevant international agreements (International Plant Protection Convention, World Organization for Animal Health, and Codex Alimentarius)?

- 2) Does your laboratory provide all tests that are applicable for the products under your purview relevant for exports?

- 3) Are the test certifications recognized by exporting countries for testing any products?

- 4) Is the testing process monitored/ inspected by the exporting countries frequently?

- 5) Is the risk analysis of the test certificates done regularly?

Queries regarding BTF activities and recommendations

1. In your opinion, how effective was BTF's general work approach with your organization? Would you change any particular coordination mechanism?
2. Did the project undertake interventions in alignment with your organizational/government priorities?
3. Were project activities carried out in a timely manner? Has there been any execution level delay that may have potentially affected the quality of the intervention?
4. As we know, there are more than one trade facilitation relevant projects ongoing currently with the common agencies. These projects frequently collaborate with government agencies to achieve their goals. Can you share examples of ideal collaboration models that have been successful in achieving intended goals for trade facilitation?
5. Which of the BTF activities do you think will continue beyond the project timeline?
 - a. How does the BTF project handing over the diverse outputs to the authorities/GoB agencies?
 - b. Has there been any specific intervention so far which requires an adjustment in approach/planning to sustain beyond the project timeline?
6. Additionally, what other areas of support from BTF would you like to see in developing system and process automation in the future?
7. Is there any other topic that you want to discuss that we may have missed out on but would benefit the BTF project implementation plan?
8. Would it be possible to share the list of service

Set 4.2: Gemba Checklist for Labs

Study Background:

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

The midterm evaluation of the BTF project serves to measure the project's short-term progress towards achieving key indicators while evaluating the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to the project's efforts. Ultimately, the study will guide to find actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Laboratory/respondent identification queries	
Name of the cooperating agency	
Name of laboratory	
Location and address of the Laboratory	
Name of the observers	
Designation	
Date of the interview	

Parameters and Assessment Components				
Organizational Service Delivery Journey				
Service Order Placement Procedure			Answer	Comments
1	What is the procedure to place a service request?			
2	Is it easy to follow? (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			

3	Do the service recipients have any difficulties to avail the services? Please explain. Also discuss with service recipients to identify major pain points. (If any)			
Lead time			Answer	Comments
1	What are the services offered?			
2	All testing services are offered on site.			
3	There is a system in place to notify clients about the stage of testing/service the laboratory is currently in. (Answer parameters: Digital, Manual, N/A)			
4	What are the lead times for various tests?			
5	What document needs to be submitted for a testing service?			
Report Delivery			Answer	Comments
1	Which department/ staff is responsible for sharing reports?			

2	How are reports shared? (Answer parameters: Manually, Digitally, N/A)			
3	How many stakeholders are the reports shared to?			
4	What's the lead time for sharing different reports?			
Sample Collection and Handling				
Sample Collection			Answer	Comments
1	There is a sample collection SOP in place. (Answer parameters: Yes (both), Yes (Export), Yes (Import), No, N/A)			
2	This is clearly understood by the staff. (Answer parameters: Yes, Partial, No, N/A)			
3	Sample collecting processes are documented and accessible to the appropriate personnel. Answer parameters: Yes, Partial, No, N/A)			
4	There is a common sample request form available for individuals who want to request tests.			

	(Answer parameters: Yes (Online), Yes (Offline), No, N/A)			
5	Samples are recorded in a book, worksheet, computer or other similar system. (Answer parameters: Yes (Digital), Yes (Manual), No, N/A)			
6	It's possible to trace a sample from the original parent sample. (Identification number, etc.)? (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
Sample Handling			Answer	Comments
1	Does the laboratory experience problems with sample collection from outside the facility? (Probe: insufficient request form, specimen identification, containers, and so on)			
2	What is the acceptance or rejection criteria for primary samples (including potential caution non-conforming samples)?			
3	If not immediately analysed, how are primary samples adequately preserved (fridge, -20C freezer, -70C freezer, or other suggested storage conditions)?			
4	Is there a protocol for storing main samples after they have been analysed? Could you explain it please?			

5	Who draws the samples? What is the sample drawing process?			
Sample transportation			Answer	Comments
1	Is there a written procedure to receive samples for testing in the laboratory (e.g., any package in accordance with local rules or recommendations.) (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
2	How are the transportation guidelines for referral samples (Bus, currier, postal service, etc.) implemented?			
3	How are person/s in charge of shipments is/ trained for the transport of samples for microbiological tests?			
4	If yes or partial: 1. He/she is trained for local or national regulations or recommendations. 2. He/she trained in international regulations. (Answer parameters: Yes (1 and 2), Yes (1), Yes (2), No, N/A)			
Test Result and Report				
Results and report			Answer	Comments
1	Observations/ results of the laboratory are recorded digitally. (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			

2	The results reviewed are authorized before being uploaded digitally. (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
3	There is a protocol in place to determine how a report is issued and by which lab when samples need to be referred to other labs. (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
4	A real-time notification system is available. (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
5	Is There a real-time notification system in place for relevant ministries and agencies when results are critical. (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
6	The lab digitally transmits test reports to relevant authorities (including customs). (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
7	What is the turnaround time for various test results?			
8	How do people apply for various tests? (Answer parameters: Digitally, Manually, N/A)			
9	There is a feedback procedure in place at the lab. (Answer parameters: Digitally, Manually, N/A)			

Data analysis and statistics			Answer	Comments
1	Can the laboratory supply basic statistical data from its operations? Please explain the process. (e.g., number of tests ordered, aggregated qualitative/quantitative data, etc.)?			
Data security - confidentiality			Answer	Comments
1	Sample data access and modification is protected (both paper and digital). (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
2	Does the lab have efficient backup processes in place? Can you explain the process?			
3	The lab updates an annual risk basis plan. (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
Quality Procedures			Answer	Comments
1	How are quality manuals used?			
2	How are testing procedures used in the lab validated?			
3	What are the methods of validation?			

4	How frequently are the lab Equipment calibrated? What's the process?			
5	What are the procedures to record incidents or complaints?			
Biosafety Procedures			Answer	Comments
6	How have risk assessment measures related to the laboratory procedures been performed and documented?			
7	How are staff trained on biosafety? Is there a biosafety procedure written in place?			
Safety equipment			Answer	Comments
1	What kind of safety equipment does the lab utilize? How are they utilized?			
2	- Handwashing (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
3	- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			

4	- Sterilisation (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
5	- Glassware and equipment washing (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
6	- Waste disposal systems (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
7	- Laboratory cleaning procedure (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
8	- Storage and destruction methods of hazardous sample (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
9	- Spillage (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
10	- Laboratory related injury (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			

1	- Fire emergency (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
IT and Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)			Answer	Comments
1	What software/applications does the lab use?			
Facilities and organizational capabilities				
Staff Number and Qualification and Skills			Answer	Comments
1	Managers/senior staff (postgraduate degree)			
2	Laboratory technologists or technicians (performing tests)			
3	Laboratory assistants/medical aides (not doing tests)			
4	Support/administrative staff			
5	Other staff (Please specify)			

6	Total number of persons working in the laboratory			
7	The staff number adequate to undertake the required work.			
8	There is a plan for increasing the capacity. (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
9	If yes, is the laboratory already in operation to increase the capacity? (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
10	There are IT staff positions in the lab. (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
11	The technicians participate regularly in PT. (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
12	The laboratory staff participate regularly in ILC. (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
Biosafety Risk Management				
Biosafety Level			Answer	Comments
1	BSL 2			
2	BSL 1			
3	Others			
Disinfection and Waste Management			Answer	Comments
1	How are disinfection and decontamination procedures are implemented?			

2	There are enough disinfectants available for use at any time.			
3	Does the lab have waste management procedures in place? What is the process??			
4	How does the lab dispose of chemical and hazardous waste? (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			
5	There are dedicated waste management systems for used solvents. (Answer parameters: Yes, No, N/A)			

Set 5: Questionnaire for Private Sector

Set 5.1: KII Checklist for Cold Chain Businesses

Study Background:

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

The midterm evaluation of the BTF (Bangladesh Trade Facilitation) project serves to measure the project's short-term progress towards achieving key indicators while evaluating the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to the project's efforts. Ultimately, the study will guide to find actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated

with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this survey?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Part A: Respondent Information

Sl	Name	Designation	Organization name	Organization address	Contact info
1					

Part B: Organizational Information

General Information

- 1) Could you tell us briefly about your organization?
 - a) What sector do you operate in?
 - b) What are your roles and responsibilities?
- 2) Does your business utilize temperature-controlled logistics services?
 - a) In what part of your value chain do you utilize temperature-controlled logistics services?
 - b) How much do you spend on an annual basis on utilizing temperature-controlled logistics services?
- 3) Do you intend to invest in temperature-controlled logistics operations?
 - a) Could you share your objective and rationale for investing in temperature-controlled logistics?
 - b) What process/ next steps does your company have to go through to take and approve the decision to invest in temperature-controlled logistics operations?
 - c) Is there any specific market you want to serve? How is the potential target group selected?

Required Support (For BTF assisted organizations)

- 1) What was the nature of the assistance offered by BTF?
 - a) Did BTF engage with your organization as per the commitment? Was the engagement satisfactory?
 - b) What kind of concrete output did you gain from BTF's assistance? **Probe: Pre-feasibility study, Feasibility study, Site assessment, etc.**
 - c) Did the output help you to make any business decisions? Please elaborate.
 - d) Did you receive any training or attend any events from the BTF project? What were the outcomes of these training/events?
- 2) What were the impacts of BTF assistance on your temperature-controlled logistics business vision?
- 3) Following BTF intervention, what kind of progress have you made in enhancing/ establishing cold chain facilities? What are they?
- 4) What are your future plans when it comes to investment in temperature-controlled logistics? Are you getting the support required from BTF to go through with this plan? Could you elaborate?
 - a) If you decide not to invest in TCL, what are the likely reasons? (Probe: macro/micro economic situation, other issues)
- 5) What other macro risks do you foresee in the growth of the TCL sector in Bangladesh?

Set 5.2: KII Checklist for Cold Chain Association

Study Background:

The Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project (BTF) is a five-year initiative launched on October 1, 2020. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and implemented by Venture37 and its partners, BTF is dedicated to enhancing regional and international trade in agricultural goods. The project activities will strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh to comply with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, particularly focusing on Category C measures, including test procedures, risk management, handling perishable goods, and managing trade formalities.

The midterm evaluation of the BTF (Bangladesh Trade Facilitation) project serves to measure the project's short-term progress towards achieving key indicators while evaluating the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to the project's efforts. The study will guide to find actionable recommendations to enhance project performance, efficiency, and sustainability. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project, and the evaluation shall benefit from a discussion with you. We have prepared a questionnaire to guide the discussion.

This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this survey?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Respondent Information

Sl	Name	Designation	Organization name	Organization address	Contact info
1					

1. Can you provide an overview of your organization's involvement with agricultural trade?
2. What role do your members play in agricultural trade? Import, export, both?
3. Have you heard of the Bangladesh Trade Facilitation project? Has there been any intervention by the BTF project which has affected/will affect your member organizations in a significant manner? Please elaborate.
4. Has there been any improvement in the time-cost-process requirement of agricultural export-import over the course of the last three years? In your opinion, what changes are must-to-have but nobody is addressing yet?

BTF Activity-wise Question

Activity 1- Increase harmonization of processes, formalities, and pre-clearance processing

1. Which government agencies govern the regulatory framework of your members' agricultural trade activities? Can you identify any legislative reform within those agency/agencies that happened in the last three years that has positively affected the agricultural trade?
2. Are you aware of Bangladesh commitment and timeline of WTO-TFA?
3. Is there any process or regulation within your relevant government agency that hampers your members' efficiency in agricultural export/import?
4. How often do your association members get their export consignments rejected? What might be the contributing factor behind rejections? How do you get notification of the rejection of a consignment?
5. From which sources do you/your members usually collect trade related information? Are There any difficulties to access the required information? How can these difficulties be streamlined?
6. Have you ever heard of the Agro-trade working group under the National Trade and Transport Facilitation Committee? Has this working group been effective in addressing your concerns?
7. Have you observed any change in terms of automating the issuing process of certificates, permits, licenses and other government approvals recently? Are your members aware of such automated systems? Are they facing any barrier in using such systems?

Activity 2- Increase transparency of trade information and WTO notification compliance

1. How would you rate your members' overall awareness of requisite forms and procedures for importing/exporting agricultural/agro-processed goods? Which government portal are usually used by your members?
2. Are the members of your organization aware of the WTO notification system? Do they use the national enquiry point? If not, how do they access information regarding new trade related regulatory measures and how do they provide feedback on the proposed regulatory measures?
3. What recommendations do you have to increase transparency of trade information and WTO notification compliance of Bangladeshi agro-traders?

Activity 3- Strengthen Risk Management Systems

1. BTF is working with agro trade related GoB agencies to develop automated risk management systems for international trade of agro products. In your view, how will establishing risk management systems benefit or harm the international trade business of your members of your organization? Please elaborate your answer?

Activity 4- Improve Laboratories and Testing Procedures

1. Do the members of your organization face any difficulties in obtaining services from government labs? What are those? What is your recommendation to overcome those difficulties?
2. Do the members of your organization seek private labs for better service delivery? Please elaborate on the reasons.
3. BTF is assisting some labs to avail ISO/IEC 17025 certification. What tangible benefits and improvements will traders experience because of the ISO certification of the laboratory?
4. BTF is assisting some labs to automate their laboratory information management system. What tangible benefits and improvements will traders experience because of the automation of the laboratory services?

Set 5.3: Survey Questionnaire for Agro-traders

বাংলাদেশ ট্রেড ফ্যাসিলিটেশন (বিটিএফ) প্রকল্পের মিডটার্ম ইভালুয়েশনের জন্য জরিপের প্রশ্নপত্র

আমদানি-রপ্তানি ব্যবসার সাথে জড়িত ব্যবসায়ীদের মতামত নেয়ার জন্য ব্যবহার করা হবে।

স্ট্যান্ডি ব্যাকগ্রাউন্ড

বাংলাদেশে কৃষি পণ্যের আমদানি-রপ্তানি ত্বরান্বিত করার উদ্দেশ্যে মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের কৃষি বিভাগ (ইউএসডিএ) এর অর্থায়নে বাংলাদেশ ট্রেড ফ্যাসিলিটেশন প্রজেক্ট (বিটিএফ) ২০২০ সালের ১ অক্টোবর যাত্রা শুরু করে। পাঁচ বছর মেয়াদী এই প্রকল্পটি Venture37 দ্বারা বাস্তবায়িত হচ্ছে। World Trade Organization (WTO) এর ট্রেড ফেসিলিটেশন এগ্রিমেন্ট (টিএফএ) এর ক্যাটেগরি সি মেইজারস এর অন্তর্গত টেস্ট প্রসিডিওর, রিস্ক ম্যানেজমেন্ট, পচনশীল পণ্য পরিচালনা এবং ট্রেড ফর্মালিটি পরিচালনার উপর ফোকাস করার মাধ্যমে এই প্রকল্পের কার্যক্রমগুলো বাংলাদেশের ট্রেড ফেসিলিটেশন এগ্রিমেন্ট মেনে চলার সক্ষমতা আরো জোরদার করবে, যার প্রধান সুফলভোগী হবেন রফতানিকারক, আমদানিকারক এবং সিএন্ডএফ এজেন্ট।

জরিপের উদ্দেশ্য

এই জরিপটি রফতানিকারক, আমদানিকারক এবং সিএন্ডএফ (ক্লিয়ারিং এবং ফরওয়ার্ডিং) এজেন্টদের কাছ থেকে এগ্রো-ট্রেড বিষয়ক মূল্যবান তথ্য সংগ্রহের জন্য ডিজাইন করা হয়েছে। এই ইভালুয়েশন স্ট্যান্ডার লক্ষ্য হল বিটিএফ প্রকল্পের স্বল্পমেয়াদী অগ্রগতি পরিমাপ করা এবং একই সাথে প্রকল্পের কার্যকারিতা এবং স্থায়িত্ব বাড়ানোর লক্ষ্যে কার্যকর রেকোমেন্ডেশন উপস্থাপন করা।

এই প্রকল্পের একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ স্টেকহোল্ডার হিসেবে আপনাকে এই জরিপে অনশগ্রহণ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করছি। এই প্রশ্নপত্রটি সম্পূর্ণ করতে আপনার প্রায় ২০-২৫ মিনিট এর মত সময় লাগবে। জরিপে আপনার দেওয়া তথ্যের গোপনীয়তা নিশ্চিত করা হবে, এবং শুধুমাত্র প্রকল্পের ইভালুয়েশনের উদ্দেশ্যে প্রাপ্ত তথ্য ব্যবহার করা হবে। এই জরিপে অংশগ্রহণের সাথে আপনার কোনো প্রকার ক্ষতি হওয়ার সম্ভাবনা নেই। আপনার যদি কোনও প্রশ্ন থাকে তবে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে জিজ্ঞাসা করতে দ্বিধা করবেন না।

প্রকল্পের বিস্তারিত তথ্য এবং জরিপটি সম্পর্কে আরও জানতে যোগাযোগ করুন,

ইমেল: hello@inspira-bd.com

ফোন: ০১৮১৭-৭৫৯৭২৮

আপনি কি এই জরিপে অংশ নিতে সম্মত?

☐ হ্যাঁ

☐ না

যদি হ্যাঁ হয়, তাহলে শুরু করা যাক!

অংশ A: উত্তরদাতার তথ্য

ক্রম	নাম	পদবী	যোগাযোগের তথ্য	অভিজ্ঞতা/ চাকরির সময়কাল
1				
2				

অংশ B: প্রতিষ্ঠান সম্পর্কিত তথ্য

সেকশন B.1: প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রোফাইল

ক্রম	সাধারণ তথ্য	
B.1.1	প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম	
B.1.2	অনুগ্রহ করে ব্যবসার ধরণ নির্দিষ্ট করুন (একাধিক বাছাই করতে পারবেন)	<input type="checkbox"/> আমদানি <input type="checkbox"/> রপ্তানি <input type="checkbox"/> সিএন্ডএফ এজেন্ট
B.1.3	আমদানি-রপ্তানি ব্যবসায়ের অভিজ্ঞতা	
B.1.4	আপনি কোন কোন দেশে কৃষিপণ্য রপ্তানি করেন? (একাধিক বাছাই করতে পারবেন)	<input type="checkbox"/> মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র <input type="checkbox"/> ইউরোপিয় ইউনিয়ন দেশ <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দয়া করে নির্দিষ্ট করুন)
B.1.5	আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠানে বর্তমানে কতজন লোক কর্মরত আছেন?	<input type="checkbox"/> ১৫ জন (মাইক্রো) <input type="checkbox"/> ১৬-৫০ জন (ছোট) <input type="checkbox"/> ৫১-১২০ জন (মাঝারি) <input type="checkbox"/> >১২০ জন (বড়)
B.1.6	আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠানের কি ISO সার্টিফিকেশন আছে?	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ (সার্টিফিকেশন ক্যাটেগরি উল্লেখ করুন) <input type="checkbox"/> না <input type="checkbox"/> আপডেট করা হয় নি
	যদি আপডেট করা না হয়, কেনো? দয়া	

	করে বিস্তারিত বলুন।	
বিটিএফ প্রকল্পের কার্যক্রম সংক্রান্ত তথ্য		
B.1.7	আপনি বা আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠানের কেউ কি বিটিএফ কর্তৃক আয়জিত কোন ইভেন্টে (যেমন, সেমিনার, কর্মশালা) অংশগ্রহণ করেছিলেন?	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না
	যদি হ্যাঁ হয়, তাহলে আপনি কোন ইভেন্টগুলোতে অংশগ্রহণ করেছিলেন এবং কোন বছর এই ইভেন্টগুলি সংঘটিত হয়েছিল?	1..... ... 2..... .. 3..... ..
	যদি হ্যাঁ হয়, তবে ইভেন্টগুলি থেকে আপনি কীভাবে উপকৃত হয়েছেন?	

সেকশন B.2: কৃষিপণ্য রফতানি-আমদানির জন্য ব্যবহৃত বন্দর।

বন্দর (পোর্টের) ধরন	পোর্টের নাম		কৃষি পণ্য আমদানি-রপ্তানি ব্যবসায়ের %
	রপ্তানি	আমদানি	
সমুদ্রবন্দর			
বিমানবন্দর			

স্থলবন্দর			

সেকশন B.3: কৃষিপণ্যের তথ্য

B.3.1 আপনি / আপনার ক্লায়েন্ট সাধারণত কোন ধরনের কৃষিপণ্যের বাণিজ্য করেন?

রপ্তানি	দয়া করে শীর্ষ ৩ টি পণ্যের নাম উল্লেখ করুন
<input type="checkbox"/> উদ্ভিদ এবং উদ্ভিদজাত পণ্য	
<input type="checkbox"/> পশুজাত পণ্য	
<input type="checkbox"/> প্রক্রিয়াজাত খাদ্য	
<input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য	
আমদানি	দয়া করে শীর্ষ ৩ টি পণ্যের নাম উল্লেখ করুন
<input type="checkbox"/> উদ্ভিদ এবং উদ্ভিদজাত পণ্য	
<input type="checkbox"/> পশুজাত পণ্য	
<input type="checkbox"/> প্রক্রিয়াজাত খাদ্য	
<input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য	

B.3.2 আপনি/আপনার ক্লায়েন্ট কোন কৃষি পণ্যগুলো একটি নির্দিষ্ট দেশ থেকে বছরে সবচেয়ে বেশি আমদানি করেন?

ক্রম	পণ্যের নাম	ফ্রিকুয়েন্সি (১ বছরে)
১		
২		
৩		
৪		
B.3.3 প্রতিটি আমদানিকৃত চালান ইন্সপেকশন করতে কাস্টমস এবং অন্যান্য সংশ্লিষ্ট এজেন্সির কত সময় লাগে?		

অংশ C: আমদানি-রপ্তানি বাণিজ্যের অভিজ্ঞতা

C.1.1 আপনি কি গত ৩ বছরে আমদানি-রপ্তানি বাণিজ্য পরিচালনায় কোনও চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হয়েছেন?	
<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	
যদি হ্যাঁ হয় তবে দয়া করে উল্লেখযোগ্য চ্যালেঞ্জগুলির উল্লেখ করুন।	
সাধারণ চ্যালেঞ্জ	মার্কেট এক্সপানশন চ্যালেঞ্জ
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
C.1.2 আপনি কি নিচের কনসেপ্টগুলোর সাথে পরিচিত? (একাধিক বাছাই করতে পারবেন)	<input type="checkbox"/> কন্সাইনমেন্ট রিলিজের জন্য রিস্ক বেইস্‌ড সিলেক্টিভ এসেসমেন্ট <input type="checkbox"/> এডভান্সড রুলিং <input type="checkbox"/> রপ্তানির প্রি-এরাইভাল প্রসেসিং <input type="checkbox"/> আমদানির প্রি-এরাইভাল প্রসেসিং <input type="checkbox"/> কোনটিই নয়

<p>C.1.3 "কন্সাইনমেন্ট রিলিজের জন্য রিস্ক বেইস্‌ড সিলেক্টিভ এসেসমেন্ট" এই কনসেপ্টটি সম্পর্কে আপনি কোথায় থেকে জেনেছেন?</p>	
<p>C.1.4 গত এক বছরে (সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২২- সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৩) আপনি কতবার এই সার্ভিসগুলো ব্যবহার করেছেন?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> এডভান্সড রুলিং.....</p> <p>...</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> রপ্তানির প্রি-এরাইভাল প্রসেসিং.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> আমদানির প্রি-এরাইভাল প্রসেসিং.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> কখনও না</p>
<p>যদি "কখনও না" হয়, তাহলে কি কারণে সার্ভিসগুলো ব্যবহার করেন নি? দয়া করে ব্যাখ্যাসহ উত্তর দিন।</p>	

সেকশন C.2: সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের সাথে অভিজ্ঞতা

C.2.1: কোন সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠান থেকে আপনি আপনার কৃষি-পণ্যের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় সিএলপিও নিয়ে থাকেন?

C.2.2: থেকে প্রাপ্ত সেবাগুলো কি?

C.2.3: থেকে অনুরোধ করা পরিষেবা(গুলি) পেতে কত সময় লাগে?

C.2.4: এ পরিষেবা(গুলি) অনুরোধ করার আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া কী?

C.2.5: থেকে ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহের প্রক্রিয়া কি?

C.2.6: এর কি এন্ট্রি/এক্সিট পয়েন্টে প্রয়োজনীয় সকল সিএলপিও ইস্যু করার সক্ষমতা রয়েছে?

C.2.7: আপনার মতো ব্যবসায়ী/এজেন্টদের সাথে ট্রেড সার্ভিস, ক্যাপাসিটি, বা আইন সংক্রান্ত সমস্যা অথবা চ্যেলঞ্জগুলো দূর করার জন্য কি পরামর্শ করেন?

C.2.8: এ অগ্রিম প্রক্রিয়াকরণের জন্য কৃষি-পণ্যের প্রি-এরাইভাল তথ্য গ্রহণের প্রক্রিয়া টি কী?

C.2.9: থেকে গৃহীত সার্ভিসে আপনি কেমন সন্তুষ্ট?

প্রতিষ্ঠান (C.2.1)	প্রাপ্ত সেবা (C.2.2)	সেবার সময় (ঘন্টা) (C.2.3)	আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া (C.2.4)	ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহণ প্রক্রিয়া (C.2.5)	প্রয়োজনীয় সকল সিএলপিও ইস্যু করার সক্ষমতা রয়েছে (C.2.6)	ব্যবসায়ী/এজেন্টদের সাথে পরামর্শ করেন (C.2.7)	অগ্রিম প্রক্রিয়াকরণের জন্য প্রি-এরাইভাল তথ্য গ্রহণের প্রক্রিয়া (C.2.8)	গৃহীত সার্ভিসের সন্তুষ্টি (C.2.9)
<input type="checkbox"/> PQW	<input type="checkbox"/> লাইসেন্স <input type="checkbox"/> পারমিটের (IP, EP) <input type="checkbox"/> সার্টিফিকেশন (যেমনঃ PC, NOC) <input type="checkbox"/> রিলিজ অর্ডার (RO) <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (নির্দিষ্ট করুন).....		<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> নিয়মিত (বছরে 2+ বার) <input type="checkbox"/> মাঝেমধ্যে (বছরে একবার) <input type="checkbox"/> খুবই কম (কেয়েক বছরে একবার) <input type="checkbox"/> কখনও না	<input type="checkbox"/> স্বয়ংক্রিয় <input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত <input type="checkbox"/> প্রযোজ্য নয়	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট
<input type="checkbox"/> DoF	<input type="checkbox"/> লাইসেন্স <input type="checkbox"/> পারমিটের (IP, EP) <input type="checkbox"/> সার্টিফিকেশন (যেমনঃ PC, NOC) <input type="checkbox"/> রিলিজ অর্ডার (RO) <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (নির্দিষ্ট করুন).....		<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> নিয়মিত (বছরে 2+ বার) <input type="checkbox"/> মাঝেমধ্যে (বছরে একবার) <input type="checkbox"/> খুবই কম (কেয়েক বছরে একবার) <input type="checkbox"/> কখনও না	<input type="checkbox"/> স্বয়ংক্রিয় <input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত <input type="checkbox"/> প্রযোজ্য নয়	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট
<input type="checkbox"/> BFSI	<input type="checkbox"/> লাইসেন্স <input type="checkbox"/> পারমিটের (IP, EP) <input type="checkbox"/> সার্টিফিকেশন (যেমনঃ PC, NOC) <input type="checkbox"/> রিলিজ অর্ডার (RO) <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (নির্দিষ্ট করুন).....		<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> নিয়মিত (বছরে 2+ বার) <input type="checkbox"/> মাঝেমধ্যে (বছরে একবার) <input type="checkbox"/> খুবই কম (কেয়েক বছরে একবার) <input type="checkbox"/> কখনও না	<input type="checkbox"/> স্বয়ংক্রিয় <input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত <input type="checkbox"/> প্রযোজ্য নয়	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট

প্রতিষ্ঠান (C.2.1)	প্রাপ্ত সেবা (C.2.2)	সেবার সময় (ঘন্টা) (C.2.3)	আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া (C.2.4)	ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহণ প্রক্রিয়া (C.2.5)	প্রয়োজনীয় সকল সিএলপিও ইস্যু করার সক্ষমতা রয়েছে (C.2.6)	ব্যবসায়ী/এজেন্টদের সাথে পরামর্শ করেন (C.2.7)	অগ্রিম প্রক্রিয়াকরণের জন্য প্রি-এরাইভাল তথ্য গ্রহণের প্রক্রিয়া (C.2.8)	গৃহীত সার্ভিসের সন্তুষ্টি (C.2.9)
							
<input type="checkbox"/> BSTI	<input type="checkbox"/> লাইসেন্স <input type="checkbox"/> পারমিটের (IP, EP) <input type="checkbox"/> সার্টিফিকেশন (যেমনঃ PC, NOC) <input type="checkbox"/> রিলিজ অর্ডার (RO) <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (নির্দিষ্ট করুন).....		<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> নিয়মিত (বছরে 2+ বার) <input type="checkbox"/> মাঝেমাঝে (বছরে একবার) <input type="checkbox"/> খুবই কম (কেয়েক বছরে একবার) <input type="checkbox"/> কখনও না	<input type="checkbox"/> স্বয়ংক্রিয় <input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত <input type="checkbox"/> প্রযোজ্য নয়	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট
<input type="checkbox"/> DLS	<input type="checkbox"/> লাইসেন্স <input type="checkbox"/> পারমিটের (IP, EP) <input type="checkbox"/> সার্টিফিকেশন (যেমনঃ PC, NOC) <input type="checkbox"/> রিলিজ অর্ডার (RO) <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (নির্দিষ্ট করুন).....		<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> নিয়মিত (বছরে 2+ বার) <input type="checkbox"/> মাঝেমাঝে (বছরে একবার) <input type="checkbox"/> খুবই কম (কেয়েক বছরে একবার) <input type="checkbox"/> কখনও না	<input type="checkbox"/> স্বয়ংক্রিয় <input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত <input type="checkbox"/> প্রযোজ্য নয়	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট

প্রতিষ্ঠান (C.2.1)	প্রাপ্ত সেবা (C.2.2)	সেবার সময় (ঘন্টা) (C.2.3)	আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া (C.2.4)	ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহণ প্রক্রিয়া (C.2.5)	প্রয়োজনীয় সকল সিএলপিও ইস্যু করার সক্ষমতা রয়েছে (C.2.6)	ব্যবসায়ী/এজেন্টদের সাথে পরামর্শ করেন (C.2.7)	অগ্রিম প্রক্রিয়াকরণের জন্য প্রি-এরাইভাল তথ্য গ্রহণের প্রক্রিয়া (C.2.8)	গৃহীত সার্ভিসের সন্তুষ্টি (C.2.9)
<input type="checkbox"/> BAEC	<input type="checkbox"/> লাইসেন্স <input type="checkbox"/> পারমিটের (IP, EP) <input type="checkbox"/> সার্টিফিকেশন (যেমনঃ PC, NOC) <input type="checkbox"/> রিলিজ অর্ডার (RO) <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (নির্দিষ্ট করুন)..... <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> নিয়মিত (বছরে 2+ বার) <input type="checkbox"/> মাঝেমাঝে (বছরে একবার) <input type="checkbox"/> খুবই কম (কেয়েক বছরে একবার) <input type="checkbox"/> কখনও না	<input type="checkbox"/> স্বয়ংক্রিয় <input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> মিশ্রিত <input type="checkbox"/> প্রয়োজ্য নয়	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট

C.2.10 আপনি ট্রেডিং করছেন এমন পণ্যের স্যাম্পল রিজেক্ট হওয়ার গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তিনটি কারণ কী কী?		
ক্রম	আমদানি	রপ্তানি
1		
2		
3		

C.2.11 আপনি যে চালানটি (কন্সাইনমেন্ট) ট্রেড করছেন তা রিজেক্ট হওয়ার গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তিনটি কারণ কী কী?	
1	
2	
3	

সেকশন C3: ট্রেড এবং WTO নোটিফিকেশন সম্পর্কিত তথ্য

C.3.1 এগ্রো-ট্রেড এবং টেস্টিং প্রসিডিওর সম্পর্কিত সমস্ত তথ্য আপনি কোন উৎস থেকে সংগ্রহ করেন?	<input type="checkbox"/> সংশ্লিষ্ট সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের ওয়েবসাইট <input type="checkbox"/> বাংলাদেশ ট্রেড পোর্টাল <input type="checkbox"/> ন্যাশনাল এনকোয়ারি পয়েন্ট ফর কাস্টমস (NEP for customs) <input type="checkbox"/> ন্যাশনাল এনকোয়ারি পয়েন্ট ফর ট্রেড (NEP for trade) <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দয়া করে উল্লেখ করুন).....
যদি সংশ্লিষ্ট সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের ওয়েবসাইট হয়, কোন সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের ওয়েবসাইট নির্দিষ্ট করুন।	<input type="checkbox"/> PQW <input type="checkbox"/> DoF <input type="checkbox"/> BFSA <input type="checkbox"/> BSTI <input type="checkbox"/> DLS <input type="checkbox"/> BAEC
C.3.2 আপনি কি WTO নোটিফিকেশন সিস্টেম সম্পর্কে অবগত?	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না

যদি হ্যাঁ হয়, তাহলে এই নোটিফিকেশন সিস্টেম আপনার ব্যবসাকে কিভাবে প্রভাবিত করে? (দয়া করে বিস্তারিত বলুন)	
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অংশ D: ল্যাব অভিজ্ঞতা

সেকশন D.1: সরকারি ল্যাব অভিজ্ঞতা

- D.1.1: কোন সরকারি ল্যাব(গুলি) থেকে আপনি আপনার কৃষি-পণ্যের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় টেস্ট সার্টিফিকেট নিয়ে থাকেন?
- D.1.2: টেস্টের নাম এবং প্যারামিটারগুলো কি কি?
- D.1.3: টেস্টের জন্য আপনার কৃষি পণ্যের নমুনা কে সংগ্রহ করে?
- D.1.4: ল্যাব থেকে টেস্টের পরিষেবা(গুলি) অনুরোধ করার আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া কী?
- D.1.5: ল্যাব থেকে টেস্ট ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহের প্রক্রিয়া কি?
- D.1.6: ল্যাব থেকে অনুরোধ করা পরিষেবা(গুলি) পেতে কত সময় লাগে?
- D.1.7: ল্যাবের কি এন্ট্রি/ এক্সিট পয়েন্টগুলোতে প্রয়োজনীয় সকল সার্টিফিকেট ইস্যু করার সক্ষমতা রয়েছে?
- D.1.8: পচনশীল পণ্য পরীক্ষা করার জন্য ল্যাবে কি পর্যাপ্ত কোল্ড স্টোরেজ সুবিধা আছে?
- D.1.9: ল্যাব থেকে গৃহীত সার্ভিসে আপনি কেমন সন্তুষ্ট?

ল্যাব (D.1.1)	টেস্টের নাম এবং প্যারামিটার (D.1.2)	নমুনা সংগ্রহণ পদ্ধতি (D.1.3)	আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া (D.1.4)	টেস্ট ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহণ প্রক্রিয়া (D.1.5)	সেবার সময় (ঘন্টা) (D.1.6)	প্রয়োজনীয় সকল সার্টিফিকেট ইস্যু করার সক্ষমতা রয়েছে (D.1.7)	ল্যাবগুলিতে পর্যাপ্ত কোল্ড স্টোরেজ সুবিধার প্রাপ্যতা (D.1.8)	গৃহীত সার্ভিসের সন্তুষ্টি (D.1.9)
<input type="checkbox"/> Lab-AEC, Dhaka		<input type="checkbox"/> আমদানিকারক/ রফতানিকারক <input type="checkbox"/> সি এন্ড এফ এজেন্ট <input type="checkbox"/> ল্যাব প্রতিনিধি <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দয়া করে উল্লেখ করুন).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড		<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না <input type="checkbox"/> কিছুটা	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট
<input type="checkbox"/> Lab-AEC, Chattogram		<input type="checkbox"/> আমদানিকারক/ রফতানিকারক <input type="checkbox"/> সি এন্ড এফ এজেন্ট <input type="checkbox"/> ল্যাব প্রতিনিধি <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দয়া করে উল্লেখ করুন).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড		<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না <input type="checkbox"/> কিছুটা	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট

ল্যাব (D.1.1)	টেস্টের নাম এবং প্যারামিটার (D.1.2)	নমুনা সংগ্রহণ পদ্ধতি (D.1.3)	আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া (D.1.4)	টেস্ট ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহণ প্রক্রিয়া (D.1.5)	সেবার সময় (ঘন্টা) (D.1.6)	প্রয়োজনীয় সকল সার্টিফিকেট ইস্যু করার সক্ষমতা রয়েছে (D.1.7)	ল্যাবগুলিতে পর্যাপ্ত কোন্ড স্টোরেজ সুবিধার প্রাপ্যতা (D.1.8)	গৃহীত সার্ভিসের সন্তুষ্টি (D.1.9)
<input type="checkbox"/> QC Lab-DLS, Dhaka		<input type="checkbox"/> আমদানিকারক/ রফতানিকারক <input type="checkbox"/> সি এন্ড এফ এজেন্ট <input type="checkbox"/> ল্যাব প্রতিনিধি <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দয়া করে উল্লেখ করুন).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড		<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না <input type="checkbox"/> কিছুটা	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট
<input type="checkbox"/> QC Lab-DoF, Chattogram		<input type="checkbox"/> আমদানিকারক/ রফতানিকারক <input type="checkbox"/> সি এন্ড এফ এজেন্ট <input type="checkbox"/> ল্যাব প্রতিনিধি <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দয়া করে উল্লেখ করুন).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড		<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না <input type="checkbox"/> কিছুটা	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট

ল্যাব (D.1.1)	টেস্টের নাম এবং প্যারামিটার (D.1.2)	নমুনা সংগ্রহণ পদ্ধতি (D.1.3)	আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া (D.1.4)	টেস্ট ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহণ প্রক্রিয়া (D.1.5)	সেবার সময় (ঘন্টা) (D.1.6)	প্রয়োজনীয় সকল সার্টিফিকেট ইস্যু করার সক্ষমতা রয়েছে (D.1.7)	ল্যাবগুলিতে পর্যাপ্ত কোন্ড স্টোরেজ সুবিধার প্রাপ্যতা (D.1.8)	গৃহীত সার্ভিসের সন্তুষ্টি (D.1.9)
<input type="checkbox"/> QC Lab-DoF, Dhaka		<input type="checkbox"/> আমদানিকারক/ রফতানিকারক <input type="checkbox"/> সি এন্ড এফ এজেন্ট <input type="checkbox"/> ল্যাব প্রতিনিধি <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দয়া করে উল্লেখ করুন).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড		<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না <input type="checkbox"/> কিছুটা	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট
<input type="checkbox"/> QC Lab-DoF, Khulna		<input type="checkbox"/> আমদানিকারক/ রফতানিকারক <input type="checkbox"/> সি এন্ড এফ এজেন্ট <input type="checkbox"/> ল্যাব প্রতিনিধি <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দয়া করে উল্লেখ করুন).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড		<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না <input type="checkbox"/> কিছুটা	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট

ল্যাব (D.1.1)	টেস্টের নাম এবং প্যারামিটার (D.1.2)	নমুনা সংগ্রহণ পদ্ধতি (D.1.3)	আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া (D.1.4)	টেস্ট ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহণ প্রক্রিয়া (D.1.5)	সেবার সময় (ঘন্টা) (D.1.6)	প্রয়োজনীয় সকল সার্টিফিকেট ইস্যু করার সক্ষমতা রয়েছে (D.1.7)	ল্যাবগুলিতে পর্যাপ্ত কোল্ড স্টোরেজ সুবিধার প্রাপ্যতা (D.1.8)	গৃহীত সার্ভিসের সন্তুষ্টি (D.1.9)
<input type="checkbox"/> Lab-CDIL, DLS		<input type="checkbox"/> আমদানিকারক/ রফতানিকারক <input type="checkbox"/> সি এন্ড এফ এজেন্ট <input type="checkbox"/> ল্যাব প্রতিনিধি <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দয়া করে উল্লেখ করুন).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড		<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না <input type="checkbox"/> কিছুটা	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট
<input type="checkbox"/> CPQ Lab- PQW-DAE		<input type="checkbox"/> আমদানিকারক/ রফতানিকারক <input type="checkbox"/> সি এন্ড এফ এজেন্ট <input type="checkbox"/> ল্যাব প্রতিনিধি <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দয়া করে উল্লেখ করুন).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড		<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না <input type="checkbox"/> কিছুটা	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট

ল্যাব (D.1.1)	টেস্টের নাম এবং প্যারামিটার (D.1.2)	নমুনা সংগ্রহণ পদ্ধতি (D.1.3)	আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া (D.1.4)	টেস্ট ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহণ প্রক্রিয়া (D.1.5)	সেবার সময় (ঘন্টা) (D.1.6)	প্রয়োজনীয় সকল সার্টিফিকেট ইস্যু করার সক্ষমতা রয়েছে (D.1.7)	ল্যাবগুলিতে পর্যাপ্ত কোন্ড স্টোরেজ সুবিধার প্রাপ্যতা (D.1.8)	গৃহীত সার্ভিসের সন্তুষ্টি (D.1.9)
<input type="checkbox"/> Lab-PQW, Chattogram Seaport		<input type="checkbox"/> আমদানিকারক/ রফতানিকারক <input type="checkbox"/> সি এন্ড এফ এজেন্ট <input type="checkbox"/> ল্যাব প্রতিনিধি <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দয়া করে উল্লেখ করুন).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড		<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না <input type="checkbox"/> কিছুটা	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট
<input type="checkbox"/> Lab-PRTC		<input type="checkbox"/> আমদানিকারক/ রফতানিকারক <input type="checkbox"/> সি এন্ড এফ এজেন্ট <input type="checkbox"/> ল্যাব প্রতিনিধি <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দয়া করে উল্লেখ করুন).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড		<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না <input type="checkbox"/> কিছুটা	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট

ল্যাব (D.1.1)	টেস্টের নাম এবং প্যারামিটার (D.1.2)	নমুনা সংগ্রহণ পদ্ধতি (D.1.3)	আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া (D.1.4)	টেস্ট ডকুমেন্ট সংগ্রহণ প্রক্রিয়া (D.1.5)	সেবার সময় (ঘন্টা) (D.1.6)	প্রয়োজনীয় সকল সার্টিফিকেট ইস্যু করার সক্ষমতা রয়েছে (D.1.7)	ল্যাবগুলিতে পর্যাপ্ত কোল্ড স্টোরেজ সুবিধার প্রাপ্যতা (D.1.8)	গৃহীত সার্ভিসের সন্তুষ্টি (D.1.9)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other govt. lab(s) (specify).....		<input type="checkbox"/> আমদানিকারক/ রফতানিকারক <input type="checkbox"/> সি এন্ড এফ এজেন্ট <input type="checkbox"/> ল্যাব প্রতিনিধি <input type="checkbox"/> অন্যান্য (দেয়া করে উল্লেখ করুন).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড	<input type="checkbox"/> ম্যানুয়াল <input type="checkbox"/> ডিজিটাল <input type="checkbox"/> মিক্সড		<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না	<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না <input type="checkbox"/> কিছুটা	<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট

সেকশন D.2: অন্যান্য ল্যাব তথ্য

D.2.1 সরকারি ল্যাব ব্যতীত, আপনি কি কোন প্রাইভেট ল্যাব / টেস্টিং ফেসিলিটির সার্ভিস গ্রহণ করেন?			<input type="checkbox"/> হ্যাঁ <input type="checkbox"/> না
যদি হ্যাঁ হয় তবে দয়া করে ল্যাবগুলির বিবরণ, গৃহীত সার্ভিস এবং সেবা গ্রহণের কারণগুলি উল্লেখ করুন।			
ল্যাবের নাম	অর্জিত সেবা	কারণ	গৃহীত সার্ভিসের সন্তুষ্টি
			<input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> সন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> নিরপেক্ষ <input type="checkbox"/> অসন্তুষ্ট <input type="checkbox"/> অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট

জরিপকারির নাম: ফোন নম্বর: ইমেইল: তথ্য সংগ্রহের স্থান: স্বাক্ষর তারিখ
সুপারভাইজার এর নাম: স্বাক্ষর তারিখ

Set 6: Questionnaire for Donor Organizations

Set 6.1: KII Checklist for USDA Team

Introduction:

Inspira Advisory and Consulting Ltd has been entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the midterm evaluation of the Bangladesh Trade Facilitation (BTF) project, a crucial initiative designed to enhance trade of agricultural products in Bangladesh. This evaluation serves as a comprehensive tool, assessing the project's short-term progress towards achieving key indicators while evaluating the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to the project's efforts. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project. Your insights, experiences, and perspectives as significant stakeholders will guide us to find actionable recommendations and shape the project's future trajectory.

We have prepared a detailed questionnaire to guide our discussion. This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used

for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Respondent Information

Sl	Name	Designation	Organization name	Organization address	Contact info
1					

1. What has been your role in the BTF project?
2. What factors did you consider while finalizing/approving the key activities of the BTF project? Has there been any significant change in the project from preliminary design stage to actual implementation stage?
3. To what extent are the project strategy and activities aligned with the development goals, objectives and strategies of USDA and the Government of Bangladesh?
4. How would you evaluate the project's performance so far? What have been some of the key milestones that the project has achieved in the first three years? What are the key gaps and improvement areas?
5. What has been the perception of your BD counterparts (high officials from relevant line ministries) with regard to the contribution of this project in expanding agricultural trade in Bangladesh?
6. What would be your remarks on the general project management approach of the BTF implementation team? How well was the project managed?
7. Could the project allocate resources for different activities in an effective manner? To what degree has the project implemented activities/interventions within a planned budget? Is there any improvement area that can be addressed going forward?
8. Has there been any significant delay in implementing any project activity? Could the project implementation team plan the activities differently to ensure timely implementation?
9. Are you satisfied with the MEL approach of the project? Would you suggest change in any specific component within the MEL framework going forward?
10. What are some of the recurring/critical challenges that you foresee in achieving the project objectives going forward? How prepared is the BTF project to address these challenges?
11. Do you collaborate with other donors active in the agricultural trade landscape? Has there been any coordination challenge while working with different GoB counterparts who are recipients of assistance from multiple donors? How effectively is the BTF project managing this challenge?
12. In your experience, what models of collaboration among local and international actors and partners could have been more effective to expedite advocacy for major transformation (in line with legislative reforms, automation etc.) across the GoB agencies.

13. How do you assess the potential for sustainability/replicability of any activity under a project funded by you? Which project activities (of BTF project) and benefits are likely to be sustained beyond the project lifespan?

Set 6.2: KII Checklist for Other Donors

Introduction:

Inspira Advisory and Consulting Ltd has been entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the midterm evaluation of the Bangladesh Trade Facilitation (BTF) project, a crucial initiative designed to enhance trade of agricultural products in Bangladesh. This evaluation serves as a comprehensive tool, assessing the project's short-term progress towards achieving key indicators while evaluating the extent to which these achievements can be attributed to the project's efforts. We believe you are an important stakeholder of this project. Your insights, experiences, and perspectives as significant stakeholders will guide us to find actionable recommendations and shape the project's future trajectory.

We have prepared a detailed questionnaire to guide our discussion. This questionnaire should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation. We do not anticipate any risk associated with your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. Your participation in this interview is highly appreciated. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, let us begin!

Respondent Information

Sl	Name	Designation	Organization name	Organization address	Contact info
1					

Questions

- How is Bangladesh performing in terms of agricultural trade?
 - What have been the positive signs in the last couple of years?
 - What are the key hindrances/ challenges that you think are currently existing in the export and import agri-trade of Bangladesh?
 - What should be the priority areas to work in immediately in order to improve agri trade volume?
- Are you familiar with the work done by the Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Project? How would you rate the quality of the interventions that BTF project is undertaking?
- How far has Bangladesh progressed in terms of achieving the four category C measures (Test procedures, Risk Management, Perishable Goods and Formalities) related to the expansion of agricultural trade?
- To what extent has BTF project been able to strengthen the capacity of Bangladesh in achieving the above-mentioned category C measures under WTO TFA?

5. Do you collaborate with other donors active in the agricultural trade landscape? Has there been any coordination challenge while working with different GoB counterparts who are recipients of assistance from multiple donors? How effectively is the BTF project managing this challenge?
6. In your experience, what models of collaboration among local and international actors and partners could have been more effective to expedite advocacy for major transformation (in line with legislative reforms, automation etc.) across the GoB agencies?
7. How are you addressing (in your projects) some of the key challenges that the trade facilitation projects in BD are facing:

(The interviewer will share the challenges in a sequence after receiving inputs on each):

- Delays in responses and approval from the cooperating agencies (CAs),
- Frequent changes in the agency leadership,
- A dearth of proficient professionals possessing technical know-how in areas like regulatory reform and agricultural trade,
- Low intra and inter-agency coordination,
- Very slow process of reforms in legislative tools
- Sustainability of the interventions
- Duplications in development partner activities