



Q: Food Security? A: Trade Facilitation.



Making the link

Ensuring access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food to meet dietary needs should never be a pressing concern. Yet today, one in ten people around the world is experiencing hunger, an estimated nine million people die from starvation every year, and almost one-third of the global population - 2.3 billion people - endure food insecurity.

Population growth and increasing urbanisation only add greater urgency to ensuring food security needs are met in terms of food availability, accessibility, adequacy, acceptability and empowering people to make informed food choices.

And the impact of the so-called three Cs: Climate change, COVID-19, and Conflict make achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030 seem more unlikely than ever.

Growing more food is only one part of the journey from farm to fork - trade facilitation plays a vital role in ensuring that highly perishable goods make it to market in optimal condition. Reducing the time and cost of trade can mitigate deterioration and spoilage, while greater access to global markets may also encourage the transition from subsistence farming to surplus production.

How?

Trade facilitation makes trade work better by simplifying border processes. Excessive tariffs, non-tariff barriers, and complex customs procedures impede the flow of food products across borders, affecting availability, affordability, and discouraging production.

This is why policymakers must consider trade facilitation as part of their food security strategy.




Safe food should never see the DO NOT ENTER sign!

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development cites trade as an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction.

Trade can act as a buffer against local food shortages caused by factors such as extreme weather events and crop failures.

A well-functioning trade system ensures that in time of scarcity, affected regions can rely on imports to maintain food supply.

Alliance trade facilitation projects support food security by streamlining border processes.

 **Spoilage:** Digitalising paper-based procedures helps eliminate unnecessary delays, allowing fresh food to transit faster

 **Productivity:** Fewer hold-ups on imported inputs such as fertilisers stimulate agricultural production

 **Transparency:** Seamless systems provide predictability for agri-food traders, improving confidence in cross-border transactions

How the Alliance can help

The Alliance's public private partnership approach has a proven, reliable track record of bolstering food security, generating measurable impacts that are making a real difference to countries, businesses, and consumers.

Digitalisation, the lifeblood of Alliance projects, has helped transform the agri-food trading environment for many developing countries. Making trade more inclusive by reducing time and cost can also contribute to food security in many ways, including by strengthening plant health protection and consumer safety.

For example, replacing the manual, paper-based transmission of mandatory phytosanitary certificates with end-to-end electronic exchange reduces the risk of error, loss or fraud. Close-circuiting certification makes forgery or illegal alterations far more difficult, reducing the transmission of pests and diseases.

Related reforms, such as upgrading risk management systems lower the administrative burden on governments, enabling border officials to concentrate on higher-risk threats to the food chain.

Likewise, digital initiatives such as automating certification issuance, modernising sample food testing and supporting governments to provide transparent, up-to-date information on cross-border agri-food requirements all help to strengthen food security.

Case study



Senegal

Senegal's population has more than doubled over the past 30 years to almost 18 million people. The West African country relies heavily on imports of agricultural inputs and finished products to feed itself.

In 2022, the Alliance completed two complementary projects:

- Streamlining key import and export processes to bolster food security and increase export potential, especially for MSMEs
- Replacing complex, paper-based phytosanitary certification with a quick, accurate, low-cost electronic alternative



This new system has helped in pushing people to adapt themselves to digitalisation and it will save them time and cost. Also, electronic certification means we can improve our competitiveness with international trading partners.

Mamadou Ndiaye, Coordinator of the Association of Market Gardening Unions of Niayes (AUMN), Senegal

Digitalising key import processes means fewer trips to government offices, saving time and cost.

Introducing electronic phytosanitary certification promotes seamless exchange, reducing spoilage and waste while mitigating the risk of error, loss or fraud.

In Senegal, the Alliance encountered many stories of food security being undermined by missed planting seasons because of paperwork holding seed imports up at ports and of lower yields due to delays in processing fertiliser imports.

Alliance projects are helping to consign such avoidable occurrences to history.

About us

The Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation supports governments in developing countries in implementing the WTO TFA. Alliance projects bring together governments and businesses of all sizes as equal partners to deliver targeted trade reforms. By emphasising digitalisation and delivering other best practices, Alliance projects ultimately boost trade competitiveness and business conditions, which are key drivers of inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction.

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