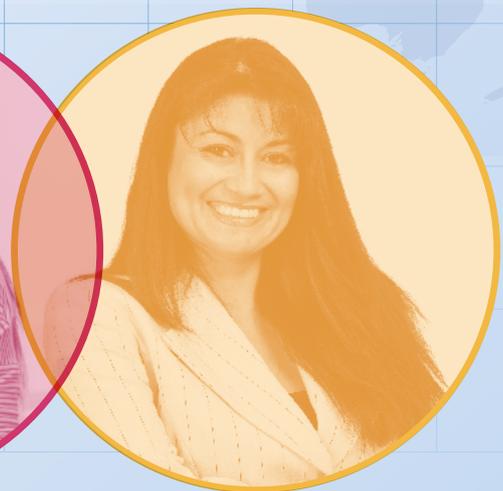




## WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS BRING SOLUTIONS TO RED TAPE CHALLENGES

### Three continents, similar issues



THE ABILITY TO SELL QUALITY PRODUCTS AT COMPETITIVE PRICES DOES NOT GUARANTEE WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS.

SEVERAL FACTORS COALESCE TO VIRTUALLY EXCLUDE WOMEN TRADERS, MOST OF THEM MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (MSMES).

To better understand the barriers that women-owned businesses face in moving goods across borders, the **Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (the Alliance)** and **WEConnect International** conducted workshops, coupled with a survey, involving women with trade experience in **Nigeria, Bangladesh and Guatemala**.

The objectives were two-fold:

1. Identify the main barriers to global trade for women-owned businesses
2. Discuss potential solutions

## WHO WE SPOKE TO

### Markets served across the world



### Industry sectors



MANUFACTURING 20%

AGRICULTURE 18%

TEXTILES 17%

IT 12%

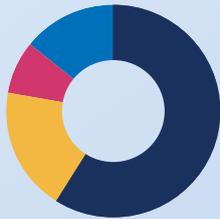
FOOD AND BEVERAGE 9%

SERVICES 9%

MEDICAL 6%

OTHER 9%

### Size of business by turnover



MICRO  
<US\$250K 59%

SMALL  
US\$250K-US\$500K 19%

MEDIUM  
US\$500K-US\$1M 8%

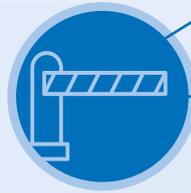
LARGE  
US\$1M+ 14%

**86%**  
Total for MSMEs

## MAIN CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

The participants in all three countries listed red tape among the biggest problems they had to overcome, including:

COMPLEX, INCONSISTENT CUSTOMS AND **BORDER CONTROLS**



Increases the cost of trade.

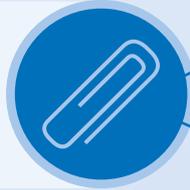
Particularly harmful for agri-food exporters, a sector with relatively high employment of women.

LACK OF **HARMONISATION AND SIMPLIFICATION**



Entails visits to several offices and multiple inspections. This has a **disproportionate impact on women-owned MSMEs, which are resource-strapped and time-poor.**

MANUAL, **PAPER-BASED, PRE-SHIPPING CERTIFICATION**



Lengthy wait times for customs clearance.

Complex processes to acquire necessary licences. In-person payment of duties and charges.

LACK OF **TRANSPARENCY IN PROCESSES**



**Fertile conditions for corruption - participants reported discrimination, with frequent demands for illicit payments.**

Services sector participants also reported having to make unofficial payments for access to cross-border trade.

LACK OF **INFORMATION ON TRADE REQUIREMENTS**



**MISCLASSIFICATION OF GOODS - PARTICULARLY EXPORTS OF SAMPLES NECESSARY TO WIN ORDERS**



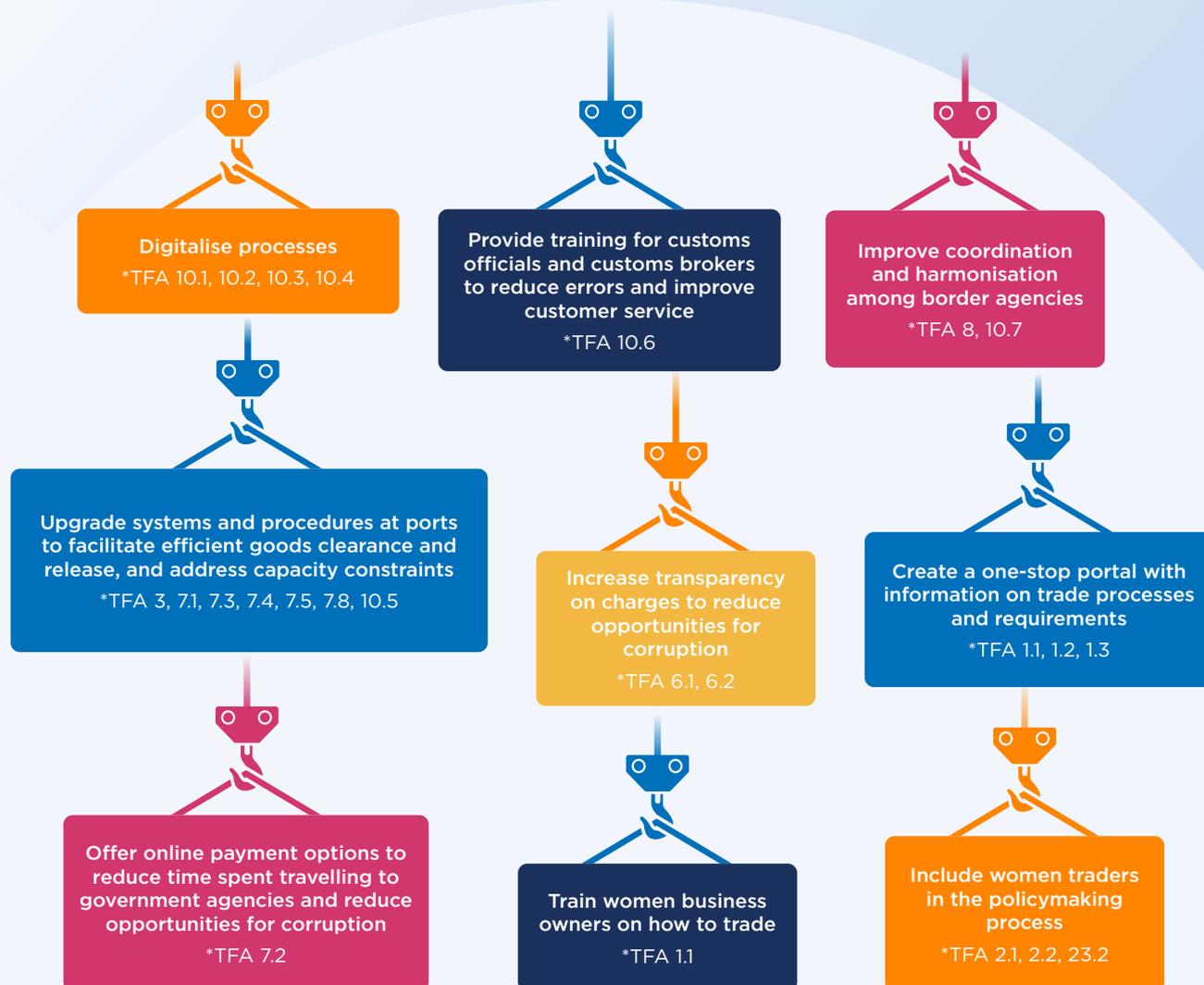
LACK OF **ACCESS TO BONDED WAREHOUSES DUE TO HIGH FINANCING REQUIREMENTS**



Women typically have less access to finance and are therefore often unable to provide the necessary sureties.

## ADDRESSING THE ISSUES

The women-owned businesses identified the following solutions which are all addressed by the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).



The Alliance is supporting the governments in partnership with their private sectors in all three countries to implement the TFA.



In **Nigeria**, the Alliance is addressing chronic delays at border controls in Lagos, including implementing some of the suggestions the women business owners articulated, such as simplifying processes and training border agency staff.



In **Bangladesh**, the Alliance is engaged in targeting a range of procedures for digitalisation at the busy Bhomra Land Port border crossing 60km from Kolkata, as well as providing training and raising awareness of the new services, with particular emphasis on improving the working environment for women.



In **Guatemala**, it is supporting efforts to automate arrival and departure processing at the country's four main ports. This digitalisation effort also involves the harmonisation of inter-agency procedures.



#### The Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation

is a public-private partnership for trade-led growth, supporting governments in developing and least-developed countries in implementing the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement. Alliance projects cut through red tape and end costly delays at borders by bringing together governments and businesses of all sizes as equal partners to deliver targeted trade reforms.

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**WEConnect International** is a member-led, global non-profit that brings motivated large buyers together with women-owned suppliers around the world. It works with over 150 multinational buyers, with more than \$1 trillion in combined annual purchasing power, that have committed to sourcing more products and services from women-owned businesses based in over 130 countries. WEConnect International identifies, educates, registers and certifies women's business enterprises based outside of the U.S. that are at least 51% owned, managed and controlled by one or more women.

For more information, visit  
[www.WEConnectInternational.org](http://www.WEConnectInternational.org)

## ABOUT THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION

### HOST ORGANISATIONS



### IN COOPERATION WITH



### SUPPORTED BY

