Implementation Summary

Trade Facilitation for Regional Integration in Central America Trust Fund (P120272/TF096818)

Background

The trade facilitation agenda represents an important opportunity for countries to not only realize their economic development and poverty reduction goals, but also deepen regional integration. The improvement or creation of trade corridors and the harmonization of requirements across national borders facilitate transit and significantly improve regional market integration. There is growing recognition that the small, open economies of Central America need to boost intra-regional trade to improve resilience in an external environment susceptible to global market fluctuations. With the lowering of traditional market access barriers, high trade transaction costs have become one of the most significant obstacles that developing countries face in benefiting from globalization. The ability to move goods across borders rapidly, cheaply, and above all predictably is a critical determinant of export competitiveness.

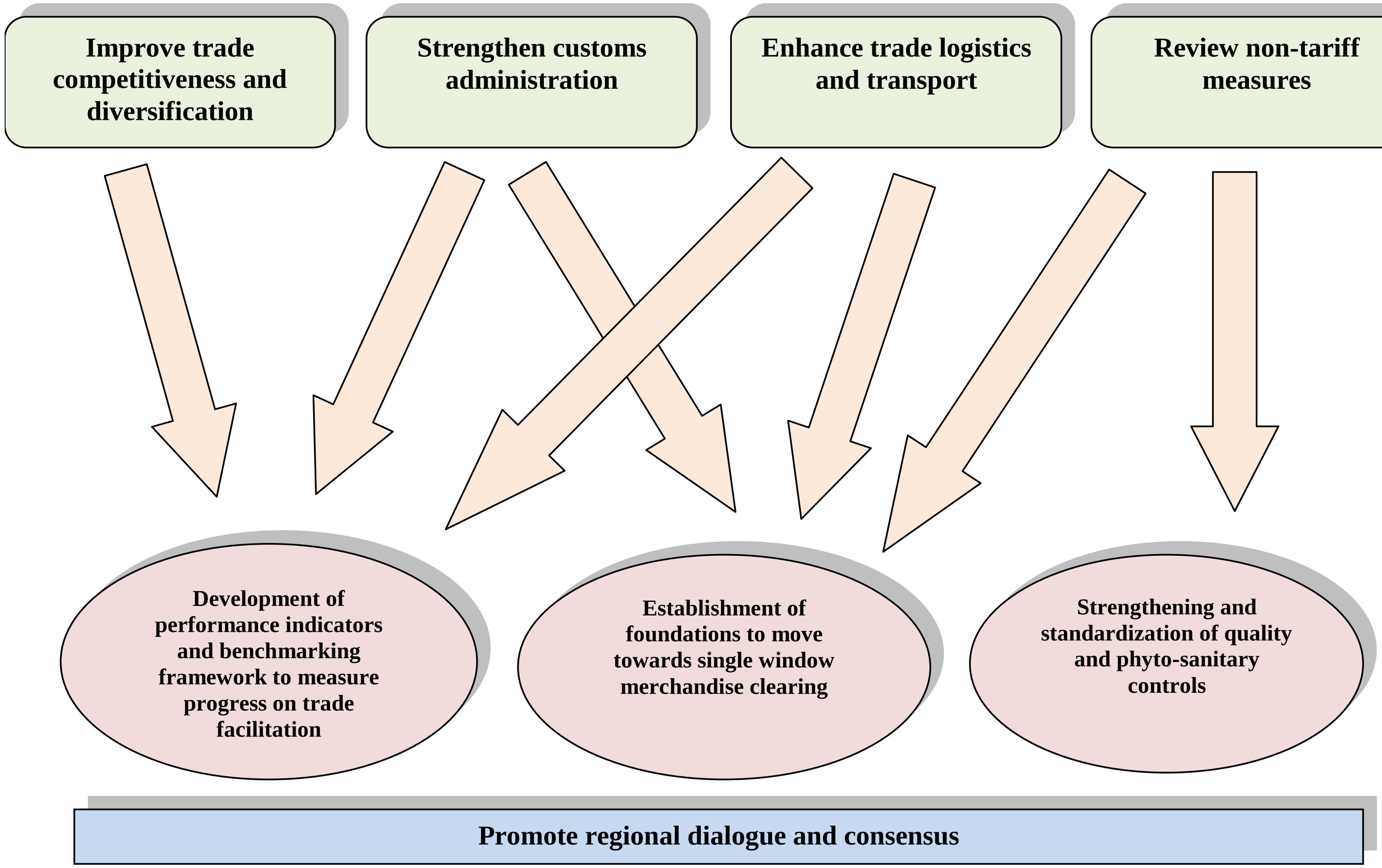
The Trust Fund for Trade Facilitation for Regional Integration in Central America was designed to support the region in improving its trade facilitation environment. It was financed by the Trade Facilitation Facility, a multi-donor trust fund that helps developing countries improve their competitiveness through concrete improvements in trade facilitation systems and reducing trade costs.

The Trust Fund responded to government requests and was endorsed by the Secretariat for Economic Integration in Central America (SIECA). It assisted in the implementation of the technical needs and policy recommendations that emerged from focused analytical work[1] and from the complementary agenda of the DR-CAFTA and the Bank's Aid-for-Trade strategy. Trust Fund activities began in May 2010 and were completed in October 2013.

The Trust Fund program foresaw four components: (i) development of performance indicators and benchmarking framework to measure progress on trade facilitation; (ii) establishment of foundations to move towards single window merchandise clearing; (iii) strengthening and standardization of quality and phyto-sanitary controls; and (iv) improving the trading capacity of small market participants. In a restructuring approved in June 2012, the fourth component was dropped because other parts of the World Bank Group provided extensive support on supply chain analyses. Activities were grouped into four broad thematic areas, each contributing to one of the three components (Figure 1). In addition, the TF promoted regional dialogue and consensus on issues related to trade facilitation. Following is a summary of the activities carried out in each of the four thematic areas, as well as their results.

[1] Most notably the World Bank book on "Getting the most out of Free Trade Agreements in Central America".

Figure 1: TF thematic areas and components



I. Improve trade competitiveness and diversification

A competitive, efficient, and diversified export basket is best able to benefit from open trade policies and is best equipped to adapt to international market demands. Central America has increased its openness to trade at the same time that it has deepened regional integration. Not surprisingly, intraregional trade explains much of the export growth.

Activities to increase competitiveness of the export basket:	
Diagnostic/analytical work	Unlocking Central America's export potential: Export performance (Co-financed)
	Unlocking Central America's export potential: Infrastructure for unlocking exports: SEZs, innovation, and quality systems (Co-financed)

The **Central American Trade Outcomes Analysis** studied the competitiveness of the goods and services export sector in order to better understand performance and constraints, and to suggest policy options aimed at ensuring the region take better advantage of the benefits of international trade. Four different dimensions of export performance were examined for each country: (i) the composition, orientation, and growth of the country's export basket; (ii) the degree of diversification across products and markets; (iii) the level of sophistication and quality; and (iv) the survival rate of export relationships.

The composition of Central America's export basket is dominated by fruits/vegetables, food products, and textiles. With the exception of Nicaragua, textiles are losing importance. For the most part textile production takes place in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and is mostly financed by Foreign Direct Investment. The region is starting to engage in the global production of automobiles by exporting basic components. These firms are mostly FDI with minimal linkages with the domestic economy. Services exports rely mainly on tourism. The US market is the most important destination, although its relevance has been decreasing over the last decade. Export relationships with South America are insignificant, as are export relationships with BRIC countries. The EU market has lost its relevance over time, mainly because exports of coffee and bananas to the EU have markedly decreased over the last decade.

The region has increased the **diversification of its export basket** over the last decade, with the exception of Nicaragua, in part because of greater intraregional trade. Though the region's share of worldwide trade is still very low, it is moving towards export products that are more important in terms of world trade. This has caused the region as a whole to diversify away from the US, losing market share in the country.

In terms of **sophistication and quality**, the regional export basket consists mainly of resource-based and primary products with low value added. With countries entering into the global supply chain of automobiles production, the technological composition of the export basket is increasing. A measure of the "sophistication" level of the export basket, however, indicates that this variable is decreasing during the last decade. This is a worrisome finding since this is usually associated with economic growth. With the exception of textiles, the large export sectors are rather homogeneous products (commodities) where the scope for quality is limited.

Guatemala's exports have the highest **probability of survival** since it is estimated their export relationships are the most likely to endure at the 2 and 5yr marks. These approximations are close with El Salvador and Costa Rica. Nicaragua has the lowest probability of maintaining an export relationship at 2 and 5 years.

Panama is the only country that experienced a positive trade balance since 1990. This is almost entirely due to the success of the Colón Free Trade Zone (FTZ). The **Special Economic Zones (SEZs) Study** examines the role of these in contributing to the competitiveness and integration agenda in the region.

Costa Rica closed 2010 with exports from SEZs making up 60 percent of total exports. The Study demonstrates SEZs have not only increased exports but have also diversified the export basket. Currently, the users in the SEZs evaluated have gone from selling raw materials and low-technology finished products to selling high-technology products such as precision medical equipment, textiles, clothing, agri-industry, assembly, pharmaceuticals, electronic, and electric equipment. This added value is reflected in job creation in a variety of sectors and is part of the diversification strategy countries use to avoid depending on a single industry.

DR-CAFTA and other treaties, the rising costs in China, and an increase in cargo costs due to high oil prices have encouraged firms to relocate the final industrial process as close as possible to the final consumer, causing a **relocation phenomenon**. Companies are relocating from Asia to Central America, namely Nicaragua and Dominican Republic, at an increasing rate that is predicted will continue for the next 10 years.

There have been efforts to **diversify the exports** from SEZs by El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and Costa Rica. Costa Rica has been notably successful in adding value to its exports, becoming the second largest exporter of medical devices in Latin America after Mexico. Other efforts are aimed at driving other industries, including agri-industry, logistics services, call centers, and BPOs.

The most effective way to increase exports, diversification, and regional integration is to encourage **productive chains** between SEZs. Productive chains established between SEZs build an economically competitive block on a global scale. This strengthens their position as an ideal destination for businesses that are looking to benefit from the FT regime, a favorable geographic location, and international free trade agreements, which now recognize origin for FTZs. If more productive chains are developed between the countries' free trade zones, more foreign investors will find the area attractive and the region's global competitiveness will increase. Currently there are only a few productive chains between free trade zones, which also serve as a platform for regional integration.

In terms of preparing to fulfill **WTO requirements** for 2015, Costa Rica and Panama have aligned their legislation with these requirements. The other countries are currently working toward these requirements. For Nicaragua and Honduras, as long as they maintain their designation as, "member countries in the process of developing" they can abstain from introducing WTO compliant reforms.

Input for other Bank products

Trust fund product	External product	Delivery date
Unlocking Central America's export potential: Export performance	Central America Competitiveness and Integration Study	Q1, FY2013
Unlocking Central America's export potential: Infrastructure for unlocking exports: SEZs, innovation, and quality systems	Central America Competitiveness and Integration Study	Q1, FY2013
	Honduran transition policy notes	Q2, FY2014
	El Salvador transition policy notes	Q4, FY2014
All products	Policy agenda for trade and logistics in Central America	Q2, FY2014

II. Strengthen customs administration

Paperwork and multiple procedures with varying norms across countries represent a high cost for traders. The Trust Fund increased the efficiency and control systems of customs administrations in the region through assessment tools and technical advisory services targeted at identified deficient areas. The Customs Assessment Trade Toolkit (CATT) is an integrated monitoring tool for measuring customs performance over time. It collects data and information on a variety of indicators related to customs' operations and produces performance benchmarks that can be accessed through an online portal. CATT assessments were conducted in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.

Activities to modernize customs administration:	
Diagnostic/ analytical work	CATT conducted in Costa Rica, Nicaragua (2 times), and El Salvador.
Technical assistance	Strategic plan drafted in Costa Rica.
	Control strategy and risk management assistance in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.
	Assistance with non-intrusive means of control in Costa Rica.
	Border management assistance in Costa Rica.
	Capacity building for customs in Nicaragua.
Capacity building/ knowledge sharing	Value assessment course in Nicaragua.
	Strategic plan implementation workshops in Costa Rica.

The **four CATTs** revealed a lack of integration between customs procedures that cause time delays and control management problems. They also demonstrated a lack of strategic thinking that is preventing customs from benefitting from technological and administrative advancements.

Technical assistance was provided in the areas of strategic thinking, control, and valuation. In Costa Rica, a strategic plan was drafted based on government supported policies and advised by international best practices. Follow up assistance was provided to implement the plan among the various stakeholders. For the period of 2012-2017, the plan will achieve the following: 1) an efficient and effective control system for goods crossing the border, 2) ensure the correct value assessment for all goods, 3) create and maintain a regular review process for operations through the use of benchmarks, and 4) establish a 7 percent physical inspection rate.

Assistance on control strategies and risk management systems primarily helped to expedite existing systems through the implementation of more sophisticated risk assessment mechanisms. The CATT revealed the Nicaraguan customs was carrying out an excess of physical inspections. There are currently not enough non-intrusive tools for customs inspections. As an additional obstacle, infrastructure is limited and cannot guarantee environmental safety and proper performance. Technical assistance helped develop the functions and procedures that allow for balancing the goals of trade facilitation with control and security.

A significant and systemic problem with tariff and custom duty evasion was detected in Costa Rica and more notably in Nicaragua. In Nicaragua, assistance was delivered to provide adequate technical and administrative control systems of risk, classification, valorization, and merchandise origin designation. It was recommended that such systems be monitored by proper control, inspection, and operational reviews.

The influx of contraband through authorized and unauthorized border crossing points is a growing concern for the Nicaraguan customs agency.

Inputs in other Bank products

Trust fund product	External product	Delivery date
CATTs in Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Nicaragua	Nicaragua Country Economic Memorandum	Q1, FY2013
	Jamaican Maritime Review	Q2, FY2014
CATT in El Salvador	El Salvador Fiscal and Public Sector Performance Technical Assistance Loan (P095314)	Q2, FY2014
CATT in Nicaragua	Nicaragua Trade and Logistics NLTA	Q4, FY2015
Control strategy and risk management assistance in Nicaragua	Nicaragua Trade and Logistics NLTA	Q4, FY2015
All products	Policy agenda for trade and logistics in Central America	Q2, FY2014

III. Enhance trade logistics and transport

There are several logistic services and participants that comprise a typical international supply chain. The "**Trade and Transport Facilitation Assessment**" (TTFA) provides a framework to analyze the obstacles affecting a supply chain and offers a list of remedies or action plans based on international best practices. The assessment incorporates a broad set of topics including logistics infrastructure, procedures for moving goods, regulatory activities, and the provision, quality, and cost of logistics services. Policymakers can use the assessment to locate where opportunities exist to improve performance in each of these areas and establish performance benchmarks. Though each assessment is conducted for a single country, TTFAs are primarily focused on international supply chains and thus offer solutions in a regional context.

Activities to assess and enhance transport and logistics:	
Diagnostic/ analytical work	Trade and Transport Facilitation Assessment (TTFA) missions in Nicaragua
	Central America trucking survey
	Road freight in Central America: Five explanations for high costs of service provision (Co-financed)
	Transport and logistics country policy notes for Honduras and Guatemala
	Road freight transport challenges in Central America

To date, over 50 TTFAs have been conducted throughout the world. The assessment funded in Nicaragua revealed long and fragmented land routes that cause difficulties in integrating with international supply chains destined to the U.S., in spite of its relative proximity. Exporters have to rely on expensive backup solutions to meet delivery schedules. This work coupled with analytical pieces on trade flows also funded by the Trust Fund is helping build capacity at the ministerial level and has prompted an inter-agency commitment supported by the private sector to improve supply chains and address critical trade bottlenecks.

The "**Logistics in Central America: Path to Competitiveness**" report summarized the recent contributions from the Sustainable Development Unit to the Trust Fund. The analyses on infrastructure and logistic services identified significant trade and competitiveness obstacles. The **road network** in the region reveals large infrastructure deficiencies in the secondary and tertiary networks. Poor quality of rural roads limits accessibility of farmers to market (above all during the rainy season) and increases transport times and costs, especially for producers of time-sensitive products. Time delays, particularly during the first transport segment from the farm gate to the consolidation center, can also lead to major product losses for producers. In the case of beef exports from Nicaragua to the U.S. (through Puerto Cortés in Honduras), for instance, for the first transport segment alone (transport of cattle from farm to slaughterhouse), poor quality of rural roads significantly reduces driving speeds which increases transportation times, as well as contributes to cattle injuries, deaths, and weight loss. It is estimated that for this segment alone, these costs range from around 4 percent of the wholesale price in the best case scenario (usually for large cattle farms) to 9 percent in the worst case (usually for small cattle farms), directly impacting producer margins.

Roads and bridges in countries across the region are highly vulnerable to **natural disasters**, often getting damaged and thus limit the access of rural areas to markets and create safety concerns, especially during the rainy season. In addition, repairing damaged roads and bridges not properly reinforced to withstand reoccurring natural disasters places a very heavy burden on authorities. For instance, the 1998 Hurricane Mitch caused massive damage to infrastructure across Central America. In Honduras alone, it is claimed to have destroyed over 70 percent of the transport infrastructure in the country. In El Salvador, the World Bank estimates that damages from the 2011 Tropical Depression 12E to the transport infrastructure alone totaled over $223 million.

Logistics facilities could also be improved. There is a limited availability of refrigerated storage facilities, distribution or processing centers by production zones in rural areas delays the time it takes to transport products from farm to processing centers, leading to delays and product loss. In the case of pineapple exports from Costa Rica to Europe, for example, rough rural roads and lack of cooling facilities leads to product losses that are 50 percent greater on the short freight trip in the first transport segment (farm to distribution center), than from the rest of the journey from the distribution center in Costa Rica to the port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

The state of **ports** in the region vary widely, with most still mired in outdated practices, yet to introduce private terminal operators who bring with them modern practices. The Stochastic Frontier Analysis suggests, for instance, that Puerto Cortes in Honduras is underutilizing its present infrastructure endowment, and could benefit from improved operational efficiency. Apart from low operational efficiencies, some container ports in the region suffer from insufficient infrastructure stock, limiting their operations. Puerto Limon-Moin in Costa Rica, in particular, needs to expand its physical capacity either by increasing the number of container cranes or the length of the container berths. Higher costs due to poor shipping services and inadequate port conditions are passed on to consumers and local producers.

City congestion is a significant problem. The lack of easy bypassing routes around the region's metropolitan areas significantly contributes to transit times and delays. For instance, for the two optimal path routes that pass through the urban municipal areas of Guatemala City and Panama City, the lack of easy bypassing routes account for approximately 12 percent of overall transit time.

Risk management systems are only partially implemented in most border crossings in the region, as demonstrated by low detection rates and high percentage of physical and documentary inspections, often causing considerable delays in the clearance of imports. For instance, the World Bank's Customs Assessment Trade Toolkit (CATT) found that the Costa Rican customs agency has no integral customs risk management, either in manual operating or computerized operating systems, leading to excessive physical inspections and low non-compliance detection.

Weigh stations in countries across the region are a source of long delays and corruption, increasing transportation costs. In the case of frozen beef exports from Nicaragua, for example, the supply chain analysis discovered that delays at the weight station can add two additional days to the journey to port and result in fines anywhere from $16 (for the first offense) to over $1,000 per container (for a repeat offender). Many interviewees across the region openly reported paying bribes to avoid excessive weight station delays.

Border waiting times vary widely amongst border crossings in the region, between two sides of the same border crossing, and even within a border crossing. This variation demonstrates that border services are not consistent amongst the different countries in the region, adding uncertainty in the logistics process, and thus harming local importers and exporters. For example, in the border crossing El Amatillo, between Honduras and El Salvador, truckers reported spending anywhere between 2 and 24 hours to cross both sides of the border.

The **Central American road freight transport assessment** examines the degree of importance road freight transport has on the GDP of Central America and discusses the factors that determine road freight transport prices and competitiveness. In part because of an increase in intra-regional trade, the assessment finds the region faces inefficiency in many of the elements that are necessary for a well-functioning transport sector including institutional and regulatory frameworks, border management, firms and independent owners' operation and management, use of technology, financing, and infrastructure planning. The Trucking Firms Survey benefits from inputs of 20 firms and 60 truck drivers in 6 countries. It provides specific analysis on the impact of fuel efficiency technologies, backhaul practices, waiting times, and constraints on access to and cost of finance for small companies in the region.

Trucking firms have seen a rise in direct **security costs** in recent years as a result of measures taken to cope with increased crime and violence rates in Central America. Average security costs in the region over the past three years have increased by around 20 percent, and are likely to increase further along with growing security issues. This negatively impacts the business of trucking firms, as well as increases transportation costs.

Fuel costs are considerable for trucking companies, representing between 40 to 60 percent of total variable costs, a much higher figure in comparison to USA and Canada (between 15 and 22 percent depending on the configuration of the truck). Despite this, measures related to fuel efficiency have yet to be deployed by most trucking firms in the region.

A relatively high rate of **empty backhauls** exists throughout the region, resulting in inefficiencies and higher prices for importers and exporters. Empty returns are particularly high in Guatemala, where around 77 percent of trips are reported to return empty.

Inputs in other Bank products

Trust fund product	External product	Delivery date
The state of road freight in Central America: Five explanations to high costs of service provision	Logistics in Central America: The path to competitiveness	Q4, FY2013
Central America trucking survey	6 Country Infrastructure for Growth and Integration	Q4, FY2012
	Freight flows, logistics costs and efficiency: Optimal path analysis	Q4, FY2013
Transport and logistics country policy note for Honduras	Honduran transition policy notes	Q2, FY2014
	Transport workshop in Honduras – "Desafios principales en transporte y logistica para la agricultura"	Q2, FY2014
TTFA in Nicaragua	Nicaragua Country Economic Memorandum	Q1, FY2013
	Nicaragua Trade and Logistics NLTA	Q4, FY2015
All products	Policy agenda for trade and logistics in Central America	Q2, FY2014

IV. Review Non-Tariff Measures

The prevalence of trade agreements and an expanded WTO membership base have consistently lowered tariffs in the past few years. As a result, trade policy has shifted toward a discussion of Non-Tariff Measures ("NTMs"), requirements for international commerce in the form of sanitary and phytosanitary rules, product standards, and certifications governed by multiple agencies in a country. Client consultations with Honduras and Nicaragua revealed small producers and micro entrepreneurs many times are excluded from trade due to difficulties in obtaining required certifications and cumbersome procedures. Such procedures can result in additional transaction costs and unnecessary delays for firms of all sizes making trade financially impossible.

In an effort to gain greater clarity on the prevalence and scope of these measures in Central America, the Trust Fund commissioned a comprehensive collection of NTMs in the region. From July to October in 2012 agency websites and representatives in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras were consulted. The information collected includes sources, regulations, affected products, affected countries, and objectives. Measures were classified according to guidelines set by the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development ("UNCTAD") and will be recorded in the World Bank World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS) database.

Simple frequency and coverage ratios were calculated to measure the prevalence of NTMs. However, these calculations make no distinction between those NTMs with relatively little impact on trade and those with major, even prohibitive effects. Central America is one of the regions where NTMs are especially prevalent. The Central America level of coverage is only comparable to that of South Asia, a region well known for the use of NTMs as trade barriers. On average, around 70 percent of tariff lines in the region are affected by at least one NTM.

Activities to improve regulatory provisions and procedures:	
Diagnostic/analytical work	Non-tariff measures in Central America: Economic incidence and price rising effects
	Non-tariff measures in Central America – Costa Rica
	Registro sanitario de alimentos y bebidas: Analisis de procesos y costos
	Costos de cumplimiento de medidas no arancelarias en Centroamerica: Analisis de productos alimenticios en Guatemala, Honduras, y Nicaragua
Technical assistance	Inventory of non-tariff measures
Capacity building/ knowledge sharing	WB-UNCTAD non-tariff measures training workshop in Costa Rica
	Validation workshop in Costa Rica

Three important findings were made on the prevalence of the different **types of measures**: 1) In line with international evidence, Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical barriers to trade (TBT) measures are the most prevalent in Central America. SPS are mostly concentrated in animals, vegetables, and foodstuffs products. It is noted that SPS measures greatly affect intra-regional trade in Central America. 2) TBTs are applied to a wider range of sectors and are especially important for chemical products. These two issues are common across countries in the region and comparable with international practice. And 3) Nicaragua's large use of Quantity controls (QCs) is focused specifically on the oil sector. Guatemala and Honduras apply price controls (PCs) to all economic sectors.

Sanitary registries are the most debated requirements by the private sector in Central America. Registration requirements for both SPS and TBT reasons are the most common NTM measure prevalent in the region. Since agricultural products are very important for regional integration, the use of registration requirements for SPS reasons in Central America was compared to other countries for which data was available, finding that for international standards, all Central American countries with the exception of Costa Rica are heavy users of this type of regulation.

SPS procedures are often too burdensome for importers and exporters throughout the region. According to Honduran dairy exporters, for instance, every time a refrigerated container of dairy products undergoes a duplicate inspection at the El Salvador border, logistics expenses may increase by up to $900, and the time in transit from 2 to 9 days.

There appears to be no common **approach to trade regulation** in Central America, especially among the least developed countries. The more developed countries in the region demonstrate a relatively low incidence and the less developed countries show a higher use of NTMs. Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua apply at least one NTM to every imported product, while Costa Rica and El Salvador apply at least one NTM only to 24.4 and 32.2 percent of the products they import, respectively. The many agencies involved in each country has led to a duplicity in the scope of some regulations. This heterogeneity in the writing and application of measures may be an indication of differences in terms of governmental priorities and approaches towards trade regulation, different composition of the import baskets, and diverse influences of import-competing sectors lobbying for protection.

There is no single, up-to-date **repository** for these regulations. While most agencies publish legislation on their websites or in print, it is not a standard practice for all of them. The business community is often unaware of the breadth of requirements necessary, increasing the cost of doing business in the region. ALADI maintains this information for most of South America.

It is difficult to determine the level of enforcement of these measures region-wide. Interviews with firms and public sector representatives indicate that there is an increasing number of fraudulent registration labels in the region.

In terms of their **price impact**, NTMs are positively and significantly related to domestic prices. They increase domestic prices by 8.7 percent on average across all countries for which data is available. The impact of NTMs on domestic prices depends on the type of measures, the country that imposes them, and the main products affected by them. Most importantly, SPS measures are positively and significantly correlated with domestic prices in the region. The price impact of SPS measures is larger in Central America than in other parts of the world. While this type of measure corresponds to a tariff of 33.3 percent in the region, this value is 22.5 percent worldwide. Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Honduras are the countries most affected by the price-increase of SPS.

Inputs in other Bank products

Trust fund product	External product	Delivery date
Non-tariff measures in Central America: Economic incidence and price rising effects study	Training on non-tariff measures classification and streamlining in Cambodia	Q2, FY2014
Costos de cumplimiento de medidas no arancelarias en Centroamerica: Analises de productos alimenticios en Guatemala, Honduras, y Nicaragua	Nicaragua Trade and Logistics NLTA	Q4, FY2015
All products	Policy agenda for trade and logistics in Central America	Q2, FY2014

V. Promote regional dialogue and consensus

Growing intra-regional trade since the ratification of DR-CAFTA and subsequent application of common rules within as well as outside the region has provided strong motivation to improve regional dialogue and consensus on key trade facilitation issues. Despite deepening integration, important differences exist in legal frameworks, markets, institutions, and level of development across the region making a one-sizefits-all harmonization plan unrealistic. In the context of country realities and priorities as identified by the assessments and diagnostics, the Trust Fund capitalized on the growing political will to trigger national and regional discussion and further the regional integration agenda. With the collaboration of the IFC, the Secretariat for Integration in Central America (SIECA), and other regional organizations, strategic trade policy was promoted through a coordinated approach.

Activities to promote regional dialogue and consensus:	
Capacity building/ knowledge sharing	Trade facilitation training module with INCAE (Co-financed)
	WB-IFC workshop on trade facilitation in El Salvador (Co-financed)
	WB-IFC client coordination workshop on trade facilitation assistance in Guatemala (Co-financed)

The Trust Fund financed one of five modules of the Regional Economic Integration Program (PIER) hosted by the INCAE Business School. The module reviewed international best practices in trade facilitation, documented current initiatives at the national and regional level in trade facilitation, and established a space for stakeholders to discuss these issues. Similarly, the joint WB-IFC workshop on trade facilitation in El Salvador reviewed trade facilitation activities by The World Bank Group. The ensuing discussion raised the importance of the integration of national single windows, identification and analysis of non-tariff measures, and the development of integrated customs strategies. All these issues were incorporated into the work plan. Participants at these events included public and private sector representatives, academia, and staff from international organizations.