

Report on the World Bank's Work in Supporting Countries

Introduction

In 2025, the World Bank (WB) continued its efforts to support various countries in enhancing their National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) including support to phytosanitary agencies, trade facilitation, and regulatory environments. This report highlights the key activities and progress made in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Zambia, Eswatini, Lesotho, the Turkish Cypriot Community (TCC) and Kosovo.

Sri Lanka

The World Bank collaborated with quarantine and standards agencies to enhance the enabling environment for the agriculture sector's competitiveness and modernization. The project included a \$7 million component to aid agencies in improving digitization, lab infrastructure, and competencies. Support is being provided to the National Plant Quarantine Service (NPQS), Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR), and Department of Animal Production and Health (DAPH) in developing modern information management systems to improve trade efficiency and operational effectiveness. Other initiatives include supporting lab improvements at the National Cinnamon Research and Development Centre and capacity development initiatives for the Sri Lanka Standards Institute among other agencies.

Nepal

Significant progress was made in supporting Nepal's trade facilitation and quality infrastructure. The Plant Quarantine and Pesticide Management Centre (PQPMC) improved market access for plant products such as ginger, turmeric, and fruits. With support from the World Bank and the Government of Australia, a treatment facility near Kathmandu was refurbished, allowing Nepal to carry out needed treatments and inspections of agricultural products. This initiative reduced reliance on Indian treatment providers and lowered costs. The World Bank provided technical assistance to PQPMC, the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control, and the Department of Livestock Services to implement risk-based approaches and align with international standards. These risk-based approaches are being piloted at few borders to collect data and improve targeting measures.

Zambia

Under the Zambia Agribusiness and Trade Project II (ZATP II), the World Bank progressed with the development of infrastructure to assist technical agencies in improving the regulatory and standards environment for the agriculture and aquaculture sectors. Technical assistance and financing support included the development of risk-based border measures, simplified clearance requirements, infrastructure improvements, and increased collaboration between border and inland agencies. These efforts aimed to expand Zambia's export competitiveness while keeping strict quarantine measures.

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Eswatini

The focus in Eswatini was on enhancing trade facilitation measures. The National Plant Health Inspection Service NaPHIS has proposed upgrading its certification system to generate electronic phytosanitary certificates (ePhytos) and improve traceability of import and export processes. The World Bank is supporting these efforts and ongoing trade facilitation reforms including through a bilateral workshop involving government technical working groups from Eswatini and South Africa. Trade between the two countries is critical and developing mutual recognition measures and harmonized processes is critical.

Lesotho

In Lesotho, the WB is supporting the Department of Agricultural Research (DAR) to implement ePhyto to improve trade efficiencies. The World Bank met with DAR to discuss implementing ePhyto and its integration with the National Single Window (NSW) being developed by the government under WB financing, and eventual automatic exchange with South Africa. Lesotho is also investing on upgrading border inspection facilities, enhancing laboratory capacities, and improving bilateral cooperation with South Africa, as part of an investment program financed by the WB.

Kosovo

The WB is supporting Kosovo's trade facilitation and quality infrastructure efforts by aiding with the development of an enhanced Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) program. 11 AEOs have been authorized and the WB is working with agencies to develop a comprehensive strategy that includes agricultural imports under the program. The World Bank supported the Food and Veterinary Agency of Kosovo (KFVA) in using the Customs ASYCUDA data for risk management to expedite low risk trade and reduce administrative burdens. Training in and implementation of the ASYCUDA system improved the effectiveness of targeting and treating risks. A central risk management unit was set up at the KFVA following several years of WB advisory. The WB further provided assistance to the KFVA regarding aligning lists of controlled products under KFVA jurisdiction with those of the European Union.

Turkish Cypriot Community (TCC)

The WB is working with the European Commission to improve the trade and economic conditions in the community by increasing access to trade across the Green Line. Key efforts include the implementation of a Risk Management Strategy including a pilot project between the “Customs Department” and the “Department of Veterinary Services” in the TCC for the implementation of coordinated risk-based controls on imported products. Additionally, the WB will be commencing an assessment of the quality infrastructure to understand the improvements needed to support trade across the Green Line. This work also includes workshops and dialogues to find partnership opportunities and to more fully understand the challenges to trading across the Green Line.

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Conclusion

The WB's efforts in 2025 have significantly contributed to enhancing trade facilitation, regulatory environments, and quality infrastructure in a number of countries. These initiatives have improved market access, reduced costs, and boosted export competitiveness, ultimately supporting economic growth and development.

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