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# **WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION: TRADE FACILITATION ASSESSMENT PROJECT**

## **Report on Rwanda Trade Facilitation Self Assessment**

**March 10 – 14, 2008  
Kigali, Rwanda**

**Paul Fekete  
Chief of Party  
USAID Trade Facilitation and Capacity Building Project “FASTrade”**

**Contract Number: PCE-I-00-98-00013-00**

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**Submitted by:  
Booz Allen Hamilton**

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### **DISCLAIMER**

**The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.**

The WTO Trade Facilitation National Self Assessment of Rwanda's Needs and Priorities was held in Kigali, Rwanda between March 10-14 at the Hotel des Milles Collines.

## **Background**

The WTO's Trade Facilitation Negotiating Group, operating under the auspices of the WTO Doha Round negotiations in Geneva, is implementing a *Trade Facilitation National Needs Assessment Project* under the auspices of the Trade Facilitation Trust Fund. These self assessments are intended to provide support to WTO members, particularly developing and least-developed countries, with respect to their trade facilitation needs and priorities, and to the cost implications of proposed measures being considered in the Trade Facilitation negotiations. The importance of carrying out a national self assessment of needs and priorities has been identified in several written proposals and by many Members as a crucial step with respect to the negotiations and the implementation of any final result.

There are already a large number of requests from WTO members for technical assistance under this proposed self assessment program, with the demand already exceeding the capacity of the WTO Secretariat. As a result, the WTO has been seeking support from WTO developed country members to support this initiative. The US Government (USTR/USAID) has offered in-kind support to this needs assessment project. USAID's Trade Facilitation and Capacity Building Project "FASTrade" has been identified as the vehicle through which this assistance will be offered as FASTrade's mandate, from its inception, has been to improve trade facilitation efforts around the world.

## **The Self Assessment in Rwanda**

The USAID team supporting the WTO's effort in Rwanda was led by FASTrade's Chief of Party, Paul Fekete who served as lead facilitator. He was assisted by Mr. Beat Eugster, (Customs Specialist) sponsored by Federal Swiss Customs, Bridget Chilala, (Trade Specialist) from USAID's Southern Africa Trade Hub, and Claire Avett, (Trade Specialist III), also from the FASTrade project.

## **Advance Meetings with Rwandan Officials**

Although the assessment itself was scheduled to take place during the week of March 10-14, part of the team (Paul Fekete and Claire Avett) arrived in Kigali on March 6, 2008 so that preparatory meetings could be held with Rwandan stakeholders on March 7<sup>th</sup>. The schedule of meetings (Appendix) offered the team the opportunity to talk with Rwandan government and private sector officials to reinforce the importance of the trade facilitation self assessment and to encourage as broad a participation as possible.

Ms. Laurence Mukarugwiza from Rwanda's Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Investment Promotion, Tourism, and Cooperatives (MINICOM) served as the coordinator for the assessment along with Mr. Innocent Safari from the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA).

Ms. Mukarugwiza and Mr. Safari arranged meetings with stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. The team's visits on Friday were important because they provided further information to stakeholders of the forthcoming assessment and allowed the team to elaborate on how the assessment would be carried out. Meetings had been requested with the Rwanda Bureau of Standards (RBS) and with senior officials of RRA. In the case of RRA, since it was serving to help coordinate the self assessment, the team was assured that there would be extensive participation from throughout RRA. In the case of RBS, no meeting was scheduled, but again, the team was assured of broad participation from technical officers from RBS.

Past experience with assessments in Tanzania and Uganda, and now in Rwanda, highlights the need to encourage the local coordinators for these assessments to invite stakeholders from both the government and private sector. Government officials, while trying to respond to the WTO's recommendations for whom to invite to the workshop, often do not fully appreciate the breadth of technical officers that should attend the assessment from government entities. This turned out to be a concern with Rwanda's self assessment where technical expertise was often absent during the workshop.

Accompanied by the inevitable attrition of participants that accompanies such week-long meetings, the assessment workshop faced significant challenges in engaging the right stakeholders to complete the assessment.

### **The Trade Facilitation Self Assessment**

The self assessment workshop commenced on Monday at the Hotel des Milles Collines (the schedule is attached in the Appendix). The opening ceremonies were attended by Mr. Justin Nsengiyuma, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Investment Promotion, Tourism, and Cooperatives (MINICOM) who made some introductory remarks about the importance of trade facilitation for Rwanda and formally opened the assessment workshop. Technical officers from a variety of customs border agencies were also in attendance with approximately 30 individuals in total.



Mr. Justin Nsengiyuma, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Investment Promotion, Tourism, and Cooperatives (MINICOM) making introductory remarks.

Following the Minister's remarks, Rwanda's Geneva Representative, Mr. Edouard Bizumremyi gave a presentation focusing on the WTO, the status of the trade facilitation negotiations in Geneva, their importance to Rwanda, and the link between the self assessment and the ongoing negotiating process on trade facilitation. He also pointed out that Rwanda has recently become the focal point for African countries in the trade facilitation negotiations, hence the particular importance of the self assessment and the partial reason that Rwanda was receiving assistance from the WTO and USAID so early in the self-assessment process—notable given the queue of countries having requested assistance.



Rwanda's Geneva Representative Edouard Bizumuremyi during the opening ceremony.

After a brief break, Chief of Party Paul Fekete provided training on the WTO's assessment methodology which would be used to carry out Rwanda's self assessment. Although the overall assessment methodology has not changed since its inception, some of the documents—along with the assessment tool itself—has evolved and been refined since the conduct of earlier efforts. Once that presentation was completed the self assessment commenced, with Rwandan participants divided into four working groups to begin the process of completing the assessment.

Most Rwandan government agencies with border control or trade facilitation responsibilities were represented during the course of the week's discussions, although typically with fewer representatives than had been the case in previous efforts undertaken by the USAID team. These included MINICOM, RRA, RBS, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance, and the Rwandan Investment and Export Promotions Agency (RIEPA). Private sector participation was limited. The Private Sector Federation (PSF) attended throughout the week with the Rwanda Association of Clearing Agencies and the Rwanda Tea Associations attending intermittently. Some border control agencies were present for only short periods of time or did not attend at all such as the Ministry of Health. (The complete list of participants can be found in the Appendix.)

One of the significant challenges during the assessment was assuring that there were sufficient participants involved in the assessment. For most of the week, only approximately 8-10 individuals were in attendance at any given time. The local

coordinators were encouraged to try and reach out to additional personnel from various entities that could be helpful, but this was met with limited success.

Some of the limited attendance might be partially attributed to the fact that the team learned, at the start of the assessment on Monday morning, that a cabinet shuffle had taken place in the government during the previous weekend. Extensive changes had been announced, including the appointment of a new Minister of Commerce and the reassignment of the Commerce Ministry's Permanent Secretary—officials who had been aware and involved in the assessment, and who had been anticipated to participate in the closing sessions. Since additional changes were made throughout government, there was an air of uncertainty along with demands for some participants to attend to matters back at their respective ministries.

As a result of the relatively low level of participation, technical expertise related to many of the trade facilitation issues was not available, which made it difficult to complete elements of the assessment, and/or to get the level of detail desirable for completing a comprehensive assessment. Those who were in attendance were dedicated to completing the assessment as thoroughly as possible, but given the breadth of issues touched upon during a typical assessment, no one individual can be expected to have the wide-ranging technical expertise to respond to all issues covered.

Another ongoing challenge during the course of the assessment was to guide the discussions related to infrastructure issues. As has been the case in previous efforts, Rwanda lacks the infrastructure necessary to implement many of the proposals contained in the trade facilitation negotiations. Participants were encouraged to identify and elaborate on infrastructure needs, but were also guided to understand that technical assistance anticipated as part of the trade facilitation negotiations is unlikely to have sufficient resources to address many of the larger infrastructure needs facing Rwanda—many require significant capital investment.

Most of the self assessment was completed by mid-Wednesday in the four individual working groups. Some groups moved more quickly, while others had more difficult issues with which to



Participants working on Self Assessment.

contend or, as stated previously, the necessary technical knowledge to complete some elements of the assessment.

Once the individual groups' work was completed, all participants reconvened in plenary session on Thursday to review the work of the individual groups and to provide additional input on issues where one or another government ministry official had not been a part of a group. The plenary session was also used to debate the current status of a number of issues in Rwanda—about which there was some disagreement—as well as the wisdom of accepting a number of elements of the trade facilitation negotiations.



Rwanda's Geneva Representative Edouard Bizumuremyi (standing right) conferring with self assessment participants.

Once this process was completed, the plenary session turned to the preparation of a PowerPoint presentation to be made to senior officials who would be in attendance on Friday afternoon. (The PowerPoint presentation is included in the Appendix.) It summarizes the work of the assessment participants and identifies major barriers in the trade facilitation area and needs for technical assistance. The presentation was also a means by which to encourage Rwandan government and private stakeholders to continue the process started with the workshop so as to further refine Rwanda's understanding of and participation in the WTO Trade Facilitation process.

The closing ceremonies were held Friday afternoon, with the summary presentation, made to the senior officials in attendance, and the distribution of certificates (see Appendix) to the workshop participants. Because of the cabinet shuffle, the Permanent Secretary of MINICOM did not attend as originally planned. Senior officials in attendance were the Director General of Customs in Rwanda, Mr. Eugene Torero; the

Director General of the Rwanda Bureau of Standards, Mr. Anastase Kimonyo; and the Deputy Director General of Magerwa, Mr. Aloys Rusagara. After the presentation was made by workshop participants, there was general agreement that Rwanda needed to continue the process of self assessment that had commenced with the workshop. There was also a consensus that the recommendations of the participants should be adopted. The recommendations included:

- The stakeholders convened to participate in the needs assessment workshop will continue its work, under the direction of the Ministry of Commerce, to complete the self-assessment.
- Further consultations are required in order to finalize the self assessment.
  - The Private Sector Federation commits to distributing the draft self-assessment to its membership and will provide further feedback on the various TF issues.
  - Government stakeholders will also continue internal consultations on TF issues.
- All stakeholders will reconvene to review the work within two weeks.



Jide Sodipo, from MINICOM, making final presentation as Beat Eugster (facilitator from Federal Swiss Customs) listens in the background.



The Honorable Vincent Karega, Minister of State for Commerce with FASTrade's Chief of Party Paul Fekete

The assessment ended with a very brief appearance by the Honorable Vincent Karega, Minister of State for Commerce, who thanked the participants for their work and indicated that the government of Rwanda was fully committed to continued efforts on trade facilitation issues.



[Rwanda Self Assessment Participants – March 2008]

## Appendix

### **Advance Meetings: Trade Facilitation Needs Assessment, Kigali, Rwanda, Friday March 7, 2008.**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Name/Institution</b>
8:00 – 9:00	Mr. Justin Nsengiyuma – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Investment Promotion, Tourism, and Cooperatives
9:00 – 10:30	Mr. Vincent Gatwabayege, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Infrastructure (Transport, Public Works, Energy, ICT) (This meeting included additional participants from the Ministry as well as other related stakeholders from the transport sector.)
11:00 – 12:00	Ms. Francine Umurungi, Director of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Investment Promotion, Tourism, and Cooperatives (This meeting included additional participants from the Ministry and other stakeholders.)
15:00 – 16:00	Mr. Emmanuel Hategeka, Secretary General, Private Sector Federation. (This meeting included other private sector representatives.)



**WTO Trade Facilitation  
National Self Assessment of Rwanda's  
Needs and Priorities**



**March 10-14, 2008  
Hotel des Milles Collines  
Kigali, Rwanda**

**OPENING STATEMENT**

Paul Fekete  
Lead Facilitator

Honorable Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

- It is a great pleasure for me and my colleagues to be here today in the land of a thousand hills as facilitators of the national trade facilitation needs assessment workshop for Rwanda. I am joined by Beat Eugster from Swiss Customs, Bridget Chilala from USAID's Southern Africa Trade Hub, and Claire Avett, from USAID's Fastrade Project.
- The WTO and USAID are pleased to support this important initiative and I want to express our thanks for being invited to participate in your self-assessment of needs and priorities in the WTO trade facilitation negotiations.
- Since trade facilitation became a part of the WTO Doha Negotiations in 2004, it has been witness to a very active participation from the wide WTO membership, now comprising 151 Members. This has included not only developed countries, but also developing countries and even LDCs who share the collective interest to lower transaction costs for their traders and help expedite the clearance and release of goods across borders.
- It is important to mention that any future legal commitments in the area of trade facilitation will be linked to each country's implementation capacity. LDCs, in particular, will only be required to undertake commitments to the extent consistent with their individual development, financial, and institutional capabilities.

- As called for in the trade facilitation negotiating mandate, the self assessment of trade facilitation needs and priorities is a very important element in the trade facilitation negotiations, not only to help developing countries and LDCs identify their needs and priorities vis-à-vis the proposed trade facilitation measures, but also to enhance their participation in the trade facilitation negotiations in Geneva.
- Many Members have stressed the need for support in conducting their self assessment. For that reason, the WTO Secretariat has developed an extensive program of technical assistance that is funded by WTO Members through a special trust fund. We are here, with USAID's support this week to assist you by facilitating your work as you assess your needs.
- The main objectives of this five (5) day workshop are:
  - To help Rwanda identify its technical assistance and capacity building support needs and priorities to implement WTO Members' proposals on how to clarify and improve GATT Articles V, VIII, and X.
  - To help Rwanda determine its national negotiating position on each of the proposed measures.
  - To help maintain a national inter-agency dialogue among the stakeholders on trade facilitation.
- This week, we bring together Rwandan officials from a variety of ministries and government entities as well as from the private sector to carry out the national self assessment. Let me stress that this is not a normal training seminar or diagnostic mission, but rather a workshop where all of you will be undertaking the actual assessment. I and my colleagues are here only as facilitators to guide the process. At the end, this will be a Rwandan product.
- For those senior officials who will be unable to stay with us throughout the week, let me invite you to return on Friday, at 2pm, when the results of the self assessment will be reported out and next steps will be considered.

- It is our hope that after this week, you will continue to work regularly with each other in order to provide the necessary support for your negotiators in Geneva as the negotiations proceed .
- We are confident that with your active participation and cooperation, we will bring this week's efforts to a success.

Thank you.



**WTO Trade Facilitation  
National Self Assessment of Rwanda's  
Needs and Priorities**



**March 10-14  
Hotel des Milles Collines  
Kigali, Rwanda**

**CLOSING STATEMENT**

Paul Fekete  
Lead Facilitator

Honorable Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

- It has been a great pleasure for us to be here this week as facilitators of the national trade facilitation needs assessment workshop for Rwanda. Both the WTO and USAID have appreciated the opportunity to support his effort. I'd like to thank my colleagues, Beat Eugster, Bridget Chilala, and Claire Avett for their support throughout the workshop. In particular I would like to thank the Ministry of Commerce and the Rwanda Revenue Authority for their support of the workshop. I would also like to single out and thank Laurence Mukarugwiza and Innocent Safari for all the work they have done to help assure the success of this effort.
- We have appreciated your warm hospitality, your hard work, and your commitment to making this assessment a success. At the opening session, we cautioned you that this would be a workshop of a different nature, and you have all met and exceeded the challenge through your commitment and wholehearted participation in the assessment.
- When we started the assessment, we indicated that the main objectives would be to:
  - Help Rwanda identify its technical assistance and capacity building needs and priorities in relation to implementation of WTO Members' proposals on how to clarify and improve GATT Articles V, VIII, and X.
  - Help Rwanda determine its national negotiating position on each of the proposed measures.

- Help maintain a national inter-agency dialogue among the stakeholders on trade facilitation.

In each of these areas, the participants of the assessment have met or exceeded the objectives that were laid out at the commencement of the effort.

- Sadly, we will be leaving Rwanda, and so the ongoing responsibility for continuing the national dialog on trade facilitation issues falls to all of you. We hope that the decisions reached during this workshop with respect to the way forward will guide you and will serve to provide the necessary support for your negotiators in Geneva.

Thank you.



**WTO Trade Facilitation  
National Self Assessment of Rwanda's  
Needs and Priorities**



**March 10 – 14, 2008  
Hotel des Milles Collines  
Kigali, Rwanda**

**DAY 1: Monday, 10 March**

9:00 – 9:30 Opening Ceremony  
     - *Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Investment Promotion, Tourism and Cooperatives*  
     - *Mr. Paul Fekete, BAH/USAID*

9:30 – 9:45 Introductions of Participants and International Officials

9:45 – 10:45 Session 1: Introduction to the WTO trade facilitation negotiations  
     - Negotiation mandate  
     - GATT Articles  
     - Members' proposals

*Speaker: Mr. Edward Bizumuremyi, Rwanda Geneva Representative*

10:45 – 11:00 Break

11:00 – 12:00 Session 2: Introduction to the Needs Assessment Process and Tool  
     - Introduction to the self assessment tool

*Speaker: Mr. Paul Fekete, BAH/USAID*

12:00 – 12:30 Session 3: Self Assessment Of Needs And Priorities

Participants will work in working groups that contain representatives of each agency and private sector for completion of the needs assessment using the Needs Assessment Guide and Tool (TN/TF/W/143). Each working group will be assigned certain trade facilitation proposals from the Guide.

*Facilitators: Mr. Paul Fekete, BAH/USAID; Mr. Beat Eugster, Swiss Federal Customs Administration; Ms. Bridget Chilala, USAID Southern Africa Trade Hub.*

12:30 – 1:30 Lunch Break

1:30 – 5:30 Session 4: Self Assessment Of Needs And Priorities

**DAY 2: Tuesday, 11 March**

9:00 – 5:30 Self Assessment Of Needs And Priorities

**DAY 3: Wednesday, 12 March**

9:00 – 5:30 Self Assessment Of Needs And Priorities

**DAY 4: Thursday, 13 March**

9:00 – 5:30 Self Assessment Of Needs And Priorities

Participants continue work on needs assessment. As soon as each group completes their assigned proposals they should begin review of the assessments completed by the other groups.

**DAY 5: Friday, 14 March**

9:00 – 12:30 Session 1: Report Preparation

Participants will review the results of the needs assessment and determine the conclusion of the results. These conclusions should be prepared in a PowerPoint presentation for the final reporting session.

12:30 – 1:30 Lunch

1:30 – 2:00 Session 1: Evaluation and Feedback on the workshop

2:00 – 3:00 Session 2: Reporting Session

- Report is made to high level officials.
  - Discussion and feedback on findings.
  - Distribution of certificates.
-



## National Self-Assessment of Trade Facilitation Negotiation Needs and Priorities for Rwanda

Integrated Registration List  
March 13, 2008



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# WTO Trade Facilitation Self Assessment of Needs – Rwanda

Needs and Priorities  
in the WTO  
Trade Facilitation  
Negotiations

*Workshop  
Kigali, Rwanda  
March 10-14, 2008*



(Click on graphic to open PowerPoint Presentation)

# **THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION**

**hereby acknowledges the participation of:**

**in the**

**National Self-Assessment of Trade Facilitation Negotiation Needs and Priorities  
for Rwanda**

**presented by the WTO in cooperation with USAID**

**Kigali, Rwanda  
March 10-14, 2008**



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