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QUARTERLY REPORT

Covering the period January 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021

Fiscal Accountability and Sustainable Trade (FAST)



Nairobi, Kenya

Photo by Amani Nation

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Fiscal Accountability and Sustainable Trade (FAST)

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Acronyms

AMEL	Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
GPA	Agreement on Government Procurement
DDI	Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation
COP	Chief of Party
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CLTG	Civilian Led Transitional Government
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
DPP	Department of Public Procurement
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
EG	Economic Growth
FAST	Fiscal Accountability and Sustainable Trade
FSR	Funding for Self-Reliance
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IT	Information Technology
KNT	Kenya Negotiation Team
MAPS	Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems
NIWS	Natural Infrastructure for Water Security in Peru project
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
PIT	Personal Income Tax
PFM	Public Financial Management
PFM for PES	Public Financial Management for Payment for Ecosystem Services
PPL	Public Procurement Law
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
EMD	The Center for Economics and Market Development
GATT	The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
TCB	Trade Capacity Building
TPPR	Transparent Public Procurement Rating
UNCITRAL	United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
USTR	United States Trade Representative
VAT	Value Added Tax
SEDAPAL	Water Utility Company of Lima
WTO	World Trade Organization

QUARTERLY REPORT

This quarterly report covers the period January 1, 2021 to March 31, 2020. It summarizes activities and results of the ongoing Fiscal Accountability and Sustainable Trade (FAST) project. It includes a discussion of progress against the work plan.

I. INTRODUCTION

FAST supports rapid, sustainable, and equitable economic growth in USAID-assisted countries. It enables USAID to bring a systems approach to addressing PFM (public revenue, budget, expenditure, and debt), trade capacity building (TCB), macroeconomic planning and policies, and other economic governance issues, such as regulatory reform. FAST supports missions to improve the following: a) host-country capacity to mobilize revenue and provide public services; b) policy climate for investment that generates more productive employment and inclusive growth, including issues specific to women and other disadvantaged populations; c) host-country ability to recover from, prevent, and mitigate the impact of conflict, natural disasters, or fiscal crises; and, d) host-country institutional capacity to identify, design, advocate for, and implement better economic policies to enhance inclusive growth and gender equity.

FAST is demand driven, i.e., as requested by USAID and approved by the Contracting Officer Representative (COR). The FAST team provides the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI) and the Center for Economics and Market Development (EMD) with a dedicated core staff of experts who provide on-call analysis and expertise on issues of PFM, trade, macroeconomic planning and policies, and other areas of economic governance. FAST rapidly mobilizes to provide constructive technical assistance in PFM and trade to USAID missions and partner countries; is a training resource; and serves as a communication resource.

During the second quarter of FY 2021, FAST made progress on several tasks: the Public Financial Management for Payment for Ecosystem Services (PFM for PES) tasks in the Dominican Republic and Peru; support for PFM and DRM programming in Sudan; procurement reform in Kyrgyzstan; the TCB study in Kenya; the Financing for Self-Reliance (FSR) tracker and repository, initiation of the tax policy reform primer; provided training at the USAID's Economic Growth training; and updated the COVID-19 macroeconomic resilience model.

Throughout the reporting period, FAST employed teleworking platforms while social distancing. We conducted many activities remotely, while local expert have been able to operate from the field.

This report discusses core management and presents FAST activities and progress according to the two project workstreams:

Workstream 1: Technical leadership, including strengthened understanding of leading practices and tools, and,

Workstream 2: USAID operating unit and partner country support.

Management and Reporting

FAST core management includes the Chief of party (COP) and the Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP), with access to a Trade Advisor, and project management support staff. The COP or DCOP report on all aspects in a weekly meeting with the COR and ACOR.

DevTech System, Inc. is the prime contractor with subcontractor support from Nathan Associates, Georgia State University (GSU), and The Economist Intelligent Unit. The COP and DCOP are DevTech staff and the Trade Advisor is a Nathan Associates staff member.

Table I lists reporting deliverables and program deliverables in effect during FY2021 and their status.

Program deliverables occur over execution of the annual work plan and link to specific approved activities.

Table I: Deliverables schedule and status

Deliverable	Task	Original due date	Revised due date	Status
Reporting Deliverables				
Second Year Work Plan	Core Management	08/15/2020	08/15/2020	Approved
Second Annual Report	Core Management	10/31/2021	10/31/2021	Approved
MEL Plan	Core Management		3/15/2021	Approved
Program Deliverables				
Peru assessment	PFM for PES	6/30/2020	TBD	In progress
Dominican Republic assessment	PFM for PES	9/30/2020	4/26/2021	In progress
Colombia assessment	PFM for PES		TBD	Not started
Global report	PFM for PES	9/30/2020	TBD	COVID-19 delays
Final report - Sudan	PFM Sudan	Upon delivery	3/16/2021	Approved
Final report - Kyrgyzstan	Procurement reform Kyrgyzstan	9/30/2022	9/30/2022	In progress
Final report - Bangladesh	Tax benchmarking assessment	10/30/2020	12/30/2020	Approved
Update 1	FSR tracker	10/30/2020	10/30/2020	Approved
Update 2	FSR tracker	1/30/2021	2/19/2021	Approved
Final Report Kenya TCB	Kenya TCB	03/31/2021	5/30/2021	In progress
Report Outline	10 Tax Reform Primer	05/30/2021	05/30/2021	In progress
Tax Reform Primer	10 Tax Reform Primer	05/30/2021	05/30/2021	In progress
Report Outline	11 Public Debt Primer	07/12/2021	07/12/2021	In progress
Public Debt Primer	11 Public Debt Primer	07/12/2021	07/12/2021	In progress

II. WORKSTREAM I: TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING STRENGTHENED UNDERSTANDING OF LEADING PRACTICES AND TOOLS

The major component of workstream activities is to provide on-demand assistance to USAID/W, Missions, and other operating units.

FSR Tracker

Purpose: FAST will update, expand, and revise the existing tracker to account for all USAID activities supporting the Agency's FSR initiative. FAST will establish a tracker to aggregate recurring reporting and lessons learned from the implementation of activities that contribute to FSR. FAST will also develop an Agency-wide repository of related activity documents. The tracker and repository will incorporate activities in the following five functional areas of FSR: domestic revenue mobilization, public financial management, fiscal transparency and accountability, enabling environment for private investment, and functioning financial markets.

Progress: FAST submitted the updated FSR tracker containing 301 activities on February 19, 2021. FAST also compiled documents related to these activities into the FSR repository. FAST expects to work intermittently on the tracker and repository to include additional projects and documents.

Updating the COVID-19 macroeconomic resilience tool

Purpose: Provide USAID/W, Missions, and other operating units with tools and knowledge to understand the level of macroeconomic resilience of developing countries around the world to respond to the economic, financial, and social impacts of COVID-19.

Progress: FAST updated the model that assesses the macroeconomic resilience of nations using 14 indicators that determine potential fiscal and monetary space for up to 134 low- and middle-income countries. Macroeconomic resilience is the combination of fiscal and monetary space. Currently FAST is working on fine-tuning the model details and will deliver a final product in the next quarter.

Fiscal space is the room (or potential room) in a government's budget that allows it to allocate resources for a desired purpose without jeopardizing the sustainability of its financial position or the stability of the economy. Monetary space is the ability of a financial system to implement expansionary monetary policy to accommodate expansionary fiscal policy or to substitute for it, without creating extraordinary problems of inflation, surges in real interest rates, or disequilibria in international payments.

Green indicated countries, such as Malaysia and Thailand, are relatively resilient while those in red are less resilient. The less macroeconomic reliance the more difficulty a country is likely to face in meeting economic shocks, such as COVID-19. The red (low resilience) countries warrant greater vigilance and possibly donor assistance to help avoid instability.

In general, there is a strong geographical face to macroeconomic resilience; with Africa being less resilient, South East Asia more resilient, and Latin America, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe in between. Figure 1 presents macroeconomic resilience across the globe.

FAST also updated its estimates to the impact of COVID-19 on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of developing countries around the world (as shown in Figure 2). The most severely hit economies are in Latin America and India. We excluded three countries from the analysis: Note that this calculation does not include impacts on employment nor on poverty. The three most

damaged economies of 2020 are Maldives – as expected due to loss of tourism revenue – and Libya and Guyana. FAST will investigate these models in the next quarter.

Figure 1: Macroeconomic Resilience as of 2020

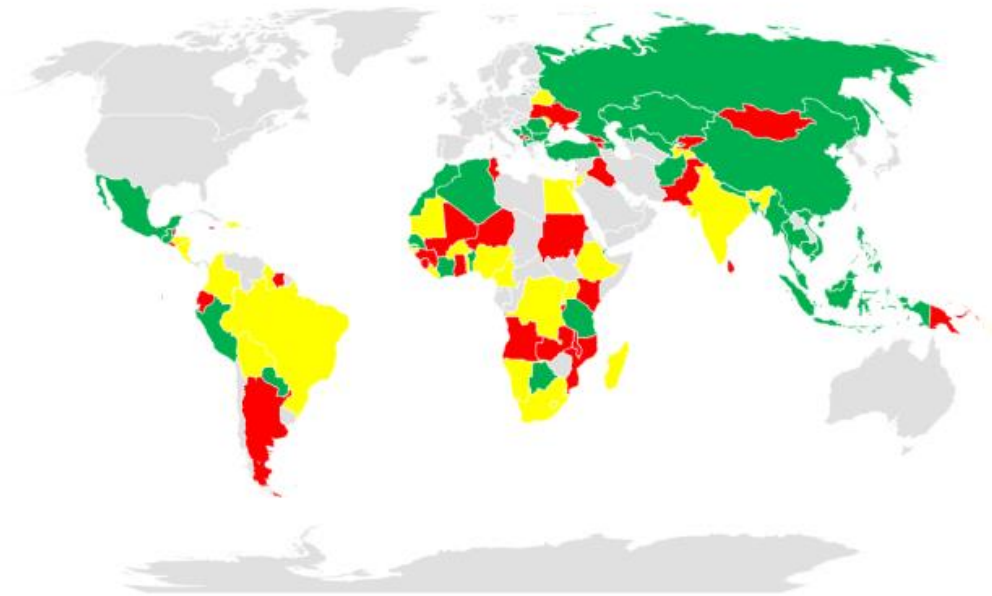
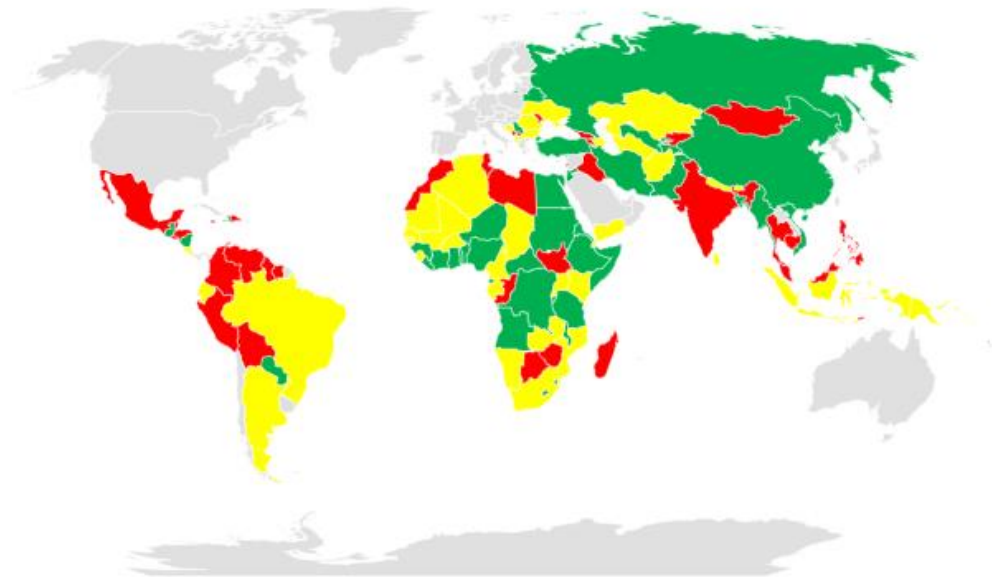


Figure 2: COVID-19 and loss of GDP in 2020



Economic growth training

Purpose: FAST, through COP Gallagher and DCOP Rosado, participated in the USAID’s Economic Growth (EG) 2021 training, by presenting the FAST macroeconomic resilience tool.

The macroeconomic resilience tool highlights in bright, clear terms the challenges that 134 low- and middle-income countries face in being able to respond to the economic and financial assault the pandemic has wrought.

Progress: FAST presented the tool to 28 USAID staff, including 16 women and 12 men, and received. The session feedback was similar to the other sessions that day and generally positive.

III. WORKSTREAM 2: USAID OPERATING UNIT AND PARTNER COUNTRY SUPPORT

FAST worked on five tasks to support operating units under this workstream during this quarter. These are: PFM for PES, increasing government transparency and accountability in Sudan by supporting responsible government budget formulation and increased and equitable domestic revenue mobilization, effective public procurement for Kyrgyzstani taxpayers, conduct a TCB assessment in Kenya, and elaborate a primer paper related to tax reform.

PFM for PES

Purpose: Assess and provide design recommendations for PES programs through a public financial management lens to strengthen their effectiveness, efficiency, equitability, and transparency in use of funds. This task includes assessment in Peru, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia, as well as supporting knowledge management in Washington. The task also includes providing support to the DDI, such as preparing a repository or writing blog articles.

Progress: FAST is finalizing the PFM for PES assessment in the Dominican Republic, has conducted research on Peru, and will conduct an assessment in Colombia in the near future.

In the Dominican Republic, FAST is finalizing the evaluation of the adequacy of the pilot PES project in the Cuenca Yaque del Norte River Watershed. This includes assessing the design, capacity, systems, and operations relative to principles of good PFM. This assessment will inform on the extent PES activities are equitable, effective, and efficient. It will also propose adjustments, corrective actions, or changes to enhance collection of fees and administration and allocation of revenues. This activity will produce lessons learned and recommendations for future PES activities in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere.

Activities to date in the Dominican Republic include: 1) reviewing background documents shared by colleagues at the PES office within the Ministry of Environment; 2) conducting interviews with the PES staff and other stakeholders; 3) visiting the field office to conduct verification of documentation and review office practices; 4) interviewing sellers of environmental services (also called program beneficiaries); and 5) present findings to USAID/W and USAID/DR colleagues, the US Forest Services, and the PES staff in the DR. Findings include the need to improve transparency in the receipt and disbursements of funds, and to improve the reliability of transfer of funds.

In Peru, FAST is developing program design, institutional arrangements, and contractual instruments for streamlining Lima's water company (SEDAPAL) PES program implementation through third parties.

Activities to date in Peru include: 1) mobilizing the team, 2) compiling and analyzing publicly available documentation of the PES systems in Peru, 3) participating in introductory meetings among FAST, USAID/W, USAID/Peru, and Natural Infrastructure for Water Security in Peru project (NIWS), 4) reviewing documentation related to the legal viability of fund transfers, and 5) designing the field interview questionnaires in the. FAST is analyzing organizational alternatives to

solve the bottlenecks that impede the use of USD 30+ million earmarked for green infrastructure. FAST will conduct the interviews in April 2021.

FAST will conduct an assessment related to PES in Colombia in the next quarter. FAST had an introductory meeting with USAID/Colombia to brainstorm ideas about possible workstreams and is currently waiting for the definition of the scope of work to mobilize the team.

In parallel to the country work, FAST is compiling a PES document repository and has created an annotated bibliography. We will continue to build the repository in the next quarters.

Table 2 is the schedule for activities and progress milestones.

Table 2: Schedule for PFM for PES

Activity	Estimated Dates	Progress
Dominican Republic Assessment	July 2020– May 2021*	Ongoing assessment
Peru Assessment	January – September 2021*	Ongoing assessment
Colombia Assessment	TBD*	Not yet started
Other overall supporting activities, such as repository and responding to queries	June 2020-TBD	In progress
Final report on activities	TBD*	Postponed
* Deliverable		

DRM and budget formulation in Sudan

Purpose: Provide a foundation for informed decision making related to investing in Sudan to support DRM and improved budget formulation. FAST will conduct an independent and objective assessment of the context and rationale for assistance to the Civilian Led Transitional Government (CLTG) in Sudan. This will enhance DRM and budget formulation and provide USAID a menu of options for programming in these areas.

Progress: During the reporting period, the FAST team delivered a newly tailored report and presented analysis, findings, recommendations, and recommendations on next steps for the US Government. The final report provides an overview of the economic, social and political challenges in Sudan, assesses PFM and DRM performance based on international benchmark standards. It also provides several immediate- and long-term reform recommendations.

The report outlines several immediate term reform priorities that are essential to strengthen budget formulation processes and improve DRM in Sudan. They include the need to hold further consultations with the government on PFM and DRM reforms and facilitating a dialogue with private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs) and other stakeholders. We submitted a previous version of the draft final report for USAID’s review on December 30. Upon receiving feedback during the reported period, we revised the report to incorporate views and requested modifications. FAST delivered the revised report in March 2021.

The Team prepared additional tailored PowerPoint presentations and presented these in two meetings. The first meeting held on February 17 included six USAID staff. The second meeting, held on March 24, included nine persons, from USAID, State, and Commerce. These two presentations were useful for leading discussion among USG agencies and between USAID/Washington and the field Mission in Khartoum.

FAST also developed a menu of options for USAID consideration and estimated resource requirements, potential return on investment, and risks. The Team delivered the latest revised version on April 7. The Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) has reviewed the report and is evaluating its circulation. FAST continues to support both the Mission and USAID/W with regard to further advising on a potential Sudan program.

Procurement reform in Kyrgyzstan

Purpose: Improve self-reliance in Kyrgyzstan's public procurement systems by increasing capacity to properly evaluate public proposals and support reforms in public procurement systems and processes. These changes will improve transparency and reduce corruption. The FAST team works with the Ministry of Finance's Department for Public Procurement (DPP), State Committee on Information Technology, and media and civil society groups. In particular, this effort supports digitalization of public procurements to increase transparency, reduce corruption, and enable civic oversight and participation at the budget planning and execution phases.

Progress: During the reporting period, FAST completed the following:

- **Transparent Public Procurement Rating (TPPR) Assessment:** The TPPR is a tool to assess public procurement legislation from the perspective of transparency with a view to identifying strengths and weaknesses. FAST submitted a draft assessment to USAID/Bishkek for review and feedback and to DPP for validating the findings in January. The DPP is currently conducting the review of the report. We expect to finalize it in the next project quarter.
- **A legal assessment based on the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Model Law.** FAST completed the UNCITRAL assessment in late-January and submitted to both USAID/Bishkek for feedback and to DPP for validating the findings. The assessment report does compares the public procurement law (PPL) in its entirety to the UNCITRAL Model Law to identify gaps and proposes recommendations required to close such gaps.
- **FAST applied the Procurement Systems (MAPS) tool and developed a report.** MAPS is an international standard and universal tool to assess public procurement systems in their entirety, with a view to identifying strengths and weaknesses to develop strategies and implement reforms. It is a detailed assessment with 55 sub-indicators, each with multiple elements. These sub-indicators are structured into 4 pillars: Pillar 1 – Legal, Regulatory and Policy Framework; Pillar 2 – Institutional Framework and Management Capacity; Pillar 3 – Procurement Operations and Market Practices; and Pillar 4 – Accountability, Integrity and Transparency of the Public Procurement System. The purpose of conducting the MAPS assessment in 2021 is to identify strengths and weaknesses of the system, to provide input into the procurement strategy for the coming years and to set a baseline against which to measure future progress.
- **FAST initiated the Information Technology (IT) roadmap with further review of procurement IT systems.**
- **FAST began providing technical assistance to the DPP (and Government of Kyrgyz Republic) to assist in developing Kyrgyz Republic's offer for its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Government Procurement GPA.** FAST deployed two national experts to carry out this advisory activity.
- **FAST developed a comprehensive training plan that will help enable civic oversight of public procurement.** The main purpose of the plan is to address specific training needs that our team identified during the assessment phase of the FAST project. In particular,

the assessment using the MAPS methodology provided valuable information on training and capacity building needs. In developing the plan, we have prioritized training needs that most closely align with the main objectives of the FAST project and relate to specific activities in the project workplan.

- FAST also delivered a training on “Strengthening Public Procurement Systems: International Best Practices.” 28 counterparts from the DPP, from the Training Centre of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and other procurement specialists from the Ministry of Economy and Finance participated in the training. The training topics included the stages of development of public procurement systems; an Introduction to international tools and standards – MAPS, TPPR, UNCITRAL; and the elements of a public procurement system
- FAST also developed and delivered the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (AMEL) plan and Strategic Communication Plan and submitted them to USAID/Bishkek.

FAST placed five additional staff members on short-term technical assistance (STTA) basis (two of whom will convert to full-time staff positions in the next period). They include two WTP GPA consultants, an IT systems expert and two procurement specialists to support project activities in the country.

Kenya trade capacity building assessment

Purpose: Identify Kenya’s overall ability to negotiate and implement a comprehensive, high-standard, free trade agreement with the United States. This includes the identification of existing gaps and recommendations to develop a trade capacity building (TCB) strategy to ensure the successful negotiation and implementation of a U.S.-Kenya Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The Government of Kenya (GOK), USAID, and key U.S. Government departments and agencies will consider the FTA. This assessment will include identification of short- to long-term technical assistance needs in the areas of trade policy, trade-related sector policy, financial, institutional and human capacity, and a proposed TCB plan. The plan will have well-defined priorities and related estimated costs, which will help the GOK to enhance the likelihood of successful negotiation and implementation of the Kenya-U.S. FTA.

Progress: The FAST Team of experts worked extensively during the reporting period in gathering information for the TCB assessment. The Team prepared questionnaires related to trade capacity needs and distributed these questionnaires to representatives of the negotiating areas, and other representatives from the Kenya Negotiating Team (KNT). FAST conducted meetings on an almost-daily basis with Kenyan counterparts to discuss and carry out the questionnaires, as well as other TCB issues. FAST held bi-weekly debriefing meetings with USAID/W, USAID/Kenya, Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), and the KNT, and internal weekly meetings to evaluate progress and define the coordination for the next steps of the assessment process.

FAST prepared two technical notes to streamline the discussion with the KNT team. The notes are stand-alone documents that supply the rationale and context for raising questions that pertain to: Kenya’s readiness to negotiate, implement, and monitor a high-standard FTA and related TCB needs; and Kenya’s mainstreaming FTA policies, rules, and regulations into its sustainable development strategy and related TCB needs.

The Team is integrating the information gathered into a comprehensive report for distribution to USAID/W, USAID/Kenya, USTR, and the KNT for review in the beginning of the next quarter.

Table 3: Schedule for Kenya TCB

Activity	Estimated Dates	Progress
Inception Report	December 24, 2020	Delivered
Bi-weekly progress report presentation	January-April 2021	In progress
Draft FTA Readiness Assessment Report	April 30 th , 2021	In progress
Final FTA Readiness Assessment Report*	May 31 st , 2021	Not yet started
* Deliverable		

Tax reform primer

Purpose: The main purpose of this primer is to highlight that there is a structured approach to improving tax policy in a country. The primer should, first, include a discussion of the aims of good tax policy (e.g., adequate revenues, equitable burden distributions, and others). The primer will also discuss effective approaches to conducting tax policy reform activities (e.g., selecting an aim, such as additional revenue or revenue neutrality for different distribution of burdens, engaging stakeholders in the reform process to achieve legislative changes).

Progress: The FAST team prepared the draft annotated outline of the report. We delivered the draft outline to the USAID Activity Manager, who circulated it among colleagues and reverted back to provide inputs. We subsequently revised the draft to reflect this input.

Table 4: Schedule for Tax Reform Primer

Activity	Estimated Dates	Progress
Report Outline	April 15, 2021	Delivered
Report	May 30, 2021*	In progress
Online seminar	TBD	Not yet started
* Deliverable		

Appendix I- MEL Reporting

Standard and Customized Indicators								
Note: Target values are in italics, actual values are in bold								
Standard Economic Growth (EG) Indicators								
Standard EG indicators								
No.	Category	Indicator	Fiscal Year				Sum	Notes
			2021	2022	2023	2024		
4.1.1	High level	Three-year average in the fiscal deficit as a share of GDP (sp. general government primary net lending/borrowing)	-7.3	-4.6	-3.1	-2.3	na	Sudan. Deficits are negative numbers. Data from WEO/IMF Others may be added if needed
			-6.6p	na	na	na	na	
4.2.10	High level	Foreign trade (X+M) as a percentage of GDP	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	na	Kenya Others may be added depending on requirements
			30.5	na	na	na	na	
4.1.1-14	Training	Person hours of training in fiscal policy and fiscal administration supported by USG assistance provided to counterparts and stakeholders, by gender	100	120	120	120	460	Provided to partner country counterparts and stakeholders Data from FAST records
			224 (Q2) (57% f)	na	na	na	208	
4.2.1-12		Person hours of training in trade and investment enabling environment supported	20	100	100	100	320	

		by USG assistance provided to counterparts and stakeholders, by gender	0	na	na	na	0	
4.1.1-15	Technical assistance	Number of days of USG-supported technical assistance in fiscal policy and fiscal administration provided to counterparts and stakeholders	650	800	800	800	3,050	
			135 (Q2)	na	na	na	135	
4.2.1-20		Number of days of USG-supported technical assistance trade and investment enabling environment provided to counterparts and stakeholders	20	200	200	200	620	
			0	na	na	na	0	

Custom FAST Indicators

No.	Category	Indicator	Fiscal Year				Comment	
			2021	2022	2023	2024	Sum	
A-1	Training	Person hours of training in fiscal policy and fiscal administration supported by USG assistance, by gender	200	600	600	600	2,000	Support to USAID capacity and knowledge and USAID/OOU and Missions.
			28 (Q2) (57% f)	na	na	na	224	
A-2		Person hours of training in trade and investment enabling environment supported by USG assistance, by gender	50	50	50	50	200	Data from FAST records.
			na	na	na	na	na	
A-3	Assessment	Number of days of USG supported	800	800	800	800	3,200	

		technical assistance in conducting fiscal policy and fiscal administration assessments	<u>777</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>777</u>	
A-4		Number of days of USG supported technical assistance in trade and investment enabling environment assessments	350	500	500	500	1,850	
			<u>135(Q2)</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>135</u>	
A-5	Knowledge management	Number of analytical tools, research, or best practice notes produced with USG support	4	4	4	4	16	
			<u>2 (Q2)</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>2</u>	
FAST country-level								
			FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2025	CUMMULATIVE	Notes
C-1.1	County – Kyrgyzstan	Number of new procedures or tools adopted by procurement entities to improve public procurement due to USAID assistance	0	8	0	0	8	Counterpart records/project records
			<u>0</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>na</u>		
C-1.2	Country - Kyrgyzstan	Number of business practices changed to reflect the accurate procurement reporting measured annually since baseline	0	10	0	0	10	Counterpart records
			<u>0</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>na</u>	<u>na</u>		