



# Forging Sustainable Local Public Private Partnerships through Trade Facilitation

INSIGHTS FROM THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE  
FOR TRADE FACILITATION

**Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation Lessons Learned Series**

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This paper is part of the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation Lessons Learned Series. It was prepared by Candice White, International Consultant.

The authors' views do not necessarily reflect the views of the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, its host organisations, implementing partners, donors, or business partners.

# THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION

The Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation supports governments in developing and least developed countries in implementing the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement. Alliance projects cut through red tape and end costly delays at borders by bringing together governments and businesses of all sizes as equal partners to deliver targeted trade reforms.

By emphasising digitalisation and delivering other best practices, Alliance projects enable businesses to trade more easily thanks to streamlined and more predictable processes. Governments save time and resources by modernising trade procedures while safeguarding their borders. Ultimately, Alliance projects boost trade competitiveness and business conditions, which are key drivers of inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction.

The Alliance is led by the Center for International Private Enterprise, the International Chamber of Commerce, and the World Economic Forum, in cooperation with Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). It is funded by the governments of the United States, Canada and Germany.

## LESSONS LEARNED SERIES

The Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation Lessons Learned Series is a collection of papers documenting the technical and operational insights gained from the Alliance's experience in the implementation of trade facilitation reforms. Its goal is to share lessons and emerging best practices as a resource to governments, businesses and other organisations and initiatives in the trade facilitation and related fields.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation is a public private partnership for trade-led economic growth. Through each trade facilitation project, the Alliance develops the relationship between the local government agencies and local business representatives to build sustainable mechanisms for collective reform. Such partnerships are forged out of trusted goodwill instead of relying on a contractual arrangement. The Alliance, in playing the role of a neutral third party, is able to let each party recognise the value of its counterpart. By building local partnerships between business and government, Alliance projects are able to deliver targeted and measurable results. In addition, the mutually beneficial local public private partnership can lay the foundation for further regulatory reform.

The Alliance has experience in bringing together business and government in over 31 countries and across a diversity of initiatives removing roadblocks to trade and driving inclusive economic growth. Each project captures stakeholder sentiment at the beginning and at the end. Based on early-2024 survey data<sup>1</sup>, the Alliance can assert that a large majority of public and private stakeholders agree that the Alliance model has improved collaboration and cooperation. Moreover, a significant portion of respondents stated that their trust in the other sector had increased.

This legacy of close collaboration has allowed the Alliance to identify four key success factors in building strong and sustainable local public private partnerships in developing countries:

- (i) At the onset of a new collaboration, the Alliance needs to **build credibility and bilateral trust**. The role of a neutral third-party such as the Alliance can only work if it is a trusted entity with strong credibility among the key parties. Thus, first the Alliance must build a strong bilateral relationship with local partners by leveraging its extensive network and expertise.
- (ii) Once a strong relationship has been established, and the Alliance has advanced to the scoping stage for a project, the Alliance **facilitates a process of co-creation**. This is an essential building block that brings together the public and private sectors for a series of joint working sessions to align on challenges, propose solutions and build the project action plan. **This is followed by co-implementation**, where the sectors jointly contribute to the project activities, proving that the two sectors can work together and achieve success.
- (iii) In addition, the Alliance facilitates other **opportunities for the public and private sectors to continuously engage** throughout the project, such as public private dialogues, study tours and capacity building workshops where the sector representatives engage on a personal level. The project's public private working groups are another important forum to track progress, troubleshoot challenges, and celebrate wins. Through these multiple fora trust becomes built.

- (iv) Finally, the new working relationship requires an infrastructure that will allow the partnership to flourish beyond the project, **creating a long-lasting and sustainable partnership**. By changing the mindsets of the partners and by anchoring public private dialogue in semi-permanent mechanisms such as the National Trade Facilitation Committee, the stakeholders are equipped with both the environment and the capacity to continue their partnership.

Trade facilitation traditionally lies within the purview of governments; however, trade policy and process reforms are most successful when the private sector plays an active role in shaping and implementing the reforms. The Alliance's public private partnership approach suffuses every project from inception to successful conclusion. As a result, these four steps based on the Alliance's experience can be applied as a good practice approach to building local public private partnerships, whether in projects that contribute to implementing the World Trade Organisations' Trade Facilitation Agreement or in other global development initiatives. As the Alliance continues to grow its project portfolio, including with the support of the newly launched and private sector-focused USAID EDGE Fund<sup>2</sup>, it will continue to catalyse public private partnerships for trade reform.

<sup>1</sup> Based on survey responses of public and private sector stakeholders from the following countries: Brazil, Colombia Center, Ecuador ePhyto, Fiji, Indonesia, Jordan ePhyto, Madagascar AR, Madagascar ePhyto, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal ePhyto, Senegal seeds, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, Vietnam

<sup>2</sup> "The USAID Enterprises for Development, Growth, and Empowerment (EDGE) Fund is designed to unleash private sector impact on global development challenges. Rather than focus solely on using government dollars to leverage greater private sector investment—the scope of most traditional development finance—the EDGE Fund will realize partnerships that unleash business capabilities and influence commercial operations in the service of advancing development objectives." Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/private-sector-engagement/edge-fund>

# INTRODUCTION

Since 2016, the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (the Alliance) has been implementing trade reform projects that bring public and private sector actors together as equal partners in design and implementation. By emphasising co-creation and co-implementation in each trade facilitation project, the Alliance is able to prioritise the building of public private partnerships between local project actors. Co-creation brings the sectors together to discuss trade challenges and identify trade solutions. It seeks to build a trusting relationship among the stakeholders. Co-implementation allows project activities to be jointly conducted such that the project maximises benefits for both public and private sectors, and so that there remains a sustainable mechanism for pursuing future reforms together.

Such partnership does not necessarily occur organically, nor does it always feel natural to the parties involved. Yet, the Alliance has been successful in growing local partnerships between business and government, even in relationships previously characterised by extreme animosity.

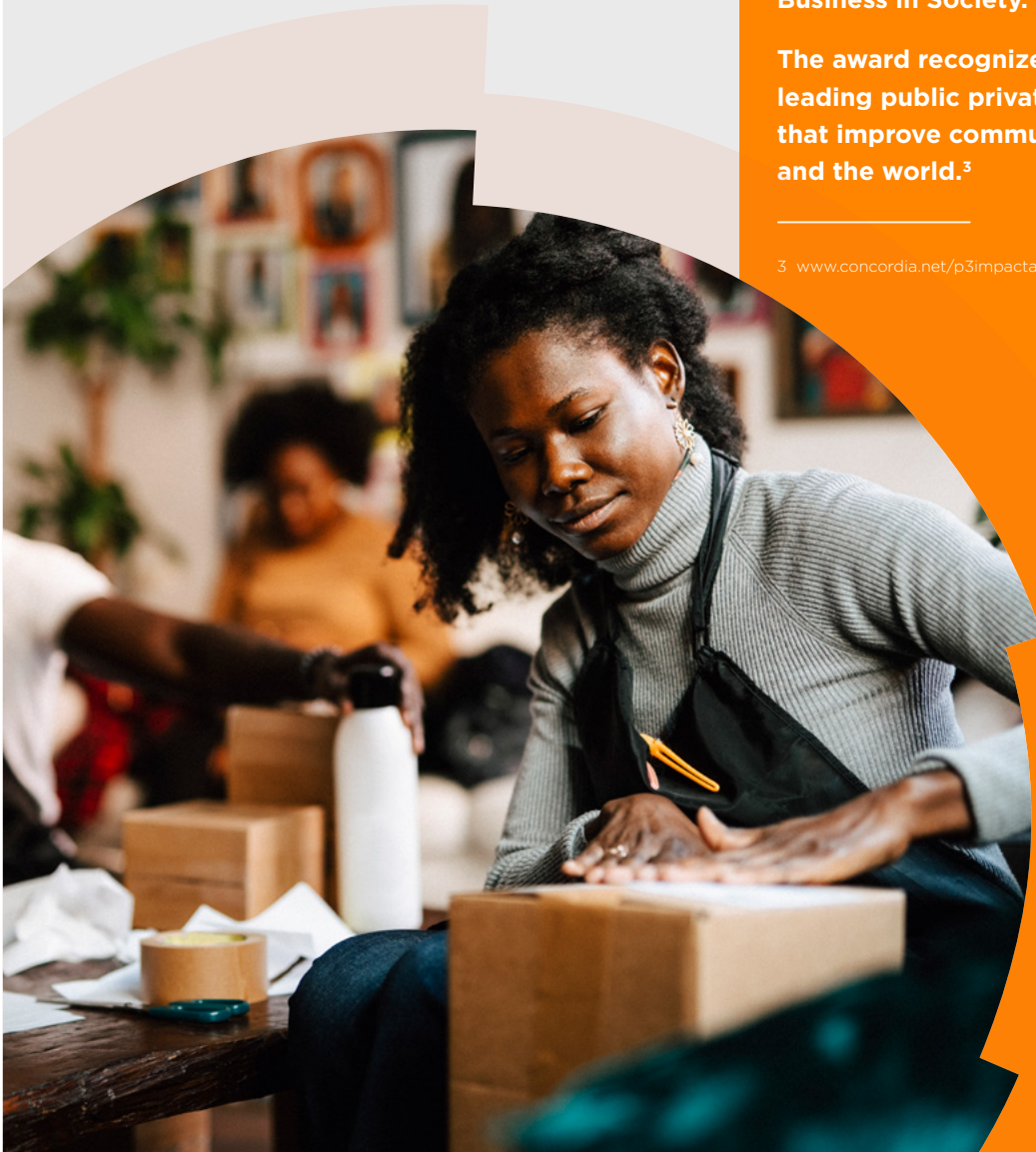
This experience, gathered through delivering 18 projects with another 16 in implementation in 31 developing and least developed countries (LDCs), has captured specific knowledge around best practices.

Drawing on select project examples, this Knowledge Paper will outline the lessons learned and best practices of the Alliance in building strong and sustainable local public private partnerships.

**In 2022, the Alliance was a finalist for the P3 Impact Award by the U.S. Department of State Secretary's Office of Global Partnership, Concordia, and the University of Virginia Darden School Institute for Business in Society.**

**The award recognizes and honors leading public private partnerships that improve communities and the world.<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> [www.concordia.net/p3impactaward/](http://www.concordia.net/p3impactaward/)



# UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN TRADE FACILITATION

There are a variety of definitions for public private partnerships (PPP), often focused on contractual or commercial relationships<sup>4</sup>. In the context of the Alliance, the local public private partnerships developed are non-commercial and non-contractual cooperation between local government actors and businesses with a local presence. The partnership is non-commercial in the sense that businesses do not contribute money to support reform, but rather time and expertise in ensuring that reforms will improve the trade environment of the country. The partnership is also non-contractual in that there are no formal or legally binding contracts bringing the parties together. Rather, there is a relationship based on trust, respect of each party's distinct expertise and a mutual interest in maximising the positive impacts of trade reform.

Public private partnerships are beneficial in trade reform because each sector draws on its strengths to contribute a unique expertise and way of working that is greater than the sum of its parts. As businesses are the primary users of trade processes, they bring a depth of practical knowledge that augments the usefulness of reforms. Their inclusion brings greater efficiency and effectiveness since reforms are

catered to the end user. This helps keep the focus on achieving impactful results, such as a new tool that is operational and user-friendly, and not simply the completion of all project activities without a concrete return on investment. The government balances business objectives by keeping reforms focused on delivering benefits for citizenry, economy and the public good.

Business also tends to bring a more flexible and innovative approach to problem solving which can help government become more agile, thereby accelerating trade facilitation. By comparison, government entities are usually more structured in ways of working and such embedded processes can prevent rash decision making. Working together, the two sectors are more likely to pursue trade policies and processes that work well, are delivered on time, reflect international best practices, and are sustainable in the long term.

However, government and business do not always have the capability or will to engage or commence a partnership. Structurally the two sectors operate very differently. The level of bureaucracy characteristic of government innately elicits complex processes to which adding additional layers, partners and consultatory dialogues can be complex

and time consuming. The two sectors also have very different work cultures, which as previously noted can be a strength, but it requires additional time for business and government to speak the same language and develop trust. For example, government is often more risk averse and favours substantial reporting given it is accountable to its citizenry. The two sectors may also see the challenges and priorities for reform very differently. Finally, each sector may even have strong distrust and hostility towards the other due to a lack of understanding or a history of corruption.

Regardless of these barriers, the Alliance has found that providing opportunities for partnership building between well-intentioned representatives of both sectors who are willing to come together will create meaningful reform. Building trust often requires new resources and assistance in the short term to provide the necessary opportunities to interact and co-create. This is where a neutral third party like the Alliance can be beneficial. Through such efforts, local business and government actors can build both the capability and will for true public private partnership.

<sup>4</sup> Based on a large literature review, including but not limited to definitions and descriptions from the World Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Rui Monteiro, 'PPP Reference Guide 3.0' (2017), Retrieved from <<https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/library/ppp-reference-guide-3-0-full-version>> and UN/CEFACT, 'Public-Private Partnerships in Trade Facilitation Recommendation No. 41.' (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2017) <<https://unece.org/trade/publications/recommendation-41-public-private-partnerships-trade-facilitation-ecetrade430>>



# FINDINGS

To evaluate the level of success the Alliance has achieved in creating useful local public private partnerships, the Alliance conducts surveys with stakeholders at the start and end of each project. As of January 2024, end-of-project survey results were available for 16 projects<sup>5</sup>, and showed that

**84%** of public and private sector stakeholders **agreed that the collaboration** among public and private sectors on trade facilitation reform **intensified as a result of the engagement of the Alliance.**

In addition, **84%** of respondents stated that they were **satisfied with the cooperation between public and private sector during the implementation**, reflecting the value of the Alliance co-creation and co-implementation model. Furthermore, **81%** of respondents stated that they were satisfied with the **cooperation between public and private sector on discussing trade facilitation reforms** during project implementation, which can in part be attributed to 137 public-private dialogues the Alliance facilitated across these projects. Figure 1 shows the breakdown between public and private sector survey respondents for these statistics.

Finally, **64%** of business and government stakeholders in the 16 Alliance project end surveys also confirmed that **their trust in the other sector had increased**, with most of the remaining respondents (35%) stating that their trust had not changed, rather than decreased (See Figure 2). When asked about the main reasons for a change in trust, users spoke about the implementation of efficient, agile and optimised trade processes, more secure systems, and more transparent communication and exchange of information.

FIGURE 1: Alliance Project Survey Responses

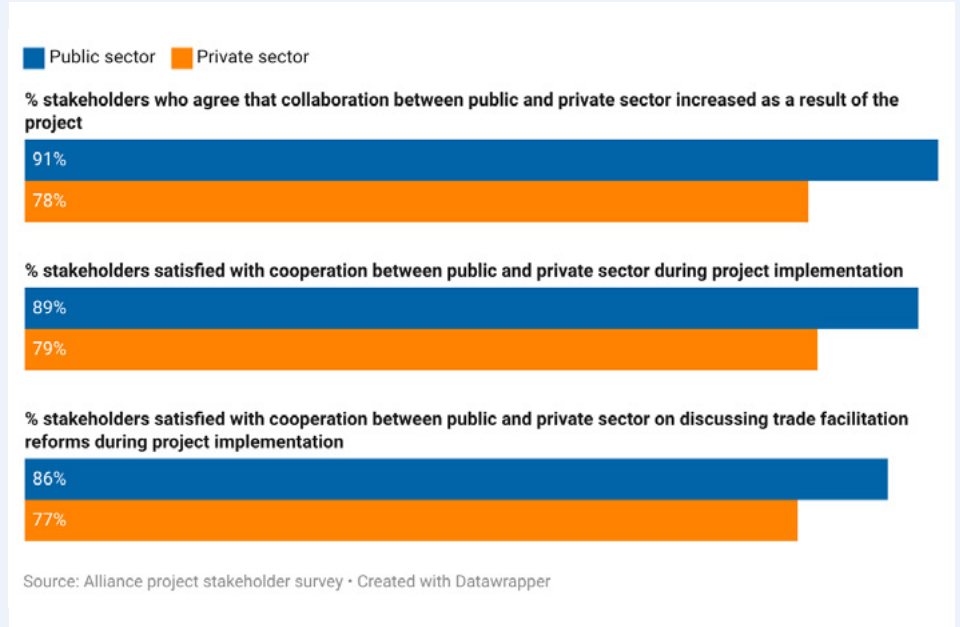
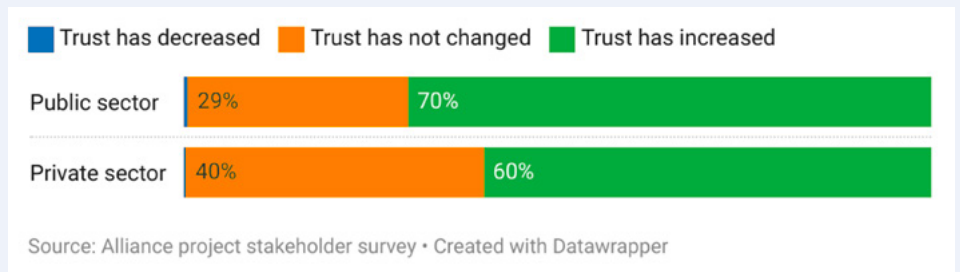


FIGURE 2: Alliance Trust Survey Responses



<sup>5</sup> End survey projects for Brazil, Colombia Center, Ecuador ePhyto, Fiji, Indonesia, Jordan ePhyto, Madagascar Advanced Ruling, Madagascar ePhyto, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal ePhyto, Senegal seeds, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, and Vietnam

## BOX 1: Building Public Private Trust in Colombia

The 2016 Alliance project in Colombia to harmonise the treatment of auto-sector imports and exports through the introduction of advance rulings also sought to build partnership between the public and private sector stakeholders working to streamline customs operations, and to facilitate the adoption of best practices that would improve overall sector competitiveness. Given that the public private relationship at the beginning of the project was characterised by low levels of coordination, communication, and trust, the Alliance conducted a study to measure how its project contributed to the building of partnership and trust.

According to the 2021 study, two-thirds of public and private stakeholders reported that their trust had increased, and that this

was due to four key success factors: having a space for dialogue and information sharing, having opportunities to achieve progress together, having committed leadership by key actors, and finally, having a well-respected Alliance project leader<sup>6</sup>.

In particular, the project created a public private working group that met consistently and enabled both sectors to make important joint progress on shaping the reforms. The project was also supported by the Alliance's network of international private sector

partners, allowing the stakeholders to tap into best practice expertise. Through study tours to other Customs agencies, the project enabled further exposure to international best practices and improved understanding of the trading realities faced by the different sectors.



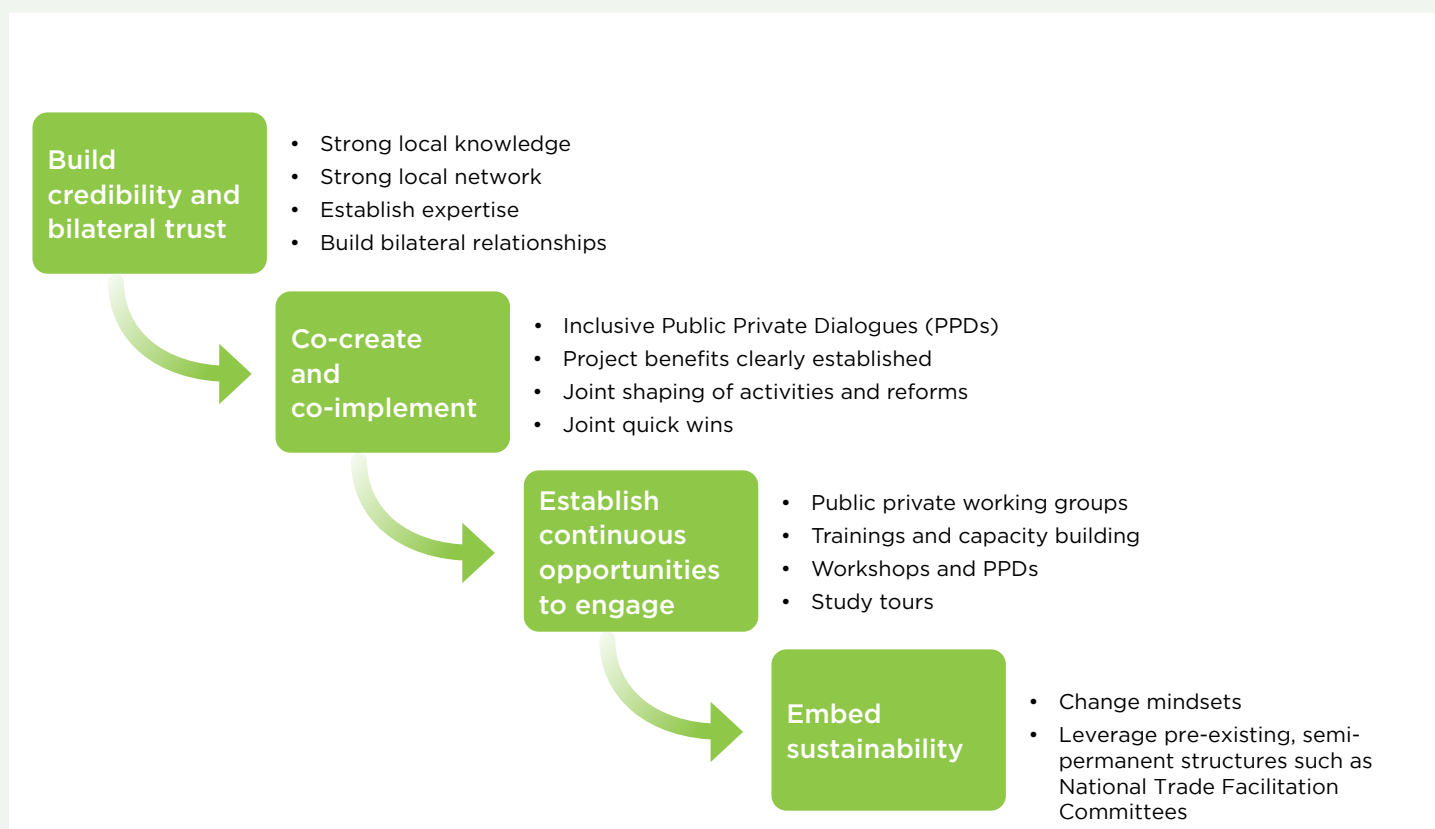
6 White, C. (2021). Trade Facilitation Reform as a Trust Catalyst: A Case Study in Building and Measuring Trust Between The Public And Private Sectors In Colombia. Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation. Retrieved from: [www.tradefacilitation.org/content/uploads/2023/02/global-alliance-for-trade-facilitation-trust-lessons-learn-t-paper.pdf](http://www.tradefacilitation.org/content/uploads/2023/02/global-alliance-for-trade-facilitation-trust-lessons-learn-t-paper.pdf)



# LESSONS LEARNED AND SUCCESS FACTORS

A further survey of lessons learned across the Alliance project portfolio has enabled the Alliance to identify key success factors to building public private partnership. These four success factors are: (i) build credibility and bilateral trust; (ii) co-create and co-implement projects; (iii) provide continuous opportunities to engage; and (iv) ensure long-term sustainability of the partnership, for example, through anchoring dialogues in the National Trade Facilitation Committee (See Figure 3).

FIGURE 3: Best Practice Approach to Building Local PPP



## 1. Establish credibility and build bilateral trust with key stakeholders

The first success factor is **building the credibility of the Alliance as a pragmatic, results-oriented partner**, and at the same time **creating bilateral trust between the Alliance and the two sectors**. In many cases, the public and private sectors do not have a pre-existing relationship or very minimal history of consultation. In such instances, the Alliance plays an important role in first building trust bilaterally with the local government agencies working on trade facilitation, as well as with the local and international businesses with trade and investment interests in the country. For example, when beginning scoping

on a project to expand the Single Window in Ecuador, at first the Alliance held multiple consultations with local business, and separately with local government actors, to understand their challenges. This is a necessary step that builds awareness of the Alliance's unique way of working as a public private partnership.

To build credibility most effectively in the early stages, the Alliance needs access to strong networks and local knowledge. In this regard, the Alliance network of host organisations and implementing partners with a strong presence across all regions is beneficial.

The Alliance also relies on its donors and global business partners to facilitate connections and provide access to best practices. For example, many Alliance global business partners play a critical role in facilitating access to their local operations, as well as local partners, suppliers and service providers who contribute considerable knowledge (see Box 2). Their presence and expertise enhance the Alliance's credibility and have been a strong contributor to building a trusting relationship with the local government and business community.

## BOX 2: Global business partners bring expertise

The Alliance counts 44 global business partners who directly support Alliance projects through providing project ideas, data, technical assistance or by leading on project deliverables. Often these large businesses have a wealth of technical expertise that helps build credibility between the local business and the government stakeholders. Alliance partners access best practices from their international operations, which can be employed to build capacity with local government and commercial partners.

For example, during the co-creation phase partners bring their experience on the front lines of trade to help shape the project focus. When the Alliance was scoping its horticulture

project in Uganda, CHAMP Cargosystems was instrumental in providing insights related to logistics and handling for fresh cargo. CHAMP also facilitated an introduction to Turkish Airlines which, without being a partner, still supported the project with a study tour and trainings for fresh cargo handling.

Another partner, Abbott Laboratories, brought forward the idea for the Alliance project in Mozambique through outlining the delays they were facing to import critical medical equipment. Abbott employees contributed their time to build a thorough understanding of the issue at hand, and even provided timestamp data on consignments in order to help the Alliance and the

government stakeholders pinpoint the challenges and facilitate the appropriate solutions.

These multinational businesses have also been critical partners during project implementation. For example, the project in Peru was focused on reducing delays in pre-market authorisations but also included a critical component to build capacity of local micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) and women-owned or women-led businesses. Partners UPS and Ardo VLM led the development and implementation of the training as an in-kind contribution to the project.

## 2. Design and implement projects collectively: co-creation and co-implementation

Once bilateral trust and credibility have been established, such that honest two-way communication is upheld and overt commitment is expressed, the Alliance can pursue the process of **co-creation**. In co-creation, the trade facilitation challenges are jointly identified, and the ideal solutions are jointly built through a series of public private dialogues (PPDs). The Alliance has established best practices on how to make these PPDs effective, which requires particular care in the early stages. For instance, in the beginning it is important to identify and bring to the table all the relevant stakeholders who will participate in the project and are representative of the local economy. On the public sector side this means understanding the key departments beyond the Ministry of Trade who may need to be involved in the project to ensure its success, such as Customs or the Ministry of Agriculture.

On the private sector side, relevant parties include local chambers of commerce and associations, MSMEs, women-owned or women-led businesses, and multinational companies with local operations. The Alliance has had success engaging its global business partners in co-creation, which not only ensures that they shape the project, but sets the foundation for them to contribute their time, expertise, and resources in-kind during project implementation (See Box 2). While

it is extremely important to keep the principle of inclusion central during co-creation, the Alliance has also found that keeping projects contained to address precise challenges at one border/point of entry is more likely to produce efficient outcomes.

In addition, the first public private interactions must be carefully fostered by a trusted intermediary such as the Alliance local project manager or a neutral facilitator who is respected by both parties to lay a strong foundation for collaboration. Over a series of meetings, the facilitator will move the discussion from general to targeted challenges, which can most effectively be done by drawing on concrete examples and facts, rather than subjective opinions. While this can be a time-consuming process, it is essential in order to build a trusting relationship where both sides share openly and start to understand the impact of inefficient trade processes.

Once the sectors have reached a place of fact-based discussion, they can also build a clear understanding of the benefits of the project. The Alliance has found that clarifying the expected outcomes that the partners can gain from the project generates high motivation and therefore a significant investment of time and expertise. For



**“PPDs need to have a more quantitative approach. Governments and businesses collect a vast amount of data and to have a fruitful and meaningful discussion we have to use the data to put together a comprehensive fact-based picture instead of one characterized by the use of anecdotes and outliers.”**

**Aurelio Garcia, Head of Trade Programs at the Centre for International Private Enterprise and Project Manager for the Alliance Brazil Project**

instance, conducting a baseline study to understand the expected time and cost savings that will accrue to the parties can be extremely beneficial to driving private sector engagement. This was the case in the Jordan ePhyto project where calculations showed that an additional USD\$400,000 could be saved by businesses in the agricultural sector if a digital payment option was added to the project, thus incentivising project stakeholders to pursue that option. This reflects that the Alliance commitment to measuring quantitative impacts of projects is a valuable component of building local public private partnership.

Once the project begins **co-implementation**, opportunities to work jointly on the project activities are facilitated through the public private project working groups which are established in all Alliance projects. Across several projects these working groups have enabled the local private sector to be consulted on Customs or regulatory reforms for the first time ever. For example, in the Advanced Rulings project in Tunisia private sector was consulted for the first time on an upcoming Customs directive before its publication, a truly unprecedented change. A similar change has been seen in the first Alliance project in Nigeria (see Box 3). The involvement of the private sector helps hold the

government accountable to making the desired progress. For example, in Peru the local private sector was highly motivated and therefore continuously influenced the government partner to make progress via the project working group, thereby contributing to the project's success.

Projects also provide opportunities for the two sectors to work together on interim activities. In Uganda, the two sectors created a joint knowledge product as part of the business process reengineering phase. This involved government agricultural inspectors and private sector packhouse quality control personnel openly sharing data, which enabled the Alliance project team to pinpoint challenges and opportunities in the sanitary and phytosanitary inspection process. Showing that the two sectors can together make progress on reforms of high interest allows for an environment where trust is built, especially where project progress is fast and quick wins are achieved.




### BOX 3: Building a Strong Working Relationship in Nigeria

The first Alliance project in Nigeria in 2021 aimed to simplify border procedures at the Lagos airport while also focusing on building the public private relationship through a series of PPDs, starting in the co-creation and design phase of the project. The goal of the dialogues was to finetune the project, create shared understanding of the challenges on both sides, and develop shared ownership of the expected project results.

The first PPDs operated at a macro level that was unable to deliver operational solutions. However, as the stakeholders became more sensitised to the perspectives of each other through many joint meetings over time, the Alliance could observe an increased level of understanding and willingness to work together by the language being used and the interest expressed in joint solutions. The PPDs were moderated by two local facilitators who hailed from customs and business respectively, which helped build trust and facilitate dialogue by knowing how best to influence the parties.

Eventually, the project created an operational working group at the airport in Lagos, with officers from Customs and other regulatory agencies directly engaged in operations at the airport, as well as freight forwarders, airlines, and terminal operators, who are the main private sector representatives in air cargo operations. The operational group now meets regularly and has seen success in solving certain issues such as delayed transmission of manifests by individual airlines, multiple and uncoordinated physical inspections of goods by government agencies, and a lack of engagement with private sector actors. The project concluded in December 2023 and Customs at Lagos Airport has continued to undertake regular consultations of licensed customs agents as a result of the project prioritising a public private partnership approach.



**“The whole attitude to trade at the airport has changed. Working with the Global Alliance has allowed stakeholders to appreciate that facilitating trade creates a win-win situation for both public and private sector. As we speak, there is a standing committee now between customs and licensed customs agents in which we discuss and solve problems that affect our operations.”**

**Olufemi Kayode,**  
Representative,  
Association of Nigeria  
Licensed Customs Agents



### 3. Reinforce the partnership through continuous engagement

Third, it is important that project activities **provide continuous opportunities for public and private stakeholders to engage**. The Alliance public private project working groups play a key role in enabling dialogue and the Alliance has found that they are most successful when they are inclusive in their reach and meet continuously, yet also have a targeted focus to make progress on the project activities. It is also more effective if the participants remain consistent over the project lifetime so that personal relationships are built. In Cambodia, the Project Steering Committee includes all the relevant project partners such as representatives from UNCTAD and UPU, as well as the Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association. According to the Ministry of Commerce, who chairs the committee, this is the first time private sector representatives have been included in a Project Steering Committee, a reflection of the progress that has been made.

Furthermore, the Alliance project workplans include other opportunities for the sectors to engage such as trainings, study tours and workshops to align on key components of new trade processes or regulatory reforms. Study tours or multi-day workshops can be particularly useful in providing a prolonged and intensive period of engaging with the other party. This also provides an opportunity to spend a day in each other's shoes through touring the local business or agency operations. For example, 11 public and private stakeholders in the Zambia project took part in a study tour to the United States for one week to review Customs procedures. This was extremely effective in building an understanding of the other sectors' challenges and building relationships and trust on a personal level, in addition to acquiring knowledge of international best practices. Box 4 includes a further example of how trainings have helped to build public private partnership in the Senegal ePhyto project.

It can also be necessary to build the capacity of the private sector, especially MSMEs and women-owned/ women-led businesses to participate in public private dialogue and trade facilitation reform. For example, in Cambodia the project activities included a 3-day advocacy training workshop for the Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association (CWEA) to enable PPD readiness. Through the training, CWEA representatives learned to communicate the challenges faced by their membership of over 800 women-owned businesses with a united voice and supported by strong evidence and data. As a result, CWEA's advocacy team is equipped with a clear strategy and tools to advocate for inclusive policies for women-owned businesses through government-led public-private consultation channels. Furthermore, in the aforementioned Nigeria project (see Box 3), the team conducted targeted trainings for female licensed customs agents on how to voice their concerns, and how to advocate for a more women-friendly work environment at the airport's cargo terminal. Such activities will ensure that trade facilitation reforms are better able to accrue to underrepresented populations like women traders and MSMEs.



“We feel that the more they meet, the more they will talk, and thus better mutual understanding is often the outcome. From our experience, embedding the dialogue meetings between the public and private sectors into a series of project activities is important (not a one-off meeting). To be more inclusive, these activities should not be limited to the city-level, but include provinces and try to engage more with different private sector actors (i.e., association and their provincial chapters).”

**SOK Kha**

Team Leader for the SeT4SME Project in Cambodia

## BOX 4: How Public Private Trainings Built Partnership in Senegal

The ePhyto project in Senegal, completed in 2022, built public private partnership through a series of project activities such as public private dialogues and a public private working group. However, it is the approach to trainings which is hailed as playing a significant role in growing partnership between local business and government.

Rolling out an ePhyto system successfully requires thorough training of business actors and the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) employees who will use the system. In line with the need to build an honest bilateral rapport, the team delivered the first sessions of the trainings separately to the public and private sector stakeholders, and then proceeded to bring government agents into the private sector trainings which occurred over several consecutive weeks. In the trainings each group of 20 companies was assigned an

inspector from the government agency who worked with them to test the new system, answer questions, and receive feedback. This helped build the public private relationship as well as ensure that private sector input was well incorporated into the new system and processes.

Local exporters and importers were so motivated by the project's benefits and the NPPO's willingness to reform that they agreed to pay a fee to maintain the new system going forward. With the new ePayment system, additional trust between the parties can be built because traders now pay the government agency directly, instead of individual agents. Furthermore, the digitalisation of trade has been influential for the two sectors working together to implement new policies since they can now make more data-centric decisions.



**“I commend the approach of the Alliance, which has involved the private sector in the design and implementation of these projects that will have a positive impact on the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises,”**

*said Cheikh Ngane, President of the Federative Confederation of Horticulture Stakeholders (CFAHS).*

**“On behalf of the private sector, I am committed to making these digital tools a factor in the development of Senegalese agriculture.”**

### 4. Embed sustainability into the partnership

The final building block is **embedding sustainability into the structures facilitating public private partnership.**

The Alliance seeks to ensure that the partnerships it builds between the sectors last beyond the Alliance interventions. To achieve this, the projects have found that it is essential to change the mindsets of the sectors in terms of how they view the other, moving from an adversarial relationship to one of respect, recognition of their unique expertise, and above all trust that the other sector is doing their best to facilitate trade efficiently and compliantly. For several Alliance projects, the language and tone used during PPDs and working group meetings reflects an improved understanding, openness, and willingness to work together. For example, in Nigeria, Customs has now pursued consultations with the private sector independent of the project activities, showing that they recognise the added value of the partnership. In Peru, the strengthened relationship permitted the sharing of data between the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Peru and the government to enable further roll-out of the project solution to SMEs and women-owned/ women-led businesses.

Another good practice for ensuring sustainability is embedding the public private partnership mechanisms into other semi-permanent structures such as a Ministry or National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC), thereby institutionalising the engagement. For instance, in Zambia the public private project working group has become a subcommittee of the NTFC, and in Jordan the project stakeholders have created a national committee on certificates of origin that will bring together key public and private stakeholders to jointly pursue the digital transition even after the project is over. In Mozambique, because the project working group was convened by the NTFC, it enabled project accomplishments to spillover to other trade facilitation priorities being addressed jointly by the public and private sectors in the NTFC. By grounding the partnerships in permanent mechanisms like the NTFC, the project sets up a sustainable structure for a strong long-term relationship between business and government.

# THE WAY FORWARD



Across Alliance projects, measurement has captured strong indicators that robust and sustainable partnerships have been built between the public and private sectors. Such indicators include the existence of transparent communication, expressed recognition of the value that the other party brings, and inclusion of a wide array of private sector stakeholders into consultation on regulatory reform. Additionally, a majority of parties from both sectors confirm through the Alliance end project surveys that trust has been built, and that cooperation and collaboration have improved.

The Alliance stands uniquely positioned to build these types of local partnerships given its global public private governance structure and its operational structure as a consortium drawing on the best practices of organisations committed to public private partnership. In addition, the Alliance brings the input and expertise of large global businesses into its local projects and global operations, which adds credibility and motivates governments to come to the table with firms and associations of all sizes.

In recognition of this, the Alliance has been provided with additional support from donor USAID under the Enterprises for Development, Growth, and Empowerment (EDGE) Fund, which aims to catalyse private sector participation in solving significant global development challenges<sup>7</sup>.

*The Dominican Republic is the first country where the Alliance will implement a new project with the support of the EDGE Fund<sup>8</sup>. The project has 3 components including providing opportunities for MSMEs in free-trade zones, enabling AEO certification and launching an export training program. This will ensure that the Alliance continues to catalyse public private partnership in additional countries and with additional stakeholders.*

The Alliance approach to building local public private partnerships demonstrates how a strong collaborative foundation also helps catalyse future reform, thus accelerating sustainable development in developing and least-developed countries. These best practices can and should be replicated across other trade-focused initiatives. As results from additional projects yield further insights into building sustainable local public private partnerships, the Alliance will share this critical knowledge with the trade and development community. Public private partnership is not a panacea, but the Alliance has found that it can help deliver efficient and effective progress on trade facilitation reform, which can lead to economic growth and therefore improve the lives of people in developing countries.



<sup>7</sup> Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation. Dominican Republic: Empowering Inclusive Trade. Retrieved from: [www.tradefacilitation.org/project/empowering-inclusive-trade/](http://www.tradefacilitation.org/project/empowering-inclusive-trade/)

<sup>8</sup> USAID. Enterprises for Development, Growth, and Empowerment (EDGE) Fund. Retrieved from: [www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/private-sector-engagement/edge-fund](http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/private-sector-engagement/edge-fund)



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