



# Progress and Challenges of Trade Facilitation in the Caribbean

**ECLAC/ALADI REGIONAL TRADE FACILITATION SEMINAR  
Montevideo, Uruguay 27 NOVEMBER 2023**

*Michele Lowe*  
CARICOM Secretariat





# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

## **I: CARICOM TF Environment**

- ✓ Snapshot of TFA compliance
- ✓ Drivers and Policy Imperatives

## **II: CARICOM TF Agenda & Strategy**

- ✓ Mandates & Objectives
- ✓ Priority Regional Initiatives
- ✓ Regional co-ordination

## **III: Score Card – Progress and Challenges**



# CARICOM TF ENVIRONMENT



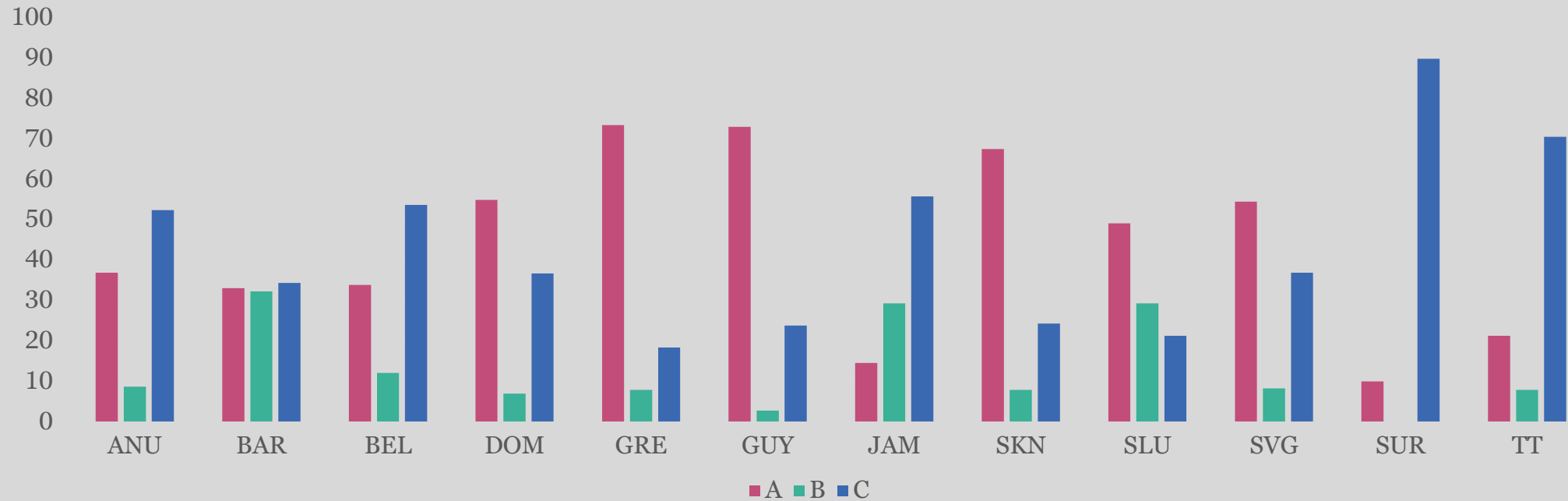
- ✓ Antigua & Barbuda
- ✓ Barbados
- ✓ Belize
- ✓ Dominica
- ✓ Grenada
- ✓ Guyana
- ❖ **Haiti**
- ✓ Jamaica
- ✓ St. Kitts and Nevis
- ✓ Saint Lucia
- ✓ St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- ❖ **Suriname**
- ✓ Trinidad and Tobago



# ***TFA COMPLIANCE IN CARICOM***

*(on Entry into Force)*

% SHARE OF CATEGORIES A, B, C

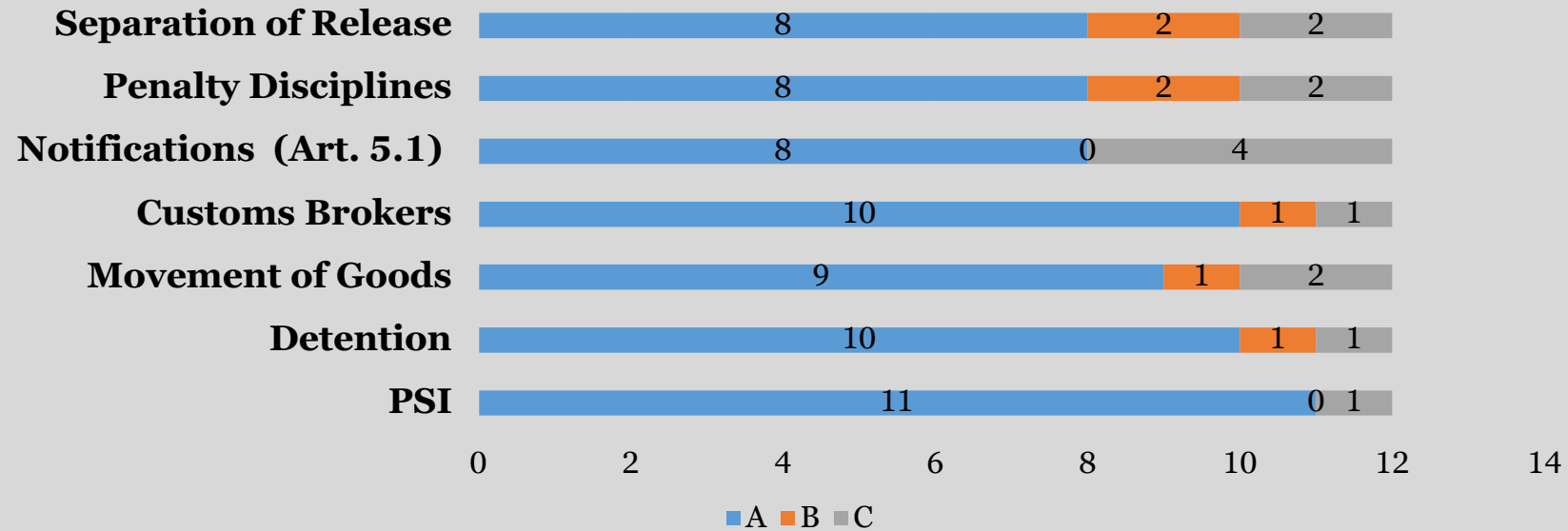


Source: Collated from WTO TFA Database



# ***TFA COMPLIANCE IN CARICOM***

## **Common 'Category A' Measures**

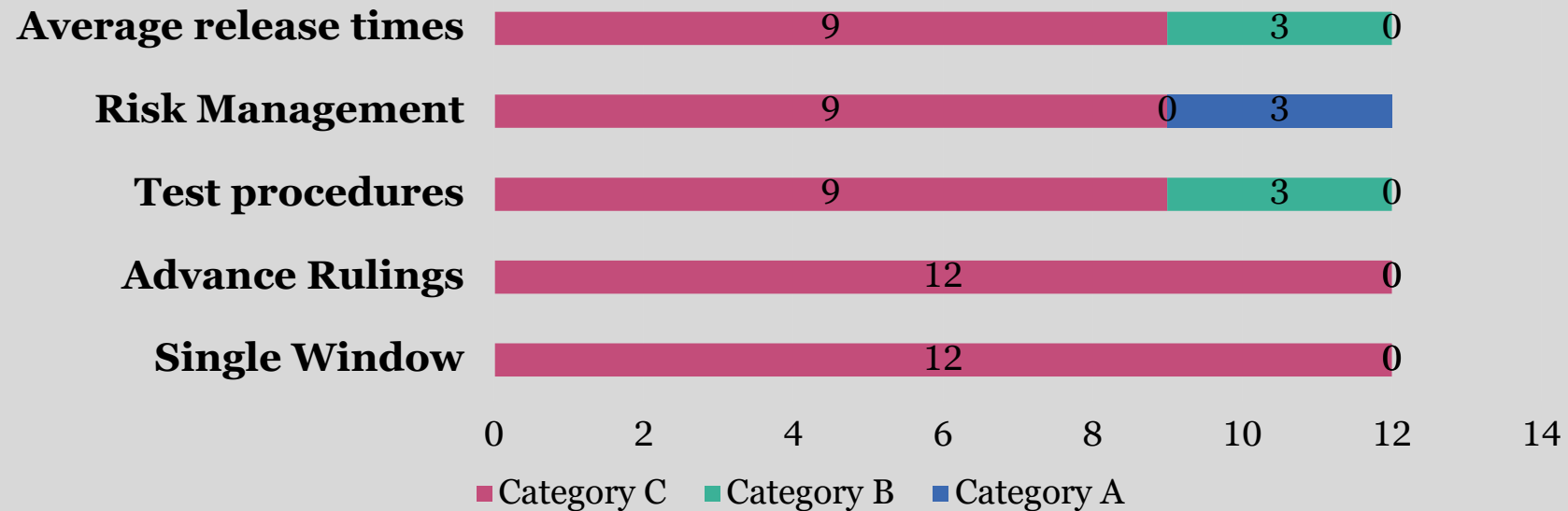


Source: CARICOM Official notifications



# ***TFA COMPLIANCE IN CARICOM***

## **COMMON 'CATEGORY C' MEASURES**

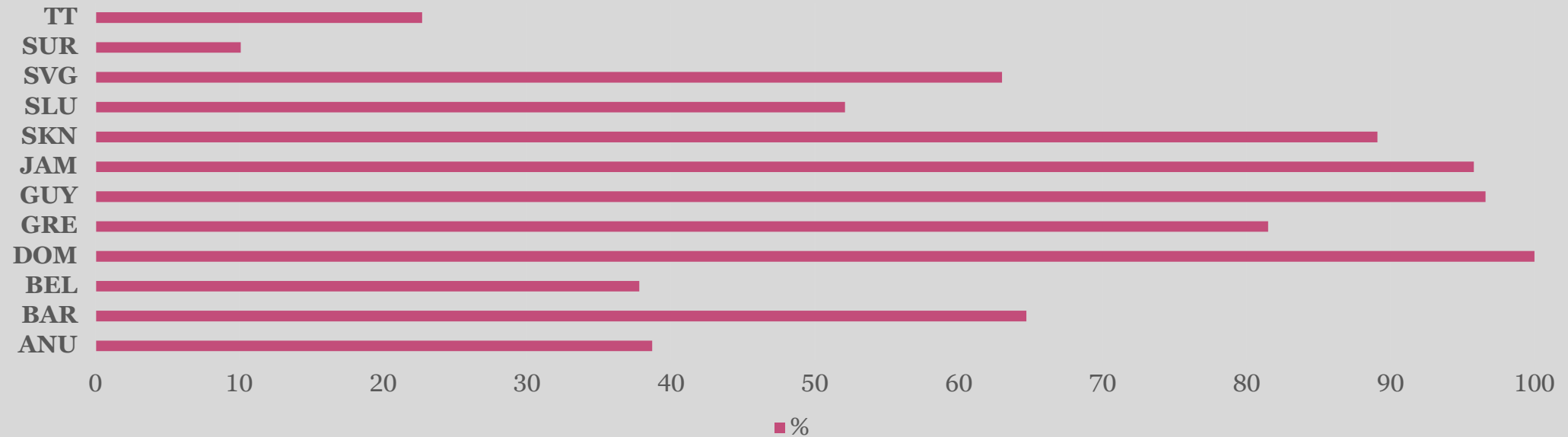


Source: CARICOM Official notifications



## ***TFA COMPLIANCE IN CARICOM***

### **PACE OF IMPLEMENTATION (based on notified implementation commitments)**

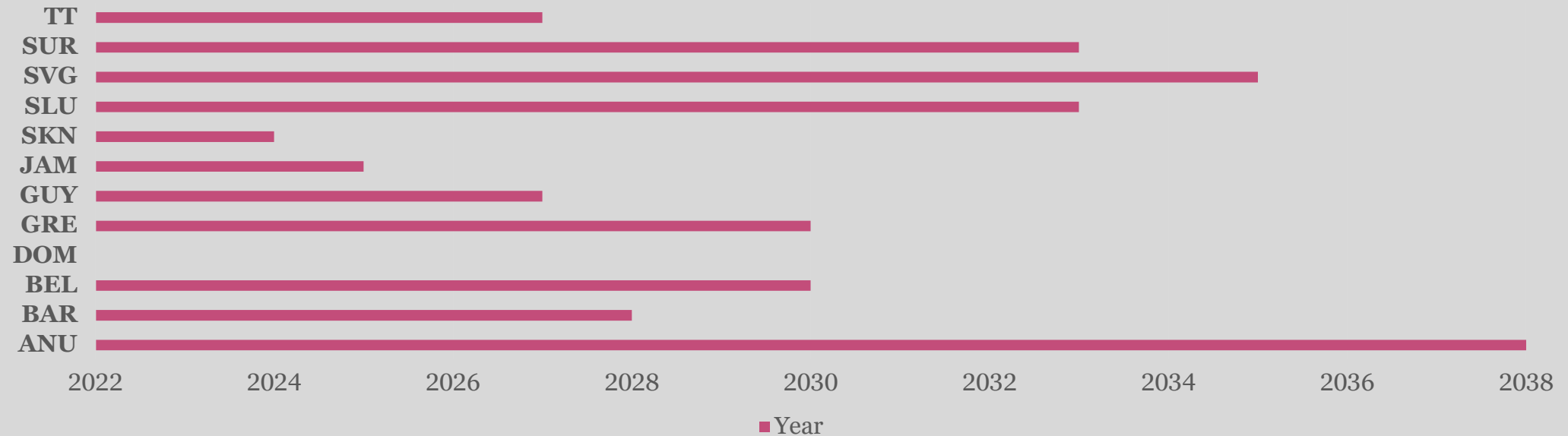


Source: Collated from WTO TFA Database



# ***TFA COMPLIANCE IN CARICOM***

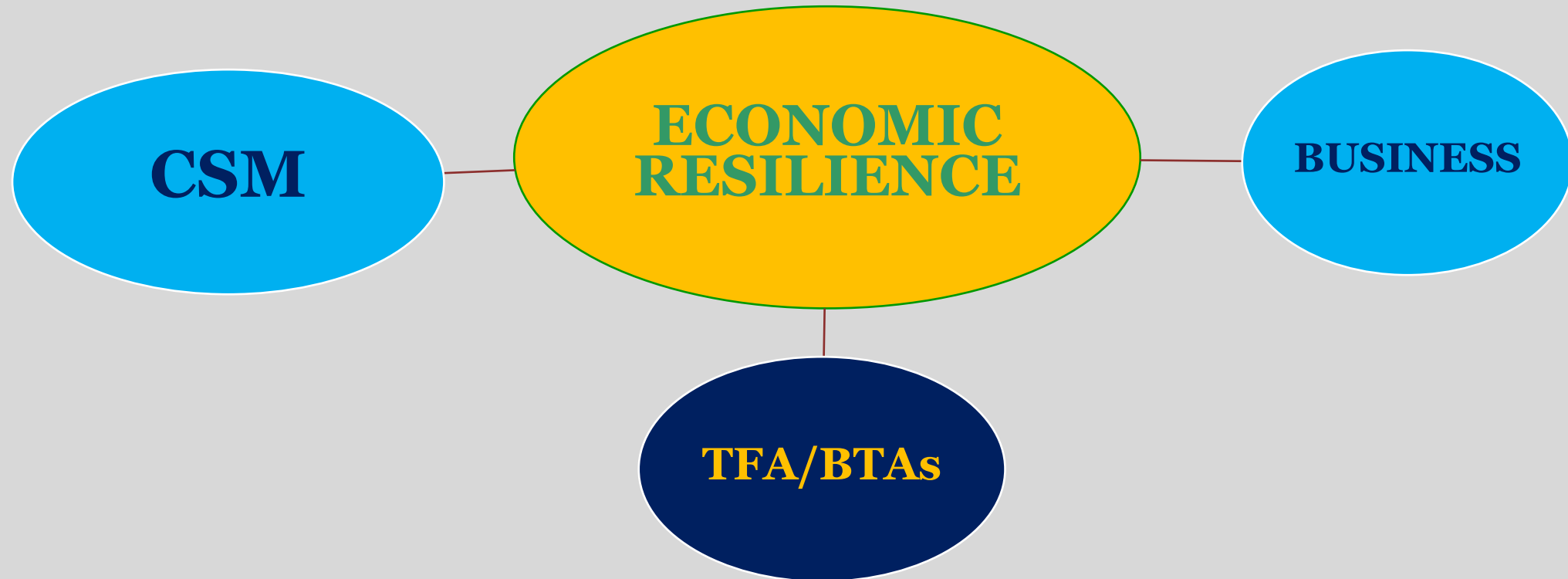
## **TIME TO FULL IMPLEMENTATION (based on notified implementation commitments)**



Source: Collated from WTO TFA Database



# KEY DRIVERS OF THE CARICOM TF AGENDA





# ***THE CARICOM TF AGENDA & STRATEGY***

## **LEVERAGE TFA IMPLEMENTATION TO:**

- ✓ Support and drive regional integration and trade facilitation reforms through harmonised and co-ordinated actions.
- ✓ Improve trade performance and enhance foreign market access;
- ✓ Improve regional business environment; reduce time and cost of doing business.
- ✓ Fulfil international obligations on Trade Facilitation (EPA, TFA);
- ✓ Rationalise and co-ordinate donor engagement and interventions for ongoing trade facilitation reforms in CARICOM.
- ✓ Harness regional expertise for TACB support;
- ✓ Support the achievement of the Community's strategic goal of Economic Resilience (improve competitiveness, attract FDI, integrate into regional and global VCs)



# THE CARICOM TF AGENDA & STRATEGY

## MANDATES

- ✓ *Prioritise co-operation on TF in bilateral arrangements with hemispheric trading partners;*
- ✓ *Adopt a co-ordinated regional approach to TFA implementation ;*
- ✓ *Utilise regional approaches, where appropriate, to minimise/rationalise TFA implementation costs;*
- ✓ *Co-ordinate mobilisation of donor resources and TACB to support implementation;*
- ✓ *Establish CARICOM Regional Committee on Trade Facilitation (RCTF) to oversee regional co-ordination;*
- ✓ *CCS to monitor, provide support, and mobilise TACB support for national and regional implementation*



WT/MIN(13)/36  
WT/L/911

11 December 2013

(13-6825)

Page: 1/29

Ministerial Conference  
Ninth Session  
Bali, 3-6 December 2013

### AGREEMENT ON TRADE FACILITATION

MINISTERIAL DECISION OF 7 DECEMBER 2013

The Ministerial Conference,

Having regard to paragraph 1 of Article IX of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization (the "WTO Agreement");

Decides as follows:

1. We hereby conclude the negotiation of an Agreement on Trade Facilitation (the "Agreement"), which is annexed hereto, subject to legal review for rectifications of a purely formal character that do not affect the substance of the Agreement.
2. We hereby establish a Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation (the "Preparatory Committee") under the General Council, open to all Members, to perform such functions as may be necessary to ensure the expeditious entry into force of the Agreement and to prepare for the efficient operation of the Agreement upon its entry into force. In particular, the Preparatory Committee shall conduct the legal review of the Agreement referred to in paragraph 1 above, receive notifications of Category A commitments, and draw up a Protocol of Amendment (the "Protocol") to insert the Agreement into Annex 1A of the WTO Agreement.
3. The General Council shall meet no later than 31 July 2014 to annex to the Agreement notifications of Category A commitments, to adopt the Protocol drawn up by the Preparatory Committee, and to open the Protocol for acceptance until 31 July 2015. The Protocol shall enter into force in accordance with Article X:3 of the WTO Agreement.



# CARICOM TFA IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

*Priority areas for TACB support*

- ❖ **Transparency Provisions**  
(Publication, Consultation, Enquiry points)
- ❖ **Test Procedures**
- ❖ **Risk Management**
- ❖ **Post Clearance Audit**
- ❖ **Single Window**
- ❖ **Advance Rulings**
- ❖ **Authorised Economic Operators**





# REGIONAL APPROACHES

Initiative	Description/ Scope
Regional or Sub-regional Trade Information Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Transparency</li><li>▪ Publication of TFA-required information.</li><li>▪ Regional enquiry point</li></ul>
Regional Electronic Risk Information Exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Rapid and secure exchange of risk information.</li></ul>
Regional Risk Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ assess regional-level threats and risks</li><li>▪ develop and communicate common risk criteria to CARICOM members</li><li>▪ monitor and evaluate results</li></ul>
Accredited Regional labs and testing bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Designate accredited laboratories in CARICOM region authorized to carry out confirmatory tests for goods imported to any CARICOM member</li></ul>



# REGIONAL SUPPORT INITIATIVES

## Regional Activities

Legal	Model harmonized legislation
Administrative/ Operational Support	Model harmonized SOPs Model harmonized forms + documents Guidelines for establishment/operation of national administrative bodies
Capacity Building	Regional training programs, sharing of experience and expertise and regional best practices.
Regional Coordination	Regional committees - monitor and provide technical guidance



# INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

## CARICOM REGIONAL COMMITTEE ON TRADE FACILITATION (RCTF)



- **Trade Ministerial Council (COTED)** - Policy Oversight
- **CARICOM Customs Committee** - Technical guidance on Customs Matters
- **CROSQ** - Regional standards setting body
- **CAHFSA** - Regional plant and animal health issues
- **NCTFs** - National Co-ordination
- **OECS Commission** - Sub-regional co-ordination
- **CARICOM Secretariat** - Regional co-ordination



## **SOME PROGRESS...**



# SCORECARD

- ✓ *Regional harmonized policy and institutional frameworks to support TF – Customs, SPS, TBT, MASA;*
- ✓ *Harmonised Regional quality infrastructure;*
- ✓ *Some advances in the automation and digitalization of trade procedures and documents;*
- ✓ *OECS Economic Union reform initiatives;*
- ✓ *Regional Co-ordination – Monitoring; TACB mobilization; Information and experience sharing through the RCTF;*



## SOME HEADWINDS....



- ✓ *Slow legislative reform process in Member States*
- ✓ *Infrastructure investment (ICT, risk assessment including certification bodies and testing labs etc.)*
- ✓ *Border Agency co-ordination*
- ✓ *Regional Transportation infrastructure and connectivity;*
- ✓ *CSM implementation gaps*
- ✓ *Public-private dialogue and Private Sector engagement*
- ✓ *National co-ordination and monitoring of commitments (NTFCs);*
- ✓ *Donor engagement.*



# Thank You!

[michele.lowe@caricom.org](mailto:michele.lowe@caricom.org)

[www.caricom.org](http://www.caricom.org)

