

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION

Trade Facilitation for SMEs

Advancing Sustainable Development through Trade Facilitation

UNCTAD/UNESCAP Online Course – 3 June 2026

Macarena Torres Rossel – Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation

Why SMEs Face Greater Barriers

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION

SMEs face trade barriers differently

- Limited resources and expertise
- High compliance costs
- Difficulty navigating procedures
- Greater impact from delays and uncertainty
- Less access to information

For SMEs, border delays can prevent participation in trade altogether.



What ‘’Next Generation’’ Trade Facilitation Means

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION

Moving beyond compliance

- Digitalization
- Transparency
- Simplification
- Coordination
- Inclusion



Trade facilitation should work for the actual users of the system — including SMEs.

Public-Private Cooperation

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION

Public-private cooperation matters

- SMEs often lack channels to influence reform
- Dialogue helps identify real bottlenecks
- Reforms become more practical and effective
- NTFCs can strengthen SME participation

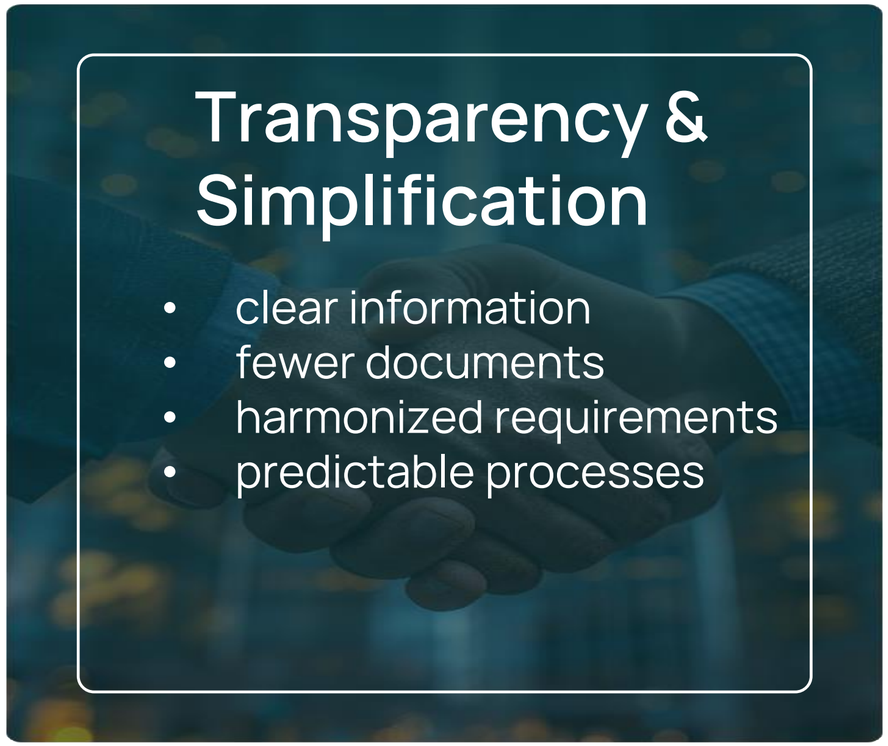
Trade facilitation reforms work best when businesses help shape them.



Practical Reforms that Help SMEs

Practical reforms that reduce SME burdens





Usability matters as much as technology

Trade Facilitation Supports Sustainable Development

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION

- Greater SME participation in trade
- More inclusive value chains
- Support for women-led businesses
- Reduced waste and delays
- Greater economic resilience

Trade facilitation is also an inclusion agenda.

Key Messages

1. Design reforms with SMEs in mind
2. Include the private sector early
3. Prioritize transparency and predictability
4. Focus on usability, not only technology

If reforms work for SMEs, they usually work better for everyone.



GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION

Targeted Solutions Global Impacts

Thank you!

macarena.torresrossel@weforum.org