

Key Points

- G20's commitments have focused on advancing women's entrepreneurship but have not fully considered their challenges to participate in cross-border trade. There is a need to apply a gender lens to trade facilitation measures to promote women's engagement in international trade.
- An examination of the UN's Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation shows that the level of gender mainstreaming in trade facilitation in G20 countries is low.
- There are several gaps in the available data and information on specific measures as reporting by countries on these measures is low.
- A holistic approach that assesses the overall trade policy ecosystem shows that several G20 countries have undertaken varied and innovative initiatives, and used various channels to address women's specific concerns in their trade ecosystem.
- The G20 communiqué should reflect this growing importance of gender mainstreaming in trade and include commitments to address specific concerns of women traders.
- G20 countries should also jointly collect and share data and best practices on gender-related trade facilitation measures to promote inclusive trade.
- The data and best practices should guide and inspire other members to include a gender dimension in trade facilitation, foreign trade policies, measures to support exporters, and future FTAs.

Gender Mainstreaming and Trade Facilitation in G20 Countries

Nisha Taneja, Professor, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), New Delhi, India

Sanjana Joshi, Senior Fellow, ICRIER, New Delhi, India

Shravani Prakash, Consultant, ICRIER, New Delhi, India

Pawani Dasgupta, Former Research Associate, ICRIER, New Delhi, India

Sanya Dua, Research Associate, ICRIER, New Delhi, India

1. Introduction

Women engaged in moving goods across borders face a number of challenges, including time and skill constraints, burdensome customs requirements, limited access to trade finance, and higher exposure to extortion and physical harassment (World Bank and WTO 2020). Applying a gender lens to trade facilitation measures can address these gender-specific impediments and provide a powerful impetus to women's participation in international trade. This, in turn, can have a positive spillover impact on global growth and sustainable development.

However, adding a gender dimension to trade facilitation measures has, until now, proven to be tough because the inequalities are not obvious in trade procedures. The World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), 2017¹ was gender-neutral in its design as it did not include any provisions to mainstream gender (UNCTAD 2022). Nevertheless, to make trade more inclusive, countries around the world have started proactively including provisions for facilitating women's trade in their national trade policies and strategies. Gender-related considerations are especially being addressed via Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) as more countries are including gender-equality provisions in the text of these agreements.

Against this backdrop, this policy brief examines gender mainstreaming efforts in trade facilitation, trade policies, and FTAs being pursued by G20 member countries. It examines the results of the Women and Trade Facilitation component of the 2021 UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation for the member countries (henceforth referred to as the "Survey"). In addition, we identify the gender mainstreaming best practices from various G20 members to highlight policy measures and initiatives that can be adopted by other member countries in their trade ecosystems. Based on these findings, we suggest a possible G20 commitment to gender mainstreaming in trade facilitation and also recommend actions that the Group can jointly undertake in this direction.

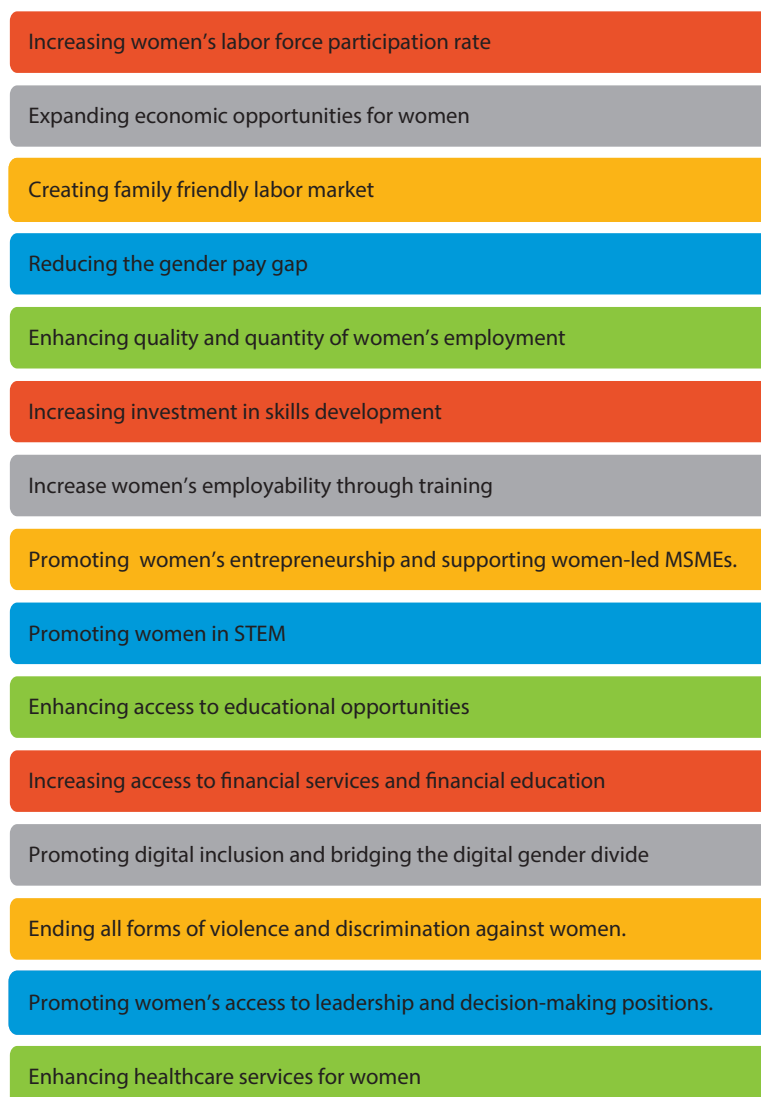
¹ https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tradfa_e/tradfa_e.htm.

2. Rationale for Including Gender Mainstreaming in Trade in the G20

G20 members have undertaken several commitments to enhance women’s economic participation, including measures to eliminate legal barriers to women’s employment; address gender pay inequity; promote

women’s education, entrepreneurship, and skill-building; participation in STEM careers; and increase the proportion of women in leadership positions (Figure 1). The need for “collecting more and accurate gender-disaggregated data” has featured high on the G20’s agenda. They have also focused on measures to address the high burden of unpaid care work on women, to prevent and address gender-based violence, and to advance financial inclusion (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Focus Areas of Gender-Related Commitments by the G20 in their Annual Communiqués



Source: Authors’ analysis of annual G20 communiqués since 2009.

² https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/womenandtrade_e/iwg_trade_gender_e.htm.

However, promoting women in trade or including gender in trade facilitation has not been stated in the G20 communiqués so far. While the 2022 G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration (G20 2022) recognized, for the first time, *"the importance of inclusive international cooperation on digital trade,"* women or gender were still not specifically acknowledged in the context of trade. The focus on gender neutrality, in fact, made the commitment *"gender blind."* This exclusion is significant because G20 members represent over 75% of global trade, and enhancing women's participation in G20's trade can have a significant impact on assimilating women-led businesses in global value chains.

Trade-related gender commitments would be in line with the G20 member countries' engagements at the multilateral level. All 20 members signed the WTO's MC12 Ministerial Outcome document in Geneva in 2022 (WTO 2022), which recognizes women's economic empowerment. Also, 16 of the G20 Members (except India, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the United States) are signatories to the WTO's Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment (2017) and are also a part of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender,² which seeks to increase participation of women in global trade.

In light of the G20's role in global trade and the potential benefits of inclusive trade, it is vital for the G20 to include gender mainstreaming in trade into its core agenda. This would encourage its members to undertake measures to assimilate women-led enterprises in global value chains and increase women's participation in trade facilitation and trade-enabling logistics.

3. Status of Women in Trade Facilitation in G20 Countries

All G20 countries adopted the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in 2017³ to commit to implementing measures to *"expedite the movement, release, and clearance of goods being traded across borders."* Measures contained in the TFA directly contribute to improvement in access to the internet, reduction in corruption and bribery, and formalization and growth of MSMEs, all of which directly impact women (WTO 2017). Even though the TFA does not include any provisions to mainstream

gender (UNCTAD 2022), a number of provisions under the TFA provide the opportunity to add a gender dimension to the implementation of trade-facilitating measures. Articles 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 21, and 23 of the Trade Facilitation Agreement include provisions that could be made gender-inclusive in their implementation (Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation 2020). Table 1 illustrates examples of including the gender dimension in some of the Articles of the TFA.

To assess how G20 countries have undertaken these gender mainstreaming actions in the implementation of the TFA, the most comprehensive source of data that provides a comparative assessment of trade facilitation measures across 144 countries is the biannual UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation conducted by the UN Regional Commissions and UNCTAD.⁴ The analysis is based on 60 trade facilitation measures, covering WTO TFA measures, as well as measures beyond the scope of the TFA. Each of the trade facilitation measures included in the survey is rated *"fully implemented," "partially implemented," "pilot state," "not implemented,"* or *"don't know"* (UN 2021).

A key component of the sustainable aspects of the survey includes scores on the implementation of *"women in trade facilitation"* measures. The overall score is based on answers to three main survey questions:

- Women in Trade Facilitation is a key component included in the sustainability aspect of trade facilitation of the survey. Does the existing trade facilitation policy/strategy incorporate special support to increase women's participation in trade?
- Has your government introduced trade facilitation measures that specifically target women in trade?
- Are women represented in the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC)?

Figure 2 shows the average rates of implementation of the three measures in *"Women in Trade Facilitation"* in G20 countries on the Survey. Saudi Arabia is the only country with a 100% score, reflecting the recent progress the country has made in implementing policies to eliminate various forms of gender discrimination. Australia (90%) and Finland (80%) are also high performers, while India has the highest score among developing countries (67%).

³ https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tradfa_e/tradfa_e.htm.
⁴ <https://www.unctad.org/>.

Table 1: Examples of Actions to Mainstream Gender into Implementation of Some TFA Articles

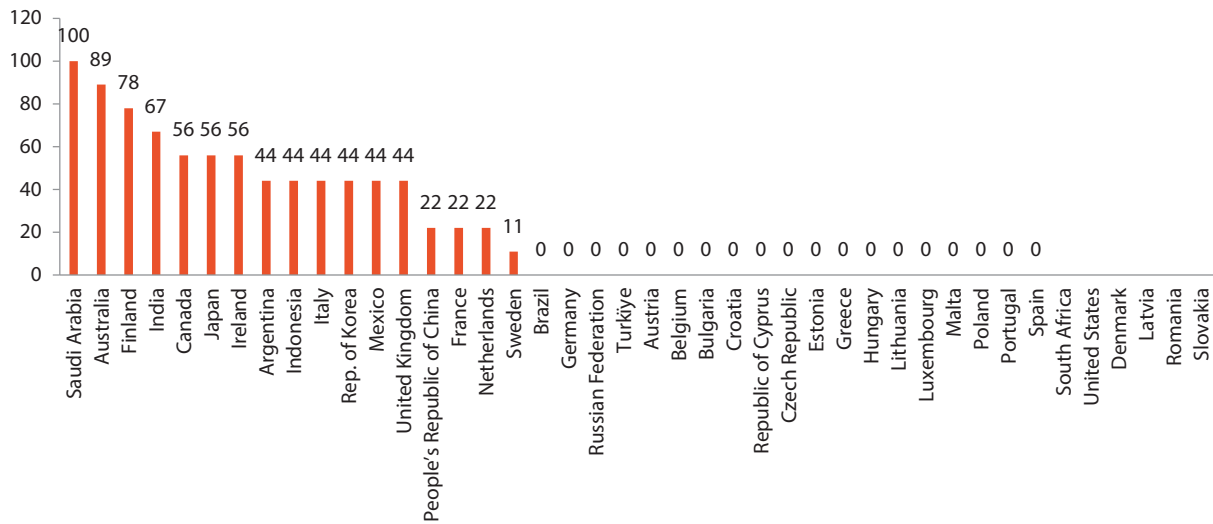
TFA Article	Trade Facilitation Measure to be Implemented	Actions to Mainstream Gender
Article 1: Publication and Availability of Information	Members should publish easily accessible trade-related information (about import, export, and transit procedures) on the Internet.	Women should be consulted to understand the most beneficial format and accessible platform for information to be available to them (i.e., internet, apps, SMS). Capacity-building training for women-owned businesses (WoBs) can be provided to explain trading basics and ways of navigating information platforms.
Article 2: Opportunity to Comment, Information Before Entry Into Force, and Consultations	All interested parties must be consulted and given the opportunity to give comments on rules and protocols before they are enforced. Members should provide for regular consultations between its border agencies and traders or stakeholders located within its territory.	Women's trade and entrepreneurial organisations must be consulted before policies and rules are entered into force. Women's business associations and groups must be included in the consultative process between authorities responsible for trade facilitation.
Article 10: Formalities Connected with Importation, Exportation and Transit	Members should periodically review formalities and documentation requirements in line with specified criteria. Members should use a Single Window for procedural formalities.	WoBs should be included in the review of simplified and harmonized trade processes. Focus on sectors that are most likely to impact WoBs and SMEs. Support marketing and awareness- activities of the simplified trade processes among WoBs. Women must be provided capacity-building training to navigate electronic platforms, such as the single window.
Article 21: Provision of Assistance and Support for Capacity Building	Donor members should facilitate the provision of assistance and support for capacity building to developing-country and least-developed country members.	Capacity-building funds should include specific assistance to female entrepreneurs to improve the ability of women traders to meet customs requirements and to take advantage of preferential trade agreements.
Article 23: Institutional Arrangements	Member countries should set up institutional arrangements for overseeing the implementation of measures of the TFA by establishing National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs).	NTFCs should be made gender balanced and incorporate gender issues into their agendas. They should include provisions to address women's concerns in the national trade facilitation strategies and by implementing specific trade facilitation measures targeted at women. The agenda of the NTFCs should be made gender sensitive by making sure there is an adequate representation of women traders and women entrepreneurial support organizations in the list of members.

Source: Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (2020) and Taneja et al. (2018).

Based on responses to these questions, only 36% of the countries have implemented the requirement of “women membership in NTFC or similar bodies” (Figure 3); while 33% of G20 members have implemented “TF measures to benefit women involved in trade,” “measures regarding how special consideration is given in trade facilitation policies/ strategies of female traders” have only been implemented in about 26% of the countries. However, implementation of all three measures is mostly on a partial and pilot basis, and full implementation is limited.

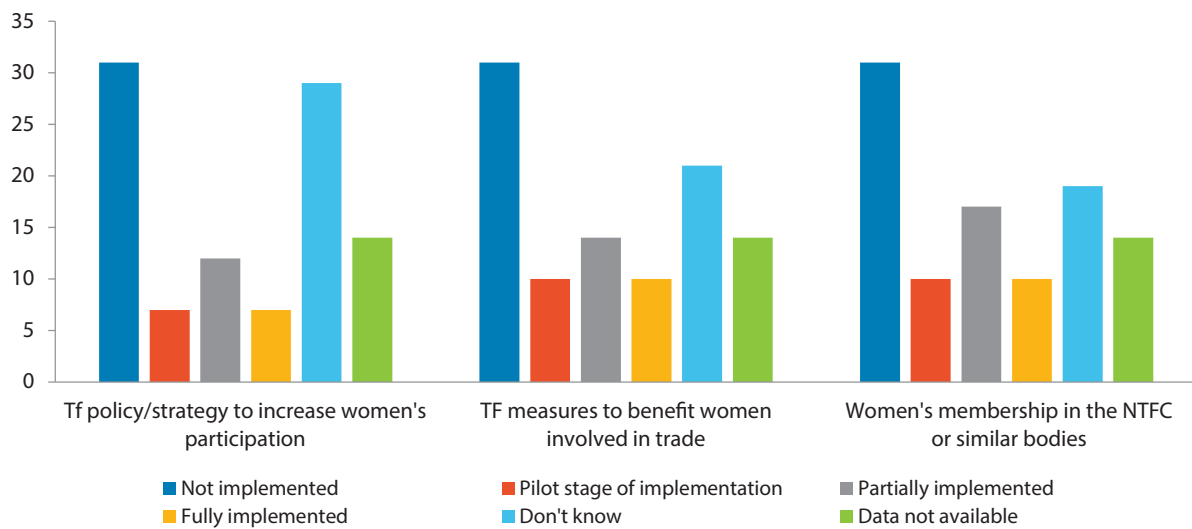
Currently, there are some limitations in reporting gender-related survey responses for trade facilitation that hinder comparable measurement across the G20 countries. For one, there is a very high proportion (30% to 60%) of countries that report “data not available” or “don't know” in response to one or more questions. Discussions with UNESCAP officials indicated that when country experts and governments do not provide responses or validate the data, it is reported as “not available.” And, “don't know” is reported when the experts and officials from national

Figure 2: Overall Implementation Rate of Women in Trade Facilitation Measures in the G20 (2021) (%)



Source: United Nations (2021). *Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation: Global Report 2021*. <https://www.untsurvey.org>.

Figure 3: State of Implementation of Sub-Measures for Women in TF in the G20 (%)



Source: United Nations. *4th UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation*. <https://www.untsurvey.org/report>.

customs and trade facilitation departments do not have knowledge of gender-related measures as it is not a part of their core mandate. Therefore, by not reporting the data, some developed and advanced member countries like the US prevent other countries from learning from their experience.

Another limitation is that the survey results do not disclose the answers to the sub-questions (Figure 4) that are used to calculate the level of implementation of each component. This makes it difficult to understand which policies are being assessed in the scoring and how the implementation rates were arrived at for each country.

Figure 4: Sub-Questions to the UNTF Survey Questions on Gender

- Q48. Does the existing trade facilitation policy/strategy incorporate special support to increase women's participation in trade?**
- 48.1 Does the trade facilitation on policy/strategy make any reference to gender equality as one of the objectives?
 - 48.2 Does the trade facilitation policy/strategy address gender-based barriers to trade for women traders?
 - 48.3 Is data collected or used to support trade facilitation policy/strategy disaggregated by sex?
 - 48.4 Does the responsible authority consider gender-specific impacts in the assessment of any trade facilitation policy/strategy?
- Q49. Has your government introduced trade facilitation measures that specifically target women involved in trade?**
- 49.1 Is there a gender focal point in the Ministry of Trade and/or Customs?
 - 49.2 Have there been specific measures to promote balanced participation of men and women in trainings?
 - 49.3 Has there been at least one specific training for women involved in trade during the past 12 months, by the Ministry of Trade and/or Customs? If yes, please list topics of trainings organized for women involved in trade
- Q50. Are women represented in the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC)?**
- 50.1 What percentage of members in the NTFC Committee are women?
 - 50.2 Is there a minimum number/percentage of women required to be members of the NTFC?
 - 50.3 Does the NTFC include a representative of women traders/entrepreneurs?
 - 50.4 Has the Committee ever been chaired/co-chaired by a woman?

Source: United Nations. *Questionnaire for UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation*. <https://www.untfsurvey.org/>.

Despite the limitations, the insights on gender mainstreaming in trade facilitation provided by the UN survey results are a good starting point to understand how countries can include gender in the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement. Most of the information collected through the survey is either not in the public domain or is available in different departments or agencies. Therefore, a good and complete dataset could be of immense value to all countries.

4. G20 Best Practices: Holistic Approach to Gender Mainstreaming Trade Facilitation

The scope of the UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation does not include any information on specific measures countries have taken to achieve the given level of implementation of trade

facilitation measures. To fill this knowledge gap, it is important to examine gender mainstreaming measures, initiatives, and channels that countries have used to achieve this goal.

The insights from the UN survey on trade facilitation measures indicate that very few countries have implemented measures that apply a gender lens to their trade facilitation initiatives. One reason for this is that adding gender inequality in trade facilitation is difficult, and a wider lens is required to observe inequalities for women when they engage in cross-border trade. Therefore, as recommended by the UNECE (UN/CEFACT 2018), a more holistic approach to the analysis of gender mainstreaming in trade facilitation is required, which includes *“all the functions that women play in international trade activities as producers, traders, entrepreneurs, workers, and policy decision-makers.”* As a result, in addition to gender mainstreaming the implementation of trade facilitation measures, the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the overall trade policy ecosystem is required.

⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/03/11/saudi-women-rising-up-in-business-in-line-with-vision-2030>.

An assessment of G20 countries using this wider gender lens shows that some members have begun to mainstream gender into their economic growth strategies. Some of these countries have specifically included the empowerment of women entrepreneurs in their vision for long-term economic growth. For example, Saudi Arabia, which is the best performer among G20 countries on the women and trade facilitation component of the Survey, has done so by implementing large-scale reforms⁵ to advance women's economic participation, especially women's entrepreneurship. Other G20 members, like the EU, Canada, Australia, the US, and Germany have introduced various forms of gender mainstreaming into their trade policy actions based on their national-level gender strategies.

The following sections highlight G20 members' efforts to mainstream gender into trade facilitation or into their overall trade policies and in FTAs.

4.1 Mainstreaming Gender in Trade Facilitation

Following are the best practices and examples from G20 member countries for mainstreaming gender into the implementation of trade facilitation measures:

4.1.1 India: Gender Mainstreaming in National Trade Facilitation Action Plan

India's National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP) lays out the reform agenda to meet the requirements of the implementation of the TFA. It contains specific measures assigned to stakeholders with indicative timelines for implementation. The National Trade Facilitation Action Plan 2020–2023 (GOI 2020) specifically includes the promotion of "gender inclusiveness in trade" as an action point (Action Point 27). The NTFAP included the gender component following the assessment of the United Nation's Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation (UN 2020), which pointed out that "gender mainstreaming is the only parameter on which India has not performed as well as its regional counterparts." The Action Plan has conceptualized and developed a "Women in Global Business Program" that provides information, resources, and mentoring programs for Indian businesswomen. Implementation of the action points under the NTFAP 2020–2023 includes performance indicators such as the sharing of an inclusiveness report,

the number of outreach programs conducted, and the number of female members participating in Customs Clearance Facilitation Committee meetings (GOI 2020).

4.1.2 Germany: Gender Mainstreaming in Trade Facilitation Projects

The German government supports The German Alliance for Trade Facilitation,⁶ which undertakes trade facilitation projects that contribute to the implementation of the WTO's TFA. The Alliance works with businesses, trade associations, and government institutions worldwide to make international trade simpler and faster with an emphasis on digital solutions for cross-border trade. The goals of the Alliance's projects are to reduce the time and financial expenditure for customs procedures and the movement of goods.

As per information on the German Trade Alliance's website, the Alliance "recognizes that trade facilitation measures can have differentiated effects on different genders," and has therefore, "set itself the goal of designing gender-sensitive projects that would contribute to a feminist development policy in the area of trade." A Gender Task Force has been set up to raise awareness of gender sensitivity in trade facilitation projects, and Gender Guidelines promote gender sensitivity and a "do no harm" approach in the projects. In several projects, they claim to track key performance indicators (KPIs) like the number of women expected to participate in the trainings and thus in their projects. By signing the Code of Conduct, the partners of the German Alliance and the Secretariat commit to acting in a gender-sensitive manner.

4.1.3 Indonesia: Gender Mainstreaming in Customs Operations

Indonesian customs have undertaken several proactive measures to mainstream gender into their organization as well as in their work with external stakeholders. The Directorate General of Customs and Excise, under Indonesia's Ministry of Finance guidance, focuses on the implementation of Gender Equality and Diversity (GED) (Directorate General of Customs and Excise of Indonesia 2021).

Following this, the Indonesian customs department used the WCO's Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT) to assess whether the existing policies

⁶ <https://tradefacilitation.de/en/projects-and-topics/topics/gender/>.

and procedures on gender equality, as implemented at its headquarters, are in line with best practices, and to identify areas of improvement (Directorate General of Customs and Excise of Indonesia 2021). The GEOAT (WCO 2021) examines five key principles related to organizational development that contribute to gender equality, including: (1) Employment and Compensation; (2) Work-life Balance and Career Development; (3) Health, Safety, and Freedom from Violence; (4) Governance and Leadership; and (5) Customs Administration and Stakeholder Relations. The first four principles are related to gender mainstreaming within the customs department. The last principle is important as it takes into account the interests of women in various stakeholder groups, which include customs brokers, importers/exporters, industry/trade associations, and logistics firms (Taneja et al. 2018).

The assessment of the measures followed by Indonesia in 2018 showed that, on average, for 47% of measures, the objectives were achieved under the five indicators. Specifically under the fifth category of customs administration and stakeholder relations, 75% of the objectives were achieved – indicating the high commitment of the Customs Administration to engage with women representing different stakeholder groups related to trade and trade facilitation agencies (Directorate General of Customs and Excise of Indonesia 2021).

4.2 Mainstreaming Gender Into Trade Policy

Some G20 members have also taken significant steps to mainstream gender into their foreign trade policies and strategies. We present some examples:

4.2.1 Germany: Including Women in Policy-Making Processes

Germany introduced a *“Feminist Foreign Policy Guidelines”* document in March 2023 (The Federal Foreign Office 2023), which seeks to *“enable the achievement of gender equality worldwide.”* The guidelines are the first initiative to gender mainstream the work of the German foreign service and will *“influence everything in Germany’s national foreign policy, European policy, and its work in international forums.”* The guidelines will also *“shape the internal work and contribute to a cultural shift.”*

Guideline 5 under the Feminist Foreign Policy elucidates Germany’s approach and initiatives toward gender mainstreaming their foreign trade and investment policy. One of the initiatives listed under this guideline is the Women in Economic Policy (WEP) international network,⁷ which *“sets up dialogue on feminist foreign trade and investment policy at selected missions abroad and works closely with thought leaders on feminist economic relations to facilitate discussion of best practices.”* The network currently has more than 550 members, including from *“German federal ministries, G20 ministries of foreign affairs, the business community, international organizations and think tanks.”*

Germany’s Feminist Foreign Policy also lays the ground for *“a gender-equitable and discrimination-free paradigm of digitalization and Artificial Intelligence.”* It seeks to enable *“a fair, free, and safe digital world for women and marginalized groups to receive equitable participation and access to resources in the development and regulation of new technologies.”* The guidelines also ensure that *“the use of artificial intelligence (AI) is gender-equitable and discrimination-free by design.”*

4.2.2 United States: Equitable, Inclusive, and Durable Trade Policy Actions

The US government has, in the last couple of years, taken proactive initiatives to make its trade policy actions more equitable and inclusive. President Joe Biden’s directive in 2021, for the government to embed equity in its policy goals, objectives, and outcomes, prompted the US trade and investment policy to include racial and gender equity as its core elements (USTR 2023). The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the agency responsible for developing and promoting US trade policy, has taken several steps toward this goal. For instance, the 2022 USTR Annual Trade Report included, for the first time, updates on USTR initiatives to advance gender equity in US trade policy, under a chapter on trade and gender (USTR 2022). The updates also highlighted that the USTR has also been conducting a review of existing trade programs to evaluate their contribution to equitable economic development. It has also committed to engaging in technical assistance and trade capacity building with trading partners to ensure workers and SMEs, especially those owned by women, benefit from US trade policy

⁷ <https://www.womenineconpolicy.com/>.

The USTR Gender Equity Team, formed in collaboration with the White House Gender Policy Council, ensures that “USTR’s trade and investment engagements enable the development of a government-wide strategy to advance gender equity and equality.” It also supports USTR’s proactive engagement (e.g., listening sessions, research, sharing materials) and policy development efforts on advancing gender and trade policy. USTR’s Equity Action Plan (2022) incorporates racial and gender equity into trade and investment-related policy actions (USTR 2023).

The 2023 USTR Report also mentions that the US International Trade Commission (USITC) will conduct an independent investigation of the distributional effects of goods and services trade and trade policy on US workers by skill, wage, salary level, gender, race/ethnicity, age, and income level. USTR will use these results to develop policies that would ensure meeting its goals (USTR 2023).

4.2.3 Australia: Promoting Women in Exports

The Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade), the Australian government’s international trade and investment promotion agency,⁸ has made supporting women to export one of its key objectives. Austrade provides services for women doing business internationally, by “giving them access to relevant market information, resources and advice to build a sustainable international business.”

Austrade has taken an exemplary initiative to use its website as a platform to showcase Australia’s female exporters to the global market via a video gallery of case studies of Australian women⁹ who have built successful international businesses. Showcasing women on the government’s foremost trade promotion platform is an effective approach to enable women to transcend from being entrepreneurs to exporters, as the increased visibility and government backing make their outreach to foreign markets easier and faster.

On its website, Austrade also mentions that it provides a *Women in Export Scholarship* to senior business women in an internationally focused role, to attend Harvard Business School’s program “Disruptive Innovation – Strategies for a

Successful Enterprise,” which enables entrepreneurs with tools for strategic decision making. Austrade also provides networking opportunities for women in business, by creating a platform that brings together women-focused business and networking organizations.

4.3 Mainstreaming Gender into Free Trade Agreements

Gender mainstreaming in trade agreements means “the inclusion of gender considerations in their drafting and implementation, an affirmation of a country’s commitment to reducing gender inequalities through trade policies and agreements, and a push for an inclusive trade agenda” (Bahri 2021). FTAs have the potential to generate more economic opportunities and result in reduced barriers for women when approached through a gender lens and through tailored gender-mainstreaming strategies (Katrin and Bahri 2023).

As per the WTO’s Database on gender provisions in RTAs,¹⁰ 14 of the G20 member countries had included one or more gender commitments in their FTAs until August 2022. These members include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, the People’s Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union. Among G20 members, gender provisions have been incorporated in FTAs as separate protocols or in agreement preambles and objectives; annexes; nonspecific articles; specific articles on gender; and as side agreements (Bahri 2021). Canada and the EU have been leaders in including gender provisions in FTAs, as discussed below.

4.3.1 Canada: Gender Provisions in FTAs and Gender Impact Assessments

Canada has pioneered the mainstreaming of gender into its trade agreements, and the Government of Canada has prioritized the inclusion of trade and gender chapters in the country’s FTAs (Government of Canada 2023). In 2017, Canada included, for the first time, a trade and gender chapter as part of the modernized Canada–Chile FTA, and the modernized Canada–Israel FTA (Taneja et al. 2021).

⁸ <https://www.austrade.gov.au/australian/how-austrade-can-help/trade-services/women-in-export>.

⁹ <https://www.austrade.gov.au/australian/how-austrade-can-help/trade-services/women-in-export#video>.

¹⁰ https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/womenandtrade_e/gender_responsive_trade_agreement_db_e.htm.

The most noteworthy policy initiative mandated by the Government of Canada is the Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) analytical process to examine the potential impacts and opportunities of all its policy actions (Government of Canada 2022a). In line with this, each chapter of every FTA that Canada enters into undergoes a comprehensive GBA+ analysis, which enables the development of trade policies and related measures that are more gender- and inclusivity-responsive (Government of Canada 2022b). The results of the application of GBA+ on trade agreements help in the identification of potential negative effects as well as the opportunities created through the application of an FTA. This in turn helps to inform negotiators and policy makers of the best ways to address gender and inclusivity considerations.

For example, during the Canada–Mercosur FTA Negotiations, Canada conducted a comprehensive, quantitative and qualitative, chapter-wise GBA+ evaluation for the first time. The analysis showed that the potential agreement could generate slightly greater demand for female workers and would increase female labor force participation a little more than that of males. It also predicted that female employment in both goods and services sectors would increase more for men. However, the GBA+ on chapters like Environment; Trade and Gender and Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) identified potential barriers that women may encounter and, therefore, recommended new provisions in each of these chapters to address these barriers (Government of Canada 2021).

GBA+ is also exemplary since it relies significantly on collecting and assessing gender-disaggregated data to provide the evidence base for understanding the effects of policies. The data is collected by Statistics Canada's Census, Labour Force Survey, a Gender-based Statistical Report called "Women in Canada,"¹¹ and through stakeholder consultations. Global Affairs Canada's Office of the Chief Economist uses this data for economic modelling that helps highlight the effects of FTAs on gender and other subgroups in the population.

Canada also has in place a Gender and Trade Advisory Group that ensures that *"the benefits of trade are more widely shared, including with underrepresented groups*

such as women" (Government of Canada 2023). With the objective of conducting outreach with a wide range of stakeholders, the Group engages Canadians from all sectors and regions in important conversations on trade and gender. This initiative provides a forum for government officials to hear from trade and gender experts, academics, and leading organizations on women in business on their challenges, concerns, and successes. It also helps to receive feedback on the Trade and Gender chapter provisions for trade agreements and other trade policy issues as well as build knowledge and capacity on these issues.

4.3.2 European Union: Including Gender Under Sustainability

The European Union is the leader in terms of the number of gender-mainstreamed FTAs. The European Parliament signed a resolution to include gender equality considerations in all future trade agreements (European Parliament 2018). Thereafter, of the 45 regional trade agreements that the European Union has signed,¹² 36 contain gender-explicit provisions in one form or another (as per the WTO's Database on gender provisions in RTAs). The United Kingdom has also mainstreamed gender into 32 of its 38 FTAs.

The key feature of the EU's FTAs has been the inclusion of gender-explicit provisions or chapters on trade and sustainability. The EU's agreements focus on trade-related social and labour standards as well as sustainable development and mostly include gender issues within these categories. Concerns relate, in particular, to employment non-discrimination, health, physical safety, and education. Cooperation to improve standards is a significant component of the agreements.

The EU has also made a commitment to carry out Sustainability Impact Assessments (SIA)¹³ of all negotiated trade agreements. Efforts have been made to ensure that these assessments include an analysis of the impact on women and other vulnerable groups. Current SIAs include four main impact areas: human rights, labor, social issues, and the environment. Impact on women is usually included in the section on social issues.

¹¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/89-503-X>.

¹² <https://rtais.wto.org/UI/PublicSearchByMemberResult.aspx?membercode=918>.

¹³ https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/analysis-and-assessment/sustainability-impact-assessments_en.

5. Summary and Recommendations

It is evident that gender mainstreaming in trade is gaining importance among G20 members as many of them have undertaken several initiatives and utilized various channels to address women's specific concerns into their trade facilitation ecosystem. Such measures can serve as policy best practices to guide and inspire other members to include a gender dimension into trade facilitation. For instance, the country experiences show that gender can be mainstreamed into the implementation of the TFA by including women in the Trade Facilitation Action Plan, by gender mainstreaming trade facilitation projects, or by using WCO's GEOAT toolkit for mainstreaming gender in the customs operations. Women can also be included in the devising trade processes and the formulation of a feminist foreign policy. Countries can make proactive efforts to showcase women exporters and to make every trade policy action gender inclusive. Lastly, gender mainstreaming FTAs by including gender provisions, backed by data and impact assessments, can be an effective tool for addressing barriers faced by women traders.

However, the G20 group's commitments have focused on women's entrepreneurship but not on their transition to expanding their business as exporters or importers. Therefore, we recommend that the G20 members should include mainstreaming gender into their trade policies and trade facilitation strategies and future work agenda.

The starting point can be the G20 Communiqué, which should add "*addressing specific concerns of female traders*" or of "*women-owned enterprises*" to the "*inclusive trade commitment*." This would explicitly foster thematic discussions on gender in the G20 Trade and Investment Working Group (TIWG) Meetings.

Further, best practices shared between G20 countries can facilitate members to further explore mainstreaming gender into the implementation of their trade facilitation measures. To improve women's access to international markets, the design and implementation of trade

facilitation measures would need to address barriers like women's lack of awareness of trade policies and procedures; higher transaction costs faced than their male counterparts, and exclusion from the consultative processes (UN 2022).

For one, G20 members must jointly mandate their National Trade Facilitation Committees, the highest bodies for implementing trade facilitation measures, to take actions toward addressing gender equality in their membership. They could also propose that the specific ministries for women be represented in the membership of the NTFCs. Gender and women's concerns should also explicitly be mentioned in the agenda of NTFCs.

In order to address the information asymmetry and data limitations visible in the analysis of women's participation in trade, G20 members should commit to collecting and sharing data and best practices on gender-related trade facilitation measures. At the least, they need to ensure that they provide complete responses to UN trade facilitation surveys on all questions related to women and trade facilitation measures. This will help reduce the number of "Don't Know" and "Not Available" responses, thereby improving the quality of data. Also, since this survey provides a good avenue to report data on gender dimensions of trade facilitation, countries like the US should also participate and respond, so other G20 Members can learn from them.

G20 members could commit to the inclusion of a gender chapter into their future or revised FTAs since 14 of the 20 members have already inserted gender provisions in one or more of their regional trade agreements. They could also collaborate to conduct impact assessments of trade agreements on both an ex-ante and ex-post basis, along the lines of Canada's GBA+ analysis.

By undertaking these joint and cooperative actions, G20 nations would be able to utilize their position of global dominance to ensure the power of cross-border trade is harnessed to achieve sustainable development and enable all people around the world to thrive.

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Asian Development Bank Institute

Kasumigaseki Building 8F
3-2-5 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-6008
Japan
Tel: +813 3593 5500
www.adbi.org