



# Modernizing Jordan Customs for a More Competitive Economy



The Government of Jordan, through the Jordan Customs Department (JCD), with financial and technical assistance from the Jordan Growth Multi-Donor Trust Fund (Jordan Growth MDTF)—co-chaired by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) and the World Bank—is accelerating trade facilitation so clearance becomes faster, smarter, and more predictable for the private sector.

These reforms focus on aligned legislation, risk-based controls, and end-to-end digital processes across border agencies, in line with World Trade Organization's (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and The World Customs Organization (WCO) standards.

Jordan Growth MDTF support has focused on modernizing systems and institutional capacity, improving trade infrastructure and procedures, and strengthening coordination among partners to align support with JCD's reform priorities. This includes more inclusive engagement with the private sector, particularly SMEs and women-led businesses, through the National Trade Facilitation Committee, and legislative reforms introducing Post

Clearance Audit (PCA) and Coordinated Border Management, which culminated in the amended **Customs Law of August 2024**.

Overall, the support aims to modernize and develop Jordan Customs in line with international best practices, enhancing trade facilitation, efficiency, and compliance.

As the lead government agency implementing Jordan's trade facilitation agenda, JCD has been one of the main beneficiaries of Jordan Growth MDTF support. MoPIC, through the Reform Secretariat, coordinates all Jordan Growth MDTF supported activities with JCD and donors to ensure resources are allocated efficiently and without overlap.

## From Assessments to Action

Work on modernizing trade procedures began with the Jordan Growth MDTF's Gap Analysis of **the National Single Window (NSW)**, which examined system performance and operational challenges. NSW, launched in 2019, enables traders and logistics companies to submit all required documents electronically through

a single entry point, eliminating the need to visit multiple agencies or resubmit the same information several times.

The analysis recommended developing a more advanced risk management system to help reduce inspection rates at border posts and prioritize inspections based on available human and infrastructure capacity. It also reviewed the NSW from a Coordinated Border Management perspective, providing recommendations that were later reflected in the project to unify regulatory border agencies.

This analysis served as the foundation for the upgraded “NSW 2.0” roadmap, which focuses on full digital integration across all border agencies, enhanced data exchange, interoperability with the private sector, and performance monitoring.

The NSW architecture is based on two core components:

1. An enhanced ASYCUDA World module that integrates workflows for nine other government agencies, allowing for faster coordination during customs processing.
2. A Licensing Hub, which provides electronic workflows for trade-related permits across four key other government agencies in addition to JCD, with plans to expand coverage to all agencies involved in import, export, and transit operations.

The NSW is already showing measurable impact. It has **reduced documentation requirements, improved inter-agency coordination, and shortened clearance and release times at major border points** including Aqaba Port, Queen Alia International Airport, and Al-Omari Border Crossing. Supported by strong political will, the government continues to invest in expanding the system, ensuring that all

agencies and traders benefit from a digital and transparent process. As NSW 2.0 progresses, it will enable Jordan to meet its Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) commitments through end-to-end digital processing, structured participation of other government agencies (OGA), and continuous performance monitoring.

In parallel, a detailed **Post Clearance Audit (PCA)** assessment was completed, followed by the development of a PCA Roadmap in November 2022 to guide the transition to modern post-clearance controls. As a key TFA requirement, PCA enables customs to shift from time-consuming border checks to smarter, risk-based controls performed after goods are released, improving compliance without delaying trade.

**The MDTF’s technical support played a vital role in shaping the legislative and institutional changes required to operationalize PCA. Today, around 60 trained and equipped staff are implementing PCA, which has already led to an estimated 55% increase in green-lane shipments.**

**Findings from the NSW and PCA assessments informed the 2024 Customs Law amendments**, which introduced a full PCA framework and created the legal basis for pre-arrival cargo information, and legal base for border agencies unification. These amendments are formally recognized as a **Prior Action under the US\$400 million Jordan Growth and Competitiveness Development Policy Financing (DPF) operation.**

To monitor progress, a **Time Release Study Plus (TRS+)** was conducted in 2022 and released in 2023 with MDTF support. Covering Aqaba, Al-Omari, the Amman Inland Terminal, and Queen Alia

International Airport, the study identified bottlenecks and practical steps to improve clearance times, while also capturing the experiences of women-led businesses to promote inclusivity in reforms.

The study found high inspection rates for **Golden List (AEO)** companies and lane-capacity imbalances in some centers. JCD acted on these findings by upgrading Al-Omari infrastructure, reallocating staff, revising risk management methodologies, and updating NSW and Integrated Risk Management System (IRMS) requirements. In addition, working hours were extended in several customs centers to accelerate release and improve service efficiency.

The TRS+ has since been adopted as a performance indicator under the Economic Modernization Vision (EMV), measuring Jordan's progress in trade facilitation, efficiency, and competitiveness. A follow-up TRS+, supported by SIDA, will soon be launched to assess the continued impact of reforms.

### **Bridging Knowledge Gaps in Gender-Specific Data**

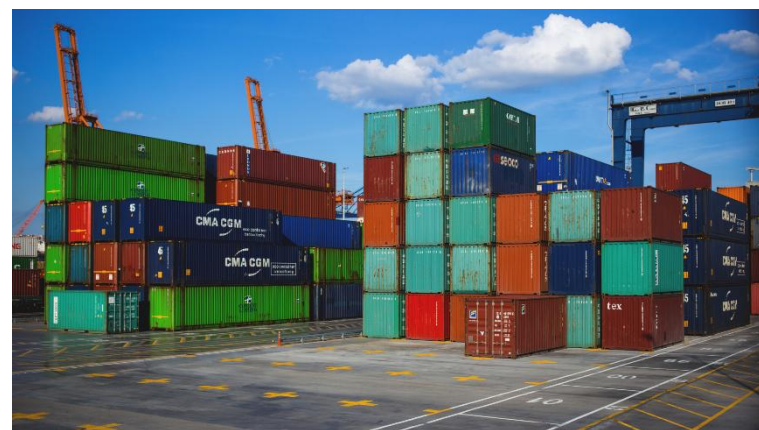
To complement the institutional reforms, a **Trade Facilitation and Gender Study** was conducted to better understand the barriers women face in cross-border trade in Jordan. The study surveyed women- and men-led firms as well as customs clearing agents, offering one of the first evidence-based analyses of gender-specific challenges in the sector.

It revealed a **male dominance of nearly 95% across various supply chain segments**, largely due to limited awareness and access to information rather than policy restrictions. The **JCD responded by integrating gender considerations into its annual training plan**, while the Directorate

**of Strategic Studies included gender and trade as a research priority in its 2026 agenda.**

These findings now serve as a baseline for future progress and guide ongoing efforts to make trade facilitation more inclusive and equitable for all.

Building on this momentum, provided support will contribute to the development of a National Risk Management Framework.



### **Digitalization and Risk-Based Control**

The Government of Jordan has adopted UNCTAD's ASYCUDA World (AW) as its integrated customs data management system. To further enhance the system's functionality, an **Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) module was introduced to strengthen the Golden List program**. This module applies dedicated risk rules for trusted traders, ensuring they are not subject to the same level of inspections as other operators.

The Time Release Study (TRS) had earlier identified a high inspection rate for Golden List members due to limited control over the ASYCUDA risk module. In response, the Reform Secretariat, through Jordan Growth MDTF support, financed the procurement and installation of the AEO component, establishing a separate risk management environment for AEO companies. As a

result, these firms now benefit from faster clearance and increased green-lane shipments.

Together with the NSW and PCA systems, the AEO module has laid the foundation for a more collaborative and trusted relationship between customs and the private sector. **To date, 134 companies have joined the AEO program.**

Complementing these achievements, JCD moved forward with the design of an **Integrated Risk Management System (IRMS)**, a core digital solution that will enhance risk profiling, automate targeting, and improve decision-making across border operations.

The IRMS design was informed by studies conducted by GIZ and the International Trade Centre (ITC), along with consultations and field visits by a World Bank expert who consolidated the system's functional requirements. The business model has been finalized and is currently in the procurement phase. Once implemented, **the IRMS is expected to significantly reduce inspection rates, prevent revenue leakage, and maintain a balanced approach between facilitation and compliance.**

### Coordination Vehicle

Behind each milestone stands a network of dedicated institutions and partners working together through the Trade Facilitation Working Group, co-led by JCD and the Reform Secretariat, and including the World Bank, GIZ, ITC, USAID, and SIDA. This platform ensures continuous coordination, alignment, and information sharing among reform partners. Many of these efforts also fed into the Customs Law amendments enacted in August 2024, ensuring that legal and institutional

frameworks keep pace with modernization needs.

### Advancing the Reform Agenda

As Jordan advances further into the digital age of trade, the vision remains clear: a modern, efficient, and transparent customs system that lowers costs for the private sector, enhances compliance, and strengthens Jordan's position as a competitive trade hub in the region.

With continued support from the Jordan Growth MDTF and close collaboration with development partners, JCD is steadily turning this vision into reality, demonstrating how reform, when led with national ownership and strong partnerships, can deliver tangible, lasting impact on the ground.

These modernization efforts reaffirm Jordan Customs' commitment to achieving excellence in trade facilitation and institutional development. They also reflect the confidence and trust that national stakeholders and international partners continue to place in Jordan's reform journey.

*“We've seen a major difference since the Customs reforms were introduced, especially with the Post Clearance Audit. Processes are now clearer and faster, reducing both time and storage costs. Today, our relationship with Customs is built on trust and cooperation, it truly feels like a partnership that makes trade smoother for everyone.”*

Mohamood Barqawi, Financial Manager at Abu Tawileh Group