

FY18 FIAS REFORM DESCRIPTIONS

COUNTRY	REFORM TOPIC	REFORM DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF REFORMS	DB VALIDATED
AFRICA			12	
Guinea	Construction Permits	Guinea made dealing with construction permits less expensive and time consuming by reducing the cost and the time needed to obtain a building permit. A decree promulgated in March 2018 amended the fee schedule for building permits to reduce the cost and time required. The basic rate of a building permit for a building with a ground floor between 201 and 300 square meters is down slightly, to approximately \$143, and the increase for each additional level has been reduced from 20 percent to 15 percent while the basic rate for each square meter has been reduced from 1 percent to 0.5 percent.	1	DB19
Guinea	Starting a Business	Guinea made starting a business easier by allowing registration with the labor promotion agency at the one-stop shop. The project team helped develop a single form for business registration at the single window of the Private Investment Promotion Agency, making it possible to register to the Guinean Agency for the Promotion of Employment while registering to other entities and obtaining a tax registration number from the National Tax Directorate in one streamlined procedure. Employee registrations can now be completed directly at the one-stop shop using the single form and without having to go to the labor promotion agency to notify the hiring of employees. This has reduced the time and number of procedures needed to start a business. The form is available online.	1	DB19
Guinea	Registering Property	Guinea made property registration easier by reducing the property transfer fee. The project team has helped update the country's Doing Business plan and provided support for implementation of reforms, with a focus on business registration.	1	DB19
Mali	Enforcing Contracts	Mali made enforcing contracts easier by adopting a law that regulates all aspects of mediation as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism. A legal text review formed the basis for reorganization of the Commercial Court to improve handling of commercial litigation as well as the Court's overall service delivery.	1	DB19
Mozambique	Getting Electricity	Mozambique reduced the time to get an electricity connection by streamlining procedures through the utility instead of different agencies. It also reduced costs by eliminating the security deposit for large commercial clients. Revisions to rules governing the establishment and licensing of new electrical connections to the national power grid translate into an optimized, simplified, and streamlined connection process. Customer service is now organized as a one-stop shop for meeting requirements, making payments, receiving permits and licenses, and arranging inspections and connections. A rule requiring prior inspection and authorization of a connection application by the Ministry of Energy has been eliminated.	1	DB18
Rwanda	Protecting Minority Investors	Rwanda strengthened minority investor protections by making it easier to sue directors, clarifying ownership and control structures and requiring greater corporate transparency. The new law incorporates best practices for the protection of minority investors. It introduces and reinforces provisions that enhance corporate governance and transparency by clarifying shareholder rights and establishing director duties and liabilities. The law provides for disclosure of related party transactions and significant ownership stakes. It includes provisions that strengthen and protect the rights of minority shareholders. The new law has boosted investor confidence by strengthening the rights of minority shareholders, increasing their access to information, and providing for their participation in shareholder meetings.	1	DB18
Rwanda	Inspections	Rwanda made trading across borders easier by removing the mandatory pre-shipment inspection for imported products.	1	
Rwanda	Licenses and Permits	Beginning in September 2017, Rwanda began reducing mobile termination rates (MTR)—the fees that one telecommunications operator charges another for terminating calls and texts on its network. As of 2019, the MTR has been cut by 90 percent to just over two-tenths of a cent per minute. The revised MTR rates allow operators to reduce consumer prices, leveling the playing field and encouraging investment by current operators in the telecommunications sector. Already one operator, TIGO, has reduced rates on mobile networks in response to the reduction. Previously, Rwandan consumers were paying higher tariffs for calls and text messages than consumers elsewhere in the region.	1	
Rwanda	Starting a Business	Rwanda made starting a business less costly by replacing electronic billing machines with free software for value-added tax invoices. A revised ministerial order now makes clear business entities are required to use an electronic billing machine (EBM). The previous requirement that all businesses and start-ups purchase an EBM has now been limited to only VAT-registered taxpayers. This means that the majority of businesses in Rwanda which are SMEs and which fall under the Doing Business case study, are not required to comply with the EBM requirement, translating into a savings for these small firms of approximately \$170.	1	DB19
South Africa	Starting a Business	South Africa made starting a business easier by reducing the time for online business registration. The time involved to start a business was reduced from 45 days to 40 days. The project team contributed to the reform through preparation of an updated Doing Business Reform Memo, which was submitted to InvestSA and the Office of the President. It included simulated post-reform scores on the Distance to Frontier, enabling the government to see how the reform would enhance the country's Doing Business ranking.	1	DB19

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South Africa	Getting Electricity	South Africa improved the monitoring and regulation of power outages by beginning to record data for the annual system average interruption duration index (SAIDI) and system average interruption frequency index (SAIFI). The effort was centered on the City of Johannesburg with the aim of improving the reliability of power supply monitoring. The city started calculating the total duration and frequency of outages per customer using the SAIDI and SAIFI methodology, making them eligible to score on the reliability of supply and transparency of tariffs index. Measuring the number and duration of power interruptions is a critical step to improving the process of getting electricity. Without such information, electricity companies cannot monitor and measure their performance. The availability of the data makes it possible to introduce necessary improvements to ensure more reliable service and access to electricity.	1	DB19
Togo	Construction Permits	Togo made dealing with construction permits safer by implementing decennial liability and insurance and strengthening quality control before construction. Togo also reduced the cost to obtain a building permit.	1	DB19
EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC			1	
Myanmar	Investment Policy - Entry	Cumbersome procedures for registering new investments contributed to an average of 90 days for the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) to process an investment proposal. Where previously all foreign investment proposals had to be approved by MIC, the new Myanmar Investment Law allows investments of less than \$5 million to be processed by a newly established State-Region Investment Committee which is required to issue investment endorsements within 30 days. With simplified procedures and fewer applications to process, MIC is able to handle larger investment proposals more quickly than before.	1	
EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA			13	
Albania	Enforcing Contracts	Albania made enforcing contracts easier by amending the code of civil procedure to establish a simplified procedure for small claims and introduce time standards for certain court events. A new law that entered into force in November 2017 amends the civil procedure code to require judges to reform and guide parties about the possibility of resolving disputes through mediation; require defendants to file a statement of defense within 30 days of the notification of a lawsuit; simplifies procedures for handling small claims; and establishes reasonable time limits for court proceedings and decisions.	1	DB19
Azerbaijan	Property Transfers	Azerbaijan made registering property easier by increasing the transparency of the land administration system. During the second half of 2017, the State Committee updated its website to publish statistics on the number of property transactions. The Ministry of Justice upgraded its website to include statistics on the number of land disputes in the First Instance Court. The reforms stem from a Doing Business Action Plan delivered in 2016 by the IFC project team.	1	DB19
Azerbaijan	Investor Protections	Azerbaijan strengthened minority investor protections by increasing shareholder rights and their role in major corporate decisions, clarifying ownership and control structures and requiring greater corporate transparency. A new law passed by the National Assembly in April 2018 addresses shareholder rights, ownership and control structures, and corporate transparency. Members of limited liability companies wishing to sell shares are required to first offer the shares to existing members of the company before transferring them to a third party. LLCs are required to pay dividends within 30 days of the declaration date. Joint-stock companies must now disclose the compensation of directors on an individual basis in their annual reports.	1	DB19
Azerbaijan	Construction Permits	Azerbaijan made dealing with construction permits easier by streamlining its construction permitting process. Construction permits are now issued only by the Baku City Executive Office single window. Low-risk construction sites along with their construction designs no longer need to pass a comprehensive project review; passing a project review with the Ministry of Emergency Situations is no longer required. Investors are only required to use the single window to obtain a construction permit. The number of procedures and days needed to deal with construction permits has declined from 21 procedures and 242 days to 18 procedures and 116 days.	1	DB19
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Investment Policy - Promotion	The Local Investment-Friendly Environment (LIFE) project assisted 21 local governments in development, programming, and implementation of a targeted investor aftercare program through multi-level government collaboration. Local governments proactively approached 103 companies—both foreign and domestic investors doing business in the country—to discuss unresolved issues and either resolve them or propose reforms where changes in the legal framework were required. The targeted aftercare program resulted in an increased percentage of investors' open issues resolved (19 percent) and number of firms investing (eight), and generated new investments of \$25.4 million. These outcomes were confirmed by the project's investor survey. Investors acknowledged the value of the services provided under the aftercare program, including fast tracking of permits and licenses, assistance in identifying investment location, connecting to infrastructure, and provision of investment incentives.	1	

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Croatia	Registering Property	Croatia made transferring property more efficient by digitizing its land registry.	1	DB19
Kazakhstan	Enforcing Contracts	Kazakhstan made enforcing contracts easier by making judgments rendered at all levels in commercial cases publicly available and publishing performance measurement reports on local commercial courts. A database of judicial acts, was launched on the official website of the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan. After some initial technical difficulties, it was modernized and enhanced so that as of May 2018, judgments rendered in commercial cases in trial courts, courts of appeal, and the Supreme Court were available to the public via the website, along with statistics on the performance of courts. For example, data was provided for the Almaty Inter-District Commercial Court on the time required to resolve cases, the number of received cases during a specific reporting period, and the cases and applications under consideration at the beginning of a reporting period	1	DB19
Kazakhstan	Starting a Business	Kazakhstan made starting a business easier by reducing the time required for value-added tax registration.	1	DB19
Kosovo	Construction Permits	Kosovo made dealing with construction permits easier by streamlining the inspection system using an in-house engineer. The Pristina Municipality in Kosovo eliminated the practice of conducting inspections during construction. A location inspection and final inspection are conducted by the municipality; for inspections during constructions, the owner must use an in-house qualified engineering professional. The number of procedures for dealing with construction permits has been reduced from 15 to 12.	1	DB19
Kyrgyz Republic	Enforcing Contracts	The Kyrgyz Republic made enforcing contracts easier by introducing a pre-trial conference as part of the case management techniques in court and adopting a consolidated law on voluntary mediation. Among other innovations, the new law introduced a pre-trial conference as part of the case management techniques used in court. Pre-trial conferences are now conducted in practice in all courts, including the Bishkek Inter-District Court. Another new law that also took effect in July 2017 introduced a consolidated set of rules regulating voluntary of virtually all aspects of mediation, including the enforceability of mediated settlement agreements.	1	DB19
Kyrgyz Republic	Investor Protections	The Kyrgyz Republic strengthened minority investor protections by increasing shareholders' rights and role in major corporate decisions, strengthening the independence of boards of directors and barring subsidiaries from acquiring shares issued by their parent companies. Amendments to the law on joint stock companies entered into force in August 2017 with new provisions on shareholder rights and ownership and control structures of listed companies. The amendments require that no less than 30 percent of the board of directors be independent, meaning they are unaffiliated with the company, unrelated to anyone in the company, not government officials, and not auditors or shareholder representatives of the company. The new provisions allow shareholders representing 10 percent of share capital to call extraordinary meetings of shareholders and prohibit a subsidiary from acquiring shares issued by the parent company.	1	DB19
Uzbekistan	Trade Facilitation	Uzbekistan made trading across borders faster by introducing an electronic application and payment system for several export certificates, reducing the time for export documentary compliance. A new version of Uzbekistan's single-window website introduced in July 2017 allowed for electronic requests and payment of various certificates required for export, such as certificates of origin and phytosanitary certificates. With the implementation of these new features, the overall time of documentary compliance for export has decreased from more than seven days to four days.	1	DB19
Uzbekistan	Investor Protections	Uzbekistan strengthened minority investor protections by clarifying the ownership and control structures of listed companies. In December 2017, Uzbekistan amended the law on joint stock companies and protection of shareholder rights. Specifically, the amendments prohibit subsidiary companies from owning voting shares of their parent company. Companies that acquired voting shares of their main or parent companies before the entry into force of the prohibition are not entitled to vote at the general meeting of shareholders of the respective company.	1	DB19

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LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN			2	
Central America Region	Agribusiness	The six countries of the Council of Ministers of Economic Integration of Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama) streamlined trade procedures for processed food and beverages in the region. Prior to this project, companies needed to go to each country to request a certificate of free sale of each product that they wanted to trade, a timely and costly process. The reform streamlined, harmonized, and automated procedures for sanitary registration for processed food beverages with the ultimate aim of boosting entrepreneurship and productivity, creating jobs, enlarging the regional market, and making the region a more attractive investment destination. The reform, which took effect in July 2017, reduced the number of documents required to recognize registries from four to two.	1	
Colombia	Investment Policy - Protection and Retention	Colombia established an effective investor grievance mechanism (IGM) to enable governments to effectively address political risk grievances. IGM includes a monitoring and tracking system providing information on the number of investor grievances and the associated investment at risk.	1	
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AMERICA			2	
Jordan	Investment Policy - Incentives	Jordan improved its investment incentives regime through the launch of an online database providing investors and stakeholders with comprehensive and up-to-date information about all types of incentives available to investors. The reform increased transparency of the incentives regime, enabling investors to make better informed decisions. By making the parameters for providing incentives publicly available, the reform reduced possibility for discretionary decisions by government agencies. It gave government, through the Jordan Investment Commission (JIC), an instrument for investment promotion and subsequent cost-benefit analysis of all incentives, and a better way to ensure that the investment incentives aligned with national priorities for investment.	1	
Jordan	Investment Policy - Promotion	IFC helped Jordan develop the capacity of the new Jordan Investment Commission (JIC) as a lead investment promotion agency and equipped it with the tools and resources to attract, retain and support investors. Investment promotion reform in Jordan was a core pillar in the World Bank lending program, "Economic Opportunities for Jordanians and Syrian Refugees, Program for Results," for which the technical advisory was delivered through this project. IFC helped develop the Investment Promotion Directorate (IPD) structure, its operation manuals and instructions, and staff jobs description. Numerous trainings and capacity building events were conducted, and the IPD staff were specifically trained on the investment promotion technique, including lead generation. Prior to the reform, JIC had struggled with a lack of knowledge and experience of working with investors, high turnover and low training levels of staff, and poor coordination internally and with other government agencies.	1	
SOUTH ASIA			10	
Afghanistan	Resolving Insolvency	Afghanistan made resolving insolvency easier by improving the continuation of a debtor's business during insolvency proceedings, introducing the reorganization procedure, and granting creditors greater participation in the proceedings. The revised Insolvency Law clearly defines procedures for solving private sector problems in cases of insolvency. Enactment of the law provides clarifies issues for the private sector relating to resolving insolvency, eligibility of debtors, appointment, qualification, and remuneration of the receiver, auditors, and other stakeholders.	1	DB19
Afghanistan	Getting Credit	Afghanistan strengthened access to credit by enacting a new insolvency law. Secured creditors are now given absolute priority over other claims within insolvency proceedings. The project supported the Afghan Presidential Office, Senior Economic Advisory Unit, providing feedback on drafts and the final version which clearly defines procedures for solving private sector problems in case of insolvency and gives an absolute priority to secured creditors within insolvency proceedings.	1	DB19
Afghanistan	Tax Simplification and Compliance Management	Afghanistan made paying taxes easier by adopting a new tax administration and law manual with clear rules and guidelines on tax audit, and by automating the submission of tax returns. The project provided recommendations on paying taxes in Afghanistan to government counterparts. Discussions with the private sector led to recommendations which included e-filing and risk management techniques. Based on recommendations, the government adopted a new tax administration and law manual with clear rules and guidelines on tax audit and automated the submission of tax returns resulting in streamlined processes for paying taxes.	1	DB19

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Afghanistan	Protecting Minority Investors	Afghanistan strengthened minority investor protections by requiring greater disclosure of transactions with interested parties, easing shareholder suits by extending access to documents and evidence during trial, increasing shareholders' rights and role in major corporate decisions, clarifying ownership and control structures, and requiring greater corporate transparency. The Presidential Office, Senior Economic Advisory Unit, led in the drafting of a limited liability companies law that incorporated inputs from the project team. The law requires greater disclosure of transactions with interested parties, streamlines shareholder suits by extending access to documents and evidence during trial, increases shareholders' rights and role in major corporate decisions, clarifies ownership and control structures, and requires greater corporate transparency.	1	DB19
Afghanistan	Starting a Business	Afghanistan made starting a business less costly by reducing the fees for business incorporation. The project entailed extensive discussions with various actors on the lowering of the fees and engagement with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce with the aim of simplifying and streamlining procedures, reducing the cost of incorporation, updating the Ministry's operational manual, and reducing the cost of publishing company information in official gazette. The cost of new company license was reduced from the equivalent of about \$400 to under \$1.50, and of a new individual license from about \$240 to under \$1.50.	1	DB19
India	Tax Simplification and Compliance Management	India made paying taxes easier by replacing many indirect taxes with a single indirect tax, the Goods and Services Tax (GST), for the entire country. India also made paying taxes less costly by reducing the corporate income tax rate and the employees' provident funds scheme rate paid by the employer. This reform applies to both Delhi and Mumbai. The GST, which went into effect in mid-2017, applies to all goods other than five petroleum products and alcoholic beverages. Under the new law, the previous sales taxes, including the central sales tax, state value-added tax, and the service tax have been merged into the GST. The Finance Act, which went into effect in Spring 2017, reduced the corporate income tax rate from 30 percent to 25 percent and the annual depreciation rates for office equipment from 60 percent to 40 percent.	1	DB19
India	Trade Logistics	India reduced the time and cost to export and import through various initiatives, including the implementation of electronic sealing of containers, the upgrading of port infrastructure, and allowing the electronic submission of supporting documents with digital signatures. This reform applies to both Delhi and Mumbai. India also changed regulations pertaining to weekly holiday work, overtime hours, and paid annual leave. These reforms were part of a broad effort by India to make trade processes more efficient as part of the National Trade Facilitation Plan 2017-2020. For Mumbai exports, border compliance time and cost decreased from 85 hours and \$348 to 54 hours and \$250, while documentary compliance time and cost decreased from 58 hours and \$94 to 24 hours and \$80. For Mumbai imports, border compliance time and cost decreased from 267 hours and \$536 to 102 hours and \$340, while documentary compliance time and cost decreased from 65 hours and \$129 to 35 hours and \$100. For Delhi exports, border compliance time and cost decreased from 125 hours and \$413 to 77 hours and \$253, while documentary compliance time and cost decreased from 21 hours and \$90 to 6 hours and \$80. For Delhi imports, border compliance time and cost decreased from 262 hours and \$550 to 92 hours and \$323, while documentary compliance time and cost decreased from 58 hours and \$140 to 25 hours and \$100.	1	DB19
India	Getting Credit	India strengthened access to credit by amending its insolvency law. Secured creditors are now given absolute priority over other claims within insolvency proceedings. This reform applies to both Delhi and Mumbai. Under the new law, which took effect in November 2017, secured creditors are repaid first during business liquidation, and hence have priority over other claims such as labor and tax. The work of the FIAS-supported team included technical assistance through the design of the Doing Business Reform Memo, preparation of Reform Action Plans, completion of feedback surveys and periodic diagnostics, and dialogue with users and implementers.	1	DB19

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SOUTH ASIA			2	
India	Starting a Business	India made starting a business easier by fully integrating multiple application forms into a general incorporation form. Replacement of the value-added tax with the Goods and Services Tax (GST) streamlined the registration process. These reforms apply to both Delhi and Mumbai. At the same time, Mumbai abolished the practice of site inspections for registering companies under the Shops and Establishments Act. Under the revised Companies Rules which took effect in January 2018, companies no longer submit separate forms for registering a Permanent Account Number and Tax Deduction and Collection Account Number (PAN and TAN). Under a new registration procedure in Mumbai, a site visit is no longer required for registering a new company. The number of procedures to start a business in Delhi and Mumbai has been reduced from 11 and 12 respectively to 10 in both cities. The time has decreased from 30 days in Delhi and 29.6 days in Mumbai to 16 and 17 days respectively.	1	DB19
India	Construction Permits	India streamlined the process of obtaining a building permit and made it faster and less expensive to obtain a construction permit. It also improved building quality control by introducing decennial liability and insurance. This reform applies to both Delhi and Mumbai. The reform, implemented in the second half of 2017, put in place a new Single Window Clearance System in Delhi, and an Online Building Permit Approval System in Mumbai. Implementation of these online platforms centralized approvals from various agencies. The reform also amended regulations on water and sewer connections, reducing the cost to obtain water connections in both cities. In Delhi, the number of procedures was reduced from 24 to 16; the time involved reduced from 157.5 days to 91 days; and the cost reduced from 23.9 percent to 4.2 percent. In Mumbai, the number of procedures was reduced from 37 to 20; the time decreased from 128.5 days to 99 days; and the cost declined from 22.5 percent to 6.6 percent. Both cities also amended their liability and insurance regimes for all categories of buildings over 750 square meters, making architects, structural engineers, site supervisors and engineers, and construction companies liable for structural flaws and defects.	1	DB19
Grand Total			40	