

October - December 2016

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2017!

FROM ESCAP TRADE FACILITATION TEAM

We are pleased to share with you the latest news on ESCAP trade facilitation and paperless trade activities in the Asia-Pacific region. This newsletter features:

[Recent Events](#)
[Upcoming Activities](#)
[Resources](#)
[Publications](#)

Recent Events

Participants meet to discuss trade facilitation measures related to agricultural trade in ESCAP and GTI seminar on Trade Facilitation in North East Asia

13 December 2016, Incheon, Republic of Korea



ESCAP and the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) organized the annual seminar on Trade Facilitation in North East Asia, which discussed recent developments in trade facilitation and possibilities for cooperation in this area. This year's seminar focused on recent initiatives and standards-related policies in agricultural trade. During the event the participants shared experiences on how each member was addressing sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues. Relevant inputs from the private sector and international organizations on how to further facilitate trade in North-East Asia were also discussed.

More information available at: <http://www.unescap.org/events/international-seminar-trade-facilitation-north-east-asia-0>

ESCAP facilitates dialogue amongst trade facilitation experts on effective implementation of the sustainable development agenda for agricultural trade and SMEs

28 - 30 November 2016, Bangkok, Thailand

During the Sustainable Development Goals Week, ESCAP in collaboration with UNECE and the Agricultural and Food Marketing Association for Asia and the Pacific (AFMA) organized the Workshop on Promoting Cross-border Agricultural Trade for Sustainable Development from 28 - 30 November 2016. This workshop was supported by UNNExT experts as well as experts from FAO, ADB, GS1 and Kasetsart University, Thailand.

Over 40 public and private sector stakeholders from more than 10 countries in the Asia-Pacific region – mainly LDCs and LLDCs from South and Southeast Asia received training on implementing food safety and quality standards and their related control systems, particularly for fresh horticulture products. Participants received training on business process analysis tools that may be used to streamline control procedures and facilitate cross-border trade. The workshop also included a practical session on fruit and vegetable grading. In light of the workshop, participants expressed interest for follow-up regional capacity building support on agriculture trade facilitation.





More information is available at: <http://www.unescap.org/events/workshop-promoting-cross-border-agricultural-trade-sustainable-development>

ESCAP Trade Facilitation team also supported a Workshop on Using Technology in Support of Trade for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises for Sustainable Development and an event organized by ADBI, ESCAP and UNCTAD on Trade in the Digital Economy, which focused on how the digitization of products and processes is impacting the trade-development relationship.



More information for these events are available at: <http://www.unescap.org/events/escap-sustainable-development-goals-week-2016-workshop-using-technology-support-trade-micro> and <https://www.adb.org/news/events/trade-digital-economy>

ESCAP Capacity Building Workshop on the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific

24 - 25 November 2016, Bangkok, Thailand

17 country representatives from the Asia-Pacific participated in the Capacity Building Workshop on the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific on 24 - 25 November 2016. During the informative workshop, the ESCAP secretariat provided guidance on how to become a party to the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, including lessons and steps undertaken by countries in the process of joining. The workshop revealed that a number of countries were already in the process of organizing inter-ministerial consultations before submitting recommendations for signature or accession to their respective Cabinets. China informed other participants that a recommendation to sign was already submitted to the State Council; the Russian Federation also made progress in securing a positive decision. Outcomes from the workshop included suggestions that ESCAP facilitate inter-agency consultations to ensure wide participation in the Framework Agreement, including the organization of a joint event with ASEAN to encourage South-East Asian countries to join. Further sessions during the workshop presented innovative ideas regarding mutual recognition of data and documents and other related cross-border paperless trade measures.



More information is available at: <http://www.unescap.org/events/capacity-building-workshop-framework-agreement-facilitation-cross-border-paperless-trade-asia>

UNNExT Advisory Group facilitates delivery of the draft road map for implementation of the Framework Agreement

22 - 25 November 2016, Bangkok, Thailand



A key development in the area of paperless trade in Asia-Pacific region in 2016 was the finalization of the first regional agreement to enable cross-border paperless trade. The Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific opened for signature on 1 October 2016 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and provides a new tool for better implementation of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific, ultimately supporting the development of cross-border e-commerce.

In an effort to further the delivery of the roadmap for implementation of the Framework Agreement, selected members of relevant UNNExT Advisory Groups and regional experts met to work on legal and technical issues related to implementation. The outcomes from the meeting included draft legal and

technical self-assessment checklists, as well as draft terms of references and rules of procedures for implementation of the Framework Agreement, which will be used as an input for the Legal and Technical Working Groups of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation which is set to hold its fourth meeting on 21-22 March 2017 in Bangkok.

More information is available at: <http://www.unescap.org/events/meeting-extended-unnext-advisory-group-cross-border-paperless-trade-facilitation>

Trade Facilitation team supports the project on the Regional Economic Integration of

Laos into ASEAN

24 November 2016, Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic

ESCAP in collaboration with the European Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lao PDR (ECCIL), organized a one day seminar on "ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA): Implications on cross-border trade and business operations in Laos", on 24 November 2016. This was the fourth seminar to be organized under the project, "The Regional Economic Integration of Laos into ASEAN, Trade and Entrepreneurship Development (RELATED)" of the Lao-German Development Cooperation.

More information is available at: <http://www.unescap.org/events/asean-trade-goods-agreement-atiga-implications-cross-border-trade-and-business-operations>

ESCAP organizes event for AFACT members to discuss recent legal developments and lessons learnt from regional implementation of paperless trade and E-Business

9 November 2016, Tokyo, Japan

As a side-event to the annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT), ESCAP, in collaboration with UNCITRAL and AFACT, held a capacity building workshop on Advancement of Cross-border Paperless Trade and Trade Facilitation. ESCAP presented ongoing work on implementation of trade facilitation measures and e-Business. AFACT members also discussed and expressed their continued support for the draft of UN/CEFACT Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism (TTFMM). ESCAP also presented the latest legal developments in the region with particular reference to the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific during the workshop. Synergies between AFACT's work and the work to be undertaken as part of the Framework Agreement implementation were highlighted. AFACT members discussed lessons learnt from regional implementation cases of paperless trade and electronic business and ways to further advance cross-border paperless trade in the region.



More information is available at: <http://www.unescap.org/events/capacity-building-workshop-advancement-cross-border-paperless-trade-and-trade-facilitation>

South and South-East Asia developing countries participate in ESCAP Workshop on the Implementation of Electronic SPS for Agricultural Trade Facilitation

1-3 November 2016, Bangkok, Thailand

The implementation of electronic sanitary and phytosanitary certification systems requires numerous key considerations and assessments by the relevant stakeholders within ministries of agriculture and regulatory agencies.



In this context, ESCAP, in cooperation partners from UNCTAD, FAO, the International Plant Protection Commission (IPPC), WTO Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and UNECE as well as experts from China, Indonesia, the Netherlands, the Philippines and Malaysia, organized the UNNExT Workshop on Implementation of e-SPS and Automation for Agricultural Trade Facilitation from 1 - 3 November 2016. 30 participants representing plant protection agencies from 11 developing countries in the South and South-East Asia region benefited from training and information on the relevant standards and systems; business process optimization of SPS certificate issuance;

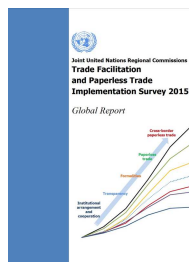
conducting needs assessment and implementation of the paperless systems for e-SPS. This was achieved through an examination of practical case studies and best practices from practitioners and experts. Participants also visited Thailand's Department of Agriculture to learn from the Thai experience.

More information available at: <http://www.unescap.org/events/workshop-implementation-e-sps-and-automation-agriculture-trade-facilitation>

Upcoming Activities

Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation 2017

The Second Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation will commence in January 2017 and will be led by ESCAP and other UN regional commissions (UNRCs). Building on the success of the First Global Survey conducted in 2015, the Second Survey will support implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement as well as emerging regional and global initiatives on paperless trade and e-trade, such as the new Framework Agreement on



Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific. The scope of the Survey will remain broadly the same as in 2015, with increased focus on measures of particular importance to SMEs and the agricultural sector.

Results are expected to provide useful information for policy makers to harness trade as a key means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Partnership was the key to success for the First Global Survey, and will be further strengthened in the Second Global Survey. The 2015 Survey was conducted by UNRCs in close collaboration with a large group of partners including UNCTAD, OECD, International Trade Centre (ITC), Oceania Customs Organization (OCO) and El Sistema Económico Latino Americano y del Caribe (SELA) in 2015.

Other interested international organizations including regional and subregional organizations, industry associations, academia, research institutes and other stakeholders are very welcome to join this initiative.

To do so and for any further information, please contact:

Yann Duval, Chief (duvaly@un.org), and/or Tengfei Wang, Economic Affairs Officer (wangt@un.org); both from the Trade Facilitation Unit, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, UNESCAP.

More detailed information of the survey is available at :

<https://unnex.unescap.org/content/global-survey-trade-facilitation-and-paperless-trade-implementation-2017>

Fourth Meeting of Legal and Technical Working Groups on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation

21 - 22 March 2017, Bangkok, Thailand

The Legal and Technical Working Groups of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation will hold their fourth physical meeting and continue carrying out their mandated tasks, including preparing a draft road map for the implementation of the framework agreement.

More information available at: <http://www.unescap.org/events/fourth-meeting-legal-and-technical-working-groups-cross-border-paperless-trade-facilitation>



Third Meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-Border Paperless Trade Facilitation

23 - 24 March 2017, Bangkok, Thailand

The ESCAP Commission resolution 70/6, adopted during the seventieth session of the Commission, endorsed the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in April 2014 to establish an interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless trade facilitation. The steering group holds its third meeting to continue carrying out its mandated tasks, in particular preparing a draft road map.

More information available at: <http://www.unescap.org/events/third-meeting-interim-intergovernmental-steering-group-cross-border-paperless-trade>

Capacity Building Workshop on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific

24 March 2017 Bangkok, Thailand

The purpose of the workshop is to build capacity of countries to implement cross-border paperless trade, in particular looking at aspects such as joining and benefiting from the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific for improving trade efficiency and competitiveness.

More information available at: <http://www.unescap.org/events/capacity-building-workshop-facilitation-cross-border-paperless-trade-asia-and-pacific>



Third UNNEXT Masterclass: Digital Customs and Single Windows

19 - 28 April 2017, Cheon-an, Republic of Korea

The UNNEXT Masterclass is a two-week intensive capacity building programme, jointly organized by the World Customs Organization (WCO) and ESCAP, in collaboration with other development partners. The Third Masterclass, will be held on 19

- 28 April 2017 at the Customs Border Controls Training Center in the Republic of Korea. The UNNExT Masterclass will focus on issues related to realizing a digital customs environment, as well as issues related to creating a Single Window environment.

More information will be available at: <https://unnex.unescap.org>

The 8th Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum (APTFF) to be held in September 2017



ESCAP and ADB with the support of multiple ministries and agencies in charge of trade, trade facilitation, logistics and foreign affairs across the Asia-Pacific region will organize the 8th Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum to be held in **September/October 2017**.

Government and/or other agencies interested in hosting the event in their country may express interest to ADB & ESCAP based on the following [guideline](#).

More information is available at: <https://unnex.unescap.org/content/asia-pacific-trade-facilitation-forum-aptff>

Resources

E-Learning Course on Business Process Analysis with online testing facility for Trade Facilitation launched in cooperation with UNNExT



Since its launch in September 2016, 21 participants have successfully completed the E-Learning Course on Business Process Analysis and received certificates. Congratulations.

Experts and government officials recognize the complexities involved in cross-border international transactions. Business Process Analysis (BPA) has been assessed as a necessary first step in identifying bottlenecks and opportunities for improvements in trade procedures. In view of this increased demand, ESCAP and the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT) have developed a self-paced online training course (<http://www.unescap.org/our-work/trade-investment-innovation/trade-facilitation/bpa-course>)

The E-Learning Course on Business Process Analysis for Trade Facilitation includes an online testing facility. Any individual who successfully passes the online test will be awarded a course certificate. It is envisaged that the certificate should be treated as a prerequisite for any individual expert to be recommended for conducting a BPA project in the future. It is also desirable for any government official to obtain such certificate to more effectively manage a BPA project, carry out analysis on trade procedures and further build capacity for policy making.

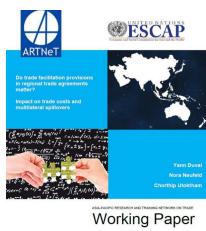
For more information, testing material and certification please contact: escap-tid@un.org.

The online test is available at: <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3012301/Business-Process-Analysis-for-Trade-Facilitation-Course-Module-1-3>

Publications

Do trade facilitation provisions in regional trade agreements matter? Impact on trade costs and multilateral spillovers, November 2016

(ARTNeT Working Paper No. 164/2016)



The scope and depth of bilateral and regional preferential trade agreements (RTAs) negotiated over the past 15 years has expanded beyond traditional market access and preferential tariffs to include provisions on a wide range of issues, including trade facilitation. This study is a first attempt to measure the extent to which RTA provisions related to those featured in the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) contribute to reducing trade costs. Inclusion of such provisions in RTAs does not appear to systematically result in their implementation. Nonetheless, it is found that TFA-related provisions in RTAs have a statistically significant impact on bilateral trade costs among RTA members. Aid for Trade Facilitation measures and Freedom of Transit provisions are found to be relatively more effective at reducing trade costs between Members than other types of trade facilitation measures. Importantly, the

discriminatory (preferential) effect of trade facilitation provisions in RTAs is accompanied by a non-discriminatory reduction in trade costs with all trade partners. Multilateral spillovers from trade facilitation measures in RTAs on trade costs are found to exceed any discriminatory effects within three years of an RTA's entry into force, highlighting the complementarity between regional and global trade facilitation initiatives.

This publication is available at: <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/AWP%20No.%20164.pdf>

The Role of ICT in Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement: some preliminary reflections, November 2016

(ARTNeT Policy Brief No. 49)



This policy brief aims to highlight some of the ways that information and communications technologies (ICT) will almost inevitably play a role in helping WTO Members implement their commitments under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). Indeed, the important role that the Internet will play is explicitly recognized in the text of the TFA, as well as in some of what are the assumptions clearly underlying many of the Agreement's provisions. But there are other ways that ICT can be leveraged to enhance and facilitate WTO Members in realizing the objectives inherent to the TFA, which this brief also aims to discuss.

The policy brief is available at: <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/polibrief49.pdf>

Paperless Trade in Regional Trade Agreements, November 2016

In this working paper we develop a comprehensive list of paperless trade measures and provisions in regional trade agreements (RTAs) and examine the extent to which they are featured in various RTAs, including in the TPP and ASEAN agreements. The number of paperless trade measures in RTAs is found to have doubled between 2005-8 and 2013-16 at the global level. Most recent RTAs contain more and deeper provisions than those featured in the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

This publication is available at: <http://www.unescap.org/resources/paperless-trade-regional-trade-agreements>



The complete list of ESCAP Trade Facilitation publications is available here: <http://www.unescap.org/our-work/trade-investment-innovation/trade-facilitation/publications>



The latest tools and policy guides from UNNExT are available here: <https://unnxt.unescap.org/tools>

Latest News on Trade Facilitation Activities at ESCAP

Our mailing address is:

Trade, Investment and Innovation Division
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations Building
Rajadamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Website: <http://www.unescap.org/our-work/trade-investment/trade-facilitation>

Email: escap-tiid@un.org

[unsubscribe from this list](#) | [update subscription preferences](#)

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

ESCAP Trade Facilitation · Rajadamnern Nok · Bangkok, 10 10300 · Thailand

MailChimp

