

Regional Organizations Cooperation Mechanism for Trade Facilitation (ROC-TF) NEWSLETTER

IN FOCUS



The **Fourth Meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-Border Paperless Trade Facilitation** took place on 22-23 March 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. Following adoption of the UN treaty text of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific in 2016, the steering group now focuses on preparation of an implementation roadmap of the agreement and related supporting document. After 5 countries formally signed the treaty last year, including Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, and Islamic Republic of Iran, Azerbaijan became the first country to ratify the UN treaty in March 2018. **More information available [here](#).**

UPCOMING

The **ADB-ESCAP Workshop on Promoting E-commerce in Asia and the Pacific: a Holistic Approach** will take place on 27 August 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. This workshop aims to identify programmatic approaches for promoting e-commerce and cross-border e-commerce in the participating countries of the workshop. The participants will learn global trends and issues in key development opportunities through interactive discussions. **More information available [here](#).**

The **4th WCO-ESCAP UNNEXt Masterclass** will be held on 5-14 November 2018 in Cheon-an, Republic of Korea. The UNNEXt Masterclass is an intensive two-week capacity building programme on trade facilitation and Single Window. The 4th Masterclass will focus on facilitation of processes on license, permits, certificates and other regulatory restrictions (e-LPCO) in a Single Window environment to realize digital Customs and paperless trade environment. **More information available [here](#).**

PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES

ESCAP published **Facilitating Compliance to Food Safety and Quality for Cross-border Trade in Asia and the Pacific** which describes the type of food safety and quality issues impacting cross-border trade. It highlights important food safety and quality control strategies, which will strengthen food safety and quality while also facilitating cross-border trade. Robust food quality and safety systems can lead to greater confidence in the importing country of the export country capabilities and thereby require less stringent import controls.. **For more information see [page 16](#).**

NEWS

As much as US\$673 billion in trade costs can be saved annually in the Asia Pacific region if the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement and digital and paperless trade measures are fully implemented, according to the Digital Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific report. **Find more trade facilitation news on [see page 22](#).**

The ROC-TF newsletter is a biannual publication, which features updates, publications and forthcoming activities of regional and international organizations working on trade facilitation in the Asia-Pacific region.

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PROJECT/ACTIVITY UPDATE

Selected project/activity updates from ROC-TF organizations on Trade Facilitation

JOINT ACTIVITIES and PARTNERSHIPS

ADB and ESCAP

ADB-ESCAP Workshop on Promoting E-commerce in Asia and the Pacific: a Holistic Approach, 27-28 August 2018, Bangkok, Thailand

E-commerce can lower entry barriers to markets and reduce transaction costs in doing businesses, and therefore, facilitate business and trade and lead to further economic growth and additional job creation. To realize the potential growth of e-commerce and cross-border e-commerce, governments need to implement more proactive policy measures. Additionally, multilateral organizations and the private sector should cooperate in fostering conducive environments. ADB and ESCAP support various activities and initiatives to promote e-commerce in Asia and the Pacific.

Against this backdrop, this workshop aims to identify programmatic approaches for promoting e-commerce and cross-border e-commerce in the participating countries of the workshop. The participants will learn global trends and issues in key development opportunities through interactive discussions. It is expected that around 50 participants from governments, international development partners, academia and private sector from the selected developing countries in Asia and the Pacific will join the workshop. In addition, ADB staff directly related to ADB's operations in trade facilitation and finance sector will participate and discuss the potential opportunities for ADB to support developing countries in enhancing e-commerce and cross-border ecommerce, particularly through a comprehensive and programmatic approach.

More information available at: <https://www.unescap.org/events/adb-escap-workshop-promoting-e-commerce-asia-and-pacific-holistic-approach>

ADB and WCO ROCB A/P

ROCB A/P participates in the CAREC Meeting for supporting implementation of the WTO TFA, 25-28 June 2018, Bangkok, Thailand



In the wake of the introductory presentations, the representative from the ADB explained the results of the ADB's assessment of status of compliance and early implementation by the CAREC member countries on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and areas to address identified challenges and capacity building needs, followed by the representative from the UNESCAP presentation on the results of the United Nations Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation for the CAREC member countries.

Mr. Jo shared the ROCB A/P's activities for facilitating the implementation of the WTO TFA with participants. He also emphasized the importance of collective cooperation and sharing information among the CAREC member countries, and capacity building conducted by competent authorities for coping with challenges in implementing the WTO TFA at the initial stage.

More information available here: <http://www.rocb-ap.org/article-detail/380/?crmid=vrv8jmq3r7 t306bkl3cn96gkv3>

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ADB and SASEC

Bhutan: Training on Intelligence, Information Gathering, and Investigation, 5-9 February 2018, Phuentsholing, Bhutan

Bhutan's Department of Revenue and Customs (DRC), in collaboration with India's Central Board of Excise and Customs, National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN), India, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), conducted the training. The aim of the workshop was to conduct training on intelligence, investigation, and information gathering. Through the Workshop, the members were able to get the professional knowledge, focusing on Information and intelligence gathering; Search and seizure procedures; Data analysis and scrutiny of documents; Interrogation technique; Financial Investigation; Drafting of investigation report and Show Cause Notices; Trade-based money laundering; and Rewards, Prosecution, and others.

More information available here: <https://www.sasec.asia/index.php?page=event&eid=251&url=intelligence-information-gathering-investigation-bhutan>

Stakeholder Workshops for ECTS, 6 February 2018, Kolkata, India and 27 February 2018, Kathmandu, Nepal

The workshops were held to discuss the use of an electronic cargo tracking system (ECTS) with private sector stakeholders including transport operators and traders. The Workshops presented not only features of Memorandum of Intent on the use of ECTS signed by India and Nepal, also presented simplified procedure applicable to the movement of traffic-in-transit under the MOI. The workshops discussed planned pilot application of ECTS.

More information available here: <https://www.sasec.asia/index.php?page=event&eid=276&url=ects-india-feb2018>
<https://www.sasec.asia/index.php?page=event&eid=277&url=nep-ects-workshop-feb2018>

SASEC Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Group Meeting, 7-8 February 2017, Colombo, Sri Lanka

The South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Group (TFTWG) Meeting was established in March 2013 to serve as a platform for increased regional cooperation. This annual meeting reviews progress of SASEC initiatives to enhance transport connectivity and promote more efficient, transparent, secure, and service-oriented processing of cross-border trade in South Asia. This meeting charted the future direction of SASEC cooperation to achieve the member countries' development goals. It will review the SASEC Vision document designed to articulate the long-term potential of the subregion as an integrated entity, reflecting the collective aspirations of SASEC members and providing the overarching framework and long-term strategy for sustained and inclusive growth.

More information available here: <https://www.adb.org/news/events/sasec-trade-facilitation-and-transport-working-group-meeting>

Meeting of the SASEC Nodal Officials and Working Groups, 5-6 March 2018, Singapore

The Meeting was held on 5-6 March 2018 in Singapore to review progress of ongoing SASEC projects in transport and trade facilitation, review progress of flagship initiatives under the SASEC Vision document and discuss the study on integration of Myanmar into SASEC. The Meeting dealt with mainly three sections. The meeting noted progress of SASEC transport and trade facilitation projects, discussed progress on SASEC Vision flagship initiatives and confirmed SASEC investment pipeline for 2018-20.

More information available at : <https://www.sasec.asia/index.php?page=event&eid=278&url=sasec-tftwg-march2018>

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SASEC National Single Window Consultation Workshop, 9 April 2018, Malé, Maldives

The Asian Development Bank (ADB), in collaboration with the Maldives Ministry of Economic Development, organized the workshop. The main objective of the workshop was to share knowledge on NSW systems, review progress on work towards SASEC NSW and discuss next steps. During the workshop, resource persons shared knowledge and experience on the implementation of the NSW system with more than 50 participants from various government agencies and discussed next steps towards SASEC NSW.

More information available at : <https://www.sasec.asia/index.php?page=event&eid=281&url=sasec-nsw-consultation>

SASEC Subregional Workshop on Sanitary-Phytosanitary and Technical Barriers to Trade National and Regional Diagnostic Studies, 11-13 April 2018, New Delhi, India

The aim of the subregional workshop was to share findings of diagnostic studies, solicit countries' views and comments on draft regional SPS-TBT study, review opportunities to include findings in trade facilitation projects. Through the workshop, these aims were achieved including: sharing the findings of national diagnostic studies, soliciting participating countries' views and comments on a draft regional SPS-TBT diagnostic study, reviewing opportunities to include SPS-TBT trade facilitation projects in the SASEC Operational Plan 2016-2025 and delivering a learning event with international expertise.

More information available here: <https://www.sasec.asia/index.php?page=event&eid=279&url=sasec-sps-tbt-subregional-workshop>

Second SASEC ADB-Korea Customs Service, 24-26 April 2018, Busan, Republic of Korea

Korea Customs Service (KCS), in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), hosted the Second SASEC Subregional Capacity-building Workshop on Implementation of the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA) on 24-26 April 2018, in Busan, Republic of Korea to review action plans drawn during previous workshop; draft agendas for succeeding workshops. The workshop (i) reviewed the national action plans drawn up at the first subregional workshop and subsequently approved by respective SASEC Customs administrations. (ii) drafted tentative Agendas for national knowledge- and experience-sharing workshops to be held in participating SASEC countries on targeted areas of the WTO TFA.

More information available here: <https://www.sasec.asia/index.php?page=event&eid=283&url=second-sasec-adb-kcs>

Inception Workshop for a Study on a Perspective Plan for Coastal Shipping, 20 Jun 2018, New Delhi, India

The Government of India aims to increase the share of coastal shipping and inland waterways transport in total freight movement to 12% by 2025 from 6% in 2015. In line with this, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in collaboration with Ministry of Shipping (MoS) of the Government of India, held an inception workshop for a study on a perspective plan for Coastal Shipping. The workshop presented a background on coastal shipping, discussed proposed concept for Coastal Shipping Study and agreed on timeline of activities and outputs.

More information available here: <https://www.sasec.asia/index.php?page=event&eid=285&url=coastal-shipping-study-workshop>

Seventh SASEC Customs Subgroup Meeting, 30-31 July 2018, Colombo, Sri Lanka

The meeting was organized by Sri Lanka Customs, Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank. The objective of the meeting was to review implementation status of subregional and national projects in the SCS Workplan 2014-18. A review was conducted, updates were shared and findings of studies were shared during the meeting.

More information available here: <https://www.sasec.asia/index.php?page=event&eid=284&url=7th-scs>

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ADB and CAREC

CAREC Advanced Transit System Prototype Phase: Round Table Discussion with Insurance Companies, 17-18 April 2018, Tbilisi, Georgia

In preparation for the implementation of the CAREC Advanced Transit System (CATS) pilot under RETA 9162: Implementation of Trade Facilitation Initiatives in Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program, a consultation meeting was organized among insurance companies from Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Kazakhstan to discuss various options for a transit guarantee mechanism. Participants discussed new mechanism that offers risk-based and comprehensive guarantees to reduce time and cost of transit trade in the consultation meeting.

More information available at: <https://www.carecprogram.org/?event=carec-advanced-transit-system-prototype-phase-roundtable-discussion>

Regional Workshop on Border Crossing for Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic within the Framework of the Almaty–Bishkek Economic Corridor, 21 May 2018, Astana, Kazakhstan

The workshop was organized by Asian Development Bank (ADB), and concluded with a set of actions to facilitate improvement of border crossing points management, infrastructure, and transit experience for citizens and tourists between Almaty and Bishkek.

More information available at: <https://www.carecprogram.org/?event=workshop-border-crossing-almaty-bishkek-corridor>

CAREC Regional Workshop on Modernizing Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, 29-30 May 2018, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

The workshop supports the implementation of the CAREC Common Agenda for Modernization of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures for Trade Facilitation, and it is co-funded by the Regional Cooperation and Integration Fund and the People's Republic of China Poverty Reduction and Regional Cooperation Fund. Thirty-nine CAREC sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) officials discussed key challenges and outlined sectoral and country action plans to modernize SPS measures.

More information available here: <https://www.carecprogram.org/?event=workshop-sanitary-phytosanitary-may-2018>

Second Almaty–Bishkek Economic Corridor Subcommittee Meeting, 11 June 2018, Almaty, Kazakhstan

ADB CWRD facilitated discussions along with ADB RM country directors for Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. During the workshop, participants had discussions and agreements facilitated toward establishing modern agricultural wholesale markets, developing tourism clusters, and facilitating efficient border crossings in the economic corridor.

More information available here: <https://www.carecprogram.org/?event=second-almaty-bishkek-economic-corridor-subcommittee-meeting>

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Inaugural Meeting of the CAREC Regional Trade Group, 25-26 June 2018, Bangkok, Thailand

The Inaugural Meeting of the CAREC Regional Trade Group (RTG) brought together more than 60 representatives from 11 CAREC member countries, development partners (Asian Development Bank (ADB), International Monetary Fund, CAREC Institute, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and World Customs Organization), CAREC Federation of Carrier and Forwarder Associations, and international experts. The aim of the workshop was to deliberate on issues under the CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda (CITA) 2030 for improved market access, economic diversification, and stronger institutions for trade. Delegates deliberated on the framework and scope of the CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda (CITA) 2030 and its accompanying Rolling Strategic Action Plan 2018-2020. The CITA aims to assist CAREC countries in integrating further with the global economy through (i) trade expansion from increased market access, (ii) greater diversification, and (iii) stronger institutions for trade. CITA was developed based on Stakeholders Consultation Workshops for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, as well as for Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Pakistan, held on 12-13 March 2018, in Almaty, Kazakhstan and 18-19 April 2018, Tbilisi, Georgia, respectively.

More information available at : <https://www.carecprogram.org/?event=inaugural-meeting-carec-regional-trade-group>

Workshop on CAREC Corridors Performance Measurement and Monitoring, Time Release Study, and Behind-the-Border Indicators, 25-26 July 2018, Baku, Azerbaijan

Since 2009, Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring (CPMM) has been identifying constraints and bottlenecks that affect the flow of goods within the CAREC region. It also provides useful data and critical inputs for analysis to assist policy formulation, investment decisions, and transport operations. Jointly organized by ADB (led by the EAFP Division) and CAREC Institute with support from CPMM team, the workshop gathered experts from development partners (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, World Bank Group/IFC) to discuss the continuing improvement of CPMM and promote the use of CPMM data to broader stakeholders including the private sector and research institutions of CAREC countries.

More information available at: <https://www.carecprogram.org/?event=workshop-cpmm-trs-jul-2018>

ESCAP and Institute for Trade and Development (ITD)

ITD/ESCAP Regional Workshop on Trade Facilitation for Sustainable Development, 7-10 August 2018, Bangkok, Thailand

This workshop aimed at building the capacity of government officials on implementing trade facilitation and paperless trade initiatives and enabling them to more effectively support or participate in the work of National Committees on Trade Facilitation or related inter-agency bodies. The workshop presented an update on the state of implementation of key trade facilitation and paperless trade measures in the region. Many key measures and instruments on trade facilitation were introduced, including the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the new Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific. On practical implementation, participants also learned how to conduct a Business Process Analysis (BPA) project to simplify trade procedures and learn about emerging topics on trade facilitation in the context of logistics management, gender specific dimensions of trade facilitation and e-commerce technical issues.

More information available at: <https://www.unescap.org/events/itdescap-regional-workshop-trade-facilitation-sustainable-development>

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ESCAP and UNECE

Twelfth meeting of the Thematic Working Group on Trade Achieving Trade Facilitation and Sustainable Development in Central Asia, 19 September 2018, Almaty, Kazakhstan

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) together with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is organizing the twelfth meeting of the Working Group on Trade of SPECA, on 19 September 2018, back-to-back with the 2018 SPECA Economic Forum and session of the SPECA Governing Council (20-21 September 2018). The Working Group supports the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 in Central Asia, in the area of sustainable trade, (notably SDGs 17.10 and SDG 17.11). The meeting will focus on four deliverables of the SPECA Working Group on Trade: SPECA regional strategy for trade facilitation; Regional cooperation for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals related to trade; The link between water management, trade and environment in the SPECA region; Non-tariff measures in trade in the SPECA region.

Participants in the meeting and SPECA participating countries are requested to contribute to the background documents on those issues, with which the Working Group will deal in the coming 3-4 years. The event will review national and regional plans and strategies of the SPECA countries for sustainable trade development and facilitation. It would strengthen cooperation among trade diplomats of the SPECA countries.

Regional Framework for the Development of Dry Ports of International Importance for North and Central Asia Capacity-building Workshop, 31 May-1 June 2018, Astana, Kazakhstan

The UNECE participated in the Astana meeting and in the Bangkok meeting (organized by UNESCAP) on 31 May – 1 June 2018 (the latter by conference call) in order to encourage the use of UN/LOCODE (UN Location codes for trade and transport) and how these could help facilitate their identification on international trade and transport documents.

WCO and ESCAP

4th WCO-ESCAP UNNExT Masterclass, 5-14 November 2018, Cheon-an, Republic of Korea

The UNNExT Masterclass is an intensive two-week capacity building programme on trade facilitation and Single Window. The 4th Masterclass will focus on facilitation of processes on license, permits, certificates and other regulatory restrictions (e-LPCO) in a Single Window environment to realize digital Customs and paperless trade environment.

More information available at: <https://www.unescap.org/events/4th-unnnext-masterclass>

WCO and Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO)

WCO Mercator Programme Advisor (MPA) Accreditation Workshop, 22-26 January, 2018, Suva, Fiji



Through its partnership with the World Customs Organisation, four members of the OCO participated in the WCO Mercator Programme Advisor (MPA) Accreditation Workshop that was held at the Fiji Revenue & Customs Service (FRCS), WCO Regional Training Centre in Suva, Fiji from 22-26 January, 2018. The Workshop was facilitated by two Technical Officials from the WCO and the Head of the Asia/Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P).

MPAs are change management experts focused on strategic planning and trade facilitation (TF) matters. The overall objective behind the accreditation of MPA's is to ensure that capacity-building support can rely on quality people to provide quality advice and experience.

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Although the OCO members given that they are non-WCO members were not able to receive the WCO accreditation, the opportunity to be pre-selected to take part in the workshop and to undertake the same assessment was an important one. Through the Workshop, the OCO members were able to get not only a better understanding of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement but also the related WCO instruments and tools which support TFA implementation. The availability of these tools can assist members not only for TFA but also in their commitments to the different regional trade agreements that they are signatory to.

More information available at: <http://www.unescap.org/projects/enhancing-contribution-preferential-trade-agreements>

WCO, ROCB A/P and the Central Board of Indirect tax and Customs (CBIC) of India

WCO A/P Regional High-Level Seminar of Cross-Border E-Commerce Framework of Standards, 16-17 July 2018, New Delhi, India



The WCO, in cooperation with the ROCB A/P and the Central Board of Indirect tax and Customs (CBIC) of India, organized the WCO A/P Regional High-Level Seminar of Cross-Border E-Commerce Framework of Standards (FoS) on 16-17 July 2018 at a hotel in New Delhi, India, with financial sponsorship of Customs Cooperation Fund of Japan (CCF/Japan). More than 40 high-level representatives from 26 WCO A/P Member administrations and the resource persons participated in this very first WCO regional event organized after the launch of the WCO Cross-border E-Commerce FoS, which was

adopted at the recent WCO Council Session in June 2018. This High-Level Seminar was organized back-to-back with the CBIC's Assumption Ceremony of WCO A/P Regional Vice Chair. Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P, and Mr. Poonyawee Sroythong, Program Manager, participated in this Seminar as facilitators.

More information available at: <http://www.rocb-ap.org/article-detail/428/>

ROCB A/P and OCO

The ROCB A/P renews cooperative ties with the OCO, 11-13 June 2018, Melbourne, Australia

The Conference included a key note address by WCO Secretary General Mikuriya. Among other things, Secretary General referred to data analysis, application of technology and human resource development. Fifteen (15) OCO Member administrations signed to the memorandum of intention for closer administrative assistance in information and intelligence exchange to contend with the threats posed by terrorism and transnational organized crime. Taking this opportunity, the Honorable Natan Teewe, Kiribati Minister of Justice, deposited the instrument of accession to the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) to Secretary General, which marked the first accession of a non-WCO Member to it.

More information available at: <http://www.rocb-ap.org/article-detail/415/>

UNECE and UNCTAD

Follow-up consultative seminar on the readiness assessment of Azerbaijan to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and set up a Trade Facilitation committee, 21-22 June 2018, Baku, Azerbaijan.

UNECE, in cooperation with UNCTAD and the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan carried out an assessment of Azerbaijan's readiness to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement between March and July 2017. On 21-22 June 2018 consultations and seminar on the National Trade Facilitation Committee and the Readiness Assessment Report have been carried out in Baku. Recommendations on both items to the Government drafted by UNECE. This RPTC project is a UNECE contribution to SDG 17.10: Promote the universal, rules-based, trading system.

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ORGANIZATION UPDATES

ADB

Connecting the Bay of Bengal Region: A New Framework for Trade and Connectivity

The Bay of Bengal is an area growing in economic and strategic importance, derived from its position as the principal maritime connection between the Pacific and Indian oceans, and from the good economic prospects of many Bay of Bengal states. Indeed, the Bay of Bengal could become the key economic connection between East and South Asia, and a potential zone for Asian economic growth.

Given the current slow pace in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation integration process, implementation of connectivity projects under Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) have gained further momentum. Countries around the Bay of Bengal have undertaken several connectivity initiatives in recent years. While most of the connectivity projects are driven by India alone, Bay of Bengal is yet to witness large scale regional infrastructure projects. In coming years, the Bay of Bengal may assume a much more central place in the Indo-Pacific dynamic as its economic significance grows but it will also benefit from greater regional coordination. Organizations such as BIMSTEC can play a crucial role in developing the Bay of Bengal as a new growth zone in Asia.

More information available here: <https://www.adb.org/news/events/connecting-bay-bengal-region-new-framework-trade-and-connectivity>

CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda 2030

CAREC is formulating a new trade agenda—CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda (CITA) 2030—to assist countries to integrate further with the global economy as envisioned by CAREC 2030. A consultation was held in Almaty in March, where representatives from five Central Asian countries deliberated on issues under the CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda (CITA) 2030 for improved market access, economic diversification, and stronger institutions for trade. An associated three-year Rolling Strategic Action Plan for 2018–2020 was also discussed. CITA 2030 is a key deliverable at CAREC Ministerial Conference in 2018.

More information available here: <https://www.adb.org/news/events/connecting-bay-bengal-region-new-framework-trade-and-connectivity>

A second consultation about CITA 2030 and its accompanying Rolling Strategic Action Plan (RSAP) was also conducted with trade-related agencies and development partners in Tbilisi with officials from Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Pakistan.

More information available here: <https://www.carecprogram.org/?event=third-subregional-consultation-carec-consolidated-trade-agenda-afg-aze-geo-pak>

Consultations with People's Republic of China (PRC) trade-related agencies also discussed the direction, priorities, and the importance of CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda (CITA) 2030.

More information available here: <https://www.carecprogram.org/?event=carec-integrated-trade-agenda-2030-stakeholders-consultation-workshop-for-peoples-republic-of-china>

ASEAN

Workshop on Technical Matters of Time Release Study (TRS) Implementation in ASEAN, on 9 April 2018 in Bandung, Indonesia

The workshop, which was facilitated by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and organised by the Indonesian Customs and Excise Directorate General, discussed the scope and technical elements for the implementation of TRS in ASEAN. The results of the TRS will be used as a proxy for the baseline study on trade transaction cost in ASEAN. The workshop was attended by ASEAN customs officials.

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ARISE Plus Roundtable Discussion on Trade Facilitation: Private Sector Engagement with ASEAN – Rules and Modalities, on 3 July 2018 in Singapore

The first ASEAN trade facilitation dialogue with the private sector, which was supported by the EU-funded ARISE Plus project, discussed the mechanisms for, and the need to improve, private sector engagement with ASEAN sectoral bodies, including on areas related to trade facilitation, such as standards and conformance, customs procedures, and non-tariff measures. Representatives from the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Joint Consultative Committee (ATF-JCC) and the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) and the Joint Business Council (JBC) attended the Roundtable.

United Nations ESCAP

Preparation for implementation of the regional UN treaty for digital trade facilitation; Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-Border Paperless Trade Facilitation held in March 2018.

The interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless trade facilitation was established following ESCAP Commission Resolution 70/6 adopted in 2014. Following finalization of the treaty text of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific in 2016, the steering group now focuses on preparation of a draft implementation roadmap of the agreement and related supporting document. Current version of the draft road map is available at: https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/E_PTA_IISG2018_CRP1E.pdf. The Legal and Technical Working Groups under it continue developing supporting documents for the implementation road map, in particular technical gap checklist, legal gap checklist and background note on mutual recognition mechanism for trade related documents and data in electronic form, to effectively support fast implementation of the agreement and participation of interested ESCAP member states in it.

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

Capacity Building Workshop on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation: Implications of Emerging Technologies



The purpose of the workshop was to discuss implication of emerging ICTs in advancing international supply chain integration and build capacity of countries in the region in implementing cross-border paperless trade, in particular in the context of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific. The workshop invited selected experts in the region and beyond to share their experiences in application of emerging ICTs and facilitating cross-border paperless data exchange, such as experience of IBM-Maersk Blockchain project for global supply chain

management. Experts will also share their perspectives on opportunities from and limits of applying emerging ICTs to overcome challenges.

The workshop discussed role of a UN treaty on digital trade facilitation, Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, in advancing regional economic cooperation and integration. In addition, the workshop features a special training session on Single Window interoperability and discuss how to overcome issues and challenges in enabling cross-border paperless trade data exchange.

More information available at: <https://www.unescap.org/events/capacity-building-workshop-cross-border-paperless-trade-facilitation-implications-emerging>

PROJECT/ACTIVITY UPDATE

Selected project/activity updates from ROC-TF organizations on Trade Facilitation

Facilitating Cross-Border Paperless Trade along the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Corridors for Regional Integration and Sustainable Development

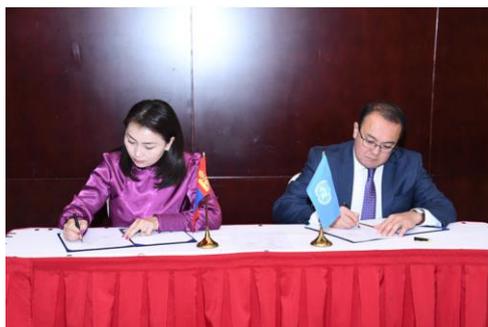
The project, funded by China, intends to build capacity of selected ESCAP member states in implementing the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific as well as to the achievement of SDG 17, including SDG Targets 17.10 and 17.11. Technical and legal readiness assessments on cross-border paperless trade as well as business process analysis (BPA) on selected corridors will be conducted in selected four developing countries of the region. This project is envisaged as the first phase of a sustained capacity building effort on cross-border paperless trade facilitation along the BRI corridors. Phase 2 would involve implementation of pilot projects on exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form, based on outcomes of Phase 1. The project is currently forming a team of international consultants to carry out the assessments and BPA.

Capacity building towards cross-border paperless trade for trade facilitation in Mongolia and East and Northeast Asia and Central Asia

The project, funded by Russian Federation, intends to enhance the capacity of member states from the East and Northeast Asia better to facilitate trade and paperless trade in the subregion by identifying, quantifying and prioritizing procedural bottlenecks for trade facilitation in Mongolia, and implementing small-scale cross-border paperless trade data exchange on a pilot basis. The project is currently forming a task force to work towards a pilot-based cross-border paperless trade data exchange among the countries.

Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI)

The 18th GTI Consultative Commission Meeting held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia



The 18th Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) Consultative Commission (CC) Meeting with the theme on “Enhance Connectivity, Promote Economic Integration in the region” was successfully held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The high-level delegates from the GTI Member States (Mongolia, the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation), as well as the representatives from line ministries, the local governments of Northeast Asia, financial institutions, research institutions and international organizations attended the meeting.

This year, the side event High-level Forum on Priority Development Programs: Financial Cooperation Initiatives was also successfully organized on 21 June 2018 by Development Bank of Mongolia (DBM), where Mr. U. Enkhtuvshin, Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia, member of the Parliament of Mongolia gave the opening speech. During the forum, not only Priority Development Programs and major projects in Mining and Agriculture sectors were presented and discussed, Exim banks, Commercial banks and international financial organizations also had a panel discussion on the Sound financing mechanism for successful implementation of priority projects and programs..

More information available here: <http://www.tumenprogramme.org/?info-720-1.html>

PROJECT/ACTIVITY UPDATE

Selected project/activity updates from ROC-TF organizations on Trade Facilitation

UNECE

31st Forum of UN/CEFACT Forum, held in Geneva on 23 - 27 April 2018



The 31st Forum of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and E-business (UN/CEFACT) took place at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland from 23 to 27 April. UN/CEFACT forums are held semi-annually in different locations throughout the world. Some of the key objectives of the 31st Forum were advancing current projects and domain activities; reviewing the current maintenance tasks; formulating and approving a series of new projects to be conducted within the framework of the approved programme of work; continuing liaison and cooperation activities with external organizations (governmental as well as industry and standards consortia); and advancing UN/CEFACT's current and forthcoming technical framework. During the 31st Forum, good progress was made on the revision of Recommendation 33 on Single Window as well as a proposed recommendation on Sustainable Procurement. The Transport and Logistics area had very active meetings, progressing their various projects on Smart Containers, Data Pipelines, Reference Data Models, IMO FAL form mappings. Various side events were held, as follows:

- *Conference on single window*: The conference looked at the regulations behind some of the more frequent supporting documents such as TIR or CMR or Invoice or Agricultural Certificates. It discussed possible ways of avoiding duplication of information through the using of legally significant data, rather than electronic documents as used for the paper process.
More information available here: https://www.unece.org/31stuncefactforum_sw.html
- *Workshop on blockchain and trade facilitation*: Subjects discussed include: issue of interoperability between different blockchains; draft chapters for the White Paper on Blockchain and Trade Facilitation; Draft White Paper on Blockchain Standards.
More information available here: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=48318>
- *Conference on Internet of Things (IoT)*: This Conference was organized to establish some clarity and a collective understanding of the potential of IoT technology for supporting trade and trade facilitation as well as the other business and government activities where the UN/CEFACT has projects.
More information available here: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=48078>
- *Workshop on Traceability for Sustainable Value Chains: Textile and Leather Sector*: The aim of the conference was to brainstorm on how deep in the supply chain visibility is necessary for responsible sourcing, along with current trends, solutions, and remaining challenges for supply chain traceability.
More information available here: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=48082>

More information available here: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=47405>

Support to Kyrgyzstan in removing bureaucratic bottlenecks and building local capacity for regional trade

Jointly with the Ministry of Economy of Kyrgyzstan and the Eurasian Economic Commission, UNECE conducted a series of capacity building workshops on trade facilitation targeted at various stakeholders including government officials and traders, with a special focus on women entrepreneurs:

- Women Leading Change by Trade on 21 May, Bishkek

PROJECT/ACTIVITY UPDATE

Selected project/activity updates from ROC-TF organizations on Trade Facilitation

- Trade Facilitation for easier access to regional and global access 22-25 May in Bishkek, and 2 regional workshops in Jalal-Abad on 28-29 May, and 31 May - 1 June in Osh

The workshops strengthened the capacity of governmental trade-support agencies in Kyrgyzstan to simplify, harmonize and automate trade information gathering and customs operations. Sessions aimed at increasing knowledge of relevant international recommendations, standards and agreements, and various instruments related to trade facilitation. The workshops have been also an opportunity for participants to discuss and highlight some of the challenges related to trade procedures and priority areas for technical assistance. The workshops were an important step which provided nationals partners with skills and necessary information to ensure leadership and commitment to future implementation of policies to integrate the country into the regional and value chains.

More information available here: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=48638>

United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) Expert Meeting in Almaty on 11-12 June 2018

UNECE organized two-day Expert Meeting to develop a package of measures to strengthen SPECA and better enable regional cooperation among the countries, using the evaluation report on SPECA; and build capacity of middle level policy makers from the SPECA countries to cooperate on the SDGs, on a regional level.

More information available here: <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=48613>

ROCB A/P

WCO Regional Workshop on Capacity Building of Customs Laboratories



The WCO, in cooperation with the ROCB A/P and Korea Customs Service (KCS), organized the WCO Regional Workshop on Capacity Building of Customs Laboratories from 17 April to 19 April 2018 in Busan, Korea, under the financial support of Customs Cooperation Fund of Korea (CCF/Korea) to enable the sharing of analytical techniques in the A/P region.

28 participants from 22 regional Member administrations, 4 resource persons, and 2 officials from the Russian Federation attended in this workshop. Mr. Hong-Young Jo of the ROCB A/P attended this workshop as one of the resource persons, and he made a presentation on the ROCB A/P's contributions and activities in capacity building.

More information available here: <http://www.rocb-ap.org/article-detail/401/>

Single Window for Trade Facilitation: Regional Best Practices and Future Development

Single Window (SW) generally refers to an electronic facility that allows parties involved in international trade and transport to submit all information needed to fulfil trade-related regulatory requirements at once and at a single-entry point. This digital trade facilitation measure aims at reducing the regulatory burden for traders when completing import, export and transit-related procedures. It has emerged more than a decade ago and has become a core component of trade facilitation reforms. The World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement, which entered into force in February 2017, has dedicated provisions on SW.

The Asia-Pacific region is home to several world-class SW implementation cases, many of which have been operational for many years. Figures 3 and 4 below provides a picture of the overall implementation of SW in Asia and the Pacific. Of forty-six (46) countries examined in Asia and the Pacific, 10 ESCAP member States (31.61%) were found running fully or partially developed SW systems. About 60% of the SW in operations are public facilities funded through grants, while 40% are established as public-private partnerships and at least partly funded through by commercial entities. The existence of regional initiatives promoting SWs appear to have played an important role in building the necessary political support and policy environment for SW at the national level, as demonstrated in the case of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Single Window.

Figure 3. Single Window implementation status by stage

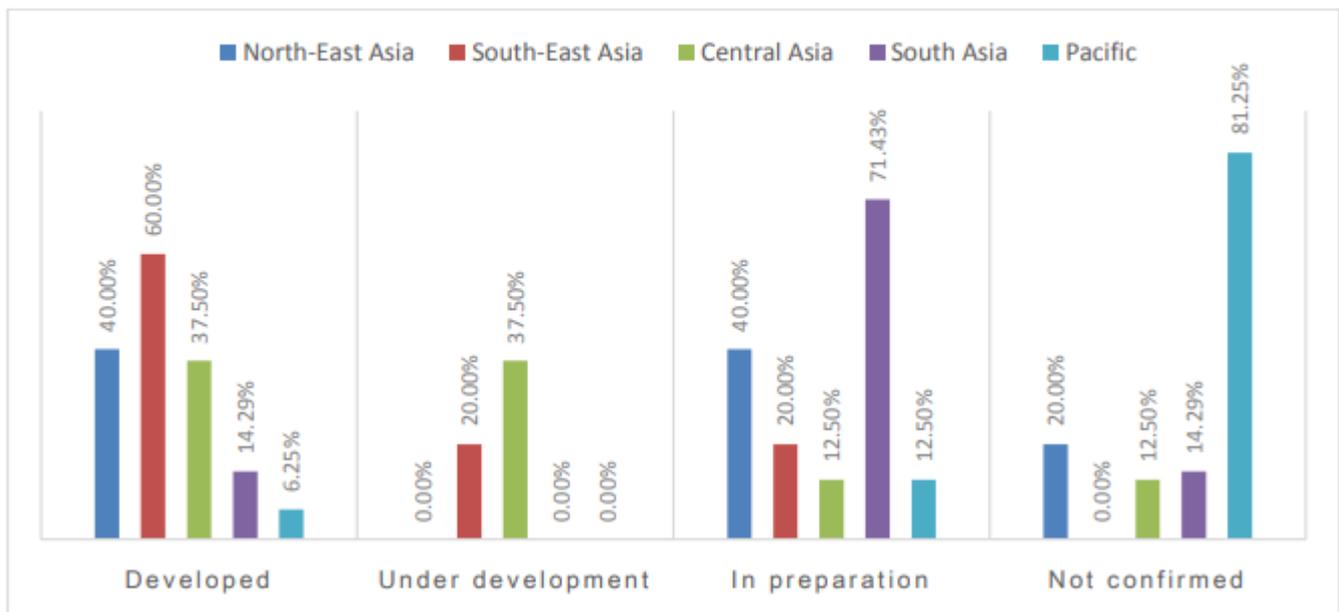
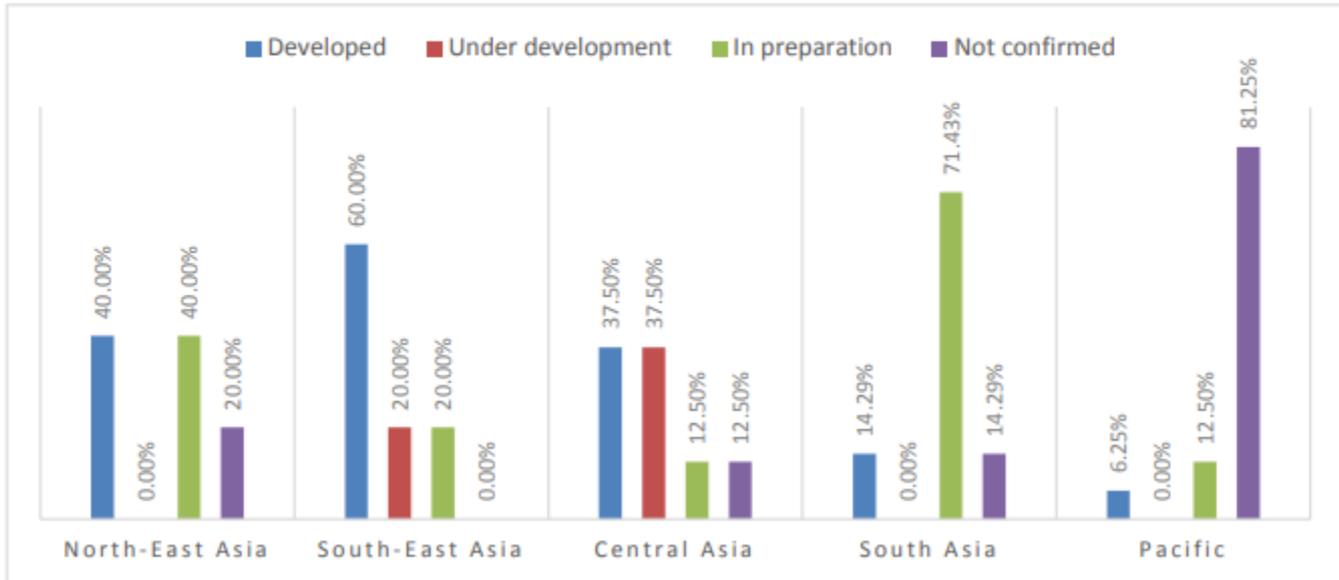


Figure 4. Single Window implementation status by subregion

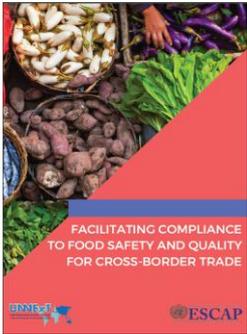


Four selected best practice cases of Single Windows can be identified in the region, namely the Hong Kong, China SW; the Japan SW, the Republic of Korea SW and the Singapore SW. The evolution of each SW in terms of institutional arrangement, funding sources and services offered, as well as implementation issues and challenges, along with future development plans, each provide insights for other countries aiming at developing advanced national trade facilitation systems. Key features and characteristics of modern SW identified include: Single entry and submission of information; Paperless environment; Standardized documents and data; Information sharing; Centralised risk management; Coordination of agencies and stakeholders; Analytical capability; and Electronic payment.

Based on the analysis of the four SW cases and the findings from a survey of SW stakeholders from both public and private sectors in the Republic of Korea, a number of key recommendations emerge for SW implementers in the region. These include: (1) Actively engage private sector in optimizing operation of SWs and to make them sustainable, (2) Make use of regional institutional mechanisms and initiatives to build political will and technical and legal capacity for SW, (3) Consider how the SW will integrate B2B services into its original B2G design, (4) Enable SWs to exchange and process cross-border trade data and documents, (5) Cooperate in the development of legal and technical solutions for cross-border paperless data exchange, and (6) Plan for continuous improvement in the operation and delivery of services through SWs.

For more information, please refer to “Single Window for Trade Facilitation: Regional Best Practices and Future Development”, <https://www.unescap.org/resources/single-window-trade-facilitation-regional-best-practices-and-future-development>

Facilitating Compliance to Food Safety and Quality for Cross-border Trade

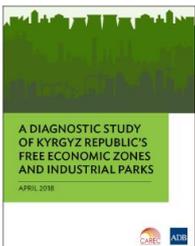


This publication describes the type of food safety and quality issues impacting cross-border trade. It highlights important food safety and quality control strategies, which will strengthen food safety and quality within countries, which will facilitate cross-border trade. Robust food quality and safety systems can lead to greater confidence in the importing country of the export country capabilities and thereby require less stringent import controls. Finally, the publication brings out guidance to governments for implementing effective food control systems that will facilitate exports as these will meet importing country requirements; and will also expedite import clearance and release of goods at border. An overview of each of these areas is highlighted below in brief.

Read the full report here: <https://www.unescap.org/resources/facilitating-compliance-food-safety-and-quality-cross-border-trade>

ADB

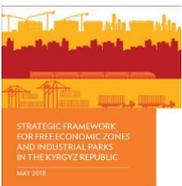
A Diagnostic Study of Kyrgyz Republic's Free Economic Zones and Industrial Parks



CAREC Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring (CPMM) Annual Report 2016 is a study of transport and trade facilitation effectiveness in the Central Asia region, collecting data over the years since 2009. In 2016, CAREC CPMM collected 2,756 shipments samples across Central Asia, using 11 national carrier and forwarder associations in seven CAREC countries. The results identified bottlenecks in CAREC corridors border crossing points using CPMM indicators.

Available here: <https://www.carecprogram.org/?publication=diagnostic-study-kyrgyz-republic-free-economic-zones-industrial-parks>

Strategic Framework for Free Economic Zones and Industrial Parks in the Kyrgyz Republic



Free economic zones that can be transformed into clusters of highly competitive traded firms can contribute significantly to industrial diversification and regional development of the Kyrgyz Republic. This strategic framework outlines strategies and policies for leveraging them to enhance productivity and promote regional development.

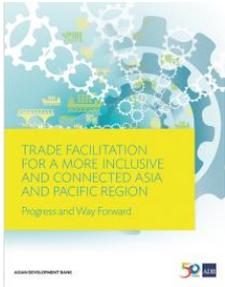
The framework involves six pillars for integrating free economic zones and industrial parks: (i) using a sustainable development program with a mix of bottom-up and top-down approaches; (ii) enhancing the investment climate by ensuring the development of sound legal and regulatory frameworks, better institutional designs, and coordination; (iii) using a proactive approach with global value chains and upgrading along them by strengthening domestic capabilities; (iv) forming regional and cross-border value chains; (v) developing a sound implementation strategy; and (vi) establishing a sound monitoring and evaluation framework.

Available here: <https://www.carecprogram.org/?publication=strategic-framework-free-economic-zones-industrial-parks-kyrgyz-republic>

RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS

ADB and ESCAP

Embracing the E-commerce Revolution in Asia and the Pacific, June 2018



This report introduces a new analytical framework to assess the level and quality of e-commerce development. The framework incorporates three key dimensions of e-commerce development: (i) economic factors and conditions, (ii) legal and institutional environment, and (iii) social acceptance and awareness. The multidimensional framework allows a systemic review of underlying conditions and factors characterizing e-commerce development to evaluate the current status, identify multifaceted development challenges, and suggest the way

forward.

Available here: <https://www.adb.org/publications/ecommerce-revolution-asia-pacific>

ESCAP

Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation in Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs

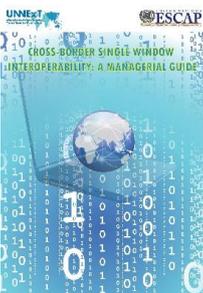


This report presents an analysis of the results of the United Nations Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation for Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs (CSNs), i.e. Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The Survey, conducted between January and July 2017, provides information on the implementation of selected measures under the WTO TFA, as well as on the implementation of innovative, technology-driven measures aimed at enabling trade using electronic rather than paper-based data and documentation - otherwise referred to as “paperless trade”. The 2017

Survey also covers specific trade facilitation measures targeted at small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the agricultural sector and women.

Available here: <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/TF%20Implementation%20in%20AP%20CSN%20%28final%29.pdf>

Cross-border Single Window Interoperability: A Managerial Guide



This guide provides a management framework and actionable recommendations for cross-border interoperability between national Single Windows, bilaterally or multilaterally. This guide builds upon UN/CEFACT Recommendation 36 and develops a five-pronged management framework for Single Window interoperability (SWI). In addition to actual business needs for SWI, four critical areas for successful implementation of SWI are proposed and discussed in detail, further elaborating on guidelines included in the Recommendation 36. In this guide, these areas are referred to as the four levels of interoperability, i.e., policy and legal interoperability, people and organizational interoperability, process and data interoperability, and platform and technical interoperability. This guide also suggests a governance and management structure as well as phase-by-phase programme management for governing and managing the establishment of cross-border SWI.

Available here: <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/TF%20Implementation%20in%20AP%20CSN%20%28final%29.pdf>

RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS

ESCAP and UNECE

Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation in OIC

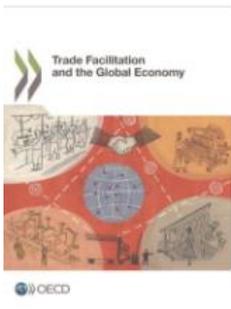


This report presents an analysis of the results of the United Nations Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation for 34 members of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The Survey, provides information on the implementation of selected measures under the WTO TFA, as well as on the implementation of innovative, technology-driven measures aimed at enabling trade using electronic rather than paper-based data and documentation - otherwise referred to as “paperless trade”. The Survey also covers specific trade facilitation measures targeted at small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the agricultural sector and women.

Available here: <https://www.unescap.org/resources/trade-facilitation-and-paperless-trade-implementation-oic>

OECD

Trade Facilitation and the Global Economy



In a globalised world, where goods cross borders many times as intermediate and as final products, trade facilitation is essential to lowering overall trade costs and increasing economic welfare, in particular for developing and emerging economies. Facilitation efforts undertaken by various countries around the world also show that the benefits of such measures clearly compensate the costs and challenges posed by their implementation.

Available here:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFAC T_2018_6E.pdf

UNECE

White Paper on a Paperless Trade



In 2017, the World Economic Forum approached UN/CEFACT in order to create a guide on Paperless Trade which might help countries to understand and implement specific provisions of the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement, specifically article 10 on Formalities connected with importation and exportation (10.2, 10.3 and 10.4) as well as article 7 on Release and clearance of goods (7.1 and 7.2). This White Paper provides a brief history on standardization of electronic business processes, especially within UN/CEFACT; the basics, benefits and challenges in electronic business processes; the governance of paperless trade; and future evolutions.

Available here:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFAC T_2018_6E.pdf

White Paper on Trusted Transboundary Environment

When exchanging information electronically, there can be questions of the legal significance of the data, in other words, if the information received is legally binding. Building on the work of UNECE Recommendation 14 on Authentication of Trade Documents, this White Paper aims to provide guidance on establishing a mutual recognition framework between countries in view of ensuring the legal significance of information, when higher levels of reliability are required or are desired. This is the Trusted Transboundary Environment. This work can eventually form the basis of future work on the subject.

Available here: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFAC T_2018_7E.pdf

RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS

White Paper on Data Pipeline Concept for Improving Data Quality in the Supply Chain

This White Paper builds upon the work that was undertaken by several European Union projects (Cassandra, CORE, SELIS) and which was brought to UN/CEFACT in order to provide a consistent definition and understanding of what is a Data Pipeline and how it should function. This paper also explores the possible information which can be input or output from a Pipeline at various “waypoints” along the life cycle of a transaction

White Paper on Technical Application of Blockchain to United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) Deliverables

Blockchain applications are providing new ways of exchanging data in a secure manner. Many UN/CEFACT domains have expressed an interest in applying blockchain technology to the standards they develop. In 2017, the Bureau decided to launch a single blockchain project in order to provide a harmonized framework on how each project team should approach Blockchain. The result was a project that aims to develop two White Papers. The first on the possible impact of blockchain technologies on UN/CEFACT deliverables, the second on the potential use cases of blockchain in the supply chain and beyond.

Available here:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFACT_2018_INF.1.pdf

White Paper on Women in Trade Facilitation

Women face key challenges in international trade and participating in the facilitation of international trade. This White Paper takes an academic approach to identify these challenges and scans the literature for concrete measures to help rectify disadvantages or discriminations women might face.

Available here:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFACT_2018_10E.pdf

Procedure for Reference Data Model Artefact Publication

UN/CEFACT maintains a number of libraries on data related to cross border trade, including Reference Data Models (RDMs) which are logical subsets related to a particular area of activity such as Supply Chain or Transport/Logistics. This document provides a proposed procedure for the generation of RDM artefacts in order to facilitate their reuse and integration into other systems. This procedure makes direct reference to the following documents: UN/CEFACT Reference Data Model Guideline (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2017/INF.2), UN/CEFACT Supply Chain Reference Data Model Business Requirement Specification (SCRDM-BRS), UN/CEFACT Supply Chain Reference Data Model Requirement Specification Mapping (SCRDM-RSM), UN/CEFACT SCRDM Master Structure and Subset of Core Component Library (Context CCL).

Available here:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFACT_2018_11E.pdf

Executive Guide on eInvoicing / Cross Industry Invoice

This document provides an executive guide to the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) Cross Industry Invoice (CII), with a view to helping governments, government agencies, industries and private companies to understand better how this e-Invoicing standard can be used to improve the exchange of data.

Available here:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFACT_2018_12E.pdf

Executive Guide on United Nations Codes for Trade and Transport Locations

This document provides an executive guide to the United Nations Codes for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE), with a view to helping governments, government agencies, industries and private companies to understand better how this codification system can be used to improve the exchange of data.

Available here:

RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFAC T_2018_13E.pdf

Executive Guide on the Electronic Consignment Note

This document provides an executive guide to the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) electronic consignment note (e-CMR), with a view to helping governments, government agencies, industries and private companies to understand better how this standard can be used to improve the exchange of data.

Available here:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFAC T_2018_14E.pdf

Report on the use of United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) Standards

UN/CEFACT delivers recommendations and standards of global impact, but developing statistics to reflect their widespread use is not easy. At the request of the Plenary (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2016/2, Decision 16-16), a survey was launched during the period May 2017 to April 2018 with mixed results because of low rates of response. However, these have been compared in this document with web site visits/downloads and statistics provided by the user community on a specific stand.

Available here:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFAC T_2018_INF.2.pdf

Transparency in textile value chains in relation to the environmental, social and human health impacts of parts, components and production processes

This paper identifies basic principles, possible solutions, and provides recommendations for an international framework initiative on transparency and traceability for sustainability patterns in the clothing sector, in support of Sustainable Development Goal 12 on responsible production and consumption.

Available here:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFAC T_2018_23E.pdf

Briefing note on United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) Contributions to UN Sustainable Development Goal 12 – Responsible Production and Consumption

This briefing note discusses why decoupling economic development from environmental degradation and ensuring fair progress through more responsible production patterns and consumption practices, is essential for green and inclusive economic development. It provides an insight into how the work of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), with its policy recommendations, standards and tools, can help attain Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”.

Available here:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFAC T_2018_24E.pdf

Briefing note on Blockchain for SDG

This briefing note discusses the possible contributions that blockchain, an emerging innovative technology, is making or could make to advance the achievement of the SDGs.

Available here:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2018_plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFAC T_2018_25E.pdf

UPCOMING EVENTS

Event	Date	Venue	Organizer
Ninth CAREC Federation of Carrier and Forwarder Associations Annual Meeting	4 September 2018	Ashgabat, Turkmenistan	ADB
17th CAREC Customs Cooperation Committee (CCC) Meeting	5 September 2018	Ashgabat, Turkmenistan	ADB
Fourth Joint Meeting of the CAREC Customs Cooperation Committee and CAREC	6 September 2018	Ashgabat, Turkmenistan	ADB
Workshop on Improving SME Trade Finance Environment in the CAREC Region	26 -27 September 2018	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	ADB
ADB Inter-subregional Knowledge Sharing Forum on Enhanced Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement	30 -31 October 2018	Bangkok, Thailand	ADB
17th Ministerial Conference on CAREC	15 November 2018	Ashgabat, Turkmenistan	ADB
Extended UNNExT Advisory Group Meeting on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation	30 October – 1 November 2018	Bangkok, Thailand	ESCAP
UNNExT Advisory Committee Meeting	2 November 2018	Bangkok, Thailand	ESCAP
Empowerment Programme for NTFC Module 1: Understanding International standards and recommendations	28 -31 August 2018	Luanda, Angola	UNCTAD
Multi-year Expert meeting - Transport	21 -23 November 2018	Geneva, Switzerland	UNCTAD
First African Forum for National Trade Facilitation Committees	27 -29 November 2018	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	UNCTAD
EAC Ministerial Conference	10 -12 December 2018	tbd	UNCTAD
Hangzhou Forum of UN/CEFACT, including side events: (1) eGovernment - IoT for Trade focusing on actual implementation and benefits derived; (2) eGovernment - Blockchain and the International Supply Chain; (3) Transport & Logistics - Showcasing of T&L deliverables, concrete applications of Trade Facilitation through automation; (4) Orchestration - Opening up UN/CEFACT work to the world of web developers; (5) Advancing the Circular Economy through Sustainable Value Chains / Belt and Road; (6) UN/LOCODE - Advisory Group meeting on DMR procedures	14 -19 October 2018	Hangzhou, China	UNECE
Single Window Conference	12 -13 November 2018	Morocco	UNECE
Team of Specialist on Sustainable Fisheries Meeting	22 November 2018	Geneva, Switzerland	UNECE
Recommendation n°16 (UN/LOCODE) revision project meeting	23 November 2018	Geneva, Switzerland	UNECE
5th Green Industry Conference for Sustainable Development	3-5 October 2018	Bangkok, Thailand	UNIDO
3rd Annual “Bridge for Cities” event	9-11 October 2018	Vienna, Austria	UNIDO
4th WCO-ESCAP UNNExT Masterclass	5 – 14 November 2018	Cheon-an, ROK	WCO & ESCAP

REGIONAL

Benefits of paperless trade, 13 April 2018

As much as US\$673 billion (or 26 per cent of trade costs) can be saved annually in the Asia Pacific region if the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement and digital and paperless trade measures are fully implemented, according to the Digital Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific report. Launched in March by the ESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), the report said that Least Developed Countries such as Bangladesh, and Pacific Island nations like Samoa, could boost profits by more than 30 per cent from trade innovation while the ASEAN states and South Asian countries stand to cut trading costs by 15 and 20 per cent, respectively. Such savings could provide them with funds to boost development and poverty alleviation programs. In a press release, ESCAP estimates that by boosting digital trade facilitation and paperless trade measures to China's level, the Asia Pacific region could raise GDP by more than 3.8 per cent.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) defines digital trade facilitation as the "application of modern information and communication technologies to simplify and automate international trade procedures."

<https://www.scidev.net/global/trade/news/benefits-of-paperless-trade.html>

ASIA-PACIFIC

ASEAN Single Window - a digital platform to simplify customs clearance, 26 April 2018

On January 1, 2018, five ASEAN member countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam have started to adopt the ASEAN Single Window mechanism which aims to expedite cargo clearance and reduce paperwork. These five member states provide a secure IT architecture and a legal framework customized for trade, transportation and commercial data to be exchanged electronically between government agencies or within the trading community.

The ASEAN Single Window is one of many efforts to create a single market and production base for ASEAN countries as it plays the role of implementing free flow of goods and services within ASEAN. The advantages of ASW have appeared differently in every country thus far, but the mechanism could expedite the release of cargo and help enterprises reduce transaction costs and time.

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/asean-business/asean-single-window-a-digital-platform-to-simplify-customs-clearance>

BANGLADESH

Project underway to facilitate trade: Tofail, 19 July 2018

Bangladesh has started making efforts to improve ease of doing business and boost trade facilitation by adopting projects and establishing greater regional connectivity, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said yesterday. Poor connectivity is one of the major barriers to regional trade for Bangladesh, although many countries have already resolved such crisis by creating a single window for business, he said. For creating such a single window or expediting online trade, the government has been working to bring all facilitators like the land and Chittagong ports, the National Board of Revenue, railways division, Economic Relations Division and commerce ministry under one window.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/project-underway-facilitate-trade-tofail-1607620>

CHINA

Beijing and Tianjin launch 33 trade facilitation policies this year, 11 July 2018

Beijing and Tianjin have jointly launched 33 policies to facilitate cross-border trade since March this year and plan to handle customs clearance for companies through a single service window next year, according to Yan Ligang, director of Beijing Municipal Commission of Commerce. In line with the new policies issued on March 18, the approval time for automatic import and export licenses issued by the two cities has decreased from 3-5 working days to 1 working day. Beijing has issued over 4,700 licenses to more than 600 companies since the new policy came into effect. In addition, the average import clearance time for Beijing companies at Tianjin Customs was shortened to 7.53 hours, 7.67 hours shorter than the previous 15.2 hours. The average export clearance time was shortened to 0.27 hours, 0.57 hours shorter than the previous 0.84 hours.

<http://www.ecns.cn/news/economy/2018-07-11/detail-ifyvzyvz7260628.shtml>

NEPAL

Nepal jumps up 10 spots in logistic performance index, 26 July 2018

Jul 26, 2018-Nepal has moved up 10 places to 114th position in the latest global Logistics Performance Index (LPI) report prepared by the World Bank. Out of 167 countries surveyed by the multilateral lending institution, Nepal's position has been improved in the LPI along with an improvement in customs procedures, trade logistics quality, tracking system and timeliness of delivery. This year, the country's LPI stands at 2.51 compared to 2.38 in 2016. The World Bank has been conducting the biennial survey since 2007.

LPI is the weighted average of the country scores on six key components of trade logistics that include efficiency of the customs, quality of trade and transport related infrastructure, ease of arranging competitively priced shipments, competence and quality of logistics services, ability to track and trace consignments and timeliness of delivery. Among these indicators, Nepal performed dismally in the efficiency of clearance procedures at customs despite improving in 2018 compared to that of two years ago. The country's index in customs efficiency was improved to 2.29 from 1.93.

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2018-07-26/nepal-jumps-up-10-spots-in-logistic-performance-index.html>

PAKISTAN

Implementation of facilitation pact to cut trade costs in Asia-Pacific, 24 March 2018

Trade costs in Asia and the Pacific is projected to be reduced by 26 per cent or savings of \$673 billion every year with the full implementation of the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement together with other paperless trade measures, according to a new report released by the United Nations on Friday.

The report, 'Digital Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific', launched by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), shows that the potential trade cost reductions in South Asia exceed 20pc in all countries of that region including Pakistan, while the potential trade cost reductions for all Asean countries exceed 15pc. Least Developed Countries and Pacific Island countries have the most to gain, with trade cost reductions from digital trade facilitation exceeding 30pc. A recent UNESCAP study found that moderate region-wide improvements in trade facilitation in Asia-Pacific could lift GDP by 0.32pc annually between 2015 and 2030, which is equivalent to nearly \$87bn per year.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1397180>

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka to amend archaic customs law to enable paperless trade, 29 May 2018

The Sri Lanka government submitted a draft document to amend the Sections 47 and 57 of the Customs Ordinance in order to expedite paperless trade and pre-arrival clearance at the Customs. Moreover, the Sri Lanka Customs administration has been up in discussion with trade unions on how to deal with further other amendments to meet the TFA commitments. The administration has a plan to launch the blueprint of the National Single Window by the end of July 2018 and start operating by 2019.

<http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/Sri-Lanka-to-amend-archaic-customs-law-to-enable-paperless-trade-150520.html>

Sri Lanka to cut costs to trade with information portal, 23 July 2018

Sri Lanka launched a trade information website Friday bringing together up-to-date information on regulations and procedures relating to exports and imports across 43 different government agencies for faster and easier cross-border trade, authorities said. Sri Lanka Trade Information Portal (SLTIP) brings together trade-related regulatory and other information across 43 government agencies such as Customs on to one single, user-friendly website.

The website is a requirement under the rules of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement which aims to achieve easier and faster cross-border trade by making rules transparent and predictable. "This would facilitate our industries, especially SMEs, in expanding their trading opportunities at a lower cost and shorter time," Minister of Industries and Commerce Rishad Bathiudeen said at the launch.

<https://economynext.com/Sri-Lanka-to-cut-costs-to-trade-with-information-portal-3-11300.html>

VIET NAM

PM Phuc asks for removal of unnecessary procedures, 25 July 2018

The Prime Minister of Vietnam issued a statement on promoting the National Single Window and the ASEAN Single Window as well as trade facilitation during a teleconference on July 24, requesting the Ministry of Finance to hand in a draft action plan to promote the ASW, NSW and trade facilitation by the end of August. He emphasized the need to regulate trade fraud, and that it would be essential to prepare rigid measures to prevent organizations and individuals from violating regulations on trade fraud.

According to the Customs Department under the Ministry of Finance, 53 administrative procedures in 11 ministries and sectors have connected with the NSW mechanism by July 23. All customs procedures have been operating under the NSW and around 99.65 percent of businesses have used procedures electronically across the country..

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/business/205735/pm-phuc-asks-for-removal-of-unnecessary-procedures.html>