Preface

Given the potential benefits of reducing red tape in making participation in international trade more inclusive, the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT) Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee endorsed the launch of a new regional study titled "Improving Import-Export Processes and Procedures in Asia" in 2009. A research team was assembled spanning South, South-East and East Asia, and was tasked to analyze the processes involved in importing and exporting specific products of strategic importance to developing countries of the region, in order to identify bottlenecks and areas for improvement at the national, bilateral and regional levels.

In addition to building the capacity of researchers in conducting business process analysis (BPA), the study also aimed at deepening understanding of how to facilitate intraregional trade and assess progress in this area. This publication brings together the main research findings and outputs produced by the ARTNeT team during 2010/11, with the support of the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT).

This publication is divided into two parts. Part I of this publication features a synthesis of the main findings and implications from the country studies, including a brief overview of the trade facilitation situation in Asia and the Pacific. Part II consists of summaries of the seven country studies on which the synthesis is based. All of the country studies were released in full as ARTNeT Working Papers (see www.artnetontrade.org) during the course of 2011, following presentation of preliminary results during the Second Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum (APTFF), held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in October 2010. Results and policy implications of these studies were also presented at the Third Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum (APTFF), held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in October 2011.