



Asia-Pacific Trade Briefs

The Pacific

(American Samoa; Australia; Cook Islands; Fiji; French Polynesia; Guam; Kiribati; Marshall Islands; Micronesia (F.S.); Nauru; New Caledonia; New Zealand; Niue; Northern Mariana Islands; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Tonga; Tuvalu; Vanuatu)

Merchandise trade: Trade in the Pacific subregion is dominated by Australia and New Zealand, which accounted for 81.0% and 14.5% of subregional merchandise trade, respectively in 2015. Merchandise exports in 2015 fell sharply by 20.8% compared to the Asia-Pacific average exports decline by 9.7%, and continued a trend of falling exports by 2.2% on average over the period 2010-2015, though increasingly more contractionary. The subregional exports are dominated by iron ores, coal and petroleum gases – which are largely based on the commodity-driven export structure of Australia – and agriculture products, such as meat and milk – which are largely driven by the export structure of New Zealand (world's 7th largest milk-producing economy). The sharp subregional exports contraction can be explained by a combination of the gradual strengthening of the US dollar, which has hurt export revenues of the subregion's commodity exporters that are relatively vulnerable to fluctuations in world commodity prices when measured in local currencies, domestic oversupply in China, especially of milk and steel on world prices for those products, and overall lower intraregional and global export demand especially by China, which is the largest export partner to the Pacific subregion (28.8%). Merchandise imports in 2015 also contracted sharply by 12.3%, though slightly less than the Asia-Pacific average imports decline of 15.0%. Imports to the subregion are mainly motor vehicles, petroleum oils and ships. The subregional imports contraction was largely driven by significant currency depreciations, especially in Australia and New Zealand, and lower world crude oil prices and lower crude oil imports volume.

Services trade: The services trade share of total trade in 2015 reached 21.1%, up from 20.5% in 2014. In 2015 services exports contracted by 9.5% compared to the Asia-Pacific average exports decline of 4.8%, following a trend of modest services exports growth over the 2010-2015 period by 1.3%. Similarly, services imports in 2015 fell sharply by 16.8% compared to the Asia-Pacific average imports decline of 5.2%. The subregional services trade contraction was largely driven by Australia – whose services trade in 2015 accounted for 77.7% of subregional services trade – especially from falling travel services imports and transportation services exports.

Intraregional and intra-subregional trade: In 2015 the intraregional share of goods exports was 75.4%, down from 78.7% in 2014, while those of intra-subregional exports increased slightly to 7.42% in 2015 from 7.39% in 2014. China is the single largest export partner to the Pacific subregion (28.8%), but this share has shrunk compared to 30.5% in 2014, while exports with the rest of the world rose from 21.3% to 24.6% in 2015, and with South and South-West Asian economies from 3.8% to 4.5% in 2015. The intraregional share of goods imports reached 62.2% in 2015 compared with 61.4% in the previous year, while the intra-subregional share, by contrast, shrank from 7.0% in 2014 to 6.3% in 2015. China is also the single largest import partner for the Pacific subregion, and whose share reached 22.2% in 2015 compared with 19.6% in the previous year.

Foreign direct investment: The Pacific subregion is a major recipient of FDI inflows which, before world commodity prices plummeted from 2012 onwards, almost reached \$66 billion. However, in 2015 inflows into the subregion declined sharply by 46.5% compared to the Asia-Pacific average inflows growth of 5.6%. The FDI inflows to the subregion during the period 2010-2015 showed an average decline of 9.4%. The contraction in FDI inflows in 2015 was largely driven by Australia – the subregion's largest inflows recipient – which continues to struggle from falling foreign investment flows in its mining sector – the most invested sector – due to lower world commodity prices, and diminishing investment returns from a prolonged economic slowdown in China. Similarly, in 2015 FDI outflows contracted, and even more sharply, by 1089.2% which was largely driven by substantially less outflows from Australia.

Trade costs: Intraregional and international trade costs in the Pacific subregion remained substantially higher compared with the most efficient major traders in Asia and the Pacific. On average, trade costs for the Pacific subregion are three and two times higher than those for East Asia-3 and European Union-3 incurred in reaching major trading economies in Asia and the Pacific (China, India, Indonesia and the Russian Federation). The largest trading economies in the Pacific subregion, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Fiji, are all members of WTO; in 2014, average bound duty at 22.3% is higher than the Asia-Pacific average of 20.0%, as well as MFN applied and effective tariffs at 7.2% and 7.4%, respectively, compared with the Asia-Pacific averages of 6.9% and 5.9%. Tariffs do not appear to form the largest component in trade costs for the Pacific subregion, whose average binding coverage at 90.2% was above the Asia-Pacific average of 84.9%.

Figure 1. Key trade and investment indicators

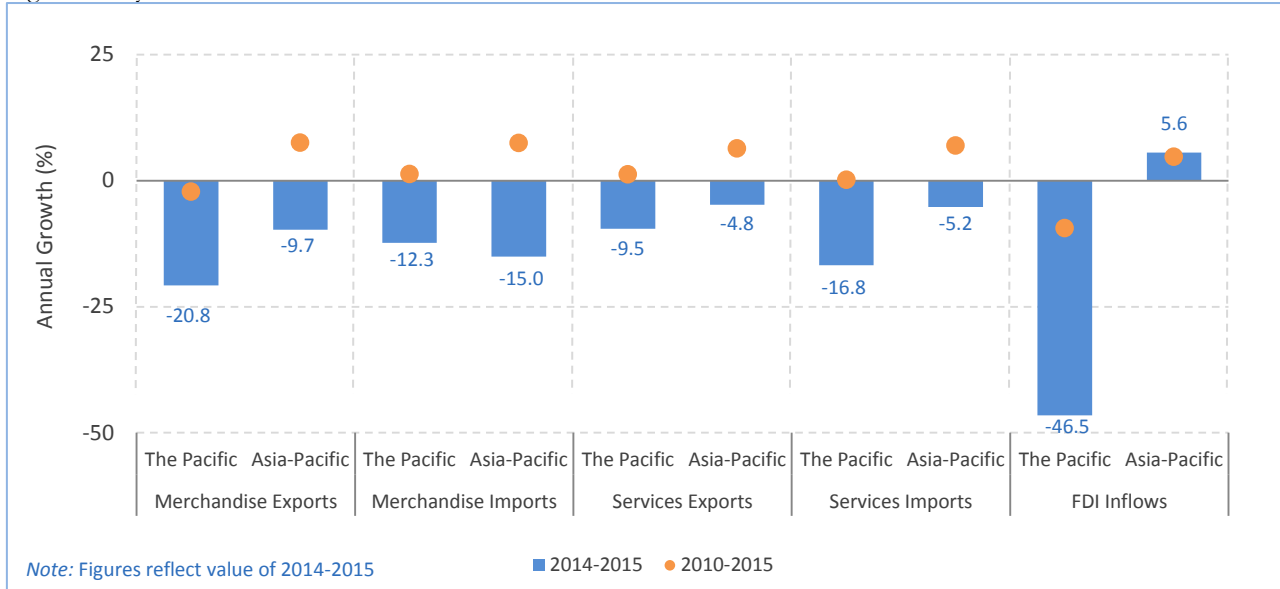


Figure 2. Top merchandise markets

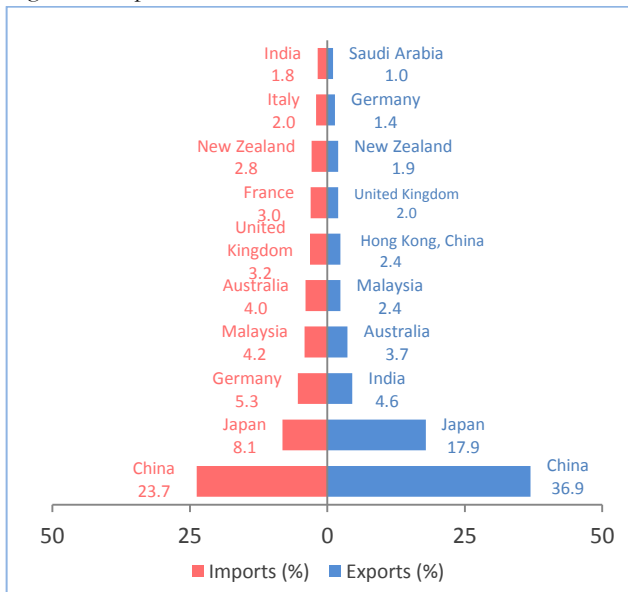


Figure 3. Top merchandise products

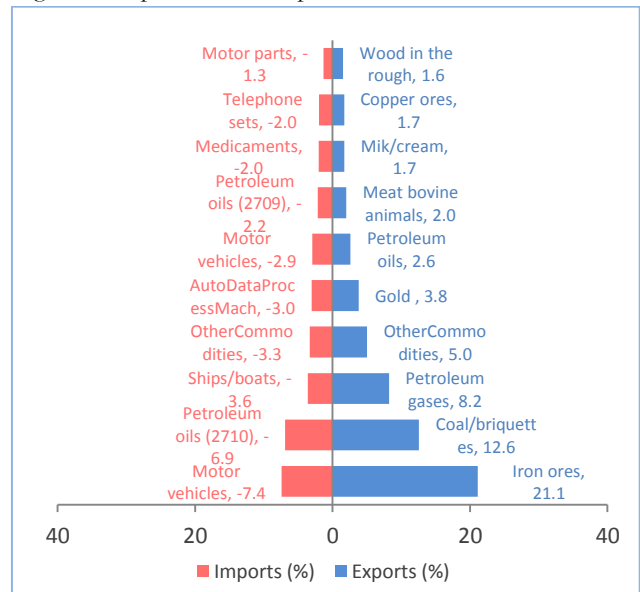


Figure 4. Breakdown of Pacific intraregional trade

Sources/Destinations (% share)	Pacific imports from		Pacific exports to	
	2014	2015	2014	2015
Asia-Pacific	61.4	62.2	78.7	75.4
East and North-East Asia	33.2	36.8	56.7	53.3
The Pacific	7.0	6.3	7.39	7.42
South-East Asia	18.8	16.5	10.5	9.9
South and South-West Asia	1.8	2.4	3.8	4.5

Figure 5. Foreign direct investment

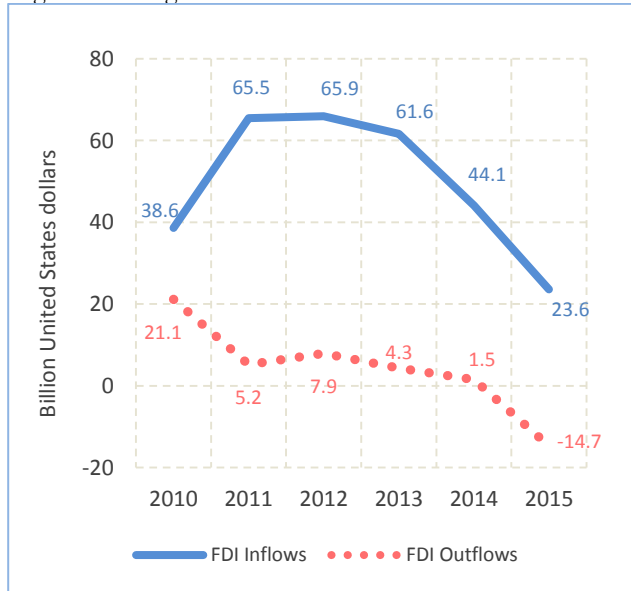


Figure 6. Tariffs (as of 2014)

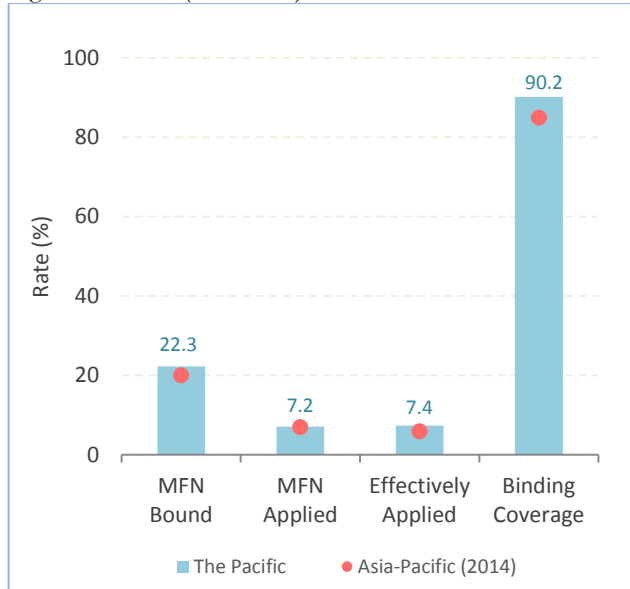
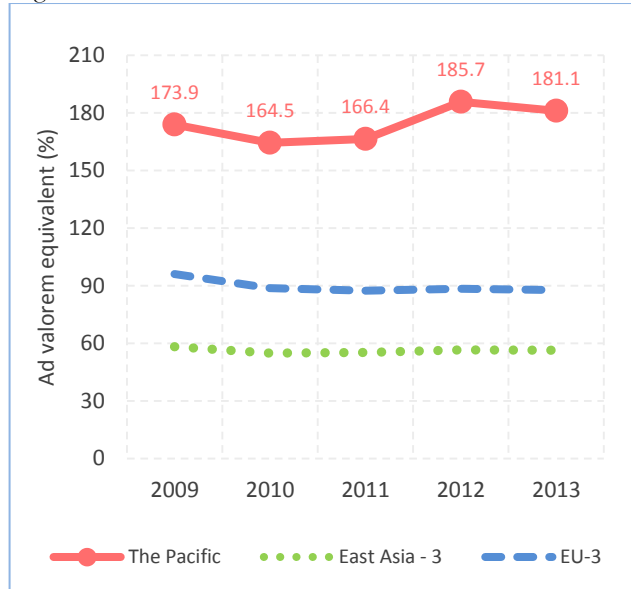


Figure 7. Trade costs



Sources: Trade and tariff data were accessed through WITS. FDI data were accessed through UNCTAD stat. Trade costs data were based on the ESCAP-World Bank trade cost database. Intra-regional trade data are calculated based on data from IMF-DOT.

Note: Data are based on countries for which data available only. Merchandise trade data follow the HS2007 classification. Mirror data are used. Products are defined at the 4-digit level. Tariffs are simple average. Trade costs shown are tariff equivalents, calculated as trade-weighted average trade costs of countries with the four developing economies (China, India, Indonesia and Russian Federation). Trade costs for East Asia-3 comprises China, Japan and the Republic of Korea; trade costs for European Union-3 comprises Germany, France and the United Kingdom.

Definitions: MFN bound tariff is the maximum most-favoured nation (MFN) tariff permitted under WTO obligations. MFN applied tariff is the tariff applied to imports among WTO members. The effectively applied rate is the ratio of collected import tariff revenue and value of imports. Binding coverage refers to the share of bound tariff lines in the total number of tariff lines. For more details contact escap-tiid@un.org.