

# Preface

Trade facilitation has emerged as an important trade policy tool in an international environment characterized by falling import tariffs and removal of quotas. Recent studies suggest that reductions in trade transactions costs through better trade facilitation measures at national and regional levels can bring significant economic benefits to economies in Asia and the Pacific. Accordingly, trade facilitation issues are increasingly a part of international and regional trade policy discussions. The global trade talks on the Doha Development Agenda include negotiations of a trade facilitation agreement, focusing on freedom of transit, fees and formalities for import and export, as well as publication and administration of trade regulations (transparency). Trade facilitation provisions are also included in a growing number of free trade agreements in Asia and the Pacific.

This reference book aims to support the implementation of trade facilitation measures in Asia and the Pacific. It attempts to bridge the gap between theory and practice in trade facilitation. It provides operational guidance on how to assess the status of trade facilitation, what measures and reforms are necessary, how to design trade facilitation initiatives, how to implement them at national and regional levels, and which organizations can help. The book intends to provide material for training on regional trade policy and help shape future trade facilitation measures in Asia and the Pacific. We hope that policy makers and practitioners in the region will widely use this reference book.

This publication on trade facilitation is the outcome of a collaborative effort between the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It was prepared by a team of staff and consultants from the two institutions under the general direction of Srinivasa Madhur (Senior Director, Office of Regional Economic Integration, ADB) and Ravi Ratnayake (Director, Trade and Investment Division of ESCAP). Ganeshan Wignaraja of ADB and Rene Bastiaans of ESCAP were the focal points for the memorandum of understanding for the joint project.

The project team was led by Shintaro Hamanaka of ADB and Shamika Sirimanne of ESCAP (Chief, Trade Facilitation Section, ESCAP) and included Cuong Minh Nguyen and Cynthia Petalcorin of ADB; Yann Duval and Maria Misovicova of ESCAP; and Richard Pomfret (principal consultant), Ben Shepherd (consultant), Maxence Orthlieb (consultant), and Shanta De Silva (consultant). Excellent research assistance was provided by Rommanee Suriyaarunroj of ESCAP.

Valuable contributions were received from ADB colleagues including Jayant Menon, Ganeshan Wignaraja, Dorothea Lazaro, and Aiken Rose Tafgar as well as from Bin Peng and Wei Liu of ESCAP. Many others from ADB provided insights, particularly Akm Mahfuzuddin Ahmed, Douglas Brooks, Ronnie Butiong, Lingling Ding,

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Useful inputs were also provided by Markus Pikart and Serguei Kouzmine of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; Kanya Satyani of the ASEAN Secretariat; Prabir De of the Research on Information System for Developing Countries, New Delhi, India; and Guillermo Parayno Jr., former Commissioner of the Philippine Bureau of Customs.

This reference book was first published in 2009 and was updated in 2013. The main contributors for the update include Shintaro Hamanaka and Aiken Rose Tafgar of ADB and Yann Duval and Tengfei Wang of ESCAP.