United Nations ESCAP/PTA/PTC(4)/3

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 April 2025

Original: English

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Paperless Trade Council of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific

Fourth session
Bangkok and online, 12 and 13 June 2025
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific and discussion on the way forward

Draft recommendations on adopting international standards for the implementation of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific

Note by the secretariat

Summary

To support the implementation of article 9 of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, the secretariat has prepared a set of recommendations that have been reviewed by the Standing Committee. The Paperless Trade Council is invited to review the present document and approve the recommendations.

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to article 9 of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, the parties to the Framework Agreement shall endeavour to apply international standards and guidelines in order to ensure interoperability in paperless trade and to develop safe, secure and reliable means of communication for the exchange of data.

2. To support the parties in implementing article 9, the secretariat has prepared a set of recommendations that were reviewed by the Standing Committee of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific during an ad hoc session held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, on 11 December 2024. On that occasion, the Standing Committee agreed to submit additional feedback to the secretariat within 60 days of the closing of the session. As no additional feedback has been

* ESCAP/PTA/PTC(4)/1.

Please recycle

received, the recommendations are hereby submitted for consideration by the Paperless Trade Council.

II. Issues for consideration by the Paperless Trade Council

3. The Paperless Trade Council is invited to review and approve the recommendations set out in the annex to the present document.

Annex

Recommendations on adopting international standards for the implementation of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless trade in Asia and the Pacific

1. Pursuant to article 9 of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific on international standards for exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form, the parties to the Framework Agreement should endeavour to apply international standards and guidelines in order to ensure interoperability in paperless trade and to develop safe, secure and reliable means of communication for the exchange of data. The parties should also endeavour to become involved in the development of international standards and best practices related to cross-border paperless trade.

2. In selecting the international standards for adoption, the following factors should be taken into consideration:

(a) Alignment with global, regional and subregional recommendations and initiatives;

(b) The content of other recent digital trade agreements to which the parties to the Framework Agreement are also parties;

(c) The content of other trade agreements, including any provisions and articles on cross-border paperless trade;

(d) The various economic, geographical and trade circumstances of the parties and how these circumstances affect the degree to which international conventions and standards are relevant to each party (depending, for example, on whether they are landlocked or islands);

(e) The fact that international standards and trade patterns evolve over time, requiring periodic adjustments to ensure that the adopted standards remain relevant and effective.

3. The Paperless Trade Council recommends that the parties to the Framework Agreement adopt the following standards, in whole or in part, as appropriate:

(a) The Model Law on Electronic Commerce of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)[1] or the United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts;[2]

(b) The UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Signatures[3] (especially article 12, on trust and assurance) or the UNCITRAL Model Law on the Use and Cross-border Recognition of Identity Management and Trust Services;[4]

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No.* 17 (A/51/17), annex I.

[2] General Assembly resolution 60/21, annex.

[3] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 17* and corrigendum (A/56/17 and A/56/17/Corr.3), annex II.

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-seventh Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/77/17), annex II.

(c) The UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records[5] (especially article 19, on no discrimination between foreign-issued and domestic-issued electronic transferable records);

(d) The World Customs Organization Data Model;[6]

(e) The United Nations Trade Data Elements Directory.[7]

4. The Paperless Trade Council requests the Standing Committee, with the support of the secretariat, to monitor the development of international standards and update the above-mentioned list regularly to ensure the continued relevance of the recommended standards.

5. The Paperless Trade Council invites development partners to assist the parties in adopting and implementing the recommended standards.

6. The Paperless Trade Council calls upon the secretariat:

(a) To continue to update the cross-border paperless trade database[8] to include relevant legal and implementation instruments and standards;

(b) To provide, where feasible and appropriate, capacity-building and technical assistance to support the parties in adopting the standards.

---

[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-second Session, Supplement No. 17* (A/72/17), annex I.

[6] See www.wcoomd.org/DataModel.

[7] See https://unece.org/untded-iso7372.

[8] See www.digitalizetrade.org/.