Report on progress made in the implementation of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific

(Agenda item 3)
Support to readiness assessments for cross-border paperless trade

- 2021: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the Philippines
  - Readiness assessments completed and draft action plans drafted
  - All action plans, except for those already acceded, included recommendation of acceding to the Framework Agreement as soon as possible
- 2021/22: Tonga, Viet Nam, Turkmenistan and Tuvalu (ongoing) and Tajikistan (planned)

Support to ratification of/accession to the Framework Agreement

- Continued the Accession/Ratification Accelerator Programme* to provide technical assistance
  - Translation of the treaty text and other related support materials into their domestic languages,
  - Provision of a national expert,
  - Tailor-made notes and/or briefs, and
  - Organization of national interagency consultations.
- Supported Mongolia and Tajikistan; Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in connection with the readiness assessment
- **Extended until December 2022**: All developing ESCAP member States encouraged to take advantage of the programme

**Capacity building**

- **Webinar Series on accelerating cross-border paperless trade facilitation (2011)**
  - In cooperation with ADB and ICC
  - Every one or two months covering different trade digitalization issues
  - Learning opportunities to more than 2,000 participants
    [https://www.unescap.org/event-series/paperless-trade-2021](https://www.unescap.org/event-series/paperless-trade-2021)

- **Webinar series on next generation trade facilitation, 14 December 2021**

- **Online course on trade facilitation for sustainable development, 1 Nov – 3 Dec 2021**
  - In cooperation with the ARTNeT and IITD
Support to advancement of cross-border electronic data exchange

- **WCO-ESCAP Joint Task Force on Cross-border Electronic Data Exchange**
  - **Customs administrations from the Northeast Asia** (China, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation)
  - Completed harmonization of selected trade processes and documents, and worked on initiation of cross-border electronic data exchange
  - Assisted with the organization of the workshop on advancing electronic origin data exchange in the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (November 2021)
Research and other support work

- United Nations Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation
  - Covers 46 ESCAP member States; Global, Regional and Sub-regional reports

- Paperless Trade and Environment research
  - Paperless trade implementation in AP = planting 400+ million trees

- Vaccine import facilitation checklist

- Initiative on Model Provisions for Trade in Times of Crisis and Pandemic in RTAs*
  - Free online course developed (600+ participants)

- Other advocacy work on trade facilitation and cross-border paperless trade

The Framework Agreement entered into force on **20 February 2021** (Article 19 Entry into force*).

*Article 19 Entry into force

1. The present Framework Agreement **shall enter into force ninety (90) days after the date on which the Governments of at least five (5) ESCAP member States have deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the present Framework Agreement pursuant to article 18, paragraphs 2 and 3.**
# Update on accession to/ratification of the Framework Agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Ratification, Acceptance(A), Approval(AA), Accession(a)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>22 Sep 2017</td>
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<td>Bangladesh</td>
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<td><strong>China</strong></td>
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<td>Timor-Leste</td>
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<td>5 Apr 2022 a</td>
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Operationalization of the institutional arrangements of the Framework Agreement

- (Article 11) parties to establish:
  - Paperless Trade Council: Article 11.1
  - Standing Committee: Article 11.2
  - Working Groups: Article 11.3
  - Article 11.4: The Council to adopt rules of procedure for itself and subsidiaries

- First Session of the Paperless Trade Council
  - 27 – 29 April 2022 (Hybrid)
  - Agenda: rules of procedures for the Council and the Standing Committee, development of action plans, amendment of the Framework Agreement
The Steering Group may decide to:

(a) Encourage its members to proactively support their Governments in becoming parties to the Framework Agreement as soon as possible;

(b) Thank the Governments of China and the Republic of Korea for support, call upon other member States to make their own financial or in-kind contributions to accelerate cross-border paperless trade facilitation and the implementation of the Agreement

(c) Promote accession to and ratification of the Agreement by as many countries as possible, so as to maximize its benefits and impact.
Thank you!

7TH MEETING OF
THE INTERIM INTERGOVERNMENTAL STEERING GROUP ON
CROSS-BORDER PAPERLESS TRADE FACILITATION