Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific: Key findings from the UN Global Survey 2019

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UN Global TF Survey: Background

Objective

- To monitor progress on trade facilitation (TF), including paperless trade and other forward looking measures, towards SDGs
- To enable evidence-based policy making, and capacity building and tech. assistance

2012-14: Regional (Asia-Pacific) surveys conducted since 2012

2015: 1st global survey on trade facilitation implementation; presented at the 5th Global Review of Aid for Trade. [partnerships with UNCTAD, ITC, OECD, Subregional org…]

2017: 2nd global survey; presented at the 6th Global AfT Review. [new partnerships: ADB, Rep. of Korea…]

2018: Launch of interactive website (now UNTFSURVEY.ORG)

2019: 3rd global survey – Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation [new partnerships: ICC (Banking Commission)]
UN Global TF Survey Scope: WTO TFA+

– WTO TFA related measures +
  • Institutional arrangement and cooperation
  • Transparency
  • Formalities
  • Transit

– Paperless trade / Digital TF measures +
  • Paperless trade
  • Cross-Border Paperless Trade

– Sustainable TF measures
  • Trade facilitation for SMEs
  • Agricultural trade facilitation
  • Women in trade facilitation

– Others (varies by UNRCs, e.g., Trade finance facilitation)

Data collected from 128 countries in 2019
Key finding #1: Southeast and East Asia leading other developing world regions

Figure 1: Average implementation rates of Trade Facilitation measures around the world
Key finding #2: Implementation varies widely across countries and subregions
Key finding #3: Implementation accelerated in all subregions, in North & Central Asia in particular

Figure 5: Trade facilitation implementation by sub-regions in Asia and the Pacific, 2017 and 2019
Key finding #4: Implementation of cross-border paperless trade still a challenge

Figure 6: Implementation of Groups of Trade Facilitation Measures, 2017–2019

Source: ESCAP (2019a).
Key finding #5: Limited attention to TF needs of special groups (SMEs, women)
Key finding #6: Lack of integration between trade facilitation & trade finance

Facilitation of access to finance through Single Window?

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

- Fully implemented
- Partially implemented
- Pilot stage of implementation
- Not implemented
- Don't know
Key finding #7: Significant room to cut trade costs through trade digitalization

### Table 6: Changes in International Trade Costs of Asia and the Pacific as a Result of World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement Implementation (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asia and the Pacific: Trade Costs Model</th>
<th>WTO TFA (binding only)</th>
<th>WTO TFA (binding + non binding)</th>
<th>WTO TFA+ (binding + non binding + other paperless and cross-border paperless trade)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partially implemented</td>
<td>Fully implemented</td>
<td>Partially implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall trade facilitation</td>
<td>-2.84</td>
<td>-5.79</td>
<td>-4.57</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Model 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General trade facilitation measures</td>
<td>-1.52</td>
<td>-3.05</td>
<td>-1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital trade facilitation measures</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-1.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WTO TFA = World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Source: Authors’ calculations.
Way forward

• *Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific* more relevant than ever
• Continue to develop *inter-agency collaboration* and *human resource capacity* (identified in the Survey as #1 challenges in developing countries and LDCs, respectively)
• Better link TF with sustainable development
  • Identify and better define TF measures for SMEs, Women and other groups with special needs
  • Environmental dimension of TF measures need further exploration
Moving up the Trade Facilitation Ladder: Towards Seamless International Supply Chains

Source: UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation (2019)

Note: UNRCs are still receiving feedback from some member countries on data validation. Therefore, the results may be further – probably slightly – revised in the final report to be issued in the coming months.
A Three-step Approach for Data Collection

Open data collection - Experts and other interested parties invited to fill the questionnaire or update the pre-filled questionnaire.

Cross-checking and verification - UNRCs internally verified the data by cross-checking answers from the experts, desk research, further interviews with respondents and informants.

Key outcome of step 2: A set of national dataset for each country surveyed.

Final validation by countries - UNRCs sent the preliminary results to countries for final validation.