

Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation

in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) 2025

Based on the United Nations Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation



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for Asia and the Pacific





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FOREWORD

The international trading environment is experiencing profound turbulence. Heightened geopolitical and trade-related tensions continue to disrupt the flow of goods and services, creating ripple effects across global value chains. Against this backdrop, the present report underscores the significant progress achieved by ASEAN Member States (AMS) in simplifying and digitalizing trade procedures. These efforts are central to reducing supply chain vulnerabilities, lowering transaction costs, and strengthening economies' ability to withstand and adapt to external shocks—particularly in today's unsettled trading landscape.

The findings of the latest United Nations Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation reveal steady and substantive progress by AMS in implementing a wide range of trade facilitation measures. In many cases, these advances extend beyond the provisions of the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement. The survey also highlights ASEAN's pioneering efforts in introducing advanced measures through the ASEAN Single Window (ASW), underscoring the region's strong commitment to modernizing and harmonizing trade processes.

As ASEAN advances its digital transformation agenda, accelerating trade digitalization remains a strategic priority. The report shows that AMS continue to outperform regional averages in Asia and the Pacific in digital trade facilitation, reflecting the expansion of electronic document exchange. ASEAN is continuing its collaboration with Dialogue Partners on the electronic exchange of trade-related documents through the ASW. In parallel, the forthcoming ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) is envisaged to contribute towards streamlining and expanding cross-border trade and e-commerce throughout the region, thereby reinforcing ASEAN's commitment to greater integration and interoperability. These initiatives serve to stimulate ASEAN's trade digitalization as an economic bloc, and help to enhance capacity among AMS in participating in the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific.

Looking ahead, ASEAN would benefit from further advancing digital innovation, integrating environmental sustainability and ensuring the active participation of small and medium-sized enterprises as well as women in trade. This holistic approach will not only reduce trade costs and enhance regional competitiveness but also contribute directly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, positioning ASEAN as a global leader in modern, inclusive, and sustainable trade facilitation.

We trust that the analysis presented in this report, alongside the interactive database available at unftsurvey.org, will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, and practitioners and other stakeholders, help chart a path towards simpler, more resilient, and sustainable trade practices across the region.



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The report was jointly prepared by ESCAP and the ASEAN Secretariat. Silvère Dernouh, Emma Tan Shu Wen Chaplin, Muireann Ni Dhrisceoil, and Chorthip Utoktham, under the guidance of Soo Hyun Kim and the overall supervision of Yann Duval, all from the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division (TIID) of ESCAP, provided data analysis for ASEAN Member States, collected as part of the United Nations Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation 2025. Cuong Ba Tran and Garlan Irawan of the Trade Facilitation Division of the ASEAN Secretariat contributed by providing best practices and reviewing the report. Assistance provided by Elizabeth Lisowski in finalizing the report is appreciated. Arom Sanguanyuang formatted the report and created the cover design.

The United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade and Transport in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT), a knowledge community supported by ESCAP and ECE, greatly facilitated data collection. Comments and suggestions received from participants of the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Joint Consultative Committee (ATF-JCC) are gratefully acknowledged.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recent global trade environment is marked by heightened uncertainty, with policy shifts in major economies creating fresh supply chain disruptions. Elevated tariffs and shifting trade policies have intensified trade cost pressures across Asia and the Pacific, undermining competitiveness gains achieved over recent years. In this context, trade facilitation becomes indispensable not merely for reducing costs but for building resilience against ongoing disruptions. Digital trade procedures and streamlined administrative processes offer concrete mechanisms to counter these escalating costs while enhancing supply chain efficiency.

This report presents the findings of the 2025 United Nations Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, examining the progress achieved in trade facilitation across the 10 ASEAN Member States. It provides a comprehensive assessment of 62 trade facilitation measures, organized into four groups – “General Trade Facilitation”, “Digital Trade Facilitation”, “Sustainable Trade Facilitation”, and “Other Trade Facilitation”. These groups encompass 12 sub-groups, incorporating both binding and non-binding measures of the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA), alongside measures addressing digital transformation and sustainable trade practices. The report reveals the following:

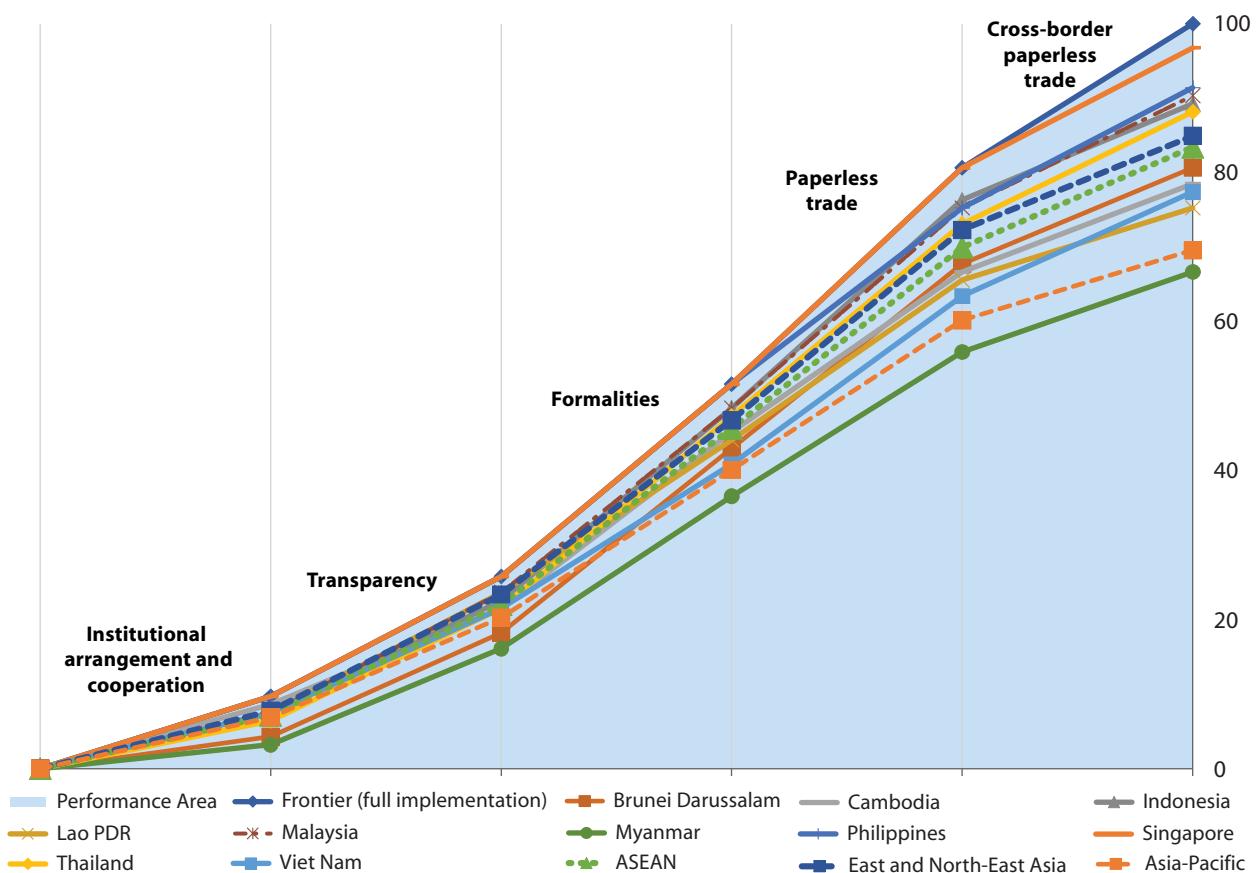
- ASEAN attained an impressive average subregional implementation rate of 83% (an increase from 79% in 2023) across a core set of 31 general and digital trade facilitation measures, significantly outpacing the Asia-Pacific regional average of 70%;
- The average implementation rate has continued its upward trajectory, rising from 79% in 2023 to 83% in 2025. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic leads this progress with the most substantial improvement, advancing from 68% to 75% (8 percentage points increase). Brunei Darussalam also achieved notable gains, improving from 74% to 81% (7 percentage points increase);
- When the set of measures is broadened to include “Sustainable Trade Facilitation” measures, the ASEAN average falls to 78% (-5 percentage points), while the broader Asia-Pacific region achieves a 66% implementation rate (-4 percentage points). This underscores the importance of strengthening implementation of measures addressing ‘trade facilitation for SMEs’ and ‘agricultural trade facilitation’;
- On the basis of the broader set of measures, including both digital and sustainable trade facilitation measures, Singapore maintains its world-leading position with 93% implementation. Malaysia demonstrates exceptional performance at 91%, being the only ASEAN Member State to improve its rate when sustainable measures are included;
- ASEAN Member States demonstrated notable progress in digital trade facilitation between 2023 and 2025, with ‘paperless trade’ maintaining a robust 84% implementation rate while ‘cross-border paperless trade’ achieved remarkable growth of 9 percentage points, reaching 69%. This substantial advancement reflects the continued evolution of the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) infrastructure and expanded document exchange capabilities. Furthermore, ASEAN Member States have

strengthened collaborative frameworks with Dialogue Partners for electronic exchange of trade-related documents, reinforcing the region's commitment to comprehensive trade digitalization and enhanced regional cooperation;

- While measures under the “Sustainable Trade Facilitation” group have shown notable improvement, particularly ‘trade facilitation and women’ which rose from 32% to 43% (11 percentage points growth), further emphasis remains essential, especially considering their relatively low implementation rates compared with general and digital trade facilitation measures. Continued efforts are needed to strengthen trade facilitation policies that promote women’s participation in trade, provide targeted benefits to women traders, and enhance their representation within National Trade Facilitation Committees, ensuring comprehensive and inclusive trade modernization across ASEAN;
- Additionally, the remaining “Sustainable Trade Facilitation” sub-groups show varied progress: ‘trade facilitation for SMEs’ has reached 51% implementation, highlighting the need for enhanced measures to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in navigating international trade procedures. Meanwhile, ‘agricultural trade facilitation’ demonstrates stronger performance at 70% implementation, though continued efforts are required to address the specific needs of agricultural traders and ensure efficient movement of perishable goods across borders;
- The introduction of two new sub-groups reveals emerging challenges in contemporary trade facilitation. ‘Trade facilitation for e-commerce’ achieved 43% implementation across ASEAN, while ‘green trade facilitation’ recorded the lowest implementation rate at 38%, despite both surpassing Asia-Pacific averages. These findings underscore the nascent stage of specialized trade facilitation frameworks addressing digital commerce and environmental sustainability. Enhanced capacity building and stakeholder awareness remain essential to advance these critical areas as trade increasingly embraces digital transformation and climate-conscious practices.

The report demonstrates that substantial trade cost reductions can be achieved through implementing paperless and cross-border paperless trade measures, significantly exceeding the impact of conventional trade facilitation approaches. Adopting comprehensive digital trade facilitation measures that enable seamless electronic exchange of trade data and documents across borders has the potential to reduce trade costs by 7.5% for ASEAN under full implementation scenarios. Building upon existing initiatives and fostering enhanced collaboration among ASEAN Member States, the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific continues to offer valuable opportunities for ASEAN countries to leverage their established initiatives, support continued advancement of the ASEAN Single Window, and ensure interoperability with broader regional paperless trade systems.

Moving up the trade facilitation ladder towards seamless international supply chains



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untfsurvey.org

Note: The figure shows global cumulative trade facilitation implementation scores for different regions in the five sub-groups of trade facilitation measures included in the Survey. Scores are based on the equally weighted implementation of 31 trade facilitation measures, but the number of measures varies in the five sub-groups. Full implementation of all measures = 100.

This report should be read in conjunction with the upcoming Global and the Asia-Pacific regional report on the results of the UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation 2025, which will become available at <https://untfsurvey.org/>.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AEO	Authorized Economic Operator
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASW	ASEAN Single Window
CPTA	Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific
DEFA	Digital Economy Framework Agreement
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NTFC	National Trade Facilitation Committee
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
UN/CEFACT	United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business
UNCTAD	United Nations Trade and Development
WTO	World Trade Organization



Introduction

1.1. Background and objective

The reduction of trade costs is widely recognized as fundamental to enabling economies' active participation in regional and global value chains, ensuring trade continues to serve as a primary driver of growth and sustainable development. According to the latest data from the ESCAP-World Bank Trade Cost Database presented in table 1, comprehensive non-tariff trade costs among middle-income ASEAN economies have decreased to 71% tariff-equivalent, representing a notable improvement from the 75% reported in the 2023 Survey. Nevertheless, these costs remain significantly higher compared to trading expenses among the three largest European Union economies (42% tariff-equivalent) and those between China, the Republic of Korea, and Japan (57% tariff-equivalent).

The global trade environment remains characterized by heightened uncertainty, with elevated tariffs and potential policy shifts creating fresh supply chain disruptions. While global trade demonstrated resilience in 2024, reaching a record US\$33 trillion with 3.4% growth driven largely by services expansion, prospects for 2025 appear more challenging. Trade growth is forecast to decelerate significantly to approximately 1.8% in 2025, representing less than half the pre-pandemic average of 4.9% recorded in the two decades before COVID-19. In this context, effective trade facilitation becomes essential for maintaining competitiveness and operational efficiency. Digital transformation of trade procedures and the streamlining of administrative processes can provide crucial support for economies navigating an increasingly complex global trading environment.



Intra- and extra-regional comprehensive trade costs in the Asia-Pacific region

Region	ASEAN-4	East Asia-3	North and Central Asia-4	Pacific Islands Developing Economies	SAARC-3	AUS-NZL	Europe-3
ASEAN-4	71.4% (-5.9%)	75.5% (-3.2%)	295.2% (-9.5%)	300.9% (8.3%)	128.2% (-1.0%)	102.1% (0.5%)	104.9% (0.3%)
East Asia-3	75.5% (-3.2%)	57.2% (3.2%)	166.7% (-1.4%)	196.5% (-18.6%)	130.2% (4.0%)	88.2% (0.6%)	85.5% (-0.2%)
North and Central Asia-4	295.2% (-9.5%)	166.7% (-1.4%)	107.1% (-5.1%)	425.3% (13.2%)	274.2% (5.4%)	405.4% (7.8%)	145.9% (-2.6%)
Pacific Islands Developing Economies	300.9% (8.3%)	196.5% (-18.6%)	425.3% (13.2%)	91.2% (-9.9%)	377.7% (7.4%)	104.1% (5.3%)	311.7% (2.0%)
SAARC-3	128.2% (-1.0%)	130.2% (4.0%)	274.2% (5.4%)	377.7% (7.4%)	215.0% (75.0%)	139.2% (0.5%)	117.9% (2.3%)
AUS-NZL	102.1% (0.5%)	88.2% (0.6%)	405.4% (7.8%)	104.1% (5.3%)	139.2% (0.5%)	52.3% (-2.9%)	102.1% (-4.7%)
Europe-3	104.9% (0.3%)	85.5% (-0.2%)	145.9% (-2.6%)	311.7% (2.0%)	117.9% (2.3%)	102.1% (-4.7%)	42.1% (-1.0%)
USA	83.9% (-3.5%)	67.4% (3.2%)	191.2% (5.1%)	180.0% (-7.0%)	111.5% (-2.0%)	98.6% (-1.7%)	66.6% (-1.0%)

Source: ESCAP-World Bank Trade Cost Database (updated August 2025). Available at <https://www.unescap.org/resources/escap-world-bank-trade-cost-database>

Notes: Trade costs may be interpreted as tariff equivalents. Percentage changes in trade costs between 2012-2017 and 2018-2023 are in parentheses.

ASEAN-4: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand; East Asia-3: China, Japan, Republic of Korea; Europe-3: Germany, France, United Kingdom; SAARC-3: India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka; Pacific Island Developing Economies: Fiji, Samoa; North and Central Asia: Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation.

Trade costs have decreased significantly over recent decades as tariffs have been eliminated or reduced across most economies. Recent studies¹ continue to indicate that non-tariff measures impose substantially higher compliance costs compared with ordinary Customs tariffs, with such border measures contributing significantly to overall trade costs. Therefore, achieving further trade cost reductions requires addressing non-tariff barriers, including transportation and logistics

infrastructure deficiencies, complex regulatory procedures, and cumbersome documentation requirements. In this context, this report presents a comprehensive overview of the results pertaining to ASEAN Member States from the UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation 2025. Furthermore, potential impacts of implementing trade facilitation measures in ASEAN are assessed based on a trade cost model.

¹ <https://unctad.org/publication/key-statistics-and-trends-trade-policy-2024>

1.2. Survey instrument and methodology

The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation (hereafter called “the Survey”) 2025 builds upon the original instrument (formerly known as the Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation). It was prepared according to the final list of commitments included in the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA) and supplemented by forward-looking measures that are sought to be implemented under the United Nations treaty – the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA) – and those supporting inclusive and sustainable trade.

The 2025 Survey covers 62 trade facilitation measures commonly used by five United Nations Regional Commissions. The 62 measures are classified into four groups and 12 sub-groups (annex 2). The first group, “General Trade Facilitation”, includes many WTO TFA measures with sub-groups of ‘transparency’, ‘formalities’, ‘institutional arrangement and cooperation’, and ‘transit facilitation’. The second group, “Digital Trade Facilitation” measures, includes ‘paperless trade’ and ‘cross-border paperless trade’. The third group of “Sustainable Trade Facilitation” includes ‘trade facilitation for SMEs’, ‘agricultural trade facilitation’, and ‘trade facilitation and women’ sub-groups. The fourth group, “Other Trade Facilitation” comes with three sub-groups: ‘trade facilitation for e-commerce’, ‘green trade facilitation’ and ‘trade finance for trade facilitation’. These last three sub-groups were added to the Survey to reflect the evolving

trade landscape and address emerging trade priorities.

The overall scope of the Survey goes beyond the measures included in the WTO TFA, in which most ‘paperless trade’ and ‘cross-border paperless trade’ measures are not specifically featured. However, their inclusion in many cases would support better implementation of the TFA. Most “Sustainable Trade Facilitation” group measures are not specifically included in the WTO TFA, except for some of the ‘agricultural trade facilitation’ measures. The “Other Trade Facilitation” group is added with considerations of trade finance’s role in facilitating trade flows, as well as the rising importance of cross-border e-commerce and the increasing need to reduce environmental impact while promoting trade in green goods.

ESCAP adopted a three-step approach to developing the dataset (annex 3). Data was collected between January and July 2025. Based on the data collected, each of the trade facilitation measures included in the Survey was rated as “fully implemented”, “partially implemented”, “pilot stage of implementation”, “not implemented”, “don’t know” or “not applicable”. Definitions for each stage are provided in annex 4. A score of 3, 2, 1 or zero was assigned to each of the implementation stages to calculate implementation rates for individual measures across countries, regions or groupings. All ASEAN countries are included in this report, namely: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. Country groupings used in the analysis as detailed in annex 1 and shown in figure 1. Further details and examples on the calculation of implementation rates are available online.



Trade facilitation implementation: Overview

The 2025 Survey reveals continued progress in trade facilitation implementation across ASEAN Member States, achieving an average implementation rate of 83% across the 31 core trade facilitation measures, including paperless trade measures (figure 1). This achievement exceeds the Asia-Pacific regional average of 70% and maintains ASEAN's position as the third-highest performing subregion, following Australia and New Zealand, and East and North-East Asia.

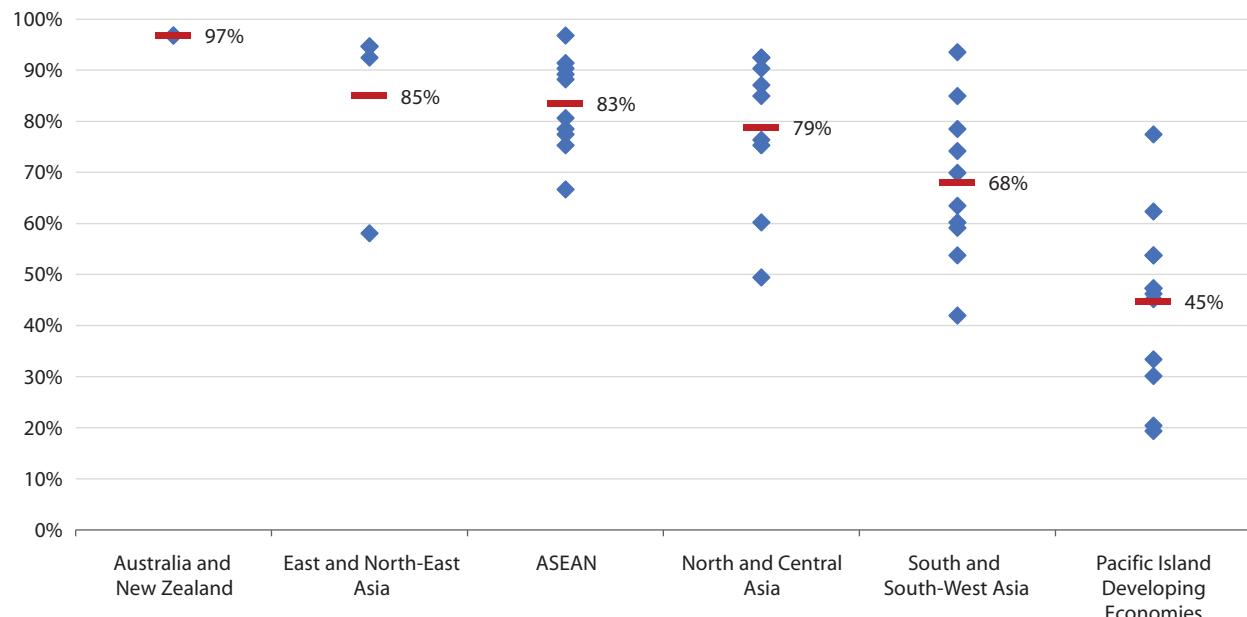
This notable achievement highlights the active efforts undertaken by ASEAN during the past two years, despite challenges posed by global supply chain disruptions and heightened trade policy uncertainty. In particular, the ASEAN Single Window (ASW), as a highly advanced cross-border paperless trade initiative, has demonstrated remarkable progress since its launch in 2018. All 10 ASEAN Member States now participate in the electronic exchange of ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) Certificate of Origin Form D (e-Form D), with 1.38 million exchanges recorded in 2024. The ASEAN Customs Declaration Document (ACDD) is exchanged among all ASEAN Member States, with 3.35 million exchanges recorded in 2024. Additionally, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand have commenced the exchange of electronic

Phyto-Sanitary Certificates (e-Phyto), with approximately 15,000 certificates exchanged in 2024. ASEAN is also making progress in linking the ASW with Dialogue Partners through a legal

template for Single Window cooperation and new technical specifications to enable government-to-government connectivity beyond the region.



Trade facilitation implementation in Asia-Pacific subregions including ASEAN



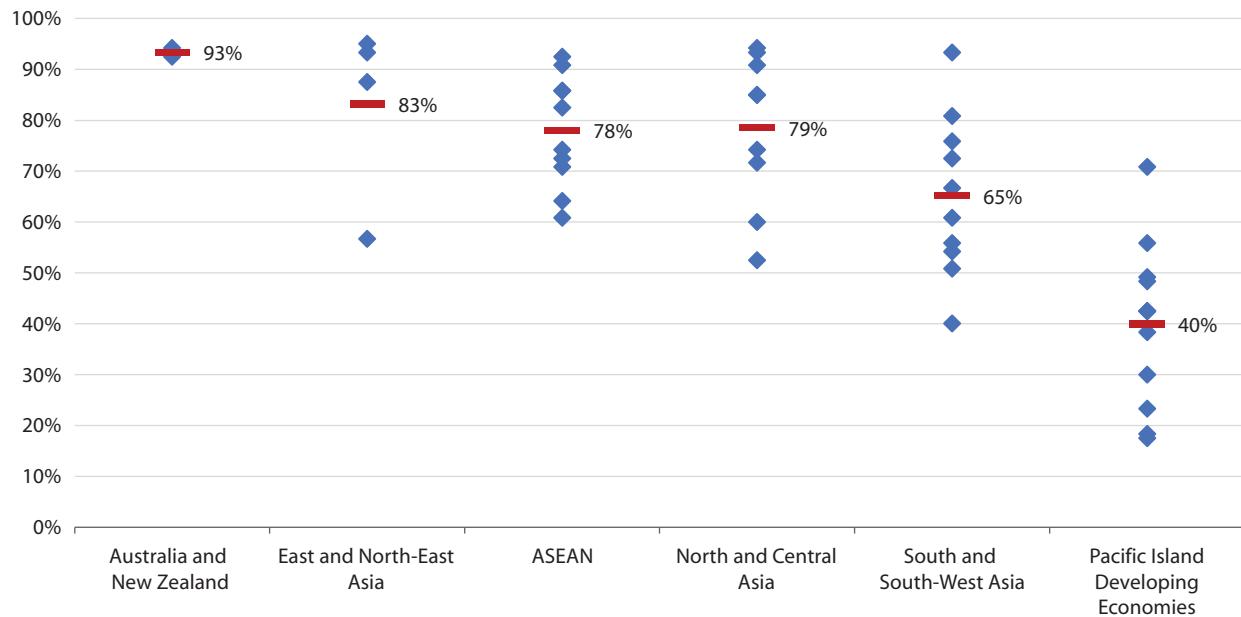
Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at unfsurvey.org

Figure 2 expands the analysis by incorporating nine additional measures from the “Sustainable Trade Facilitation” group, specifically focusing on ‘trade facilitation for SMEs’ and ‘agricultural trade facilitation’. This broader scope of 40 measures reveals a notable decrease in ASEAN’s implementation rate from 83% to 78%, representing a reduction of 5 percentage points. While ASEAN maintains a relatively high implementation level, this decline is more pronounced than that observed in other subregions. Australia and New Zealand’s implementation rate decreases from 97% to 93%, a 4 percentage point drop, though they maintain the highest overall rate. East and North-East Asia see their rate decline from 85%

to 83%, while North and Central Asia experienced a small increase where implementation rate remained at 79%. South and South-West Asia’s implementation fell from 68% to 65%, and Pacific Island Developing Economies showed the lowest overall rates, declining from 45% to 40%. These variations highlight that all subregions face challenges in implementing sustainable trade measures, with ASEAN experiencing a marginally higher impact. Enhanced focus on “Sustainable Trade Facilitation” measures has become increasingly important for ASEAN Member States, particularly given the growing emphasis on inclusive and sustainable trade practices among key trading partners.



Trade facilitation implementation in Asia-Pacific subregions, including additional sustainable measures



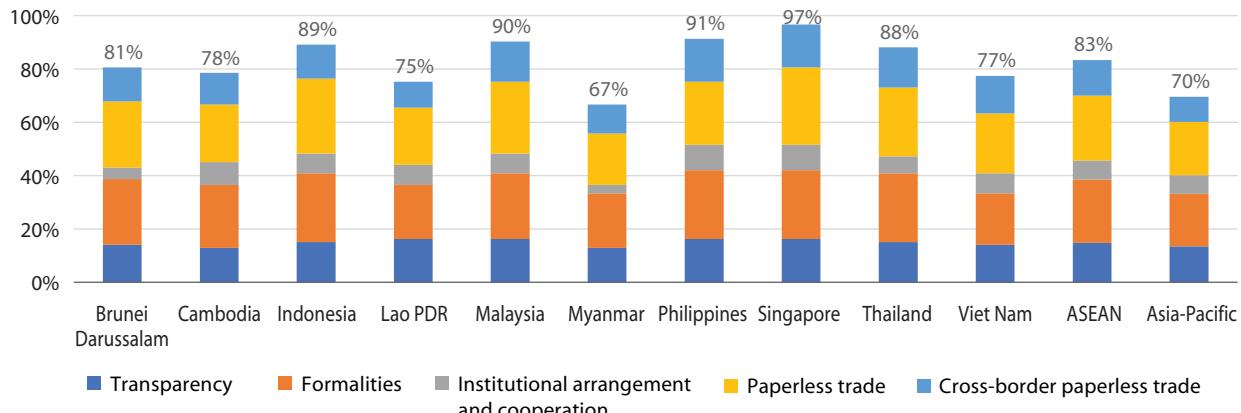
Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untfsurvey.org

ASEAN Member States demonstrate varied performance levels in implementing the core 31 trade facilitation measures (figure 3). Singapore maintains its leadership position with an exceptional 97% implementation rate, reinforcing its status among the world's most advanced economies in trade facilitation. The Philippines follows with an impressive 91%, while Malaysia achieves 90%. Indonesia shows strong performance at 89%, Thailand at 88%, and Brunei Darussalam at 81%, all exceeding the 80% threshold. Notably, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has shown remarkable progress, increasing its implementation rate from 68% to 75%, representing an improvement

of 7 percentage points since 2023. Cambodia and Viet Nam have maintained steady implementation rates of 78% and 77% respectively, both falling slightly below the ASEAN average of 83%. Myanmar continues to face implementation challenges with a rate of 67%, remaining below both the ASEAN average of 83% and the broader Asia-Pacific average of 70%. Across the sub-groups, 'formalities' and 'paperless trade' show the highest implementation levels across most ASEAN countries, while 'cross-border paperless trade' consistently shows the lowest rates, highlighting a common challenge area for the subregion.



Overall implementation of trade facilitation measures in ASEAN countries



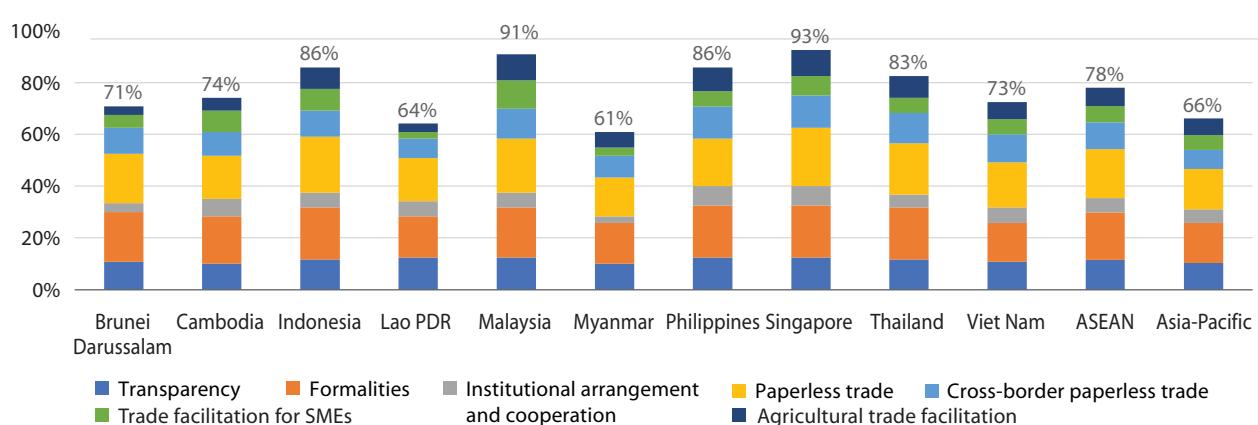
Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untrfsurvey.org

Expanding the analysis to encompass 40 measures that include the “Sustainable Trade Facilitation” group reveals continued disparities across ASEAN Member States (figure 4). Singapore retains its leading position with 93%, while Malaysia achieves 91%, demonstrating strong performance in both traditional and sustainable trade facilitation areas. Conversely, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar face greater challenges with implementation rates of 64% and 61%

respectively, falling below the Asia-Pacific regional average of 66%. Notably, Malaysia is the only ASEAN Member State to improve its implementation rate when sustainable measures are included, rising from 90% to 91%. All other countries experience decreases when the broader scope is considered, highlighting the implementation gaps in “Sustainable Trade Facilitation” measures covering ‘trade facilitation for SMEs’ and ‘agricultural trade facilitation’.



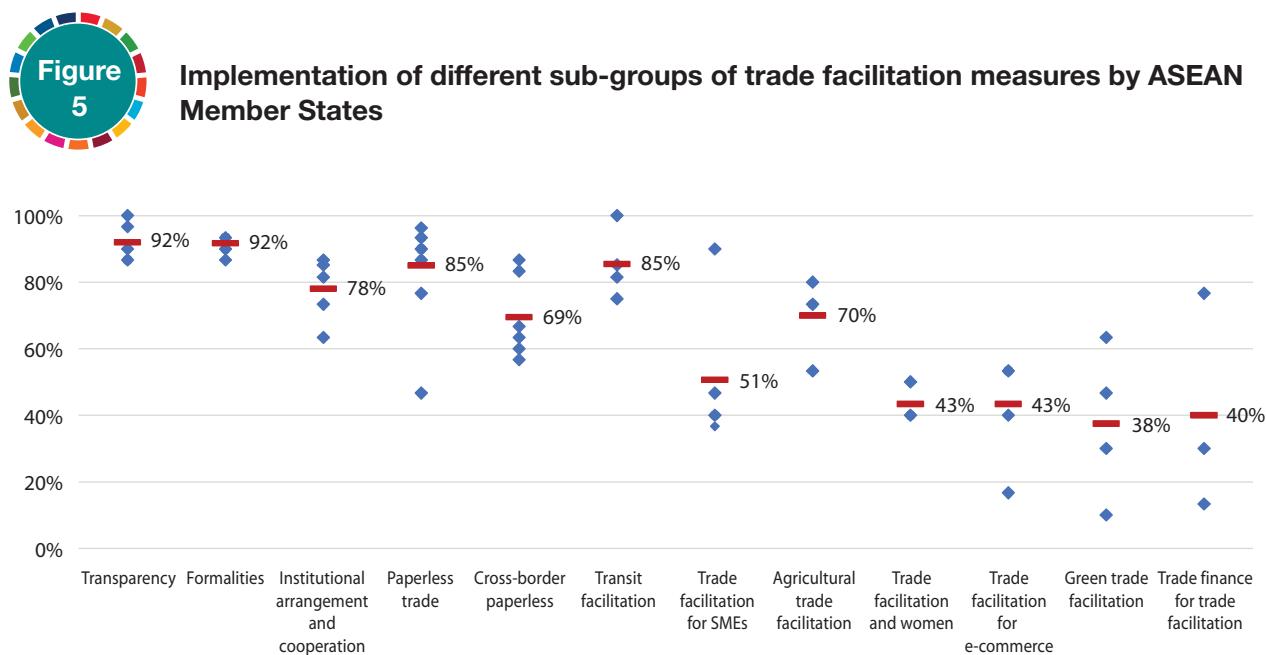
Overall implementation of trade facilitation measures in ASEAN countries, including additional sustainable measures



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untrfsurvey.org

Despite notable achievements across multiple areas, implementation gaps persist in emerging trade facilitation domains. The sub-groups ‘trade finance for trade facilitation’ and ‘green trade facilitation’ record the lowest implementation rates at 40% and 38% respectively (figure 5), representing the greatest opportunities for advancement within the Survey. As environmental considerations and

sustainable finance mechanisms gain prominence in global trade policy, enhanced efforts are essential to integrate these innovative approaches. Aligning with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ASEAN Member States must prioritize both trade finance digitization and environmental sustainability measures to ensure comprehensive and future-oriented trade facilitation frameworks.



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untfsurvey.org

Note: Differences between Figures 5 and 8 reflect the inclusion in Figure 5 of measures not applicable to certain country groups (e.g., landlocked or sea-locked economies), whereas Figure 8 covers only measures comparable across all countries.

2.1. Most and least implemented trade facilitation measures

Tables 2 and 3 provide comprehensive insights into the implementation status of trade facilitation measures across each sub-group assessed in the Survey. Within the ‘transparency’ sub-group, the measure ‘online publication of import-export regulations’ achieves exemplary performance as the sole

measure with 100% full implementation across all ASEAN Member States. Conversely, the ‘green trade facilitation’ sub-group reveals that ‘trade facilitation of green and climate-smart goods’ represents the least implemented measure with only 20% adoption. This reflects the broader challenge of limited familiarity with green trade concepts among traditional trade facilitation stakeholders, underscoring the need for enhanced capacity building and awareness raising as environmental considerations become increasingly central to international trade policy frameworks.



Most implemented measures in each sub-group of trade facilitation measures by ASEAN Member States

Sub-group	Most implemented (% of countries)	
	Measure	Implemented fully, partially and on a pilot basis (%) / Full implementation (%)
Transparency	Online publication of import-export regulations	100 / 100
Formalities	Acceptance of copies for trade formalities	100 / 80
	Establishment and publication of average release times	100 / 80
	Expedited shipments	100 / 80
	Post-clearance audits	100 / 80
	Pre-arrival processing	100 / 80
Institutional arrangement and cooperation	National committee on trade facilitation	90 / 80
Paperless trade	E-Submission of Customs declarations	100 / 80
	Internet access for Customs and border agencies	100 / 80
Cross-border paperless trade	Laws and regulations for electronic transactions	100 / 60
Transit facilitation	Cooperation between agencies of economies involved in transit	90 / 60
Trade facilitation for SMEs	Trade-related information measures for SMEs	100 / 70
Agricultural trade facilitation	SPS national standards and accreditation bodies	100 / 50
Trade facilitation and women	Trade facilitation measures benefiting women	70 / 10
Trade facilitation for e-commerce	Legal framework to facilitate cross-border e-commerce	100 / 10
Green trade facilitation	Facilitation of legitimate trade in waste	100 / 0
Trade finance for trade facilitation	Variety of trade finance services available	100 / 30



Least implemented measures in each sub-group of trade facilitation measures by ASEAN Member States

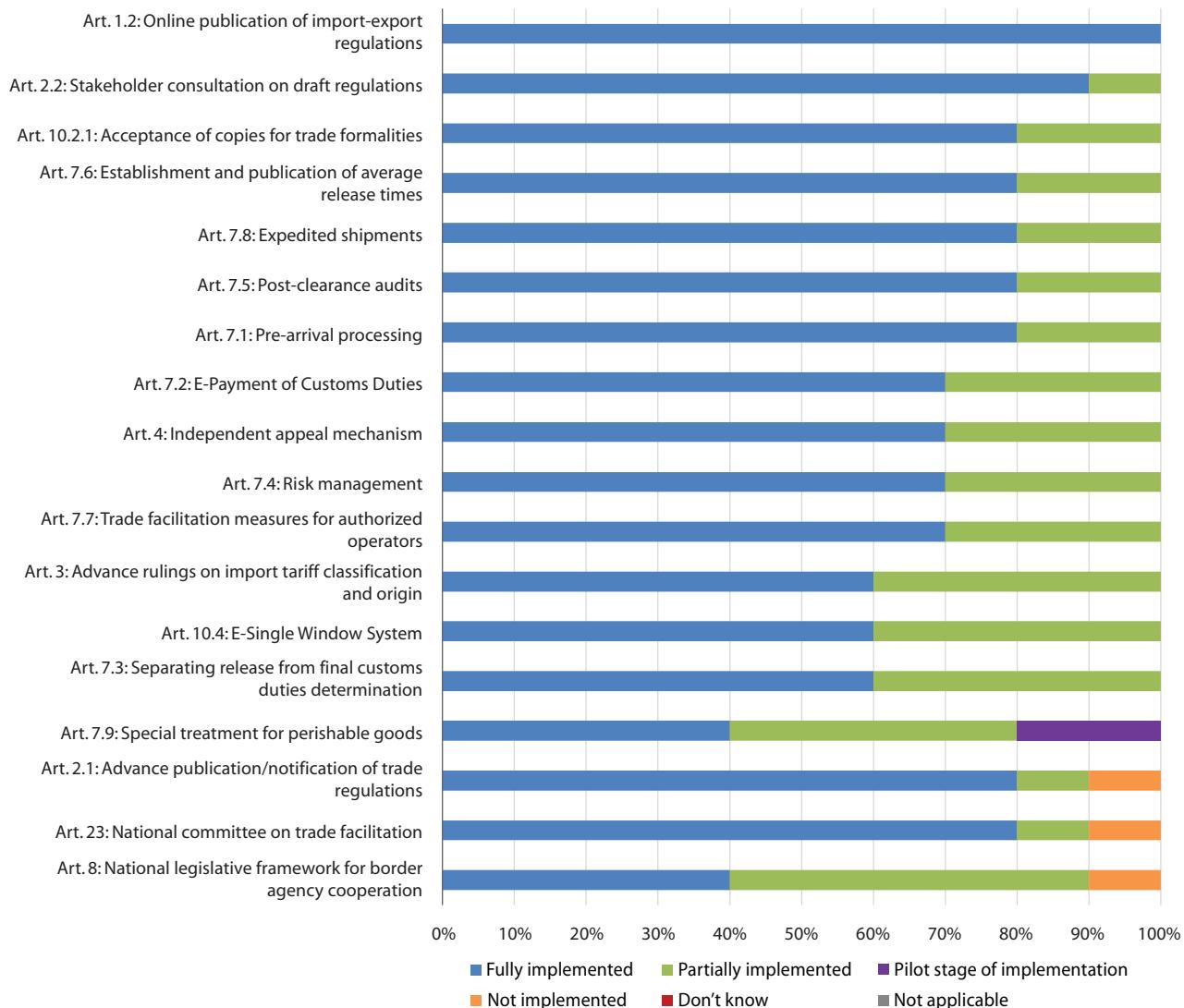
Sub-group	Least implemented (% of countries)	
	Measure	Implemented fully, partially and on a pilot basis (%) / Full implementation (%)
Transparency	Advance publication/notification of trade regulations	90 / 80
Formalities	Separating release from final Customs duties determination	100 / 60
Institutional arrangement and cooperation	Agencies delegating border controls to Customs	90 / 20
Paperless trade	E-Application for Customs refunds	90 / 10
Cross-border paperless trade	Paperless collection of payment from letters of credit	80 / 30
Transit facilitation	Pre-arrival processing for transit facilitation	80 / 30
Trade facilitation for SMEs	SMEs in AEO scheme	60 / 10
Agricultural trade facilitation	E-Application/issuance of SPS certificates	70 / 30
Trade facilitation and women	Women membership in national committee(s) on trade facilitation	70 / 0
Trade facilitation for e-commerce	AEO program for cross-border e-commerce	30 / 0
Green trade facilitation	Trade facilitation of green and climate-smart goods	20 / 0
Trade finance for trade facilitation	Single Window facilitates traders access to finance	30 / 0

Figure 6 demonstrates the implementation status of measures directly aligned with WTO TFA requirements, based on data collected during the Survey. These findings correspond closely with information reported by countries through their official WTO notifications. The data reveals a clear performance hierarchy among ASEAN Member States, with ‘online publication of import-export regulations’ achieving complete

full implementation across the subregion. Conversely, ‘national legislative framework for border agency cooperation’ presents the greatest implementation challenge, with only 40% of ASEAN Member States achieving full implementation while 50% maintaining partial implementation status. This pattern reflects the varying complexity of institutional coordination required across different TFA provisions.



Level of implementation of WTO-TFA related measures (excluding transit) by ASEAN members



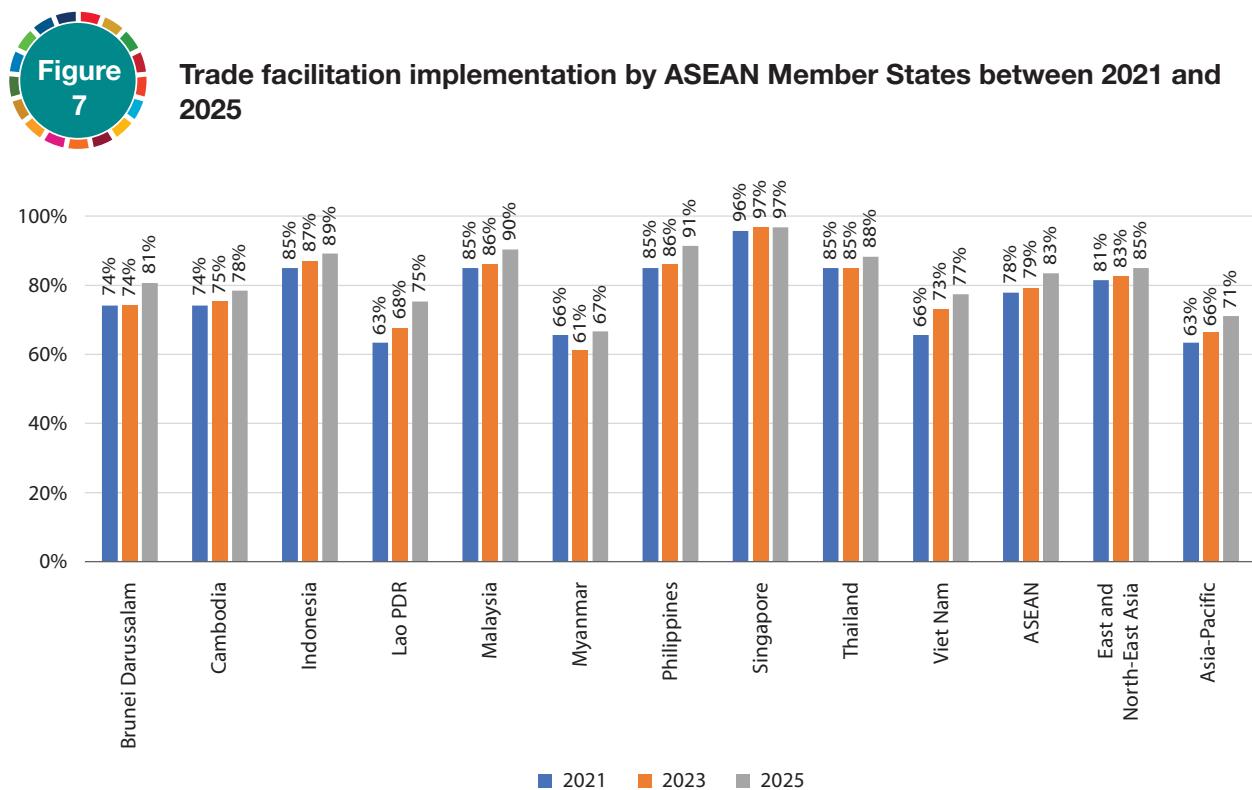
Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untrfsurvey.org

2.2. Progress in implementation

Continued advancement characterizes trade facilitation implementation across ASEAN Member States between 2023 and 2025. The subregional average implementation rate increased by 4 percentage points, rising from 79% to 83% (figure 7). The Lao People's Democratic Republic leads this progress with the most substantial improvement of 8 percentage points, advancing from 68% to 75%, followed by Brunei Darussalam with 7 percentage points (74% to 81%). Myanmar achieved 6 percentage points of progress

(61% to 67%), while the Philippines recorded 5 percentage points (86% to 91%), demonstrating sustained momentum across diverse economic contexts.

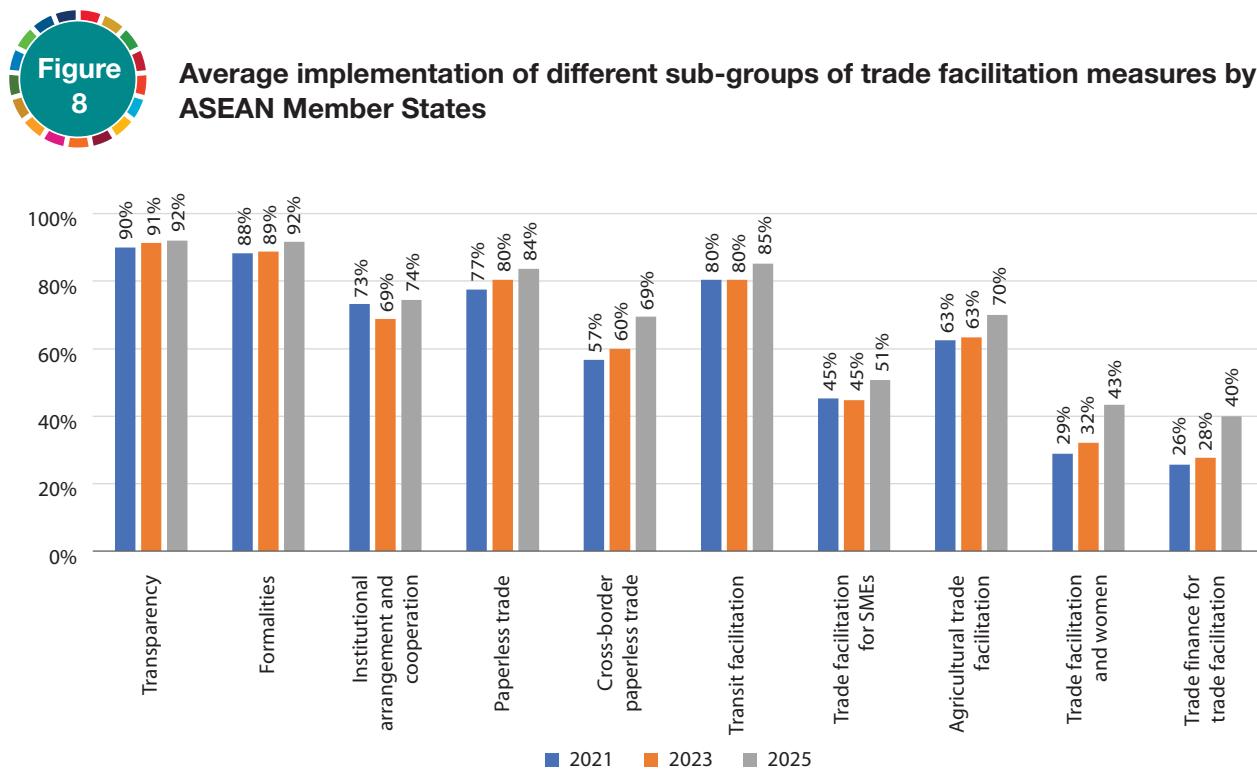
Figure 8 reveals an acceleration in implementation progress during the 2021-2025 period, with the pace of advancement intensifying between 2023-2025 compared to the preceding 2021-2023 period. Among ASEAN Member States, the average sub-group progress between 2021-2023 was 1 percentage point, while the 2023-2025 period recorded 6 percentage points of improvement. The cumulative progress spanning 2021-2025 totalled 7 percentage points across all measured sub-groups.



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at unfsurvey.org

The momentum observed during this period has been driven by improvements in “Digital Trade Facilitation” and “Sustainable Trade Facilitation” measures. ASEAN Member States demonstrated exceptional progress in three key areas: ‘trade finance for trade facilitation’ achieved the most substantial growth with 12 percentage points despite having one of the lowest baseline implementation rates, followed by ‘trade facilitation and women’ with 11 percentage

points from a starting point of just 32%, and ‘cross-border paperless trade’ with 9 percentage points. Such strategic prioritization of previously underperforming areas signals ASEAN’s focus on integrating financial innovation, gender inclusivity, and digital connectivity into trade facilitation frameworks, reinforcing the region’s commitment to comprehensive modernization of trade practices and enhanced regional cooperation.



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untrfsurvey.org



Implementation of trade facilitation measures: A closer look

3.1. Transparency

The ‘transparency’ sub-group encompasses five measures related to Articles 1 to 5 of the WTO TFA and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Article X on “Publication and Administration of Trade Regulations”. The ASEAN countries exhibit a remarkable average implementation level of 92% for this sub-group, surpassing the Asia-Pacific average of 83%. Notably, at least 90% of all ASEAN Member States have fully or partially implemented all ‘transparency’ measures.

The implementation rate in the subregion for ‘online publication of import-export regulations’ is an impressive 100% as shown in figure 9. A notable example of this commitment to transparency is the ASEAN Tariff Finder,² launched in August 2023, which serves as

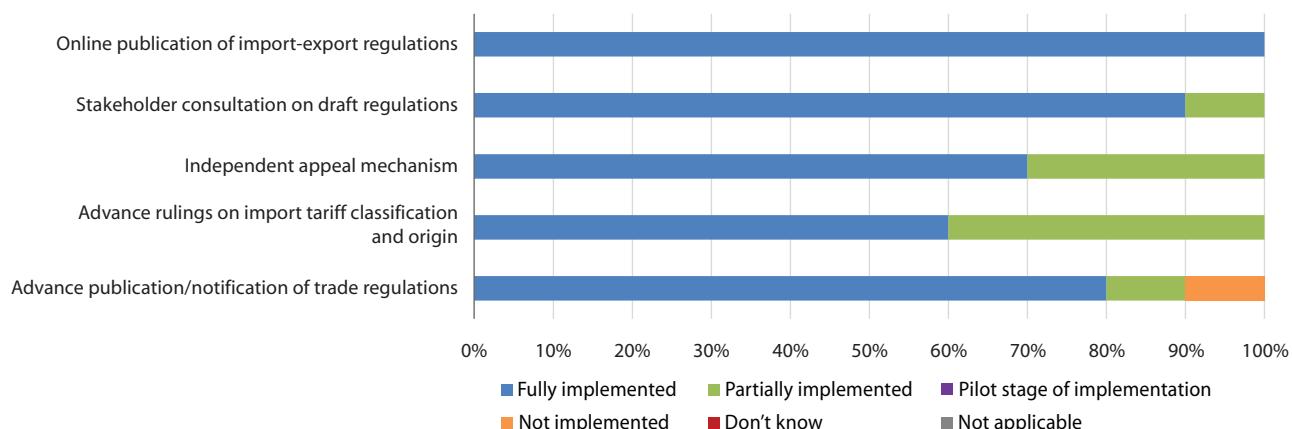
² Available at: <https://asean.mendel-online.com>

a comprehensive and searchable tool that provides trade-related information including tariffs, rules of origin, non-tariff measures, Customs regulations, import procedures and formalities, internal taxation measures, and more. It covers newly concluded and upgraded Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), including the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), ASEAN+1 FTAs, and bilateral FTAs concluded by ASEAN Member States. The tool is free of charge, updated daily, and is currently utilized by all ASEAN Member States. Efforts are ongoing to conduct further outreach activities to promote its use and enhance stakeholder engagement.

The measure ‘stakeholder consultation on draft regulations’ demonstrates the second highest level of full implementation, with 90% of countries in the subregion having fully implemented this measure. Both ‘independent appeal mechanism’ and ‘advance rulings on import tariff classification and origin’ achieve 100% implementation when considering all stages of implementation (fully, partially, and pilot), though their full implementation rates drop to 70% and 60% respectively. Meanwhile, ‘advance publication/notification of trade regulations’ achieves 80% full implementation across ASEAN countries.



State of implementation of ‘Transparency’ in ASEAN



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untrfsurvey.org

3.2. Formalities

The ‘formalities’ sub-group encompasses eight general trade facilitation measures that aim to streamline trade procedures. These are aligned with the requirements detailed in Articles 6-10 of the WTO TFA and GATT Article VIII on “Release and Clearance of Goods”. In 2025, the implementation level of these measures stands at 92%. Notably, ASEAN significantly surpasses the regional Asia-Pacific average of 77%. All measures within the ‘formalities’ sub-group

have been fully or partially implemented across all ASEAN Member States (figure 10). Five measures achieve the highest full implementation rate of 80%: (i) ‘acceptance of copies for trade formalities’, (ii) ‘establishment and publication of average release times’, (iii) ‘expedited shipments’, (iv) ‘post-clearance audits’, and (v) ‘pre-arrival processing’. In contrast, ‘separating release from final Customs duties determination’ represents the least implemented measure, with 60% of countries having achieved full implementation.

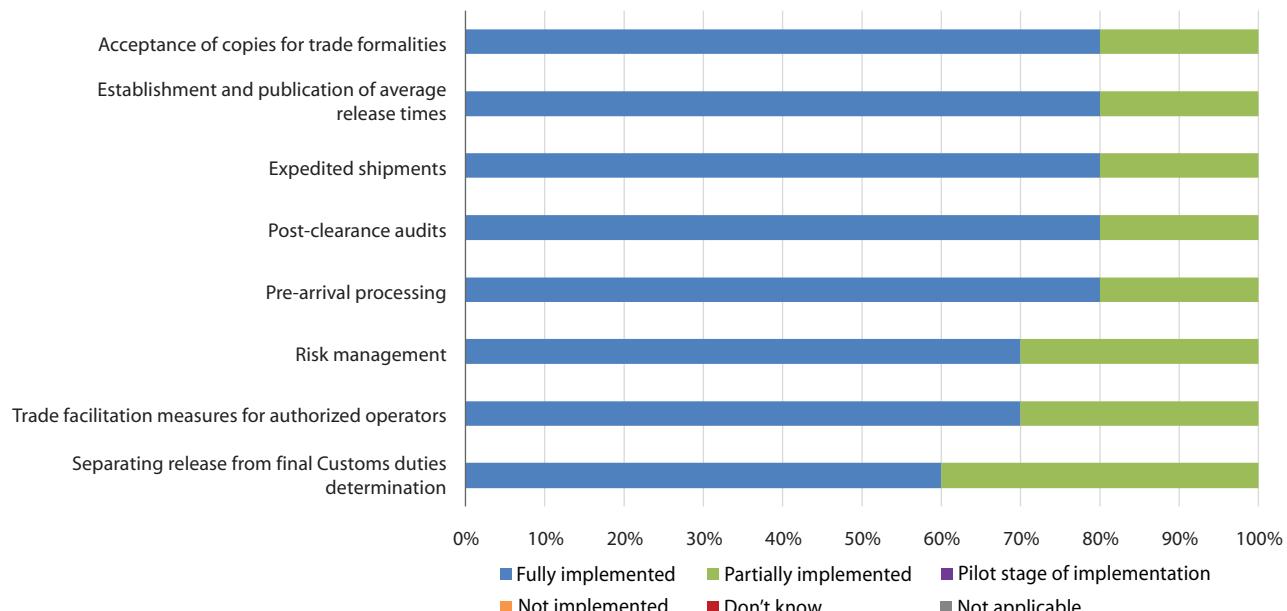
Both ‘risk management’ and ‘trade facilitation measures for authorized operators’ achieve 70% full implementation, with the remaining 30% of countries having partially implemented these measures. A notable example of regional cooperation in advancing ‘trade facilitation measures for authorized operators’ is the ASEAN Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Mutual Recognition Arrangement (AAMRA).³ This initiative aims to streamline Customs clearance and reduce inspection times, ultimately boosting trade efficiency, cutting costs, and enhancing regional competitiveness.

The AAMRA ensures compatibility of national AEO certification standards across all ASEAN Member States, in alignment with the World Customs Organization (WCO) SAFE Framework of standards,⁴ enabling mutual trust and

recognition. Since 28 February 2025, six ASEAN Member States, namely Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, have implemented the AAMRA. Lao People’s Democratic Republic has commenced the second Pathfinder Pilot with the six implementing ASEAN Member States since end-July 2025, while Cambodia, Myanmar, and Viet Nam plan to join the second Pathfinder Pilot at a later stage, with the aim of achieving full implementation of AAMRA across ten (10) ASEAN Member States by December 2025. Looking ahead, ASEAN plans to conduct a feasibility study on AEO MRAs between ASEAN and Dialogue Partners (DPs) in 2026 to facilitate the preparatory steps for negotiating AEO MRAs between ASEAN as a bloc and DPs and discuss with DPs on the possibility of negotiating AEO MRAs with ASEAN as a block starting in 2027.



State of implementation of ‘Formalities’ in ASEAN



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untrfsurvey.org

³ Text available at: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/AAMRA-Text-Signed-10-AMS-by-19-Sept-2023.pdf>

⁴ See <https://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/facilitation/instruments-and-tools/tools/safe-package/safe-framework-of-standards.pdf>

3.3. Institutional Arrangement and Cooperation

The ‘institutional arrangement and cooperation’ sub-group comprises five trade facilitation measures highlighted in the Survey. These measures revolve around the longstanding recommendation to establish a national trade facilitation body that promotes coordination and cooperation among government agencies and other stakeholders in trade facilitation activities. Four of the five measures relate to Articles 8 and 23 in the WTO TFA, whilst the last measure focuses on how agencies delegate border controls to Customs. In ASEAN, the implementation rate of these measures stands at 74%, slightly surpassing the regional Asia-Pacific average of 72%.

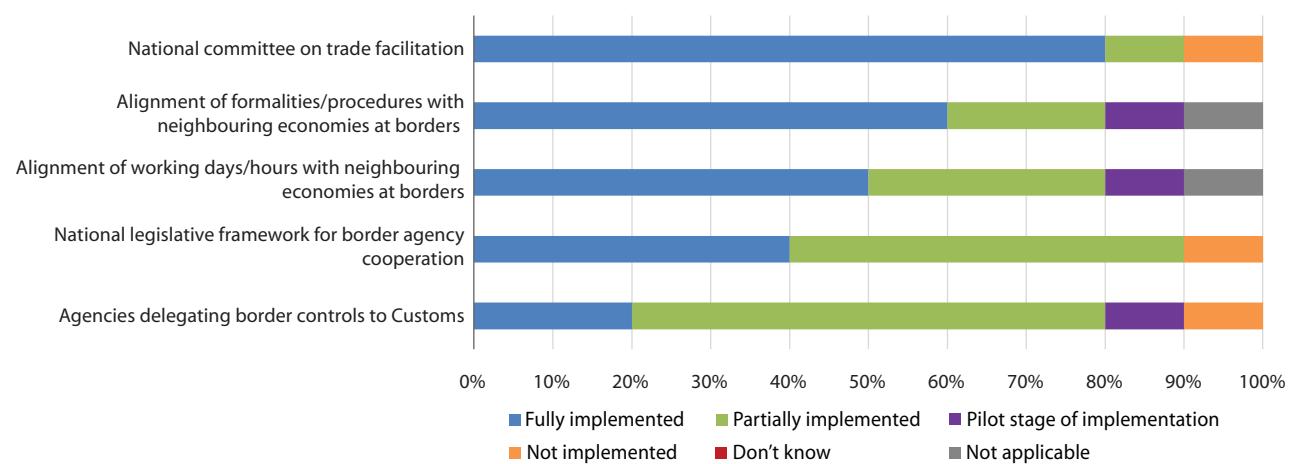
While each measure within this sub-group reaches 90% implementation across all stages (fully, partially, and pilot), the rates of full implementation differ significantly among the measures, as illustrated in figure 11. The measure with the highest implementation rate is the ‘national committee on trade facilitation’,

which has been fully implemented by 80% of countries. The measure ‘alignment of formalities/procedures with neighbouring economies at borders’ achieves 60% full implementation. A notable example of regional cooperation in advancing this alignment is the 2nd Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (Upgraded ATIGA),⁵ which is intended to be signed at the sidelines of the 47th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in October 2025. The Upgraded ATIGA includes enhanced commitments to address emerging issues such as remanufactured goods, trade and environment, supply chain connectivity, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, thereby facilitating the harmonization of procedures among ASEAN Member States.

The measures ‘alignment of working days/hours with neighbouring economies at borders’ and ‘national legislative framework for border agency cooperation’ achieve 50% and 40% full implementation respectively. Meanwhile, only 20% of countries in this subregion have fully implemented the measure ‘agencies delegating border controls to Customs’, making it the least implemented measure in this sub-group.

Figure 11

State of implementation of ‘Institutional arrangement and cooperation’ in ASEAN



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untfsurvey.org

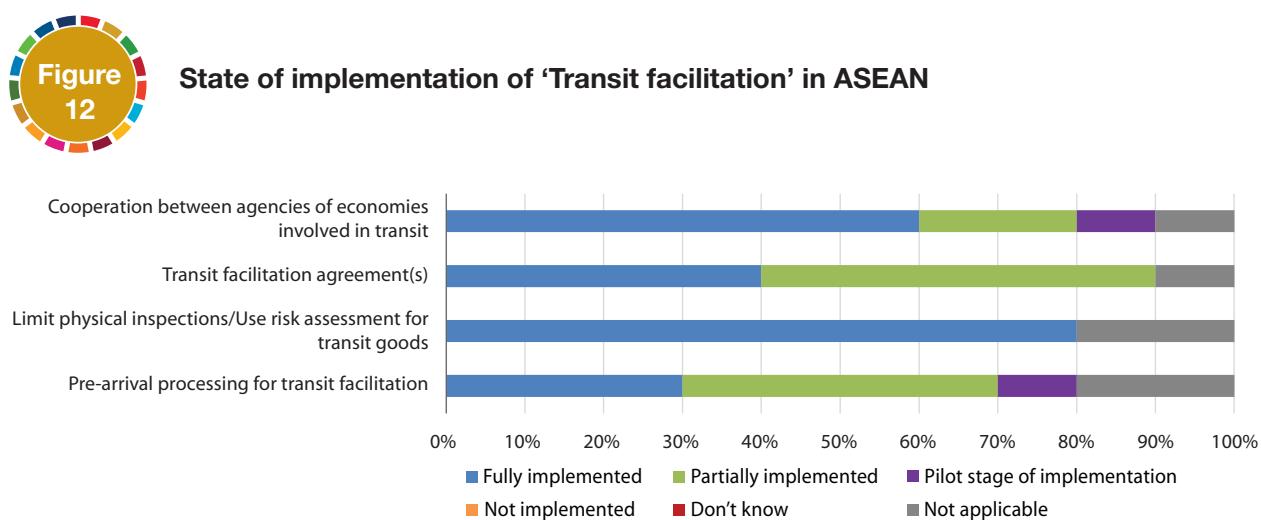
⁵ See <https://asean.org/asean-trade-in-goods-agreement-atiga/>

3.4. Transit Facilitation

Four measures surveyed specifically pertain to ‘transit facilitation’, three of which are aligned with WTO TFA Article 11 on “Freedom of Transit”, while one surveys the level of transit facilitation agreements in place between countries. These measures aim to simplify the formalities associated with transit traffic, enabling seamless transportation of goods through one or multiple transit countries. They hold particular significance for landlocked developing countries, as their goods often pass through neighbouring territories during transit. In the ASEAN subregion, the implementation level of ‘transit facilitation’ stands at approximately 85%, surpassing the Asia-Pacific average of 82%.

Among these measures, ‘limit physical inspections/use risk assessment for transit goods’ achieves the highest full implementation rate at 80%, while ‘cooperation between agencies of economies involved in transit’ and ‘transit facilitation agreements’ both achieve the highest implementation rates (fully, partially, and pilot) at 90% (figure 12). ‘Pre-arrival processing for transit facilitation’ remains the least implemented measure with only 30% of ASEAN Member States having fully implemented it.

A notable example of enhanced ‘cooperation between agencies of economies involved in transit’ is the ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS). Since its operationalization on 2 November 2020, 653 movements of transit cargo have been processed across the land borders of seven Participating Member States, namely Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Efforts are underway to increase the utilization of the ACTS through outreach activities and symposiums, as well as to facilitate the commencement of ACTS operations from Myanmar by the end of 2025. ASEAN is currently undertaking a study on the Next Generation of ACTS, which seeks to upgrade the existing system, analyze operational challenges, and recommend practical solutions to improve utilization. The study will also examine the potential expansion of ACTS to other modes of transport, assess the feasibility of extending participation to the remaining ASEAN Member States – Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, and the Philippines – as well as to interested non-ASEAN countries, and develop a long-term sustainability plan for ACTS operations. In parallel, ASEAN is preparing to conduct a pilot ACTS rail transit initiative, which will serve as a reference for the future rollout of ACTS in the rail sector.



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untrfsurvey.org

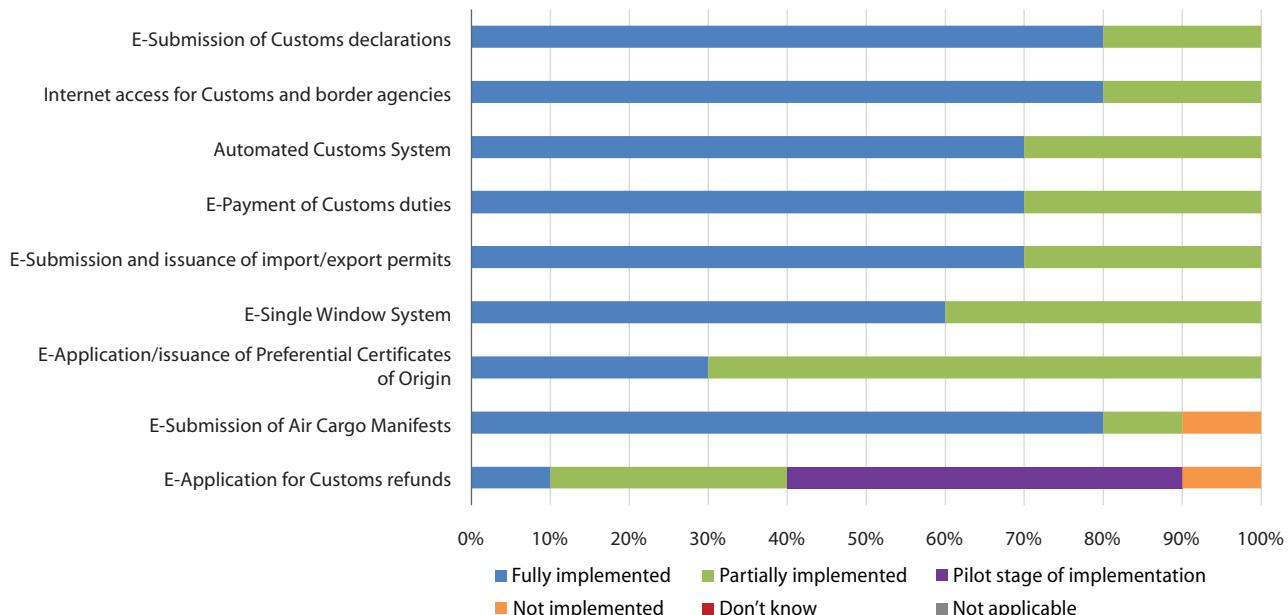
3.5. Paperless Trade

The ‘paperless trade’ sub-group comprises 10 trade facilitation measures evaluated in this Survey. These measures leverage modern information and communications technologies (ICT) to streamline trade procedures, spanning from fundamental Internet access at border crossings to advanced electronic Single Window

systems. Several of these measures correspond to provisions within the WTO TFA framework. In the ASEAN subregion, the implementation level of ‘paperless trade’ stands at 84%, surpassing the Asia-Pacific regional average of 69%. Remarkably, all measures demonstrate strong adoption rates, with each achieving at least 90% implementation (fully, partial, and pilot stage) across ASEAN Member States (figure 13).



State of implementation of ‘Paperless trade’ in ASEAN



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untfsurvey.org

While the TFA encourages economies to implement such measures without imposing mandatory requirements, this flexibility has resulted in significant variation in implementation rates across ‘paperless trade’ measures. Figure 13 illustrates that ‘e-submission of Customs declarations’ and ‘internet access for Customs and border agencies’ achieve the highest full implementation rates at 80% of ASEAN Member States. These are closely followed by ‘automated Customs system’,

‘e-payment of Customs duties’, and ‘e-submission and issuance of import/export permits’, which are fully implemented by 70% of ASEAN Member States. In contrast, ‘e-application for Customs refunds’ exhibits the lowest full implementation rate at only 10%, although 90% of ASEAN countries have implemented this measure to some degree (including partial and pilot stages), with implementation yet to commence in only one ASEAN country.

Box
1**Cambodia's ASYHUB Maritime: Modernizing Port Operations**

Cambodia has made significant progress in enhancing Customs and port operational efficiency through piloting ASYHUB Maritime.⁶ ASYHUB Maritime serves as a Maritime Single Window (MSW) platform that enables the direct submission of more accurate, timely, and complete cargo information from data originators. This enhances risk assessment accuracy and significantly accelerates cargo clearance processes. This initiative brings Cambodia into compliance with the International Maritime Organization's Facilitation Convention, which requires all ports worldwide to implement an MSW system for electronic data submission and exchange of maritime information. The adoption of ASYHUB Maritime reflects Cambodia's commitment to modernizing its trade infrastructure and advancing its paperless trade capabilities.

3.6. Cross-Border Paperless Trade

The 'cross-border paperless trade' sub-group encompasses six measures designed to facilitate the exchange and recognition of trade-related data and documents. In ASEAN, the implementation rate of 'cross-border paperless trade' stands at 69%, significantly surpassing the regional average of 49%.

Two foundational measures within this sub-group comprise the establishment of 'laws and regulations for electronic transactions' and a 'legal framework for digital authentication'. These measures serve as essential prerequisites for enabling the secure exchange of trade-related information both domestically and across the entire international supply chain. Both measures have achieved 100% implementation across all ASEAN Member States when considering fully implemented, partially implemented, and pilot stage initiatives combined, while 60% of ASEAN countries have fully implemented these foundational frameworks (figure 14). A notable example of a country implementing a digital authentication

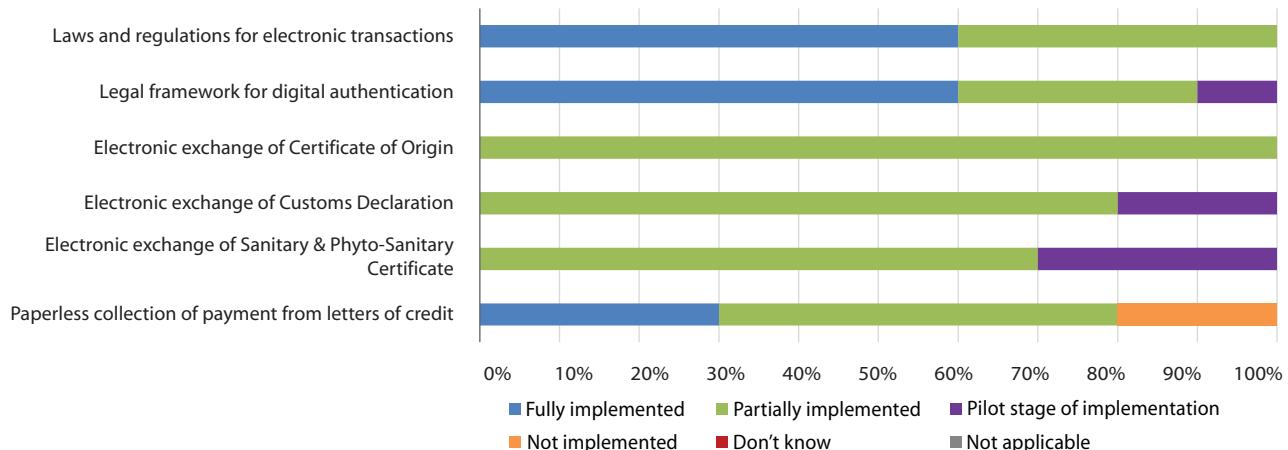
scheme is Viet Nam, which has increased the number of certificate providers that are allowed to issue digital certificates and e-signature services from 23 to 26 between 2023-2025. In contrast, 'paperless collection of payment from letters of credit' represents the least advanced measure, with only 80% implementation and merely 30% of ASEAN Member States having achieved full implementation.

The remaining three measures focus specifically on the electronic exchange of trade-related documents across borders, effectively eliminating reliance on physical paper documentation. These electronic exchange measures – 'electronic exchange of Customs declaration', 'electronic exchange of Certificate of Origin', and 'electronic exchange of Sanitary & Phyto-Sanitary Certificate' – demonstrate consistent implementation patterns, with all three achieving 100% implementation across ASEAN Member States when combining all implementation stages. While none of these measures have reached full implementation status, indicating ongoing development and refinement processes, their comprehensive adoption reflects the coordinated regional approach facilitated through the ASEAN Single Window (ASW).

⁶ See <https://asycuda.org/en/asyhub-maritime-gains-international-recognition-as-a-key-solution-for-digital-trade-facilitation/>



State of implementation of 'Cross-border paperless trade' in ASEAN



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at unfsurvey.org

Box 2

ASEAN Single Window: Advancing Cross-Border Paperless Trade

Building upon the foundation established in 2018, the ASEAN Single Window (ASW), an interoperable environment of Single Windows of ASEAN Member States, has evolved into a comprehensive platform supporting multiple trade document types. The systematic expansion from five initial participating Member States to full regional coverage by December 2019 demonstrates ASEAN's coordinated approach to implementing cross-border paperless trade measures, establishing a proven model for subsequent document integration.

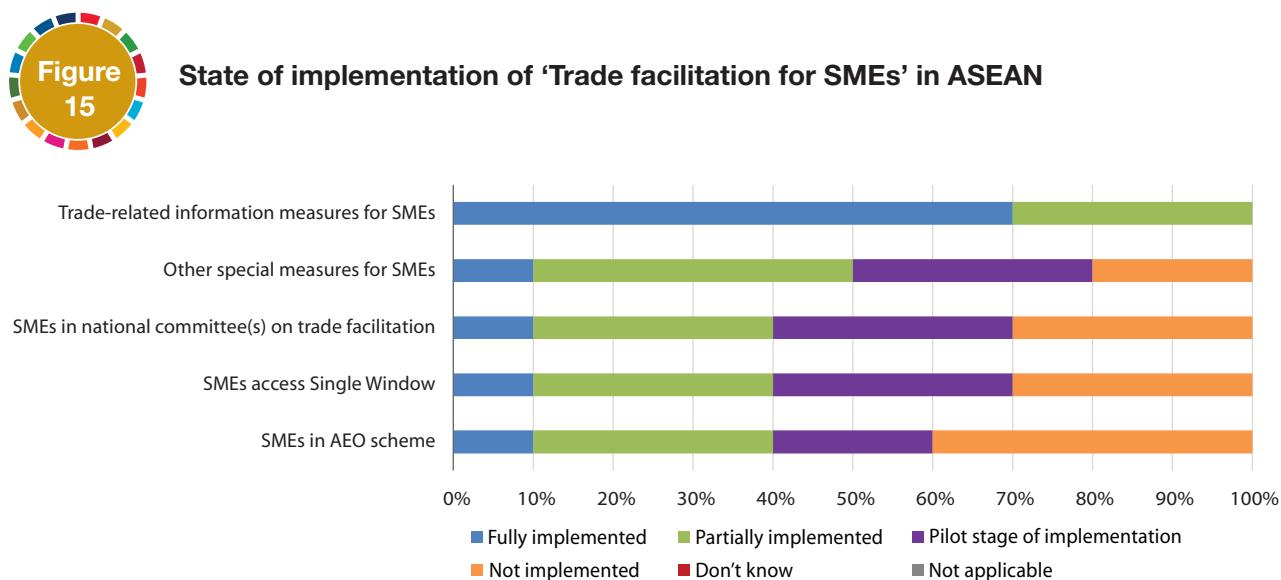
The ASEAN Customs Declaration Document (ACDD) represents the largest volume of exchanges within the ASW environment, facilitating the Customs declaration process across all ASEAN Member States. The e-Phyto certificate exchange marks a significant advancement in agricultural trade facilitation, with live operations demonstrating the system's capability to handle specialized documentation requirements for perishable goods and phytosanitary compliance.

ASEAN is also making progress in linking the ASW with Dialogue Partners. A legal template for Single Window cooperation has been developed, while a new common set of technical specifications is being designed to harmonize system architecture and enable government-to-government connectivity beyond the region. These initiatives position the ASW as a foundation for broader international trade digitalization efforts.

3.7. Trade Facilitation for SMEs

The average implementation rate of the five measures in the sub-group ‘trade facilitation for SMEs’ in ASEAN countries stands at 51%, surpassing the Asia-Pacific average of 46%. All ASEAN countries have either fully or partially implemented ‘trade-related information measures for SMEs’, with 70% of ASEAN countries fully implementing this measure, as illustrated in figure 15. However, only 10% of

countries have fully implemented the four remaining measures in this sub-group. Despite relatively low levels of full implementation, substantial progress has been initiated across the region: ‘other special measures for SMEs’ has commenced implementation in 80% of countries in this subregion, while ‘SMEs in national committee(s) on trade facilitation’ and ‘SMEs access Single Window’ have begun implementation in 70% of countries. The measure with the lowest total implementation rate is ‘SMEs in AEO scheme’, which remains unimplemented in 40% of ASEAN countries.



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at unfsurvey.org

To address the implementation challenges, particularly in measures such as ‘SMEs in AEO scheme’, some countries have developed targeted solutions. Indonesia has implemented a comprehensive range of programs tailored to support SMEs in navigating and participating in international trade. These initiatives provide information and guidance on understanding trade procedures, including export-import processes, Customs clearance, and digital platforms such as the Indonesian National Single Window. To promote SME participation in

the AEO scheme, the government has adjusted solvency requirements to account for the financial constraints often faced by SMEs. These adjustments recognize that SMEs typically have limited financial resources, thereby facilitating their qualification for AEO status. To complement this approach, the Directorate General of Customs and Excise has introduced fee reductions and lower audit criteria to reduce the financial burden of acquiring AEO status for SMEs.

3.8. Agricultural Trade Facilitation

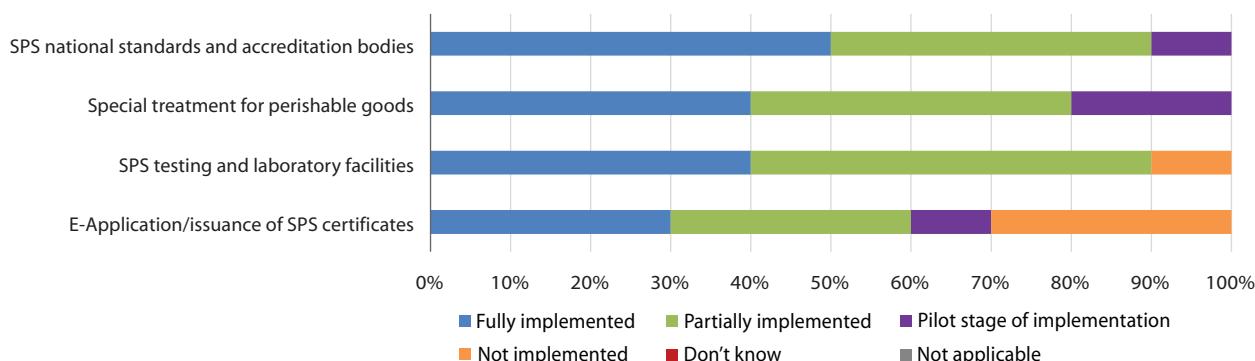
The implementation rate of 'agricultural trade facilitation' in the ASEAN subregion stands at 70%, surpassing the Asia-Pacific average of 64%. Three of the four measures demonstrate strong regional adoption, with 'SPS national standards and accreditation bodies' and 'special treatment for perishable goods' both achieving 100% implementation when considering all stages of implementation. 'SPS national standards and accreditation bodies' leads with 50% of ASEAN Member States achieving full implementation, followed by 'special treatment for perishable goods' and 'SPS testing and laboratory facilities', both at 40% full implementation. The measure requiring

further development is 'e-application/issuance of SPS certificates', which has achieved 70% total implementation but only 30% full implementation across the subregion (figure 16).

Malaysia exemplifies comprehensive implementation in agricultural trade facilitation, having achieved full implementation across all four measures. Malaysia adheres to the standards established by the International Plant Protection Convention, particularly regarding phytosanitary measures and the regulation of wood packaging materials in international trade. The country has also developed bilateral frameworks for specific agricultural products, notably durian. In 2024, Malaysia and China concluded an agreement on plant quarantine requirements, facilitating the export of fresh durian from Malaysia to China.⁷



State of implementation of 'Agricultural trade facilitation' in ASEAN



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untfsurvey.org

3.9. Trade Facilitation and Women

The implementation level of the three 'trade facilitation and women' measures at the ASEAN level currently stands at 43%, approaching the Asia-Pacific regional average of 46%, indicating continued room for improvement. These

measures encompass initiatives such as establishing designated gender focal points in relevant border agencies, promoting gender-balanced participation in training programs, and providing specialized training for women engaged in trade. Notable progress has been achieved since 2023, with the overall implementation rate increasing from 32% to 43% at the ASEAN level. All three measures

⁷ See <https://www.foodgacc.com/china-gacc-aqs iq-registration-ci q-ccic-cifer-singlewindow-durian-from-Malaysia>

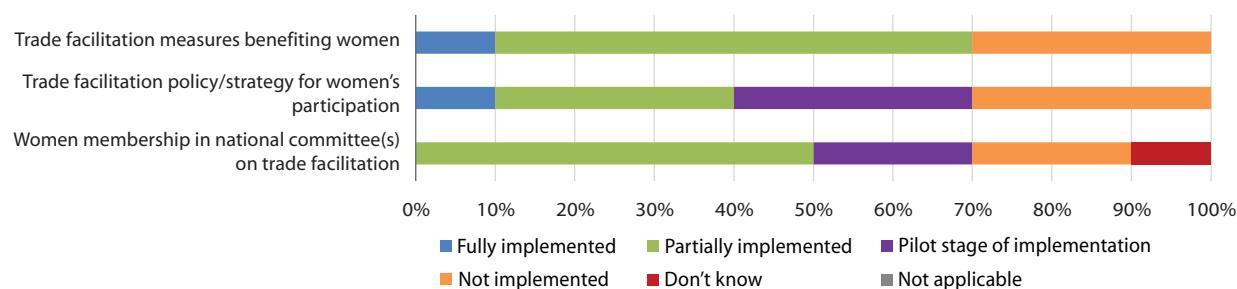
now demonstrate consistent implementation across the subregion, with each achieving 70% implementation when considering all stages (figure 17).

However, full implementation remains limited, with only ‘trade facilitation policy/strategy for women’s participation’ and ‘trade facilitation measures benefiting women’ reaching 10% full implementation, while ‘women membership in national committee(s) on trade facilitation’ has yet to achieve full implementation in any ASEAN Member State. Although gender equality has increasingly been integrated into various policy

initiatives since 2023, translating these commitments into comprehensive, fully implemented measures specifically addressing female traders’ concerns regarding trade facilitation remains a persistent challenge. The predominance of partial implementation and pilot projects across all measures suggests that while awareness and initial steps have improved, sustained institutional commitment and resource allocation are necessary to achieve meaningful progress in supporting women’s participation in trade facilitation (figure 17).



State of implementation of ‘Trade facilitation and women’ in ASEAN



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untrfsurvey.org

Among the 10 ASEAN Member States, the Philippines stands out with the highest level of implementation for the sub-group ‘trade facilitation and women’, with all three measures showing significant progress compared to 2023. Building upon the established permanent presence of the Women Business Council Philippines, the country has further advanced its commitment through the Department of Trade and Industry’s Export Marketing Bureau, which hosts the “She Trade Philippines Hub” in partnership with the International Trade Centre.⁸ This hub provides comprehensive support to Philippine women entrepreneurs and women-led SMEs seeking to engage in global markets and participate in international trade through

a three-pillar approach. Training sessions such as “Women Entrepreneurs at the Helm: Become an Agile Exporter” equip women with relevant skills and knowledge to facilitate their access to export markets. The hub also serves as a collaborative community where partners, including business support organizations, corporations, and development partners, can work together to enhance the business environment for women. Finally, the hub advocates for gender-inclusive policy reforms at the national level, ensuring that capacity-building efforts are supported by macro-level policies that promote the sustainable inclusion of women in trade.

⁸ See <https://tradelinephilippines.dti.gov.ph/ca/web/tradeline-portal/shetrades-philippines-hub>

3.10. Trade Facilitation for E-commerce

Electronic commerce accounts for a significant proportion of business transactions among ASEAN countries and represents an increasingly important element in international trade. There has been rapid growth in e-commerce transactions in the ASEAN region, with research demonstrating that four ASEAN countries – Viet Nam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia – are among the top 10 fastest growing retail e-commerce markets globally.⁹ Consequently, the sub-group ‘trade facilitation for e-commerce’ was introduced for the 2025 Survey, comprising five measures that target the trade facilitation of e-commerce goods. The implementation rate of ‘trade facilitation for e-commerce’ in the ASEAN subregion stands at 43%, surpassing the Asia-Pacific average of 33%.

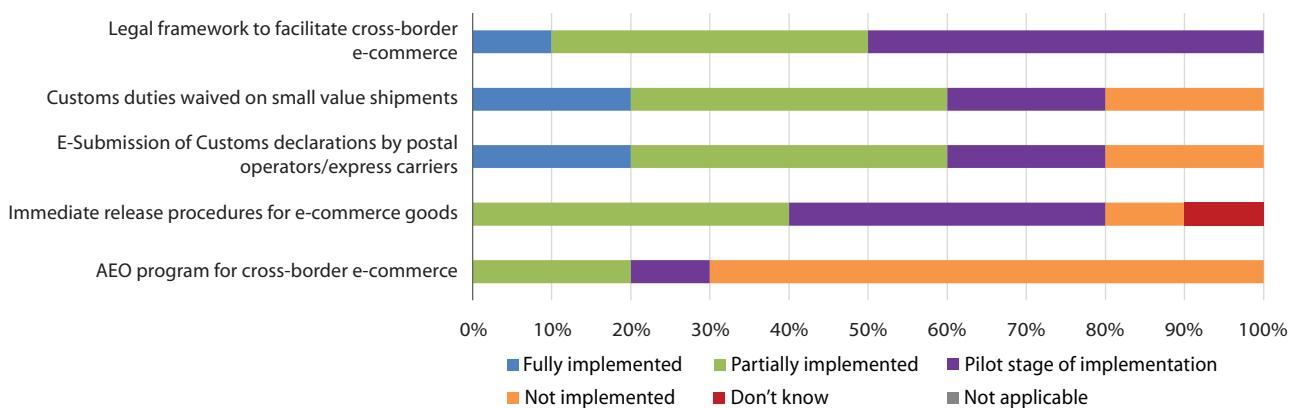
The measure with the highest level of implementation is ‘legal framework to facilitate cross-border e-commerce’, with all ASEAN Member States implementing this measure to various extents: 10% have achieved full implementation, while 40% and 50% have

reached partial implementation and pilot stage respectively. Three measures demonstrate strong regional progress with 80% implementation rates: ‘Customs duties waived on small value shipments’, ‘e-submission of Customs declarations by postal operators/express carriers’, and ‘immediate release procedures for e-commerce goods’. While many countries perform immediate release procedures, evidence suggests these are not always specifically tailored for e-commerce goods, with 40% of countries having partially implemented targeted procedures and another 40% operating at pilot stage. The measure requiring further development is ‘AEO program for cross-border e-commerce’, with 70% of ASEAN countries not implementing this measure. Despite AEO programs being well-established in the ASEAN subregion, these could be expanded to include specific conditions for e-commerce platforms, fulfilment centres, and postal operators (figure 18).

Demonstrating progress in ‘e-submission of Customs declarations by postal operators/express carriers’, Cambodia’s Department of Customs and Excise signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Cambodia Post in 2023 on



State of implementation of ‘Trade facilitation for e-commerce’ in ASEAN



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untfsurvey.org

⁹ Available at: <https://research.hktdc.com/en/article/MjA2ODQ1OTQ1Nw>

the exchange of electronic advanced data.¹⁰ The Cambodia Post UPU CDS-UNCTAD ASYCUDA interface efficiently facilitates Customs clearance of postal consignments through automatic exchange and advanced sharing of electronic shipment information between Cambodia Customs and Cambodia Post. This interface integrates postal goods declarations between ASYCUDA World and the Customs Declarations System of Cambodia Post, enabling more streamlined release and clearance of goods while maintaining relevant

risk management procedures. This initiative forms part of the “Improving Small Package e-Trade for SMEs” (SeT4SME) project, implemented by Swisscontact in collaboration with Cambodia’s Ministry of Commerce. This demonstrates how cooperation between Customs and postal institutions can simplify clearance processes and generate benefits for SMEs by facilitating their direct participation in e-commerce without relying on distributors, Customs brokers, and retailers.

Box 3

ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement

The ASEAN DEFA is positioned to be a key instrument for streamlining and expanding cross-border e-commerce throughout the region. Launched by the 23rd ASEAN Economic Community Council in September 2023, the DEFA negotiations are a comprehensive effort to establish the interoperable digital infrastructure essential for the future of online trade.

At its core and building on the ASEAN Agreement on E-Commerce, the agreement is expected to address the complexities of e-commerce through nine recommended provisions, including dedicated sections on digital trade, cross-border e-commerce, digital payment systems, and cross-border data flows.¹¹ As outlined in the Framework for Negotiating DEFA, the goal is to establish a comprehensive framework that supports enhanced cross-border paperless trading, a critical enabler for seamless business-to-business transactions involving electronic commercial documents and the high-volume, small-parcel logistics inherent in e-commerce.

Complementary initiatives are moving in parallel to reinforce the DEFA’s proposed e-commerce elements. These include the roadmap to Establish Regionally Comparable and Recognised Unique Business Identification Numbers and the Roadmap on Digital Trade Standards, which are expected to simplify verification and standardize data, making it easier for businesses to engage in cross-border e-commerce. Additionally, ongoing discussions on the adoption of the Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR) are foundational to digitizing key commercial documents, which is envisaged to reduce logistical friction for online sellers and marketplaces. By leveraging on emerging technologies and the above initiatives, the DEFA is expected to facilitate seamless, end-to-end e-commerce transactions. This is crucial for improving the speed, security, and traceability of goods and payments across the supply chain.

With the negotiations targeted for substantial conclusion within 2025 as a Priority Economic Deliverable under Malaysia’s ASEAN Chairmanship, the DEFA is projected to double ASEAN’s digital economy by up to US\$2 trillion by 2030. Upon full implementation, the agreement is expected to be a catalyst for inclusive e-commerce growth, positioning ASEAN as a leading region in digital trade integration by addressing regulatory complexities and fostering a more coherent and predictable ecosystem for businesses.

¹⁰ See <https://www.swisscontact.org/en/news/cambodia-post-launches-new-website-to-modernize-postal-services>

¹¹ <https://asean.org/asean-launches-worlds-first-regionwide-digital-economy-framework-agreement/>

3.11. Green Trade Facilitation

‘Green trade facilitation’ represents a new sub-group introduced to the 2025 Survey, encompassing four measures designed to enhance the environmental sustainability of trade in alignment with Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals on climate action. Among the sub-groups of measures in ASEAN, ‘green trade facilitation’ has the lowest implementation rate at 38%, yet this significantly surpasses the Asia-Pacific average implementation rate of 29%. The measures within this sub-group address critical environmental concerns, ranging from waste management and endangered species protection to sustainability reporting and climate-smart goods facilitation.

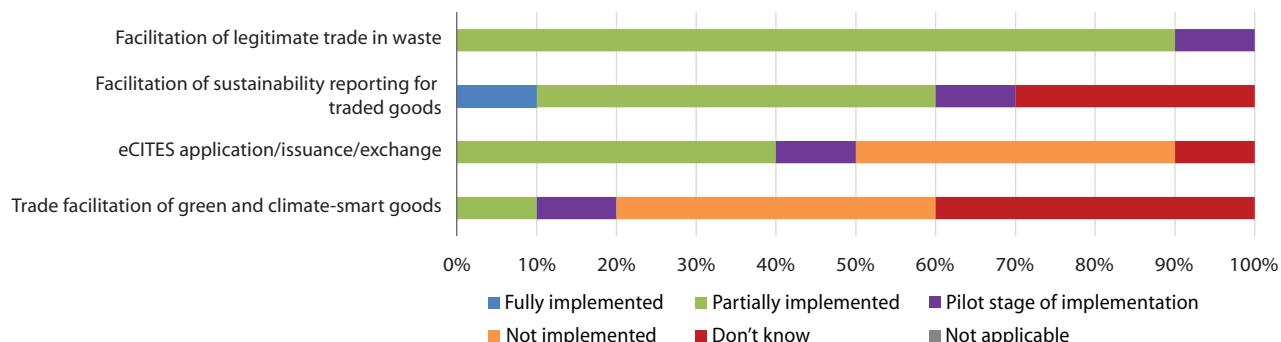
The measure achieving the highest implementation level is ‘facilitation of legitimate trade in waste’, with all ASEAN Member States having implemented this measure: 90% of countries have partially implemented it, while the remaining 10% operate at pilot stage. This measure governs transboundary movements of hazardous wastes, including toxic, poisonous, explosive, corrosive, flammable, ecotoxic, and

infectious materials under the Basel Convention framework, ensuring environmentally sound management and disposal practices. In contrast, ‘eCITES application/issuance/exchange’ – electronic permits supporting the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora – has been partially implemented by 40% of countries across the subregion, representing an important digital solution for improving CITES Convention compliance and combating illegal wildlife trade. The measure requiring greatest development is ‘trade facilitation of green and climate-smart goods’, implemented by only 20% of ASEAN countries (figure 19).

Data collection for this sub-group proved challenging, particularly for ‘facilitation of sustainability reporting for traded goods’ and ‘trade facilitation of green and climate-smart goods’, as indicated by trade facilitation experts and officials who provided or validated the Survey responses. This suggests limited familiarity with green trade concepts among traditional trade facilitation stakeholders, highlighting the need for enhanced capacity building and awareness raising as governments increasingly prioritize environmental considerations in trade policy frameworks.



State of implementation of ‘Green trade facilitation’ in ASEAN



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at unftsurvey.org

Box 4**Green Trade Facilitation: Thailand's Certification and Standards Framework**

Green non-tariff measures are increasingly influencing international trade policies, such as the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). In response, green trade facilitation measures have become essential for mitigating compliance costs and preventing environmental regulations from creating unintended barriers to trade.

Thailand has established comprehensive institutional frameworks to address these challenges. The Thai Forest Certification Council (TFCC), operating under the Federation of Thai Industries, provides technical assistance to enterprises involved in timber and timber-related products to ensure compliance with international environmental standards through the promotion of environmental certifications and sustainability frameworks.¹² The TFCC issues internationally recognized certifications, including Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and Chain of Custody (CoC), which conform to internationally recognized standards such as the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). Additionally, the TFCC has conducted capacity-building sessions to inform Thai industries about the implications of the EUDR and provide preparatory guidance based on private sector experience.¹³

Complementing these initiatives, the Thailand Environment Institute administers the “Thai Green Label Scheme” in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and Thai Industrial Standards Institute (TISI). The Green Label functions as an independent certification body that validates products assessed and verified to meet environmental standards in accordance with ISO 14024.¹⁴ The scheme has established memoranda of understanding with 11 national environmental labelling certification agencies across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, including Australia, China, Germany, India, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and the Republic of Korea. Furthermore, harmonized criteria have been developed for environmentally sustainable products to facilitate mutual recognition between countries for traded goods.¹⁵

These comprehensive institutional mechanisms have enabled Thailand to jointly achieve the highest implementation rate for the sub-group ‘green trade facilitation’ within the ASEAN region, alongside the Philippines, demonstrating how systematic certification frameworks can effectively reconcile environmental protection objectives with trade facilitation imperatives.

¹² More information at <https://tfcc.fti.or.th/about/>

¹³ Available at <https://tfcc.fti.or.th/seminars/>

¹⁴ See <https://greenlabel.tei.or.th/en/about-green-label/>

¹⁵ <https://greenlabel.tei.or.th/en/international-cooperation-operations/>

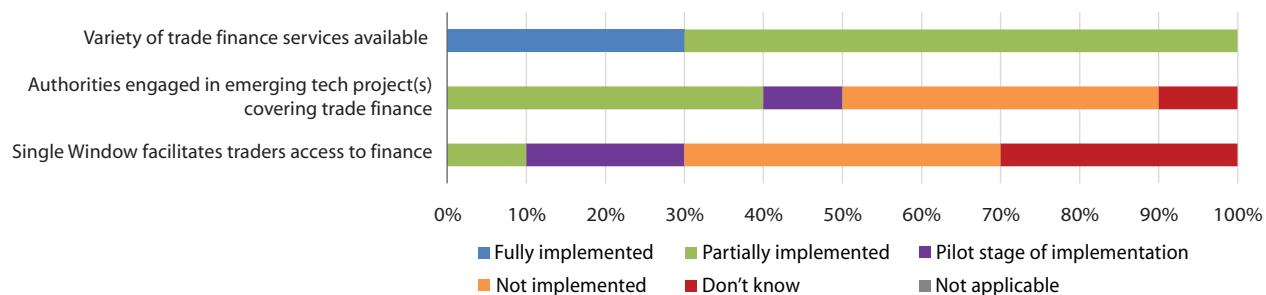
3.12. Trade Finance for Trade Facilitation

Among the sub-groups of measures in ASEAN, ‘trade finance for trade facilitation’ has the second lowest implementation rate at 40%, though this still surpasses the Asia-Pacific average of 36%. The most widely implemented

measure is ‘variety of trade finance services available’, with 100% of countries reporting full or partial implementation. However, implementation rates for ‘authorities engaged in emerging tech project(s) covering trade finance’ and ‘Single Window facilitates traders access to finance’ remain relatively low at 50% and 30% respectively, with progress limited to partial implementation and pilot projects (figure 20).



State of implementation of ‘Trade finance for trade facilitation’ in ASEAN



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at untrfsurvey.org

Data collection on this topic during the Survey proved less challenging than in previous years, with improved response quality and reduced uncertainty among stakeholders. However, this enhanced data clarity primarily revealed that many measures, particularly ‘Single Window facilitates traders access to finance’, are genuinely not implemented rather than unknown to respondents. While traditional trade facilitation actors, including Customs and government ministries responsible for trade, demonstrate greater awareness of trade finance measures compared to previous surveys, they continue to perceive financing and payment procedures in international trade transactions as beyond their core mandate. This persistent institutional separation, despite improved understanding, underscores the ongoing

necessity for enhanced coordination and cooperation with stakeholders involved in developing financial and payment services, considering the interconnectedness of goods and financial flows.

Despite these challenges, some ASEAN Member States are pioneering innovative approaches to integrate emerging technologies in trade finance. Singapore exemplifies advanced implementation in ‘authorities engaged in emerging tech project(s) covering trade finance’ through Project DESFT (Digital Economy Semi Fungible Token), which has successfully completed its first proof of concept and entered the pilot stage.¹⁶ This blockchain-based initiative, led by the Monetary Authority of Singapore, Bank of Ghana, and Singaporean

¹⁶ See <https://www.ntu.edu.sg/cas/news-events/news/details/Singapore-and-Ghana-trial-a-new-blockchain-based-trade-facilitation-platform>

fintech firms, utilizes a semi-fungible token system to electronically verify the identity and credentials of SMEs, facilitating trade between SMEs in both countries through improved financial inclusion. Live transactions have been completed using the United Nations

Development Programme's Universal Trusted Credentials semi-fungible token protocol, with a Singapore dollar-pegged stablecoin (XSGD) and the Ghanaian central bank digital currency (eCedi) exchanged using a Purpose Bound Money protocol on a distributed ledger.



Assessing the impact of trade facilitation in ASEAN

To evaluate the potential economic impact of trade facilitation implementation in ASEAN, this analysis employs a trade cost model that incorporates trade facilitation implementation rates derived from the Survey data (see annex 5 for data and methodology). The model accounts for traditional trade cost determinants including natural geographic factors (distance, “landlockedness” and contiguity), cultural and historical distance (e.g., common official language and/or former colonial relationships), regional trade agreements (RTAs), and maritime connectivity. It is based on a model which quantifies how trade costs change as countries implement various trade facilitation. Table 4 presents the projected trade cost reductions for ASEAN resulting from three scenarios of trade facilitation implementation. The first scenario focuses only on the implementation of the WTO TFA binding measures. The second scenario encompasses both binding and non-binding WTO TFA measures covered in the Survey.¹⁷ The third and most comprehensive scenario represents a WTO TFA+ approach, incorporating digital implementation of TFA measures alongside other ‘cross-border paperless trade’ measures. For each set of measures,

¹⁷ The list of binding and non-binding WTO TFA measures is available in the Appendix of UNTF Survey (2025)



Expected trade cost reduction from alternative trade facilitation reforms

ASEAN: trade costs model	WTO TFA (binding only)		WTO TFA (binding + non binding)		WTO TFA+ (binding + binding + non other paperless and cross-border paperless trade)	
	Partially implemented	Fully implemented	Partially implemented	Fully implemented	Partially implemented	Fully implemented
Model 1						
Overall trade facilitation	-0.3%	-1.8%	-0.4%	-2.9%	-1.9%	-7.5%
Model 2						
General trade facilitation measures	-0.2%	-1.6%	-0.3%	-2.2%	-0.5%	-2.7%
Digital trade facilitation measures	-	-	-0.1%	-0.5%	-1.4%	-4.6%

Source: United Nations ESCAP, based on data from unfts.org and ESCAP-World Bank Trade Cost database, available at <https://www.unescap.org/resources/escap-world-bank-trade-cost-database>

Note: There are no digital trade facilitation measures that are classified as WTO TFA binding measures.

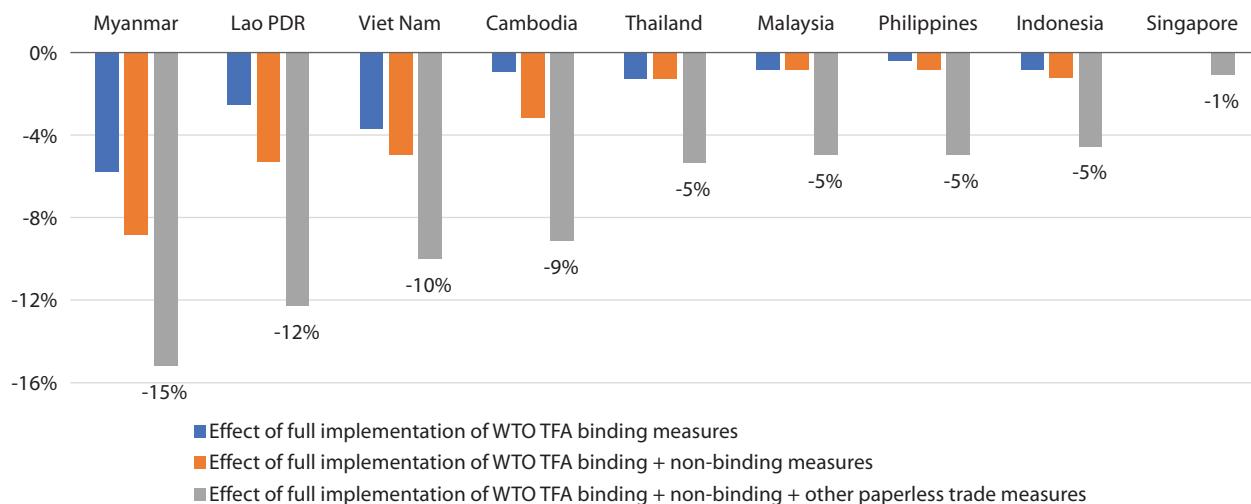
WTO TFA = World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement.

the average changes in trade cost achieved if all ASEAN countries at least partially implement all measures, or if they all fully implement all measures, are calculated.

This impact analysis reveals two key insights. First, complying with the WTO TFA by implementing binding measures can only slightly reduce trade costs. If ASEAN Member States fully implement binding measures within the overall trade facilitation model, trade costs decrease by approximately 2%, whereas comprehensive implementation of all measures (both binding and non-binding) generates a roughly 3% reduction. More substantially, the implementation of TFA measures while facilitating seamless cross-border electronic exchange of trade data and documents can deliver significant trade cost reductions of nearly

7.5% across ASEAN. Model 2 results further indicate that the majority of trade cost reductions stem from paperless trade measures compared to conventional trade facilitation measures.

ASEAN economies will reap significant benefits from accelerating trade facilitation implementation. Figure 21 demonstrates that full implementation of the three different sets of trade facilitation measures across all Member States results in trade cost reductions for every economy in the region. Predictably, the greatest trade cost benefits emerge when 'cross-border paperless trade' measures are fully realized. Nevertheless, unlocking these substantial cost reductions demands enhanced cooperation among member countries to establish interoperable paperless trade systems, as outlined in the CPTA (box 5).

**Impact of trade facilitation implementation on trade costs of ASEAN economies**

Source: United Nations ESCAP, based on data from unfsurvey.org and ESCAP-World Bank Trade Cost database, available at <https://www.unescap.org/resources/escap-world-bank-trade-cost-database>

Box 5
A Regional United Nations Treaty, “Leaving No-One Behind” to Accelerate Trade Digitalization

The Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA), which is a United Nations treaty, aims to promote cross-border paperless trade by (a) enabling the exchange and mutual recognition of trade-related data and documents in electronic form, and (b) facilitation of interoperability among national and subregional Single Windows and/or other paperless trade systems. It is designed as an inclusive and enabling platform that will benefit all participating economies, regardless of where they stand in terms of trade facilitation or Single Window/paperless trade implementation.

The treaty was adopted by the ESCAP member States in 2016. On 20 February 2021, it entered into force, indicating ESCAP members' continued efforts to accelerate trade digitalization in the region. Along with the Philippines from the ASEAN region, 14 countries are Parties to the treaty as of June 2025, with several other ESCAP member States in the process of completing their domestic processes for accession.

Achieving cross-border paperless trade across the region is a long and difficult endeavour, and it cannot be achieved without close collaboration between countries. The CPTA is expected to support the process by providing a dedicated institutional framework for countries with the proven political will to develop legal and technical solutions for cross-border paperless trade, including pilot projects, capacity-building and technical assistance, based on existing international standards. Some of the benefits for ESCAP member States that become parties to the CPTA include:

Box 5 (continued)

- (a) Accelerated progress towards a paperless trade environment at the national level, based on the political will demonstrated during the accession process to CPTA, and through access to structured and regular sharing of lessons learnt on the implementation of best practices;
- (b) Reduction in overall investment costs and maximization of returns from investments in paperless trade systems, through concurrent development of national paperless trade systems and environment for cross-border trade data exchange;
- (c) Ready access to potential counterpart countries interested in negotiating and achieving cross-border data exchange, avoiding or reducing the need for engaging in numerous and/or potentially incompatible bilateral initiatives;
- (d) Direct participation in the development of pragmatic solutions for the cross-border exchange of trade documents. For more advanced countries with relevant experience and existing practices, including many ASEAN economies, this will enable them to ensure that new regional systems and solutions will be harmonized and interoperable with what they have already achieved on a bilateral and/or subregional basis. Compliance with commitments a Party may have made through in its bilateral and plurilateral trade agreements, such as RTAs to collaborate on exchanging electronic data and documents (typically featured in “Paperless Trading” Articles in RTAs, or related provisions or agreements).

Note: Additional details on the CPTA are available at <https://www.unescap.org/projects/cpta>



Conclusion and the way forward

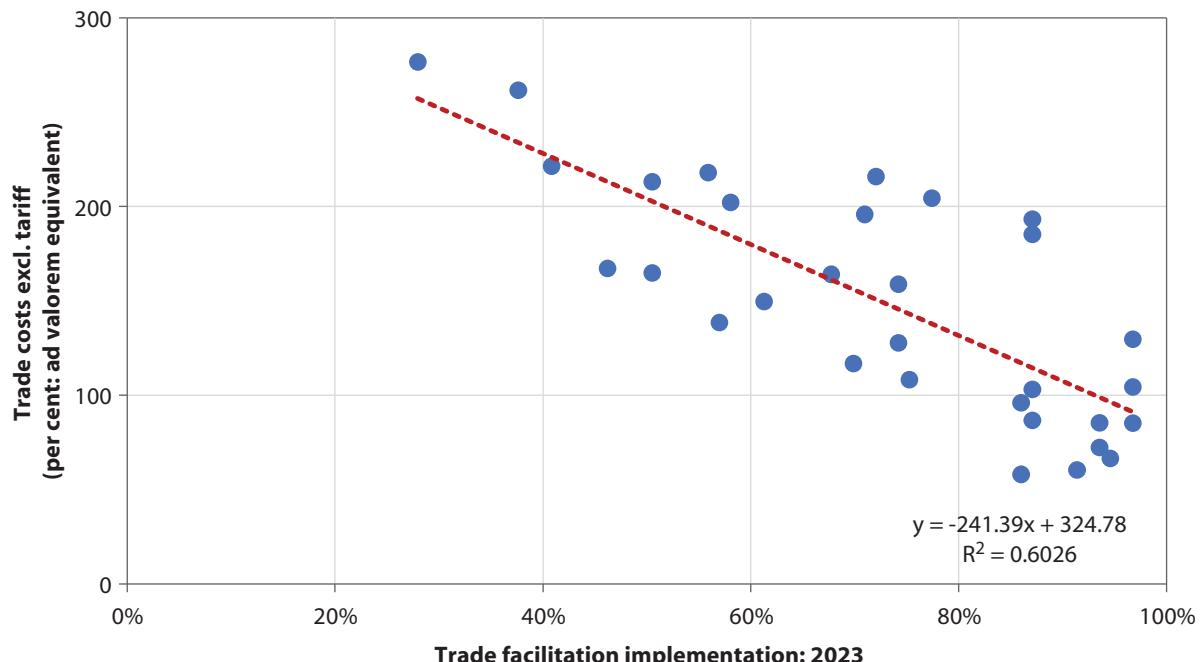
This report provides comprehensive data on the implementation of digital and sustainable trade facilitation for all ASEAN Member States, with comparative analysis against the broader Asia-Pacific region covering 38 economies. The survey includes general trade facilitation measures as outlined in the WTO TFA, alongside digital trade facilitation measures, and extends to measures targeting the agricultural sector, SMEs, women traders, trade finance, e-commerce, and green trade facilitation. As demonstrated in figure 22, the continued correlation between the cost of international trade in Asia-Pacific countries and their level of trade facilitation implementation underscores the critical importance of sustained progress in this area.

Based on an initial set of 31 general trade facilitation measures, the survey reveals an impressive average implementation rate of 83% in ASEAN (compared to 79% in 2023), maintaining the region's strong performance above the Asia-Pacific average of 70%.

When expanding the scope to include a broader range of 40 trade facilitation measures encompassing the 'Sustainable Trade Facilitation' group, the survey records reduced implementation rates. The Asia-Pacific region achieves 66% (-4 percentage points), while ASEAN Member States maintain 78% (-5 percentage points). This indicates that substantial progress remains necessary in implementing measures related to 'trade facilitation for SMEs' and 'agricultural trade facilitation', while 'trade facilitation and women' shows notable improvement at 43%.



Trade facilitation implementation and trade costs of Asia-Pacific economies



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at unfsurvey.org and; World Bank's Logistics Performance Index. Available at <https://lpi.worldbank.org>

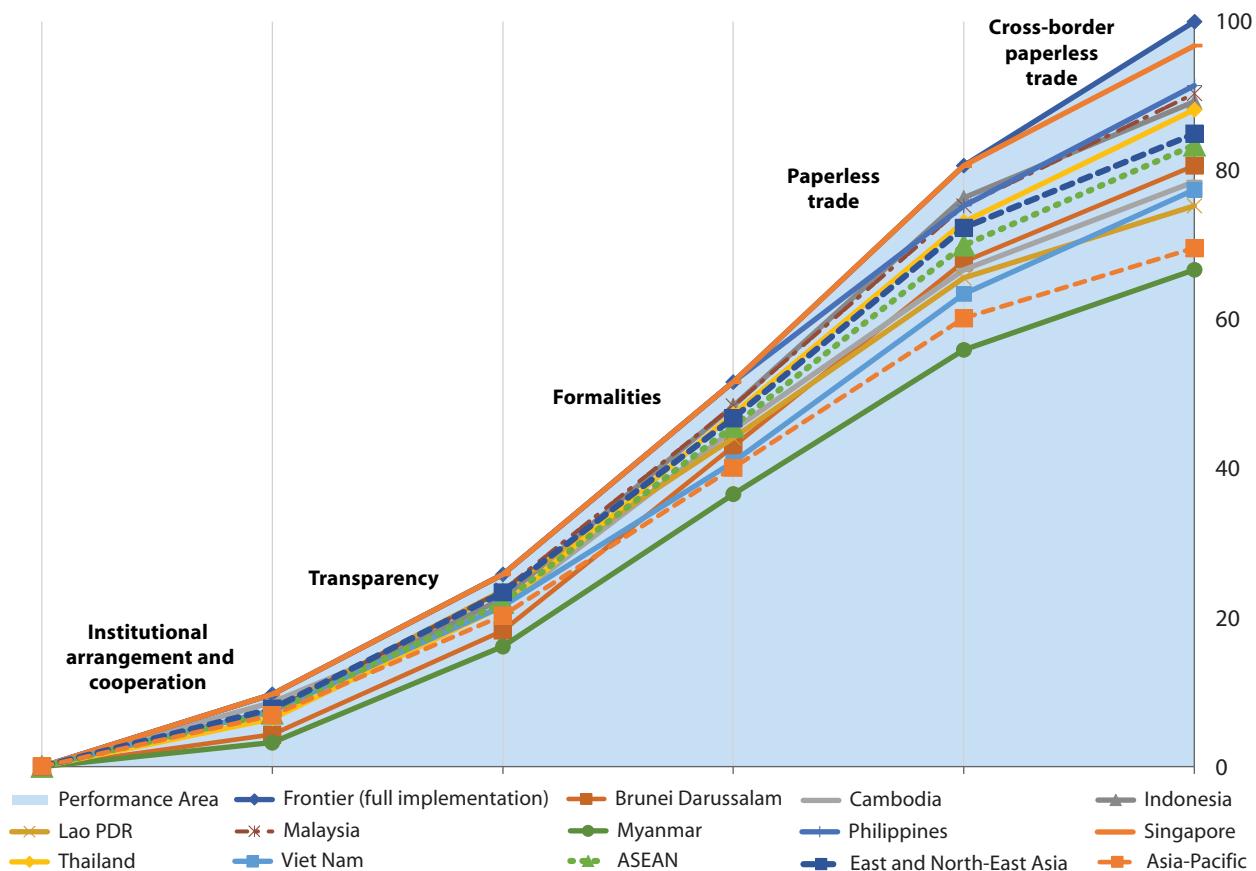
The survey reveals that ASEAN Member States have achieved remarkable progress, particularly in enhancing transparency and streamlining trade procedures, which represent the most advanced areas of implementation. Online publication of trade regulations is now standard practice across all ASEAN Member States, confirming full regional commitment to transparency. The 'paperless trade' sub-group demonstrates strong performance at 84%, indicating widespread adoption of digital customs systems and electronic processes. Significant advances have been made in digitalizing key trade documents, with electronic submission of import/export permits now widely implemented, alongside progress in electronic submission of cargo manifests. Moreover, 'cross-border paperless trade' has achieved significant growth of 9 percentage points since 2023, reaching 69% implementation. This

progress reflects the advancement particularly in establishing laws and regulations for electronic transactions and implementing legal frameworks for digital authentication.

As illustrated in figure 23, trade facilitation implementation represents a progressive journey. The foundation begins with establishing institutional arrangements and cooperation mechanisms to prioritize and coordinate trade facilitation initiatives effectively. Subsequently, transparency advances through broad information sharing on existing laws, regulations and procedures, coupled with meaningful stakeholder engagement when developing new measures. The third stage involves designing and implementing simplified trade formalities. Initially paper-based, these streamlined processes progressively transform through ICT adoption and paperless trade systems. The



Moving up the trade facilitation ladder towards seamless international supply chains



Source: The UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025. Available at unfsurvey.org

Note: Figure 23 shows global cumulative trade facilitation implementation scores for different regions for five sub-groups of trade facilitation measures included in the Survey. The scores are based on the equally weighted implementation of 31 trade facilitation measures, but the number of measures varies in each of the five sub-groups. Full implementation of all measures = 100.

ultimate stage enables seamless electronic exchange of trade data and documents among traders, governments and service providers through integrated national systems like Single Windows, allowing partner countries to access vital information that expedites goods movement and reduces overall trade costs.

Moving forward, accelerating digital trade facilitation remains imperative for ASEAN Member States to maintain competitive

advantage and reduce operational costs. The impact analysis demonstrates compelling evidence that comprehensive implementation of paperless trade, combined with seamless electronic exchange of trade data and documents, could generate trade cost reductions of nearly 7.5% for ASEAN. This represents a substantial improvement compared to the approximately 2% reduction achievable through basic compliance with WTO TFA binding measures alone. Such significant

disparities underscore the transformative potential of digital solutions beyond traditional facilitation approaches. In this context, the CPTA emerges as a complementary instrument to the WTO TFA, offering a dedicated platform for ESCAP Member States to advance electronic exchange of cross-border trade-related data and documents. For ASEAN countries, this United Nations treaty presents strategic opportunities to leverage and expand their established cross-border paperless trade solutions, particularly the ASEAN Single Window initiative. The CPTA framework enables ASEAN Member States to build upon existing bilateral and subregional achievements while supporting the continued advancement of the ASW and ensuring its interoperability with paperless trade systems across the broader Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

Regarding “Sustainable Trade Facilitation”, while notable progress has been achieved – particularly in ‘trade facilitation and women’ with 11 percentage points growth – implementation of inclusive measures supporting SMEs remains limited at 51%. SMEs hold significant importance in the global economy and digital trade, yet the availability of trade facilitation measures tailored to their needs remains inadequate. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance the capacity of SMEs and incorporate them into trade facilitation policies to achieve sustainable trade facilitation. The ‘trade finance for trade facilitation’ sub-group shows 40% implementation, having improved by 12 percentage points since 2023. Enhanced coordination between trade finance and facilitation agencies remains essential to ensure integration of financial instruments into trade facilitation strategies, including Single Window development plans. These elements are pivotal for fostering sustainable and inclusive economic development.

The 2025 Survey introduces critical new dimensions with the addition of ‘trade facilitation for e-commerce’ and ‘green trade facilitation’ sub-groups. These emerging areas reflect the

evolving trade landscape and growing emphasis on digital commerce and environmental sustainability. ASEAN’s implementation of e-commerce measures at 43% and green trade facilitation at 38%, while surpassing Asia-Pacific averages, indicates significant room for advancement in these increasingly important domains.

Furthermore, there is room for ASEAN Member States to further enhance cooperation in emerging technologies. When appropriately deployed with supporting policies and legal frameworks, these technologies can enhance supply chain visibility while building trust and transparency among trading partners. The rapid evolution of technological capabilities necessitates adaptive policies and national legislation to enable effective utilization of these innovations. International cooperation remains essential for developing and harmonizing regulatory frameworks that support technological adoption across borders. While progress has been made, with 50% of ASEAN Member States now engaged in emerging technology projects covering trade finance, significant opportunities remain for leveraging blockchain, artificial intelligence, and other digital innovations to modernize trade processes.

E-commerce facilitation has become particularly relevant given the rapid growth in digital trade across ASEAN, with four member states ranking among the world’s top 10 fastest-growing retail e-commerce markets. All ASEAN Member States have initiated legal frameworks for cross-border e-commerce, though full implementation remains at only 10%. Building on these foundations, the ongoing ASEAN DEFA negotiations, targeting substantial conclusion in 2025, promise to establish comprehensive regional infrastructure supporting enhanced cross-border paperless trading and potentially doubling ASEAN’s digital economy by 2030. Yet, limited progress has been observed in critical areas such as waiving customs duties on small value shipments, while the implementation of AEO programs specifically designed for

cross-border e-commerce remains notably low despite active promotion by the World Customs Organization.

Green trade facilitation measures play an increasingly crucial role in aligning trade with environmental sustainability objectives. While 'facilitation of legitimate trade in waste' has achieved 100% implementation across ASEAN, measures such as 'trade facilitation of green and climate-smart goods' remain at only 20% implementation. Additionally, eCITES – electronic permits for trade in endangered species – has been partially implemented by 50% of ASEAN Member States, representing an important digital solution for improving CITES Convention compliance and combating illegal wildlife trade. The limited familiarity with green trade concepts among traditional trade facilitation stakeholders highlights the need for enhanced capacity

building as environmental considerations become central to international trade policy frameworks.

Therefore, it is imperative for ASEAN countries to prioritize these emerging areas while maintaining momentum in traditional trade facilitation domains. By fostering collaborative efforts, embracing digital transformation, integrating environmental considerations, and ensuring inclusive participation of SMEs and women in trade, ASEAN can build resilient, sustainable, and prosperous trade systems. This comprehensive approach will not only reduce trade costs and enhance regional competitiveness but also contribute meaningfully to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and positioning ASEAN as a leader in modern, inclusive trade facilitation.

Annexes

Annex 1. List of participating countries

Country	Subregion
Afghanistan	South and South-West Asia
Armenia	North and Central Asia
Australia	Australia-New Zealand
Azerbaijan	North and Central Asia
Bangladesh	South and South-West Asia
Bhutan	South and South-West Asia
Brunei Darussalam	South-East Asia
Cambodia	South-East Asia
China	East and North-East Asia
Fiji	Pacific Island Developing Economies
Georgia	North and Central Asia
India	South and South-West Asia
Indonesia	South-East Asia
Iran, Islamic Republic of	South and South-West Asia
Japan	East and North-East Asia
Kazakhstan	North and Central Asia
Kiribati	Pacific Island Developing Economies
Korea, Republic of	East and North-East Asia
Kyrgyzstan	North and Central Asia
Lao People's Democratic Republic	South-East Asia
Malaysia	South-East Asia
Maldives	South and South-West Asia
Marshall Islands	Pacific Island Developing Economies
Micronesia, Federated States of	Pacific Island Developing Economies
Mongolia	East and North-East Asia
Myanmar	South-East Asia
Nauru	Pacific Island Developing Economies
Nepal	South and South-West Asia
New Zealand	Australia-New Zealand

Country	Subregion
Pakistan	South and South-West Asia
Palau	Pacific Island Developing Economies
Papua New Guinea	Pacific Island Developing Economies
Philippines	South-East Asia
Russian Federation	North and Central Asia
Samoa	Pacific Island Developing Economies
Singapore	South-East Asia
Solomon Islands	Pacific Island Developing Economies
Sri Lanka	South and South-West Asia
Tajikistan	North and Central Asia
Thailand	South-East Asia
Tonga	Pacific Island Developing Economies
Türkiye	South and South-West Asia
Turkmenistan	North and Central Asia
Tuvalu	Pacific Island Developing Economies
Uzbekistan	North and Central Asia
Vanuatu	Pacific Island Developing Economies
Viet Nam	South-East Asia

Annex 2. Grouping of trade facilitation measures and correspondence with TFA articles

Groups	Subgroups	Question #	Measures	Relevant TFA Articles
General Trade Facilitation	Transparency (5 measures)	2	Online publication of import-export regulations	1.2
		3	Stakeholder consultation on draft regulations	2.2
		4	Advance publication/notification of trade regulations	2.1
		5	Advance rulings on import tariff classification and origin	3
		9	Independent appeal mechanism	4
	Formalities (8 measures)	6	Risk management	7.4
		7	Pre-arrival processing	7.1
		8	Post-clearance audits	7.5
		10	Separating release from final Customs duties determination	7.3
		11	Establishment and publication of average release times	7.6
		12	Trade facilitation measures for authorized operators	7.7
		13	Expedited shipments	7.8
		14	Acceptance of copies for trade formalities	10.2.1
	Institutional arrangement and cooperation (5 measures)	1	National committee on trade facilitation	23
		31	National legislative framework for border agency cooperation	8
		32	Agencies delegating border controls to Customs	
		33	Alignment of working days/hours with neighbouring economies at borders	8.2(a)
		34	Alignment of formalities/procedures with neighbouring economies at borders	8.2(b)
	Transit facilitation (4 measures)	35	Transit facilitation agreement(s)	
		36	Limit physical inspections/Use risk assessment for transit goods	10.5
		37	Pre-arrival processing for transit facilitation	11.9
		38	Cooperation between agencies of economies involved in transit	11.16

Groups	Subgroups	Question #	Measures	Relevant TFA Articles
Digital Trade Facilitation	Paperless trade (10 measures)	15	Automated Customs System	
		16	Internet access for Customs and border agencies	
		17	E-Single Window System	10.4
		18	E-Submission of Customs declarations	
		19	E-Submission and issuance of import/export permits	
		20	E-Submission of Sea Cargo Manifests	
		21	E-Submission of Air Cargo Manifests	
		22	E-Application/issuance of Preferential Certificates of Origin	
		23	E-Payment of Customs duties	7.2
		24	E-Application for Customs refunds	
	Cross-border paperless trade (6 measures)	25	Laws and regulations for electronic transactions	
		26	Legal framework for digital authentication	
		27	Electronic exchange of Customs declaration	
		28	Electronic exchange of Certificate of Origin	
		29	Electronic exchange of Sanitary & Phyto-Sanitary Certificate	
		30	Paperless collection of payment from letters of credit	
Sustainable Trade Facilitation	Trade facilitation for SMEs (5 measures)	39	Trade-related information measures for SMEs	
		40	SMEs in AEO scheme	
		41	SMEs access Single Window	
		42	SMEs in national committee(s)on trade facilitation	
		43	Other special measures for SMEs	
	Agricultural trade facilitation (4 measures)	44	SPS testing and laboratory facilities	
		45	SPS national standards and accreditation bodies	
		46	E-Application/issuance of SPS certificates	
		47	Special treatment for perishable goods	7.9
	Trade facilitation and women (3 measures)	48	Trade facilitation policy/strategy for women's participation	
		49	Trade facilitation measures benefiting women	
		50	Women membership in national committee(s) on trade facilitation	

Groups	Subgroups	Question #	Measures	Relevant TFA Articles
Other Trade Facilitation	Trade facilitation for e-Commerce (5 measures)	51	Legal framework to facilitate cross-border e-commerce	
		52	Customs duties waived on small value shipments	
		53	Immediate release procedures for e-commerce goods	
		54	AEO program for cross-border e-commerce	
		55	E-Submission of Customs declarations by postal operators/express carriers	
	Green trade facilitation (4 measures)	56	Facilitation of sustainability reporting for traded goods	
		57	Trade facilitation of green and climate-smart goods	
		58	eCITES application/issuance/exchange	
		59	Facilitation of legitimate trade in waste	
	Trade finance for trade facilitation (3 measures)	60	Single Window facilitates traders access to finance	
		61	Authorities engaged in emerging tech project(s) covering trade finance	
		62	Variety of trade finance services available	

Annex 3. A three-step approach for data collection and validation

Data submission by experts	The regional commissions sent the Survey instrument to trade facilitation experts in governments, the private sector and academia to gather preliminary information. The questionnaire was made publicly available online and, where relevant, distributed to national trade facilitation authorities and regional trade facilitation partners or organizations.
Data verification by the secretariats of the regional commissions	The regional commissions cross-checked the data collected in Step 1. Desk research and data-sharing among regional commissions and Survey partners were conducted to verify data accuracy. In cases in which additional information was needed, interviews with key informants were arranged. This step produced a consistent set of responses per country.
Data validation by national governments	The regional commissions sent the completed questionnaire to each national government for review, ensuring countries could verify the dataset and provide additional information. Government feedback was then incorporated to finalize the dataset.

Annex 4. Definition of each stage of implementation

Stage of implementation	Coding/ Scoring
<p>Full implementation: the trade facilitation measure implemented is in full compliance with commonly accepted international standards, recommendations and conventions such as the Revised Kyoto Convention, UN/CEFACT Recommendations, or the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA); it is implemented in law and in practice; it is available to essentially all relevant stakeholders nationwide, supported by adequate legal and institutional framework, as well as adequate infrastructure and financial and human resources. (a TFA provision included in the Notifications of Category A commitments may generally be considered as a measure which is fully implemented by the country, with a caveat that the provision will be implemented by a least-developed country member within one year after entry into force of the TFA agreement). If a country registers positive responses for all sub-questions concerning a given trade facilitation measure, that measure should be considered fully implemented.</p>	3
<p>Partial implementation: a measure is considered to be partially implemented if at least one of the following is true: (1) the trade facilitation measure is in partial – but not in full – compliance with commonly accepted international standards, recommendations and conventions; (2) the country is still in the process of rolling out the implementation of measure; (3) the measure is practiced but on an unsustainable, short-term or ad-hoc basis; (4) the measure is implemented in some – but not all – targeted locations (such as key border crossing stations); or (5) some – but not all – targeted stakeholders are fully involved.</p>	2
<p>Pilot stage of implementation: a measure is considered to be at the pilot stage of implementation if, in addition to meeting the general attributes of partial implementation, it is available only to (or at) a very small portion of the intended stakeholder group (location) and/or is being implemented on a trial basis. When a new trade facilitation measure is under pilot stage of implementation, the old measure is often continuously used in parallel to ensure the service is provided in case of disruption of new measure. This stage of implementation also includes relevant rehearsals and preparation for the full-fledged implementation.</p>	1
<p>Not implemented: a measure has not been implemented at this stage. However, this stage may still include initiatives or efforts towards implementation of the measure. For example, under this stage, (pre)feasibility or planning of implementation can be carried out; and consultation with stakeholders on the implementation may be arranged.</p>	0
<p>Don't know: a measure is considered to be at the “don't know” stage of implementation if it cannot be determined due to insufficient information, lack of clarity, or absence of direct involvement. This classification may also apply in cases where relevant information is not publicly available, access to implementation details is limited or restricted, or the implementation of the measure falls under the jurisdiction or mandate of another agency or authority.</p>	DK
<p>Not applicable: a measure is considered to be at the “not applicable” stage of implementation if it cannot be assessed for its stage of implementation due to contextual or structural limitations. This classification applies in cases where the necessary infrastructure, administrative arrangements, or operational settings required for implementation do not exist (for example, maritime-related measures in landlocked countries).</p>	NA

Annex 5. Model and data

International trade costs are multi-faceted and affected by many factors, including geographical factors (distance, contiguity, land-lockedness), cultural factors (common official/unofficial language, colonial relationships, and formerly same country), trade policies (regional trade agreements or tariffs) and availability of hard trade infrastructure (e.g., ports). In addition, trade facilitation measures and their implementation also affect trade costs. Accordingly, building upon Arvis et al. (2016), the following trade cost model is specified:

$$\ln(\mathbf{T}_{ij}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln(gtariff_{ij}) + \beta_2 \ln(dist_{ij}) + \beta_3 (contig_{ij}) + \beta_4 (comlang_off_{ij}) + \beta_5 (comlang_ethno_{ij}) + \beta_6 (colony_{ij}) + \beta_7 (comcol_{ij}) + \beta_8 (smctry_{ij}) + \beta_9 (rta_{ij}) + \beta_{10} (landlocked_{ij}) + \beta_{11} \ln(LSCI_{ij}) + \beta_{12} \ln(TF_{ij}) + D_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

Annex table 1 summarizes variable definitions, data treatment (if any), data sources, and expected signs of trade of trade cost factors. Trade facilitation implementation is computed based on 31 general and digital trade facilitation measures in the 2025 Survey.¹⁸ The model also includes partner fixed effect (D_j) and robust and clustered standard errors by country pair to take care of cross-country heterogeneity. The model is estimated across a cross-section of 119 reporting countries using ordinary least squares.

Annex Table 1. Data source, definition, treatment, and expected sign

Variable	Definition	Data Treatment	Source	Expected Sign
τ_{ij}	Comprehensive trade costs.	Average of 2021–2023	World Bank-ESCAP Trade Cost Database	
$gtariff_{ij}$	Geometric average tariff factor (1+rate) that each reporting country (i) charges to its trade partner (j) and vice versa, which can be expressed by $gtariff_{ij} = \sqrt{tariff_{ij} \times tariff_{ji}}$	Average of 2021–2023	WITS Database	+
$dist_{ij}$	Geographical distance between countries i and j.	No treatment	CEPII	+
$contig_{ij}$	Dummy variable of contiguity equal to 1 if countries i and j share a common border and zero otherwise.	No treatment	CEPII	-
$comlang_off_{ij}$	Dummy variable of common official language equal to 1 if countries i and j use the same common official language and zero otherwise.	No treatment	CEPII	-

¹⁸ Survey data for 2023 was updated based on the information collected in 2025. This is to ensure it corresponds with data from the ESCAP-World Bank trade cost database, of which the latest data year is 2021–2023.

Variable	Definition	Data Treatment	Source	Expected Sign
<i>comlang_ethno_{ij}</i>	Dummy variable of common language equal to 1 if a language is spoken by at least 9% of the population in both countries and zero otherwise.	No treatment	CEPII	–
<i>colony_{ij}</i>	Dummy variable equal to 1 if countries i and j were ever in colonial relationship and zero otherwise.	No treatment	CEPII	–
<i>comcol_{ij}</i>	Dummy variable equal to 1 if countries i and j had a common colonizer after 1945 and zero otherwise.	No treatment	CEPII	–
<i>smctry_{ij}</i>	Dummy variable equal to 1 if countries i and j were or are the same country and zero otherwise.	No treatment	CEPII	–
<i>rta_{ij}</i>	Dummy variable equal to 1 if countries i and j are members of the same regional trade agreement and zero otherwise.	Latest definition in 2023	Egger, P.H. and Larch, M. (2008)	–
<i>landlocked_{ij}</i>	Dummy variable equal to 1 if either country i or j is landlocked and zero otherwise.	No treatment	CEPII	+
<i>LSCI_i</i>	Average scores of liner shipping connectivity index of country i.	Data gaps filled/average 2021–2023	UNCTAD	–
<i>TF_i</i>	Percentage of TF implementation of country i, modelled as: (a) overall TF (tfi_i); or (b) general TF (generaltf_i) + digital TF (pxbptf_i).	0.0001 replacement if value is zero	Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation	–

Source: United Nations ESCAP.

CEPII = Le Centre d'Études Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales, ESCAP = Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, N/A = not applicable, TF = trade facilitation, UNCTAD = United Nations Trade and Development.

Note: Where available, the average of the most recent data from 2021 onward is used in the estimation. Percentage of trade facilitation implementation of 2023 is used as trade cost data is up to 2023. Data filling for liner shipping connectivity (LSCI) is required to ensure inclusion of landlocked economies. Port countries are used as proxies for landlocked countries' portal performance. For the trade facilitation components, zeros are replaced by 0.0001 to prevent observations being omitted from the estimation.



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