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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

Fourth meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group  
on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation

Bangkok, 22 and 23 March 2018

Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

**Report on progress made by the Legal and Technical  
Working Groups on the preparation of a draft road map  
for the implementation of the substantive provisions in the  
Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border  
Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific**

**Report on progress made by the Legal and Technical  
Working Groups in their mandated tasks**

**Note by the secretariat**

*Summary*

The present document is a report on progress made by the Legal and Technical Working Groups on the preparation of a draft road map for the implementation of the substantive provisions in the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific. The Working Groups' key activities since the last meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation are highlighted. The development status of supporting documents for the draft road map, including legal and technical gap checklists and a mutual recognition mechanism, as well as the work plan for the fifth meeting of the Working Groups, to be held on 20 and 21 March 2018, are reviewed.

**I. Progress made**

1. Since the third meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation, held in March 2017, the Technical Working Group, as mandated in its terms of reference, has continued to take the lead in preparing a draft road map for the implementation of the substantive provisions in the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, including supporting documents (table 1), in cooperation with the Legal Working Group.<sup>1</sup>

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\* E/ESCAP/PTA/IISG(4)/L.1.

<sup>1</sup> The version of the draft road map updated during the fourth meeting of the Legal and Technical Working Groups is available at [www.unescap.org/events/fourth-meeting-interim-intergovernmental-steering-group-cross-border-paperless-trade](http://www.unescap.org/events/fourth-meeting-interim-intergovernmental-steering-group-cross-border-paperless-trade).

Table 1  
**Supporting documents**

<i>Supporting documents</i>	<i>Relevant articles of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific</i>
Guide on how to develop or upgrade paperless trade systems in a manner consistent with the general principles	Article 5: General principles
Template for designing a good national policy framework	Article 6: National policy framework, enabling domestic legal environment and paperless trade committee
Mutual recognition mechanism for trade-related data and documents in electronic form	Article 8: Cross-border mutual recognition of trade-related data and documents in electronic form
International standards implementation strategy/framework	Article 9: International standards for exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form
Draft terms of reference and rules of procedure of the Paperless Trade Council and the Standing Committee	Article 11: Institutional arrangements
International legal frameworks and best practices relevant to cross-border paperless trade	Article 6: National policy framework, enabling domestic legal environment and paperless trade committee and Article 10: Relation to other legal instruments enabling cross-border paperless trade
Technical gap checklist	Article 12: Action plan
Legal gap checklist	Article 12: Action plan
Template for individual action plan	Article 12: Action plan
Cross-border paperless trade reference map	Article 13: Pilot projects and sharing of lessons learned
Capacity-building strategy	Article 14: Capacity-building

2. The Technical Working Group has held five virtual meetings, one every two months, since the third meeting of the Steering Group in March 2017, using the online conference facility supported by the secretariat (table 2). The Technical Working Group, during its virtual meetings, focused on developing a background note for a mutual recognition mechanism for trade-related data and documents in electronic form, including a review of the role of trust in mutual recognition and a review of previous and existing efforts, and possible models and options for the mechanism.

Table 2

**Virtual meetings of the Technical Working Group**

<i>Virtual meetings</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Seventeenth meeting	24 May 2017
Eighteenth meeting	9 August 2017
Nineteenth meeting	11 October 2017
Twentieth meeting	13 December 2017
Twenty-first meeting	14 February 2018

3. The Legal and Technical Working Groups will hold their fifth combined meeting in Bangkok on 20 and 21 March 2018, with a view to making further progress on the preparation of the draft road map and its supporting documents. The meeting will start with a joint session of the two Working Groups, followed by breakout sessions, and end with another joint session to coordinate their work effectively.

4. During the fifth meeting, the Working Groups will aim to complete legal and technical gap checklists, so that they can be used by interested stakeholders in assessing their national readiness for cross-border paperless trade. The Working Groups will also discuss a mutual recognition mechanism based on the background note and share experiences on pilot cross-border paperless trade initiatives and projects, including challenges and lessons learned.

5. Progress made by the Working Groups during their fifth meeting will be reported to the Steering Group at its fourth meeting.

## II. Consideration by the Steering Group

6. The Steering Group may wish to consider taking the following actions:

(a) Note the progress made by the Legal and Technical Working Groups in preparing a draft road map for the implementation of the substantive provisions in the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific;

(b) Further guide the Legal and Technical Working Groups on their mandated tasks.