



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

3rd meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group
on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation

Bangkok, 23 and 24 March 2017

Item 2 of the provisional agenda*

**Report on progress made as a result of the decision taken
by the Commission on the recommendation made by the
Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-
border Paperless Trade Facilitation at its 2nd meeting**

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Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present report has been prepared by the secretariat to update the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation on actions taken and progress made as a result of the decision taken by the Commission on the recommendation made by the Steering Group at its 2nd meeting to adopt the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific.

I. Decision taken by the Commission

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, at its seventy-second session, held from 15 to 19 May 2016, adopted the text of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific as part of Commission resolution 72/4, as recommended by the Steering Group at its 2nd meeting.

2. In the resolution, the Commission invites all of its members to become parties to the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific in order to ensure its rapid entry into force, and also invites international organizations to continue to collaborate with members of the Commission to facilitate cross-border paperless trade in the region.

* E/ESCAP/PTA/IISG(3)/L.1.

3. The Executive Secretary was also requested by the Commission in its resolution to:

(a) Assist member States in the process of becoming parties to the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific;

(b) Collaborate effectively with international and regional financing institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors and international and subregional organizations in implementing the Agreement;

(c) Continue and further strengthen the secretariat's support for capacity-building activities related to trade facilitation and paperless trade, particularly in connection with the implementation of the Agreement, especially with regard to least developed and landlocked developing countries;

(d) Discharge effectively the functions of the secretariat of the Agreement;

(e) Report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

II. Progress made

4. With regard to paragraph 3 (a), the secretariat closely coordinated with the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs, resulting in the placement of a certified true copy of the Framework Agreement in the United Nations Treaty Collection.¹ The secretariat issued an official letter to all seats of Government of member States on 1 October 2016 to inform them that the Framework Agreement was open for signature at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, highlighting the potential benefits of becoming a party. The secretariat also created a web page dedicated to the Framework Agreement to facilitate access to all relevant information.²

5. Regarding paragraphs 3 (a) and (c), the secretariat organized a capacity-building workshop on the Framework Agreement in Bangkok on 24 and 25 November 2016, which was attended by participants from 17 member States, to provide information on how to become a party to the Framework Agreement and discuss its operationalization. The secretariat will also organize a workshop on cross-border paperless trade facilitation in Phnom Penh on 18 January 2017 in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce of Cambodia, which will be attended by government officials from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, to discuss progress made by the region towards cross-border paperless trade and related implementation issues, in particular in the context of the Framework Agreement.

6. On paragraph 3 (b), the secretariat has continued to work with other relevant international organizations and keep them informed of the Framework Agreement. In particular, informal consultations held with the secretariat of the World Trade Organization (WTO) confirmed that the Framework Agreement would provide a new tool for better implementation of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific. Support

¹ See https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=X-20&chapter=10&clang=_en.

² www.unescap.org/resources/framework-agreement-facilitation-cross-border-paperless-trade-asia-and-pacific.

for the Framework Agreement has also been expressed by the Eurasian Economic Union, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Pan Asian e-Commerce Alliance.³

III. Consideration by the Steering Group

7. The Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation may consider taking the following actions:

(a) Note the progress made since its 2nd meeting, and encourage participating representatives to proactively support their Governments in becoming parties to the Framework Agreement as soon as possible and discuss appropriate ways to do so;

(b) Note with appreciation the trust fund established by the Republic of Korea in 2013 to support trade facilitation, including with respect to the implementation of Commission resolution 68/3 and the work of the Steering Group under Commission resolution 70/6, as well as two projects on the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade funded by the Russian Federation; and call upon other members to also consider contributing financially or in kind to the implementation of the Framework Agreement.

³ See www.unescap.org/resources/latest-news-framework-agreement.