

REFORMING LOGISTICS SERVICES FOR EFFECTIVE TRADE FACILITATION



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Reforming logistics services for effective trade facilitation

About the paper

Difficult customs procedures, barriers to investment, and labour regulations limiting movement and hiring of personnel are the most stringent obstacles for logistics services providers in developing countries.

This study finds that policymakers need to respond to traders' concerns by promoting coordination between key stakeholders and supporting public-private dialogue. The report offers practical guidance for policymakers and logistics services providers to drive regulatory reforms in the sector, a stepping-stone towards connecting small businesses to international markets.

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Foreword

For businesses, especially micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), to thrive, a transparent, predictable and facilitative regulatory environment is critical in ensuring the free circulation of goods and services. A domestic business environment grounded in competitiveness and transparency enables traders to reduce costs and improve performance in national and international markets.

Competitive and efficient logistics services are directly associated with larger trade volumes and economic growth. Especially in developing countries, high-quality logistics facilities are crucial to connect MSMEs to regional and international supply chains and consumers worldwide at a faster pace.

Disjointed public action, state monopolies, and the resulting market failures hinder the coherent regulation of logistics services as an integrated sector, causing major trade bottlenecks. Insufficient coordination between government agencies, a lack of public-private dialogue and complex compliance requirements lead to delays and raise costs for logistics services providers.

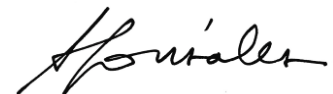
Reforming the logistics regulatory framework will make the industry competitive and productive. The private sector will only be able to provide better quality logistics services and become competitive nationally, regionally and globally once governments tackle the regulatory fragmentation of logistics supply chains and improve access to strategic infrastructure.

Harmonized regulatory interests and reduced market restrictions in the logistics services sector represent an untapped potential in the international trade facilitation agenda. By going beyond the requirements of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, this wider emphasis on revamping the logistics sector complements efforts to ease cross-border movement of goods and services and connect MSMEs to overseas markets.

Policymakers should ensure that the policy reform agenda adheres to a 'whole of supply chain' approach towards cooperation, so that barriers in one country do not hamper businesses in a partner country. This is especially crucial for landlocked developing countries that often rely on their neighbours for transit of goods. Recent trade deals are already forging the trail in harmonizing the respective national laws that address obstacles in the logistics sector in a holistic manner.

The International Trade Centre (ITC) encourages policymakers in developing countries and least developed countries to improve their national trade competitiveness by promoting positive policy reforms in the logistics and transport sectors. In a competitive market, synergies between public and private actors and stronger trade and investment support institutions can make a real difference.

ITC's four-step methodology for coherent regulatory reform and public-private dialogue provides government authorities with practical tools to do just this. It allows them to map regulatory restrictions to trade and investment in logistics services, implement reforms, and monitor them. It is our hope that this publication will be an important tool to increase regulatory coherence and promote deeper dialogues between policymakers and the business community.



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Acronyms

Unless otherwise specified, all references to dollars (\$) are to United States dollars, and all references to tons are to metric tons.

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
EU	European Union
ITC	International Trade Centre
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
USITC	United States International Trade Commission
WTO	World Trade Organization

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