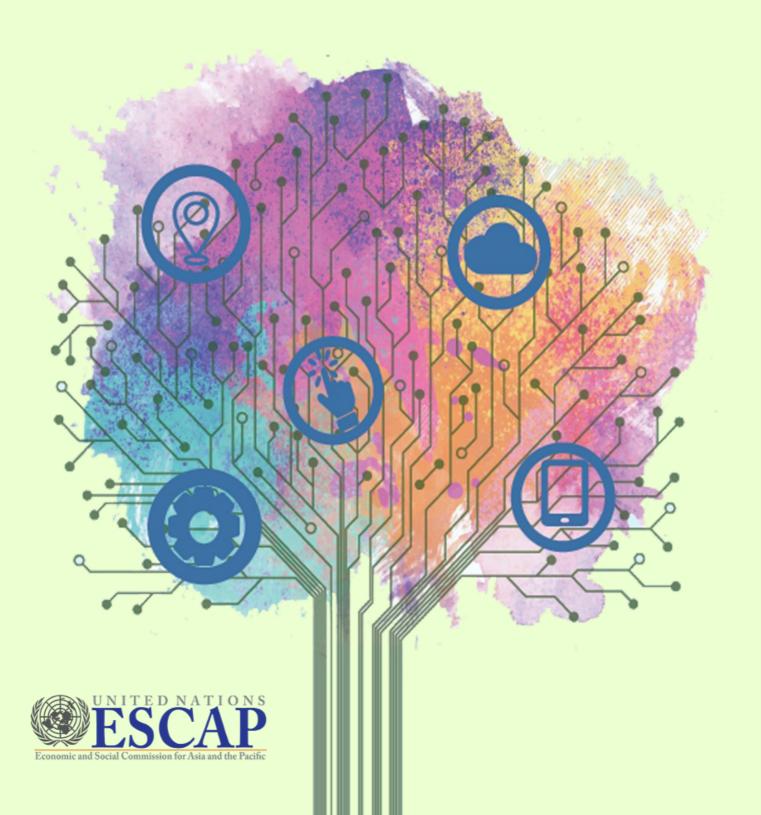
NATIONAL ACTION PLAN PROMOTING THE PHILIPPINES'S DIGITAL TRADE INTEGRATION IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CPCN Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity

CPTPP Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

FDI Foreign Direct Investment

FINL Foreign Investment Negative List

FTAs Free Trade Agreements
GDP Gross Domestic Product

GPA Agreement on Government Procurement

IFC International Finance Corporation

IPOPHL Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines

IPR Intellectual Property Right

IRR Implementing Rules and Regulations

ISPs Internet Service Providers
JSI Joint Statement Initiative
LLU local loop unbundling

NRI Networked Readiness Index NSW National Single Window

NTC National Telecommunications Commission
PIDS Philippine Institute for Development Studies

RA Republic Act

RDTII Regional Digital Trade Integration Index

RIA Regulatory Impact Assessment

SEC Securities and Exchange Commission

WTO World Trade Organization

Introduction

The Asia-Pacific region is already the fastest growing e-commerce marketplace. The region covers 43% of the global share of the e-commerce market with a value of \$1 trillion in e-commerce transactions. In this context, those countries in the region which will succeed in implementing a conducive environment that can leverage on digital trade are set to benefit the most from the value created by the digital economy. The Philippines is one of these countries.

The Philippines has undergone an economic transformation in the last five years, growing at around 7% per annum. The country is among the fastest-growing markets for digital trade due to its large population that is well-equipped in digital technologies. The Philippines was the top internet user in the world in 2018 (Hoosuite, 2019). With a population of about 108 million and 65% of the population in the country being active internet users, the Philippines has the potential to harness the opportunities created by digital trade to maintain its high growth momentum (Hinrich Foundation, 2019).

In 2018, the economic value of digital trade-enabled benefits to the Philippines' economy was estimated to be worth $\rat{P}160$ billion (US\$3.2 billion), which is equivalent to 1.8% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and this is expected to grow by almost 12-fold to reach $\rat{P}1.9$ trillion (US\$37 billion) by 2030 under right policy environment (*Ibid*).

The Philippines is a net exporter of digitally-deliverable services. The main sector driving the Philippine performance in the export of digitally-deliverable services is the "other services," which includes the technical, trade-related, and other business services (Serafica, 2019). Digital exports are the country's sixth-largest export sector and account for 5.4% of its total export value. The export value of virtual goods and services enabled by the digital economy, such as e-commerce, amounts to ₱187 billion (US\$3.7 billion) in 2018 and it is expected to grow 218% to reach ₱594 billion (US\$11.8 billion) by 2030 (Hinrich Foundation, 2019).

Albert (2020) found that Filipinos earned, on average, a monthly income of about US\$90.00 from online selling. The most common products being sold online are clothing, cosmetics, and food. However, digital export revenues from e-commerce have been significantly low due to the country's inadequate ICT infrastructure – in 2016, the country had the lowest reported internet speeds in the Asia Pacific (Hinrich Foundation, 2019).

The Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 acknowledges the role of digital trade and e-commerce as part of developing high-value added, competitive, and sustainable sectors. While digital trade has already been mainstreamed in the national aconda with the formulation of the

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