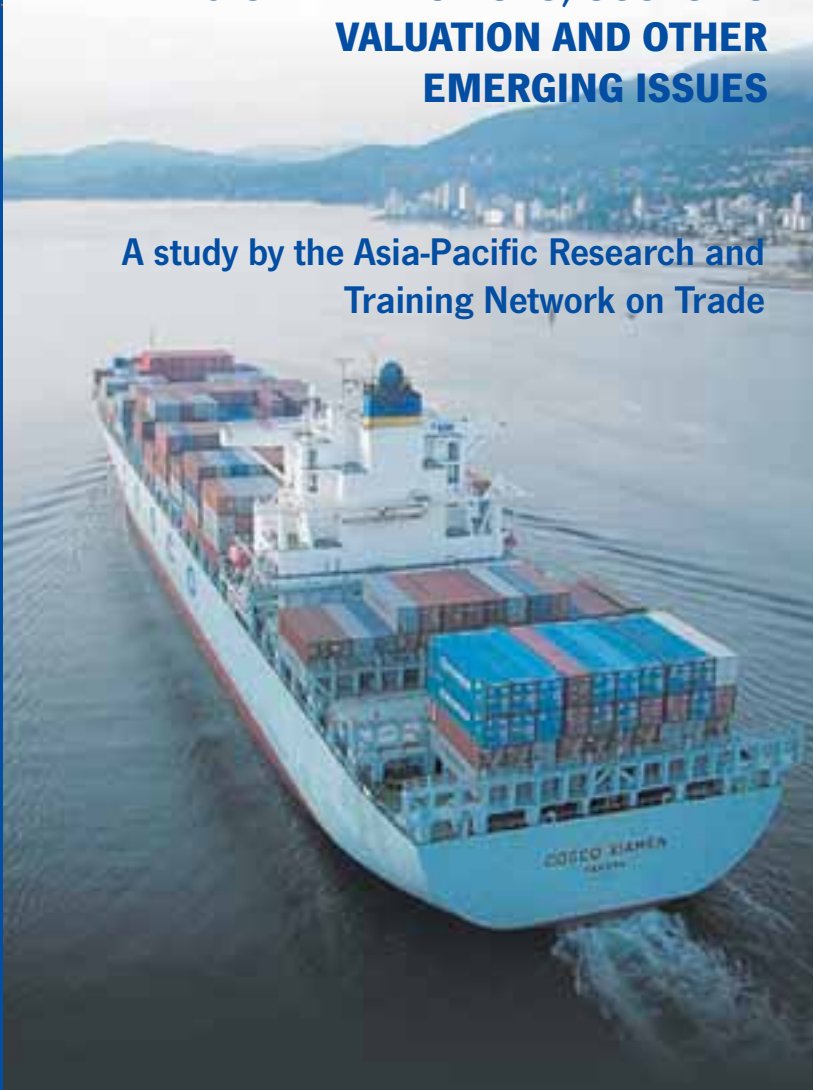




TRADE FACILITATION BEYOND THE MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS: REGIONAL PRACTICES, CUSTOMS VALUATION AND OTHER EMERGING ISSUES

**A study by the Asia-Pacific Research and
Training Network on Trade**



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ARTNeT aims at increasing the amount of policy-oriented trade research in the region by harnessing the research capacity already available and developing additional capacity through regional team research projects, enhanced research dissemination mechanisms, increased interactions between trade policymakers and researchers, and specific capacity-building activities catering to researchers and research institutions from least developed countries. A key feature of the network's operation is that its research programme is discussed and approved on an annual basis during a Consultative Meeting of Policymakers and Research Institutions. For more information, please contact the ARTNeT Secretariat or visit www.artnetontrade.org.

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The views presented in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the authors' organizations, ARTNeT members, partners and the Secretariat of the United Nations. This study was conducted as part of an ESCAP/UNDP Joint ARTNeT research project on Trade Facilitation and Regional Integration. It was carried out with the aid of a grant from the UNDP Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Initiative (APTII), Regional Centre in Colombo. The technical support of ESCAP is gratefully acknowledged. Any remaining errors are the responsibility of the authors.

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Preface

This publication brings together the main research outputs produced by the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT), and its members and partners, between April 2006 and January 2007. ARTNeT is an open network of national-level research institutions in the region launched by ESCAP and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada in October 2004, and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Trade Organization (WTO) as core partners. The ESCAP Trade and Investment Division (TID) serves as the Secretariat of the network.

This book includes 10 chapters. The first chapter introduces the concept of trade facilitation beyond the ongoing multilateral trade negotiations, and it serves both as an introduction and a synthesis of the studies presented in the remaining chapters. Chapters II and III provide an analysis of regional trade facilitation initiatives and the link between trade facilitation and preferential trade agreements (PTAs). Chapter IV is dedicated to rules of origin in PTAs, whose complexity and lack of harmonization across a growing number of overlapping agreements in the Asia-Pacific region is seen as an increasingly significant impediment to trade.

Chapters V and VI focus on customs valuation in developing countries, an issue that remains of key concern among importers and exporters but which is not part of the ongoing WTO negotiations on trade facilitation. These chapters are complemented by chapter VII, which provides a comparative analysis of the broader trade facilitation needs of Fiji and a selection of Asian developing countries, building on earlier work of the network.

Chapters VIII and IX provide a broader perspective of trade facilitation. The first of these chapters examines the linkages between trade facilitation and trade logistics services liberalization, as an initial effort to understand the interplay and level of priority that should be accorded to border trade facilitation measures, as opposed to measures that would facilitate the development of trade facilitation-related infrastructure and services. Chapter IX looks at trade facilitation in a trade (transaction) cost framework, and evaluates the impact of transport costs and underdeveloped infrastructure on bilateral trade flows of 10 Asian developing countries. In conclusion, chapter X provides recommendations on arriving at a meaningful multilateral agreement on trade facilitation.

The studies presented here were undertaken as a follow-up to ARTNeT's earlier work on the need, priorities and costs of trade facilitation measures under consideration by the WTO Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation, as mandated by the ARTNeT Consultative Meeting of Policy Makers and Research Institutions held on 6 and 7 October 2005 in

Macao, China.¹ Implementation of the trade facilitation component of the research programme approved during that meeting was made possible by the close collaboration between the Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Initiative of the UNDP Regional Centre in Colombo, which provided financial and administrative support, and TID, ESCAP which coordinated and guided the overall research effort. The generous support of IDRC, Canada, without which ARTNeT would not exist, is also gratefully acknowledged.

The research and preparation of this publication was coordinated by Mr. Yann Duval, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Policy Section, TID, ESCAP under the general guidance of Mr. Xuan Zengpei, Director, TID and Ms. Tiziana Bonapace, Chief, Trade Policy Section, TID, in collaboration with Mr. Manuel Montes and Mr. Swarnim Wagle, both formerly with the UNDP Regional Centre in Colombo. Ms. Mia Mikic, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Policy Section, TID, assisted in the preparation of Chapter IV. The authors of the individual chapters received valuable guidance and comments from Florian Alburo, Professor of Economics at the University of the Philippines and ARTNeT Advisor on Trade Facilitation. The authors also benefited from comments and suggestions by participants in the UNDP/ESCAP ARTNeT Consultative Meeting on Trade Facilitation and Regional Integration,² held on 17 and 18 August 2006 in Bangkok, Thailand, during which preliminary drafts of the studies were presented to policy makers and negotiators.

¹ The research programme endorsed at the meeting is available at <http://www.unescap.org/tid/artnet/res/research0506.pdf>.

² Summary of the meeting and other meeting documents are available at <http://www.unescap.org/tid/artnet/mtg/tfri.asp>.

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