



STUDIES IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT 60

AGRICULTURAL TRADE: PLANTING THE SEEDS OF REGIONAL LIBERALIZATION IN ASIA

A STUDY BY THE ASIA-PACIFIC RESEARCH
AND TRAINING NETWORK ON TRADE



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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Preface

***Planting trees today will provide our children with shade.
Liberalizing trade will give them jobs and prosperity.
(anonymous)***

This publication brings together papers prepared for the “Regional Agricultural Trade Liberalization” project, which was implemented by the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT) researchers between May 2005 and December 2006. The project explored the potential for agricultural trade opportunities at the regional level through preferential trade agreements (PTAs), at a time when the number of PTAs globally and in the ESCAP region has been increasing sharply. The objectives of the study were: (a) to map and analyse existing trade agreements in the region and their product coverage, particularly agricultural products, as well as associated tariff and non-tariff barriers; and (b) to derive implications and recommendations/guidelines for trade policy and negotiations. Research in this area was endorsed by the participants at the First ARTNeT Consultative Meeting of Policymakers and Research Institutions on 29 October 2004.

It was at that meeting that ARTNeT was launched as an initiative of ESCAP and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada in cooperation with 10 national-level research institutions in the region. ARTNeT operates as an open network of national-level research institutions, supported by ESCAP and other core ARTNeT partners, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The ESCAP Trade and Investment Division serves as the secretariat of the network and, as such, facilitates the conceptualization, implementation and delivery of ARTNeT activities in collaboration with members, partners and government officials involved in trade analysis and policy-making through their respective focal points. The research network now comprises 20 member institutions in 15 economies of the Asian and Pacific region.

This book includes nine chapters, most of which are based on empirical research. They contain both quantitative and qualitative analyses of liberalization efforts in the area of agricultural trade, which took place in parallel to negotiations on agricultural trade liberalization in the context of the Doha Development Agenda. The PTAs analysed in the book are from three subregions: South Asia, East Asia and South-East Asia. Therefore, this volume fills the void that currently exists in quantitative analysis of preferential agricultural trade liberalization in the Asian economies.

Furthermore, the publication adds value to the already rich, but separate, body of literature on preferential trade and trade in agricultural products. It provides an up-to-date, reliable account of preferential trade in Asia with respect to agriculture – one of the most important sectors for the majority of peoples in the developing countries of the region. By

using quantitative analysis, whenever data availability permitted, to assess the remaining protection in PTAs across the region or the extent of trade created, this study provides a solid basis for further work on tracking and assessing the performance of PTAs. The treatment of agriculture in those PTAs is also compared to its treatment under the multilateral trading system and/or national trade liberalization efforts. Non-tariff barriers still pose a significant obstacle, and an illustration of their adverse impact is given through case studies of two least developed countries (LDCs), Bangladesh and Cambodia.

An analysis of trade liberalization effects is not considered complete without also using a computable general equilibrium (CGE) model for quantitative analysis of impacts. Two chapters are related to this analytical approach. One chapter presents the results of quantification of potential gains from various bilateral and regional trade agreements. Another chapter critically assesses the methodological problems that are associated with the CGE models of the genre used for the quantifications described above.

The book also contains a review of agricultural reform in the largest Asian economy, China, with implications for its positioning in multilateral and preferential trade liberalization. A small but important step into the international political economy of agricultural protection is made in a chapter that considers possibilities for strategic intervention in agriculture trade for developing countries. Finally, policy recommendations are offered for negotiators of preferential trade arrangements as well as some guidance for further research.

No research ever published is perfect. Limited resources, data availability and expertise in some of the analytical areas resulted in some gaps in this study. The most obvious is the lack of welfare analysis at the community level as well as the gender-differentiated impact of trade liberalization implemented through the PTAs so far. These research themes remain high on a priority list for ARTNeT in a near future for two reasons: (a) to provide comprehensive assessments of trade liberalization processes: and (b) to take research capacity-building to a higher dimension, as this research requires not only primary data collection but also new research methods, some of which are being used for the first time, even in the most developed research environments.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ABB	Australian Barley Board
ACFTA	ASEAN-China Free Trade Area
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific group
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFAS	ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
AISP	ASEAN Integration System of Preferences
AMS	aggregate measure of support
ANZCERTA	Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement
ANZSCEP	Singapore-New Zealand on a closer Economic Partnership Agreement
AoA	Agreement on Agriculture
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APTA	Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement
APTAD	Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Agreements Database
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATI	agricultural tradeability index
BDCs	beneficiary developing countries
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation
BTA	bilateral trade agreement
CACM	Central American Common Market
CAFTA	China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement
CDE	constant difference elasticity
CEPA	China-Hong Kong, China Closer Economic Partnership Agreement
CEPT	common effective preferential tariff
CES	constant elasticity of substitution
CGE	computable general equilibrium
CMLV	Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam
COMTRADE	UN Commodity Trade Statistics Database
CU	customs union
CWB	Canadian Wheat Board
DDA	Doha Development Agenda
DRS	domestic rate of substitution
DRT	domestic rate of transformation in production
EAEC	Eurasian Economic Community
EBA	Everything But Arms
ECOTA	Economic Cooperation Organization Trade Agreement
EFTA	European Free Trade Association

EHP	Early Harvest Programme
EPC	effective protection coefficient
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERP	effective rate of protection
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EU	European Union
FA	framework agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FRT	foreign rate of transformation
FTA	free trade agreement or free trade area
FTAs	free trade areas
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	gross domestic product
GEL	general exceptions list
GSP	Generalized System of Preferences
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
HMT	harbor maintenance tax
HS	highly sensitive
HS	harmonized system
HTSUS	Harmonized Tariff Schedule of United States
IL	inclusion list
JSEPA	Singapore-Japan for a New Age Economic Partnership Agreement
KIEP	Korea Institute for International Economic Policy
KIET	Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade
KITA	Korea International Trade Association

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