Information Technology and Trade Facilitation
An Introduction to the ARTNeT Study 2008/9

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ARTNeT: An open network of national-level research institutions interested in trade and investment policy and facilitation issues

Objective: to build national/regional trade research capacity... to provide trade policy makers with the “homegrown” quality analysis they need

Current geographic coverage: East, South, Southeast Asia and the Pacific
Overview of ARTNeT Activities

Policy makers in the UNESCAP region able to make (more) informed decisions on trade issues

Increased quantity, quality, relevance and dissemination of trade-related research for policy makers

ARTNET Research Programme
- Team-based research
- Trade issues of interest to the region
- Short-term and long-term research

Research Dissemination
- Consultative meetings of Researchers and Policy makers
- ARTNET website
- Policy Briefs, WPs

Research Capacity Building
- Visiting fellowships for LDC researchers
- Technical Workshop on Trade Research for LDC
- Technical Advisors
ARTNeT in 2009

• 5 years old network
• 20 member research institutions in 15 countries
• 4 core partners (IDRC, WTO, UNCTAD and UNDP)
• Working Papers & Policy Brief series (70+)
  – many of which published in UN publications and used in training programmes for government officials and negotiators (e.g., in WTO Regional Trade Policy Course)
• ARTNeT website (online database of 1800+ trade and investment related publications) – www.artnettontrade.org
• ARTNeT-linked projects, including ARTNeT GMS
ARTNet Phase II (On-going, 2008-2010)
Research Programme Overview

• Three main regional research themes:
  – Trade, investment and domestic policy coherence for inclusive growth
  – Trade facilitation and trade in related services
    • 2008/9: Development impact of IT-related TF measures
  – Regional integration
    • 2008/9: Regional integration and production networks

• Developed in consultation with members and government focal points
  – Updated during annual Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee meeting
ICT and Trade Facilitation

Government Success in ICT Promotion*  
- Successful
- Unsuccessful

* Global Competitiveness Report (perception survey data), 2008
ICT and Trade Facilitation

• Most recent trade facilitation related recommendations and agreements involve ICT
  – Revised Kyoto Convention
    • Chap. 7 “Application of IT”
  – WTO Trade Facilitation Negotiation
    • Use of ICT for data storage and dissemination
    • Automation of customs and trade procedures
  – Recent UN/CEFACT recommendations
• Many customs modernization programs rely on ICT to meet their goals
ICT and Trade Facilitation

Many potential and real benefits, e.g.

- Speed up the movement of good
- Reduce regulatory compliance costs
- Facilitate risk management and improve security
- Increase transparency
- Help safeguard integrity (WCO Arusha Declaration, principle 4)
But, some potential and real issues

- Cost of ICT for trade facilitation can be significant

Source: ESCAP, 2006. Experts’ Qualitative Assessment of the Relative Cost, Benefits and Time Needed for Implementing Selected Trade Facilitation Measures
But, some potential and real issues

• Is adoption of IT for trade facilitation and communication with government agencies benefiting all traders, particularly small and medium sized enterprises?
  – limited ICT literacy of SME owners/employees
  – Cost of adoption
  – Lack of widely available/reliable or easily accessible infrastructure for IT use
  – Rules not favorable to small / infrequent traders

ARTNeT Study on the Development impact of IT-based Trade Facilitation Measures endorsed by ARTNeT Steering Committee in December 2007
ARTNet Study on the Development impact of IT-based Trade Facilitation Measures

• Main Purpose: gain insights on how IT-based trade facilitation measures impact SMEs
  – Focus on customs clearance process
  – Identify needs and gaps in computerization and automation, particularly for SMEs

• Main Method: survey/interviews of SMEs and customs house agents (exploratory)
ARTNeT Study on the Development impact of IT-based Trade Facilitation Measures

- Regional research team
  - PHILIPPINES: Florian Alburo, CATIF (Team leader) and Loreli de Dios.
  - BANGLADESH: Uttam Deb and Syed Saifuddin Hossain, CPD
  - KOREA (Rep.of): Junsok Yang, CUK
  - INDIA: Sachin Chaturvedi, RIS
  - SRI LANKA: Janaka Wijayasiri and Suwendran Jayaratne, IPS
THANK YOU

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