

*Pilot Project on Electronic Exchange and Mutual Recognition
of Product Conformity Certificates / Test Reports
in the CAREC Region
Kick off meeting, Incheon, Republic of Korea, 1–2 June 2026 ·*



ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific

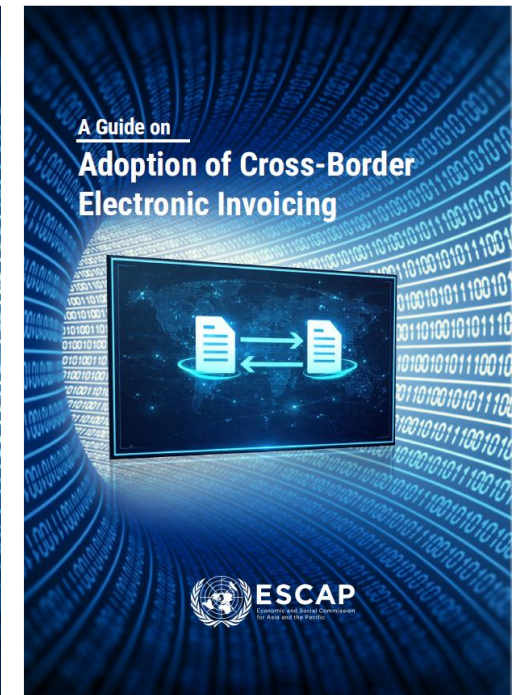
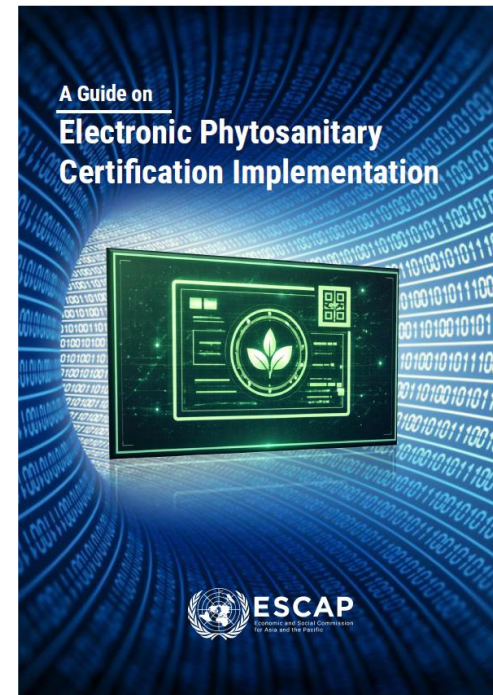
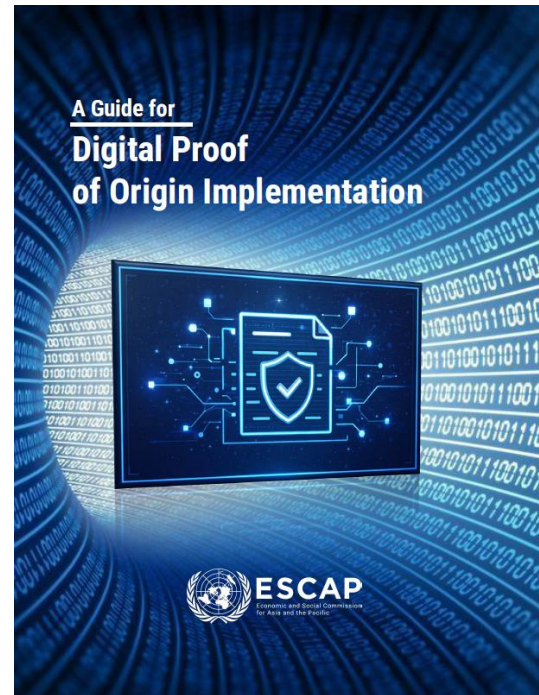


Lessons from preparing guides on advancing the digital transformation of origin certification and phytosanitary certification under CPTA

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Agenda

- Introduction to the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA)
- The Guides
 - Background and processes of preparation;
 - Summaries of the Guides; and
 - lessons learnt



Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA)

An enabling UN Treaty to accelerate trade digitalization

- Open to all **ESCAP members** to become parties

Objective:

- To facilitate cross-border paperless trade by providing a dedicated intergovernmental framework to develop legal and technical solutions
- Complementary to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) as well as (sub)regional efforts (e.g., ASEAN SW)

A young UN treaty: it **entered into force in 2021**

- But it has been growing fast: from 5 parties at the first meeting in 2022 to 15 parties in 2026

Parties to CPTA (by May 2026)

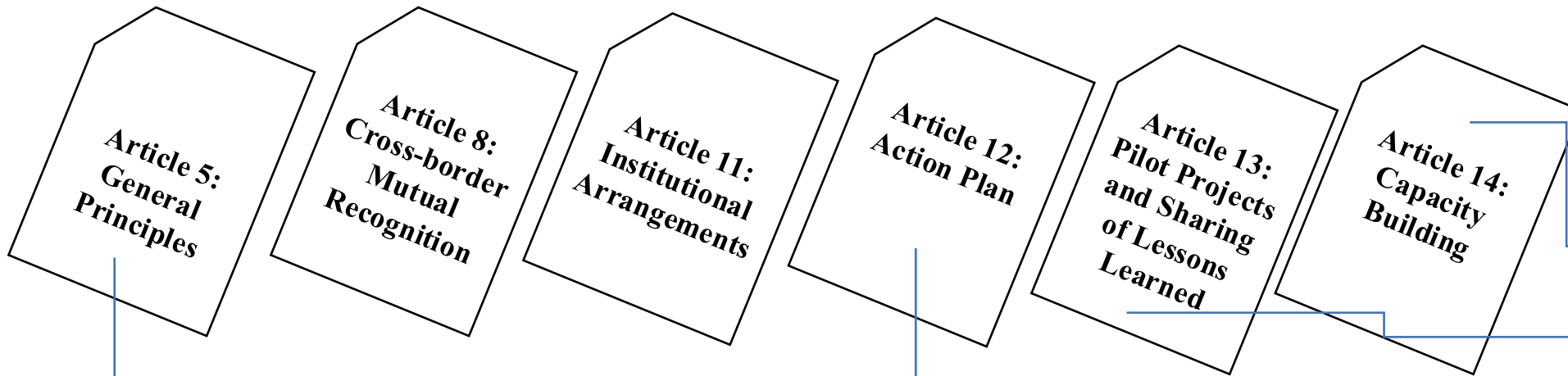
Developing Countries	Least Developed Countries (LDC)	Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)
China	Bangladesh	Azerbaijan
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Timor-Leste (also Small Island Developing state or SID)	Kyrgyzstan
Philippines	Tuvalu (also SID)	Mongolia
Republic of Korea		Tajikistan
Russian Federation		Turkmenistan
Thailand		Uzbekistan

Key Provisions of CPTA

Article 1: Objective

The objective of the present Framework Agreement is **to promote cross-border paperless trade** by enabling the exchange and mutual recognition of trade-related data and documents in electronic form and facilitating interoperability among national and subregional single windows and/or other paperless trade systems, for the purpose of **making international trade transactions more efficient and transparent while improving regulatory compliance.**

- No requirement to exchange data and documents with (all) parties



- Fully consistent with UNCITRAL model laws and the G20 trade digitalization principles

- Collective action plan + each party sets its own Individual action plan and timeline for implementation once onboard
- No legal or regulatory changes required

- Strong emphasis on capacity building and solutions testing

The Guides: Background and Preparation

- The CPTA Standing Committee prioritized key documents, including certificate of origin, phytosanitary certificates, and invoicing
- Three Guides are prepared to support Parties in advancing digital solutions of these documents
- The Guides have been developed under the guidance of the Standing Committee and with the support of the Working Group on Implementation of Article 8.
- These Guides are non-binding in nature and intended as reference living documents

Timeline of preparing the Guides

9 May 2025	First draft of the Guides circulated to the CPTA Working Group on Article 8 implementation and CPTA focal points for comments
20 May 2025	Revised version shared with the CPTA Working Group, focal points, and nominated participants of the fourth Standing Committee session
9–11 June 2025	Draft Guides reviewed and discussed during the fourth session of the Standing Committee
1 September – 3 November 2025	Public reviews organized to collect broad feedback
3 November 2025	A meeting with the CPTA Working Group on Article 8 implementation and CPTA focal points on reviewing the Guides
14 November 2025	Finalized Guides circulated to the parties
11-12 December 2025	The CPTA Standing Committee adopted the Guides

Dissemination of the Guides through a webinar on 26 March 2026



UNNEXT
United Nations Next Generation e-Trade and e-Governance

ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

ADB
Asian Development Bank

ICC
International Chamber of Commerce

WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES DOUANES

Advancing Paperless Solutions on Origin Certification, Invoicing and Phytosanitary Certification

26 March 2026
01:00 p.m. to 04:10 p.m. UTC+7
07:00 a.m. to 10:10 a.m. CET
Zoom webinar
Russian-English simultaneous interpretation is available

Welcoming and Opening Remarks

- Mr. Yann Duval, ESCAP

Moderator

- Mr. Tengfei Wang, ESCAP

Closing Remarks

- Ms. Pamela Mar, Digital Standards Initiative, ICC

Participants:

- Ms. Jisoo Yi, Dankook University
- Ms. Chunxiao Xu, WCO Secretariat
- Mr. Nitas Polachai, ASEAN Secretariat
- Mr. Dan Wright, Fonterra, New Zealand
- Mr. Sung Heun (Rama) Ha, Korea Trade Network (KTNET)
- Mr. Marcus Laube, Global Exchange Network Association
- Mr. Craig Smith, New Zealand Peppol Authority
- Mr. Bill Xiao, Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), Singapore
- Ms. Luisa Scarocella, International Chamber of Commerce
- Ms. Tsendsuren Davaa, Customs General Administration of Mongolia
- Mr. Roel Croijmans, OpenPeppol's representative in Asia and the Pacific
- Mr. Craig Fedchok, North American Export Grain Association and International Grain Trade Coalition
- Ms. Lin Jing, Tianjin Customs, China
- Mr. Gianluca Nuzzo, IPPC Secretariat
- Mr. Francis Lopez, InterCommerce Network Services Inc., Philippines
- Mr. Sapphasuk Wijaiworakit, Thai Customs Department

- The webinar was attended by over 500 participants from 99 countries
- 127 participants (49 female, 78 male) passed the quiz to receive certificates

About the Guide on Origin Certification

- **Purpose**
 - To present and review the key digitalization solutions for origin certification (each solution is called a “model” in this guide)
 - To support policymakers in selecting models
- **Coverage**
 - Both preferential and non-preferential proof of origin
- **Audience**
 - Policymakers and government officers from ministry of commerce/trade, customs agencies, chambers of commerce, and other authorities involved in proof of origin management.
- **Principles: in line with and enrich global recommendations**
 - Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC)
 - WCO Guidelines on Certification of Origin

Defining the “models” related to preferential proof of origin

1. Web-Based Electronic COO issuance
 - *such as Sri Lanka, with support of ITC*
2. Data Transmission: **Bilateral**
 - *such as Electronic Origin Data Exchange System between China and Republic of Korea*
3. Data Transmission: **Multilateral**
 - *such as data exchange through ASEAN Single Window*
4. Exporter-based declaration and recognition by the importing country
 - *such as EU’s REX system based on Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP)*
5. Importer-based declaration model
 - *such as the practice in New Zealand*

Key factors for selecting the models

The following recommendations are applicable to not only the CPTA parties but also other countries worldwide

- **Identify partner countries eligible for preferential origin**
 - Using the host country Kyrgyzstan as an example, the preferential origin may be applied to the trading partners defined by the free trade agreements
 1. Agreement on Free Trade between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan
 2. Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)
 3. Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan Free Trade Agreement
 4. Free Trade Agreement Between the Kyrgyz Republic and Moldova
 5. Treaty on a Free Trade Area between members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
 6. Free Trade Agreement Between the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, of the One Part, and the Eurasian Economic Union and Its Member States, of the Other Part (VN-EAEUFTA)
 7. Free Trade Agreement Between the Eurasian Economic Union and Its Member States, of the One Part, and the Republic of Serbia, of the Other Part

Key factors for selecting the models

The following recommendations are applicable to not only the CPTA parties but also other countries worldwide

- Identify partner countries eligible for preferential origin
- **Align adoption of the models with the relevant provisions of existing free trade agreements**
 - For example, Under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP),
 - Article 3.17: A Certificate of Origin (COO) should be issued by the designated issuing authority of the exporting Party. (**meaning model 1 can be accepted**)
 - Article 3.18: An origin declaration should be accepted (**meaning models 4 and 5 can be accepted**).
 - Article 3.29: “The Parties may develop an electronic system for origin information exchange to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of this Chapter in a manner jointly determined by the relevant Parties.” (meaning models 3 and 4 can be accepted)
 - In contrast, free trade agreements contain strict provisions regarding paper-based COO.
 - In such cases, introducing paperless solutions and adopting these models may require negotiations among trading partners to revise the relevant FTA provisions
- The same trading partners may have multiple solutions when they are the parties to different free trade agreements, and each free trade agreement may have different provisions on COO

Key factors for selecting the models

The following recommendations are applicable to not only the CPTA parties but also other countries worldwide

- Identify partner countries eligible for preferential origin
- Align adoption of the models with the relevant provisions of existing free trade agreements
- **Prioritize more liberal options whenever possible**
 - For example, the WCO Guidelines (WCO, June 2018) points out that, considering the increasing volume of preferential trade and recognizing the need for the facilitation of origin-related procedures, self-certification of origin by a producer, manufacturer, exporter and/or importer shall be utilized to the maximum extent possible while recognizing the specificities of domestic business environment.
 - Furthermore, Existing studies suggest that more liberal approaches—such as export or importer self-declaration models—tend to result in higher utilization rates by traders (e.g., Crivelli and Inama, 2021; Asian Development Bank, 2024).

Key factors for selecting the models

The following recommendations are applicable to not only the CPTA parties but also other countries worldwide

- Identify partner countries eligible for preferential origin
- Align adoption of the models with the relevant provisions of existing free trade agreements
- Prioritize more liberal options whenever possible
- **Ensure long-term viability of the business solutions**
 - Data exchange models are most justifiable in scenarios involving high trade volumes, where the benefits of automation and efficiency outweigh the implementation costs.
 - The costs associated with initiating, negotiating, setting up, and maintaining such systems can be substantial and should be carefully considered during the planning phase.

Key factors for selecting the models

The following recommendations are applicable to not only the CPTA parties but also other countries worldwide

- Identify partner countries eligible for preferential origin
- Align adoption of the models with the relevant provisions of existing free trade agreements
- Prioritize more liberal options whenever possible
- Ensure long-term viability of the business solutions
- **Assess the real needs of the traders**
 - If a paperless solution is overly complex, burdensome, or unintuitive, traders may revert to traditional paper-based processes or even choose not to utilize the benefits offered under trade agreements, particularly if the perceived costs and hassles outweigh the advantages.
 - Development of a new paperless solution should be co-designed in close collaboration with traders.

Key factors for selecting the models

The following recommendations are applicable to not only the CPTA parties but also other countries worldwide

- Identify partner countries eligible for preferential origin
- Align adoption of the models with the relevant provisions of existing free trade agreements
- Prioritize more liberal options whenever possible
- Ensure long-term viability of the business solutions
- Assess the real needs of the traders
- **Take advantage of the existing guides and cost-effective solutions**
 - Such as the WCO guides and Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)

A Guide on phytosanitary certification

- **Purpose**
 - To provide examples of possible solutions to support the digital transformation of phytosanitary certificates
 - To support policymakers in selecting models aligned with their institutional, regulatory, and technical capacities.
- **Audience**
 - Policymakers and government officers from ministries of agriculture, customs agencies, chambers of commerce, the private sector and other authorities involved in phytosanitary certification.
- **Principles: in line with and enrich global recommendations**
 - International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM12)
 - WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Articles 7.1 Pre-arrival processing, Article 7.9 Perishable goods Article 10.1 Formalities and documentation requirements

ePhyto Implementation Models – Comparison Overview and Policy Suggestions

Model	Examples	Best For	Pros	Cons	Requirements	Complexity
National System w/ Customs	USA, ROK	Strong IT capacity and sufficient resources, high trade volumes	Full control, customizable, can include other certs	High cost, ongoing maintenance, extra IT for ePhyto Hub, fit for specific national requirements	Full IT team, servers, security	● High
GeNS	Sri Lanka, Samoa	Limited resources, low trade volumes	Low cost, fast setup (as little as 6-12 months), can include other certs	Less flexible, externally hosted, IT needed to connect systems	Browser, internet, basic hardware	● Low
Direct NPPO-to-NPPO	Chile, Argentina	Bilateral trade	Direct, partner-specific, includes other certs	Not scalable, multiple formats, extra IT for more countries	Protocols, trust	● Moderate
Single Window w/ "Channel"	EU Member States, CEFTA member states	Regional integration with e-systems	Shared costs, standard format, includes other certs	Complex setup, regional IT upgrades for external exchanges	APIs, secure systems, diplomatic agreements	● High
Single Window w/o "Channel"	ASEAN	Same as above	Same as above	National-level IT upgrades for external exchanges	APIs, secure systems, diplomatic agreements	● High
Collaborative Governance	Netherlands	Private-sector ready, high trade volumes	Shared cost, user-driven, includes other certs	Governance complexity, coordination challenges	Shared platforms, privacy tools	● Medium-High

Key lessons learnt

- Multiple paperless solution options are available for each document (COO and phytosanitary certificates).
- The easier the solution, the more likely it is to be accepted (e.g. PDF-based approaches).
- The costs of introducing new solutions should not be underestimated, such as onboarding, learning, and legal/regulatory uncertainty.
- Financial viability of each solution should be fully assessed beyond the pilot stage to ensure sustainable implementation.