



ASEAN Cross-border Paperless Trade

UNCITRAL Colloquium on Digital Payments and Paperless Trade
21 January 2026
ASEAN Secretariat

ASEAN

Non-ASEAN

Government

ASEAN Single Window (ASW)
(implemented)

ASEAN + 1 Single Window Cooperation
(on-going)

Private Sector

DEFA
ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement
(on-going)

*Regional Agreements to enable
ASEAN Cross-Border Paperless Trade*

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ASEAN Single Window (ASW)
(implemented)

ASW (ASEAN Single Window)

- A network of National Single Window of ASEAN Member States (**G2G**) sharing a common technical design.
- Facilitates the exchange of **Trade Administration Documents** using a common data format.
- Operates under the **ASW Agreement and its related protocols**.

ASW Agreement and its related Protocols

2005

ASW Agreement

Agreement to Establish and Implement the ASEAN Single Window

The objective of this agreement is **to initiate the objectives and cooperation** on ASEAN Single Window.

2006

ASW Protocol

Protocol to Establish and Implement the ASEAN Single Window

The objective of this protocol is **to establish sectoral bodies** to govern and implement this initiative.

2015

ASW PLF

Protocol on the Legal Framework to Implement the ASEAN Single Window

The objective of the legal framework is to **identify the mutual legal requirement** to facilitate the exchange of electronic documents within the ASW environment.

2017

Domestic Ratification

The ratification by all AMS was completed on 1 August 2017.

ASW Agreement and its related Protocols

Pro:

- **Regional agreements** ensure sustained commitment and political will.
- **Regional agreements** establish regional mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee, to ensure accountability for implementation and operation.
- **Regional agreements** identify the necessary legal basis for domestic implementation, ensuring legal equivalence across the region.

Cons:

- **Long duration** - Initiation, Negotiation and Ratification (12 years)
- **Multiple Instruments to accommodate different needs**



Room for improvement

- Lesson learned from ASW leads to the development of a **Generic Legal Template** for Single Window Cooperation with Dialogue Partners.

Generic Legal Template for ASEAN+1 SW Cooperation

Generic Legal Template
for Single Window Cooperation with Dialogue Partners

Recommended Legal Provisions

- Institution
- Operational Framework
- Legal Framework

General Provisions <ul style="list-style-type: none">Article 1: General DefinitionsArticle 2: Relationship <u>to</u> Other AgreementsArticle 3: Objectives
Objective 1 – Institution <ul style="list-style-type: none">Article 4: Key Areas of CooperationArticle 5: Cooperation Mechanism
Objective 2 – Operational Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">Article 6: Establishment and Operational FrameworkArticle 7: StandardArticle 8: Service Level Agreement
Objective 3 – Legal Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">Article 9: Transmission and Exchange of Data and InformationArticle 10: Legal Recognition of electronic trade administration documents *Article 11: Data Integrity *Article 12: Data Security *Article 13: Confidentiality *Article 14: Data Retention Requirements *Article 15: Protection of Intellectual Property Right and Data Ownership
General provisions <ul style="list-style-type: none">Article 16: ExclusionArticle 17: Dispute Settlement *Article 18: Entry into ForceArticle 19: Withdrawal and Termination

* Minimum requirement

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ASW Agreement and its protocols were implemented

Generic Legal Template will be used as a baseline for negotiation

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- **DEFA** will be added to complete the ecosystem of ASEAN cross-border paperless trade by integrating G2G, B2G and B2B.

ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA)



Digital trade

Aims to facilitate cross-border trade by creating a seamless trade experience via electronic documents and interoperable processes.



Cross-border e-commerce

Aims to create a fairer and more efficient environment for cross-border e-commerce, including digital goods and services.



Payments

Aims to provide seamless solutions for cross-border payments and electronic invoicing systems by fostering technical interoperability,

**9 core provisions
are without
prejudice to the
DEFA negotiations**



Digital ID and authentication

Aims to develop mutual recognizable and interoperable digital identity and electronic authentication framework within the region.



Online safety and cybersecurity

Aims to improve cooperation in cybersecurity and create an open and secure online environment.



Cross-border data flows and data protections

Aims to facilitate cross-border data flow and establish frameworks to protect data privacy by prohibiting data localization restrictions, aligning on types of data and procedures for cross-border data transfer to enable digital trade and transactions, protecting personal information, opening government data, and other methods.



Competition policy

Aims to improve cooperation on competition policy in digital including fair and open digital markets to reduce barriers for inclusive growth.



Talent mobility and cooperation

Aims to facilitate talent mobility between countries via creating flexible schemes that fit the purpose for business visits within the region.



Cooperation on emerging topics

Aims to establish mechanisms for regulatory cooperation, so that relevant standards and regulations can keep up with technological innovations in emerging topics such as AI.

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*After DEFA **domestic ratification**, ASEAN Member States will have a legal basis, such as MELTR, to facilitate cross-border paperless trade.*

Key Findings



- **Regional mechanisms** help secure political will and ensure alignment of domestic laws and regulations.
- **Alignment with internationally recognized frameworks** (such as WTO JSI and CPTA), model laws (such as UNCITRAL), and standards (such as ICC DSI) enables interoperability across the region.
- **Phased implementation** allows ready Member States to proceed, while others can continue preparing based on agreed technical designs and standards.



Thank you

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