



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

2015/SOM3/DIA2/012
Session 3

Information Sharing and Transparency

Submitted by: UNESCAP



APEC
PHILIPPINES
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**Dialogue on Regional Trade Agreements and Free
Trade Agreements
Cebu, Philippines
2 September 2015**

Information Sharing and Transparency

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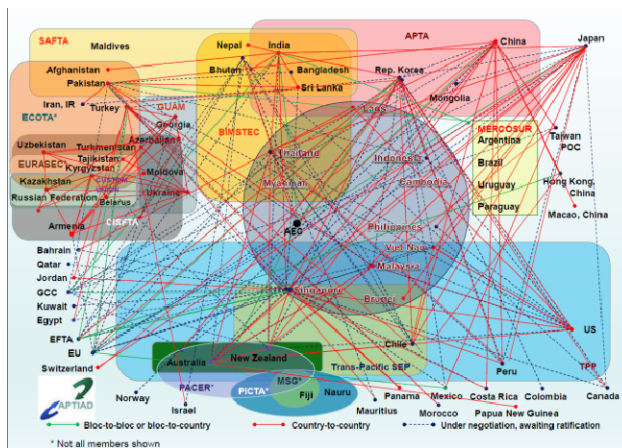
Introduction

- Globally, there are 262 “physical” trade agreements in force, of which 155 involve Asia-Pacific economies. Of the 155 preferential trade agreements (PTAs) in force, 80 are between the economies in Asia and the Pacific.
- The search for further bilateral deals contributes to multiple overlapping agreements associated with “noodle bowl” phenomenon.

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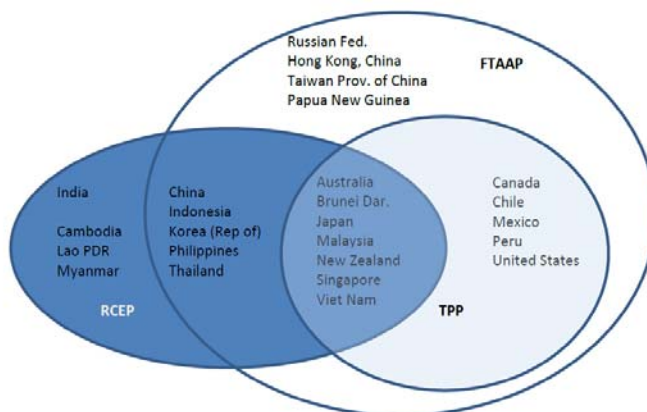
Overlapping agreements



Source: Based on data from the Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Agreements Database (APTIAD)

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Will mega-blocks reduce or add to the noodle bowl?



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Source: Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2014 (APTIR)

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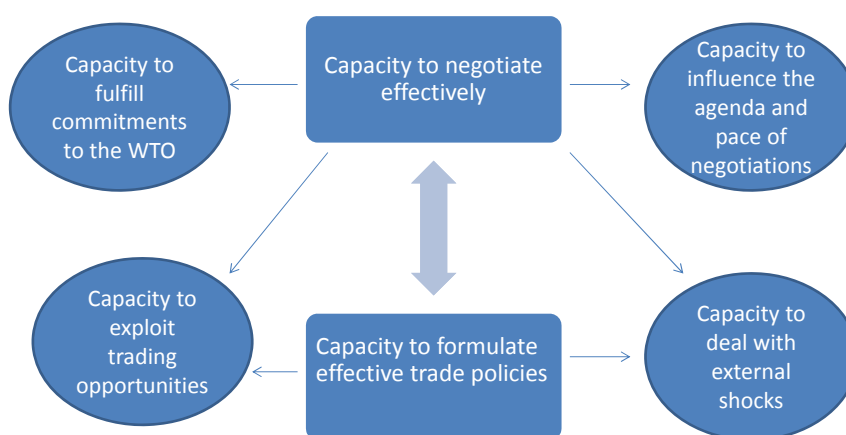
Some of the current issues related to regionalism in Asia-Pacific

1. Too many overlapping bilateral PTAs leading to “noodle bowl” but at the same time fragmentation of the region
2. Weak capacity to utilize research in policymaking, weak negotiation and implementing capacity
3. Under-utilization due to:
 - Businesses lacking proper information (no transparency and advocacy)
 - Businesses claiming complicated and costly procedures
 - Low margins of preference and/or long positive lists (lack of liberalizing contents)
 - Persisting NTBs/NTMs not dealt within PTAs
 - Lacking appropriate trade /trade facilitation infrastructure
4. PTAs not going sufficiently into WTO+ and WTO-beyond areas
5. Impacts on third parties not understood and low-income economies often excluded from “21st century” deals
6. No post-adjustment programmes

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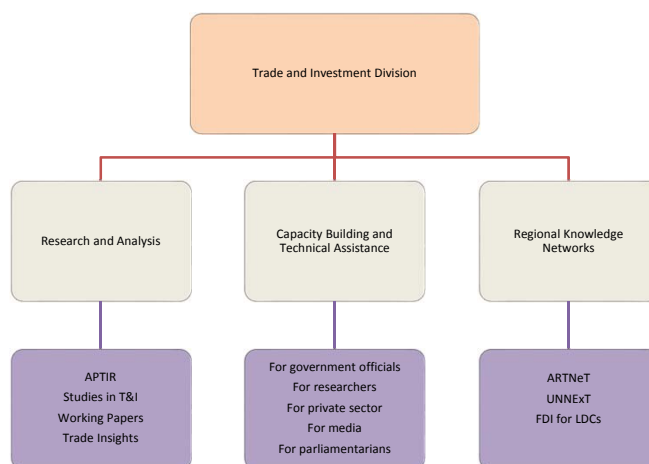
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Capacities need to do regionalism well



Source: ATCP, UNECE

How does ESCAP contribute to management of regionalism?



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Modalities:

- Training
- Research and analyses
- Co-operation and dialogues
- Partnership and integrated approach
- Monitoring and evaluation



Better evidence for better policies

Main channels of information sharing

- APTIR – annual publication
- Trade Insights and ARTNeT policy briefs and working papers
- Databases: PTAs, trade costs and others
- ARTNeT and ESCAP expert group meetings, dialogues and inter-governmental meetings
- Social media, Statistics online
- Manuals and reference material

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Footer Text

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ESCAP's way forward

- No one to be excluded to benefit from freer trade
- Asia-Pacific wide regional integration process resting on:
 - Market integration
 - Improved connectivity
 - Enhanced intraregional financial cooperation and new architecture
 - Strengthened social and economic resilience
- Implies need for enhanced analyses by both secretariat and members; consolidation/convergence of current noodle bowl; deepening and addition of emerging areas eg. environmental goods and services, labour; dialogue between private and government sectors; better institutions and more transparency

Conclusion

- Enhancing the access to information and transparency is essential in addressing perennial issues related to regionalism
- ESCAP is dedicated to provide technical assistance, capacity building and assist member States in improving their overall capacity to benefit from trade
- Our partnership with many international and regional organizations, as well as national and regional think-tanks, academia and government entities, help us to provide comprehensive assistance, whenever possible as part of integrated and joint approaches.

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Thank you

Please join us at the

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