

Case Studies on MSME-Specific Provisions in FTAs

APEC Committee on Trade and Investment

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Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation



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MSME-Specific Provisions in APEC

INTRODUCTION

Developing Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is a critical priority for both emerging and advanced economies across the APEC region. Facilitating the integration of SMEs into regional and international markets continues to be a major policy focus in the Asia-Pacific, with several APEC economies already demonstrating significant strides in this area¹. MSMEs represent the majority of businesses in the region, accounting for approximately 90% of all firms. Many larger corporations begin as SMEs, growing over time in response to market demand and other factors. Establishing a conducive business environment for SME growth is essential for APEC economies, and the specific provisions targeting Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) are crucial for this support. Furthermore, the internationalisation of SMEs aligns with APEC's overarching objective of fostering free and open trade and investment throughout the region².

This initiative aims to convene policymakers, practitioners, and industry leaders to explore the ways in which FTAs have been leveraged to enhance the inclusivity of smaller enterprises and how SMEs can more effectively capitalize on the benefits of these agreements. Among objectives of the project are (a) to Develop knowledge, abilities and skills on MSMEs' provisions from FTAs and examples of how MSMEs have utilised existing FTAs to increase trade and support jobs (b) Provide an opportunity to learn and emulate best practices from each other and last but not least (c) Create awareness for government officials to understand the needs of MSMEs to ensure practical and appropriate policy-making in the future.

The workshop is a two-day event led by an expert consultant that will deliver a tailored programme to deliver capacity building in utilisation of assistance from FTAs provisions on MSMEs. The workshop will include several sessions with varying dynamics such as expert presentations, case studies discussion, workshop sessions and more to maximize learning and retention. Therefore, this paper will provide case studies on MSMEs-related provisions in FTAs. The two-case studies are the core outline of the paper. The first case study provides an introductory overview of the general issue area, and the specific insights of MSMEs provisions examples used to construct the case study. It also relates the issue back to the concerns expressed by APEC stakeholders on MSMEs provisions in the context of benefits of supporting programmes for business, particularly with regard to the potential benefits from trade agreements.

In the second part of the case study provides example of Malaysia's initiative in strengthening MSMEs. Although the examples are economy specific, an important aspect of the case studies is to draw out lessons that may be of more general application, of course with adaptation, around the region. Hence, the ultimate aim of the two-case studies explore MSME-related provisions under both Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), which are primarily bilateral or multilateral agreements focused on reducing trade barriers, and Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs), which involve multiple regional partners to foster broader economic integration.

¹ Overview of the SME Sector in the APEC Region: Key Issues on Market Access and Internationalization, APEC Policy Support Unit, April 2020.

² APEC Capacity Building Workshop On WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement For Micro, Small And Medium Enterprises, Small and Medium Enterprise Working Group (SMEWG), August 2019.

CASE STUDY 1: MSME PROVISIONS IN FTAs and RTAs

MSME-RELATED PROVISIONS IN TRADE AGREEMENT

The Japan - Singapore Economic Partnership Agreement (JSEPA) implemented in 2002, was the first FTA to feature a dedicated chapter on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Currently, there are ten RTAs, constituting about 5% of all RTAs, that include specific provisions for MSMEs, providing dedicated chapters alongside references in other areas. The provisions in these MSME chapters focus on a cooperation framework designed to foster the development of MSMEs³. Having a standalone chapter enhances visibility and predictability for these enterprises.

Additionally, some agreements, such as the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) (Chapter 14, Article 2)⁴, facilitate access to regulatory information by mandating that governments maintain a dedicated website with information tailored for MSMEs involved in the agreement. Moreover, six out of the ten RTAs⁵ with MSME chapters state that disputes concerning these provisions cannot be resolved through the agreement's standard dispute settlement mechanism but rather through dialogue, consultations, and cooperative efforts, as exemplified by the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) (Chapter 24, Article 3)⁶.

According to the World Trade Report 2016, MSMEs are the majority of businesses in every economy⁷. However, despite their numbers, MSME have been shown to participate relatively less than large firms when it comes to international trade. Recognising the importance of MSMEs to the global economy and the need for more inclusive international trade, MSME provisions in FTAs and RTAs increasingly have MSME-related language, and even chapters, included in their provisions to strengthen MSME trade-capacity and to avoid any discriminatory treatment.

The Informal Working Group on MSMEs established by the World Trade Organization (WTO) estimates that nearly 95% of companies worldwide are MSMEs, contributing significantly to 60% of global employment. Despite their importance, these enterprises encounter various challenges when trying to engage in international trade⁸.

³ See Trade4MSMEs at <https://trade4msmes.org/guides/regional-trade-agreements/>.

⁴ "Each Party shall establish or maintain its own publicly accessible website containing information regarding this Agreement, including: (c) information designed for SMEs that includes: (i) a description of the provisions in this Agreement that the Party considers to be of particular interest to SMEs; and (ii) any information that the Party considers useful for SMEs interested in the opportunities provided by this Agreement. Each Party should include in the website links to the: (a) equivalent website of the other Party; and (b) websites of its government agencies and other appropriate entities that provide information the Party considers useful to any person interested in trading or doing business in that Party's territory. 3. The information may include: (h) SME financing programs. 4. When possible, each Party shall endeavour to make the information available in English. 5. Each Party should endeavour to ensure that the information and links on the website referred to in paragraph 1 are current and accurate" (Canada - Israel, Chapter 14, art. 2)

⁵ Canada - Israel; CPTPP; EU - Japan; EU - United Kingdom; United Kingdom - Japan; and USMCA/CUSMA/T-MEC.

⁶ "No Party shall have recourse to dispute settlement under Chapter 28 (Dispute Settlement) for any matter arising under this Chapter" (CPTPP, Chapter 24, art. 3)

⁷ World Trade Report, 2016.

⁸ Julian Mukiibi and Leslie Sajous, Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises: Key developments and updates in the Informal Working Group Discussions among World Trade Organization members

To tackle these obstacles, 88 WTO members signed a statement during the 11th Ministerial Conference (MC11) in December 2017, announcing their commitment to forming the Informal Working Group on MSMEs. This group aims to explore ways to enhance support for MSMEs' participation in global trade. The Informal Working Group convened for the first time in March 2018 to begin its work in this area⁹.

Using data from the WTO MSME Informal Working Group's database on MSME provisions in regional trade agreements¹⁰, this case study reviews all in-force notified trade agreements to the WTO and provides an overview of MSME-related provisions found within selected agreements. As of 2016, 270 RTAs currently in force and notified to the WTO and it shows that half of all the notified RTAs, namely 136 agreements, incorporate at least one provision mentioning explicitly SMEs.

The provisions related to SMEs in RTAs are notably diverse, varying significantly in their placement within the agreement, language, scope, and commitments. Many SME-related provisions are found in only one or a few RTAs, highlighting their limited but growing presence in international trade frameworks. A small yet increasing number of RTAs now include specific provisions within dedicated articles or even entire chapters focused on SMEs.

Despite the rising trend in the number of detailed SME-related provisions in recent years, most of these remain expressed in "best endeavour" language, which indicates a non-binding commitment. The two most prevalent categories of SME-related provisions in RTAs are (1) those promoting cooperation among SMEs and (2) provisions that clarify that SMEs and/or programmes supporting SMEs are not bound by the obligations of the RTA. Additionally, other SME-related provisions are included in a limited number of RTAs and may address areas such as government procurement, trade facilitation, electronic commerce, intellectual property, and transparency

Number of RTAs with MSME-related Provisions

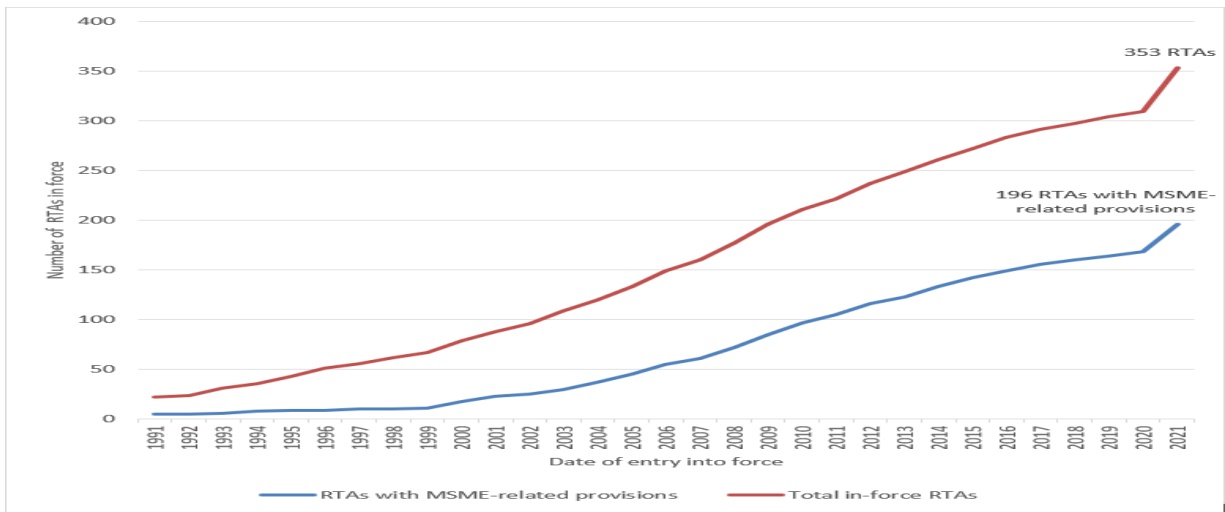
Since MSMEs were first mentioned in the EU – Overseas Countries and Territories Agreement in 1971, there has been a considerable expansion in the inclusion of MSME-related provisions within RTAs. Currently, out of 353 RTAs that are in force and have been notified to the WTO, 196 agreements accounting for 56% include at least one provision related to MSMEs. This growth reflects a broader recognition of the critical role that MSME plays in the global economy and the necessity of supporting them through tailored trade frameworks.

April 2021. See more details at <https://icsb.org/ayman-tarabishy/world-trade-organization-and-msmes/>. See also Joint initiative on Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), available at <https://www.esf.be/new/multi-plurilateral-negotiations/joint-statement-initiatives-in-wto/joint-initiative-on-micro-small-and-medium-sized-enterprises-msmes/>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ (https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmesandtra_e/rtaprovisions_e.htm)

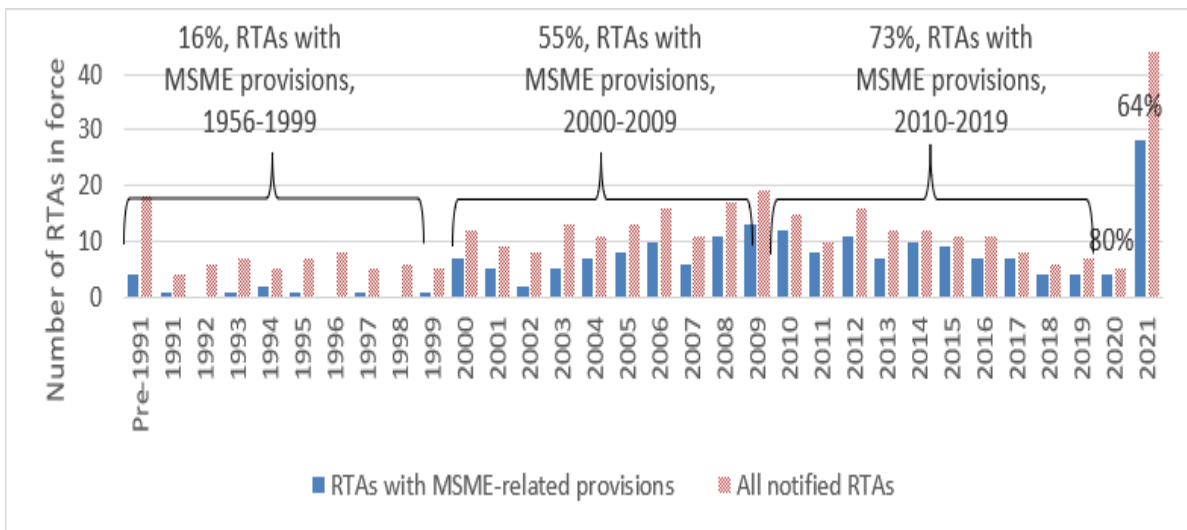
Figure 1: Total number of RTAs and RTAs with MSME-related provisions, 1991-2021



Source: Informal Working Group on MSMEs, 2022

Since the early 2000s, the number of RTAs featuring provisions related to MSMEs has seen significant growth, with their share increasing each decade. Initially, before 1999, only 16% of in-force RTAs included at least one MSME reference¹¹. However, by 2020, this figure rose dramatically to 80% for RTAs that came into force that year, indicating a substantial shift towards recognizing the importance of MSMEs in trade agreements. This trend reflects a broader commitment among economies to integrate MSMEs into the global economy, recognising their vital contributions to job creation and economic growth. As trade agreements evolve, the inclusion of MSME provisions demonstrates an increasing awareness of the unique challenges these enterprises face and the need for supportive measures.

Figure 2: Share of RTAs with MSME-related provisions by decade and year



Source: Informal Working Group on MSME, 2022

¹¹ The most recent year, 2021, was an exceptional year given the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union. Of the 45 RTAs that went into force during 2022, 38 had the United Kingdom as a partner (84 per cent). Most of these agreements are based on language in EU Agreements which the UK was previously party to.

The vast majority of WTO Members approximately 90% are part of at least one in-force RTA that includes provisions specifically related to MSMEs. Among the 21 APEC economies that are also WTO Members, most of their RTAs feature references to MSMEs, demonstrating a widespread commitment to integrating these enterprises into trade frameworks. This trend highlights the recognition of MSMEs' critical role in fostering economic growth, job creation, and innovation within the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. By including MSME-related provisions, these agreements aim to address the unique challenges that smaller businesses face, facilitating their access to international markets and promoting their overall development. See Table 1¹² below:

Table 1: In-force and WTO Notified RTAs With MSME References by APEC Economies

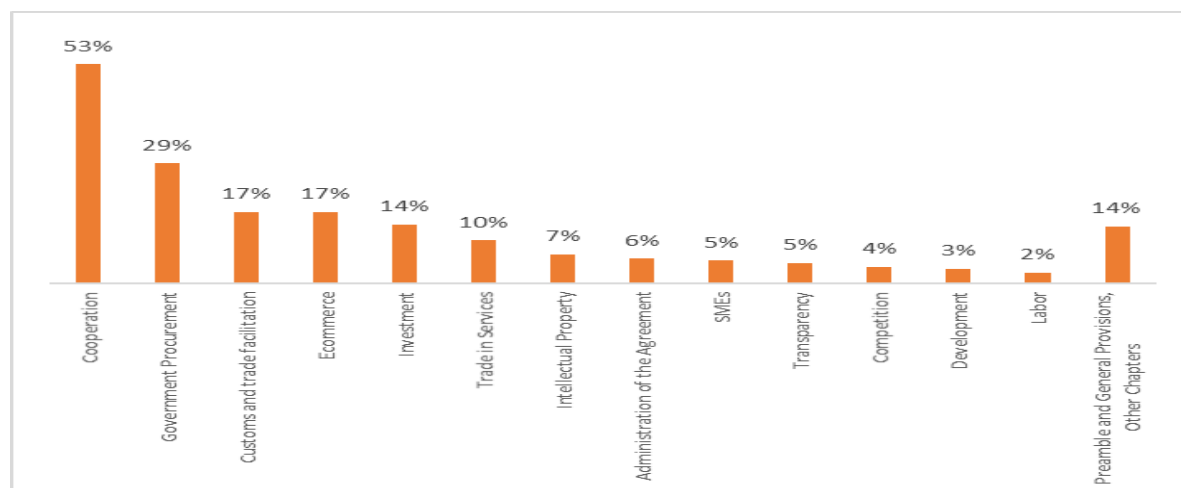
No	Member	RTA in force with MSME	Total RTAs in force and notified	Share
1	Brunei Darussalam	10	10	100%
2	Thailand	13	14	93%
3	United States	13	14	93%
4	Japan	16	18	89%
5	Canada	13	15	87%
6	New Zealand	11	13	85%
7	Peru	17	21	81%
8	Viet Nam	12	15	80%
9	Singapore	21	27	78%
10	Malaysia	12	16	75%
11	Indonesia	9	12	75%
12	The Philippines	8	11	73%
13	Chile	22	31	71%
14	Republic of Korea	14	20	70%
15	Papua New Guinea	4	6	67%
16	Australia	11	17	65%
17	China	10	16	63%
18	Mexico	12	23	52%
19	Hong Kong, China	4	8	50%
20	Chinese Taipei	2	4	50%
21	Russian Federation	4	12	33%

In general, MSMEs RTAs provisions have three broad objectives. The first is to drive economic growth and integration through greater MSME participation in regional and international markets. The second is to improve economic competitiveness and the third is to achieve sustainable development. Facilitating the acquisition and exploitation of technology; supporting innovation and creativity by MSMEs; and promoting sustainable economic development are all stated goals among others.

¹² Information in the table is derived from the WTO RTA Database and the Informal Working Group on MSMEs, World Trade Organization, INF/MSME/W/6/Rev.3, 2022.

MSME-related provisions are primarily located under cooperation and government procurement chapters, with e-commerce, customs and trade facilitation, and investment following (see Figure 3). MSME-related provisions in the chapter on cooperation are generally aimed at strengthening the productive and export capabilities of MSMEs, as well as at improving their competitiveness. MSME-related provisions under government procurement concern facilitating MSMEs' access to public procurement markets through scheduled exemptions and a cooperation framework. More details on each of the specific RTA chapters where MSME references were located follow in this report.

Figure 3: Share of MSME-related provisions by chapter over total RTAs with MSME-related provisions



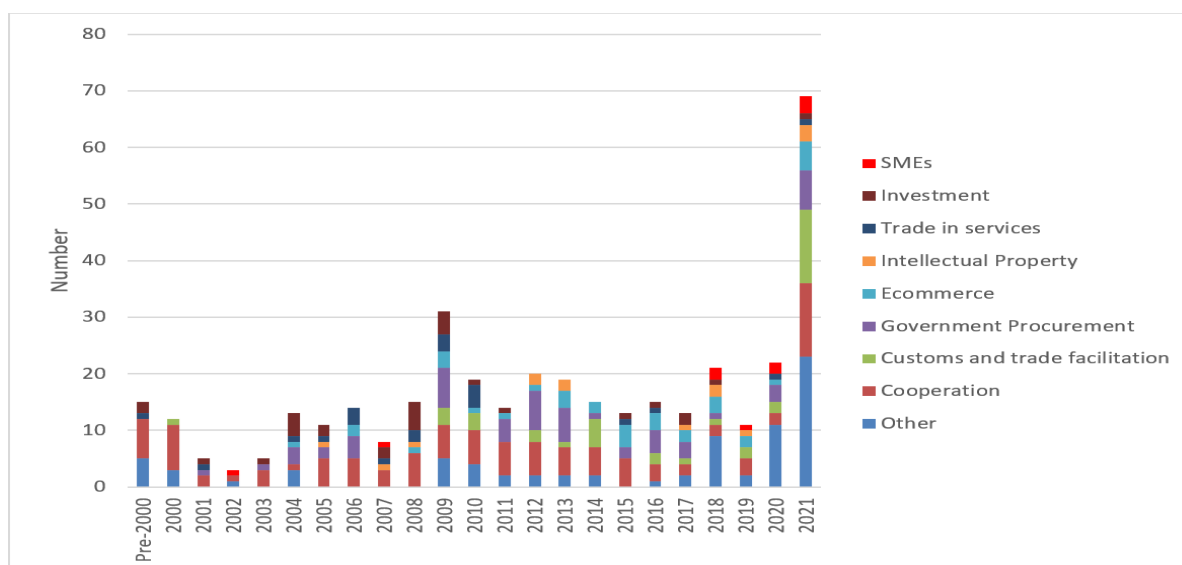
Source: Informal Working Group on MSMEs, 2022

RTA Chapters with MSME Provisions

The chapters of RTAs containing provisions for MSMEs have evolved significantly over the years. Prior to 2000, references to MSMEs were primarily found in the Preamble, Cooperation, or Investment chapters, with only a single reference in the Government Procurement chapter, one in Trade in Services, and two in Development chapters. However, in the mid-2000s, there was a marked increase in the diversification of chapters that included MSME-related text (see Figure 4).

During this period, new references began to emerge in additional chapters such as E-commerce and Intellectual Property, reflecting a broader understanding of the various facets of trade that impact MSMEs. A significant milestone occurred in 2002 with the introduction of a dedicated chapter on SMEs in the JSEPA. This chapter specifically aimed to address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by SMEs, marking a substantial shift in how trade agreements recognised and supported these vital economic actors.

Figure 4: RTA chapters MSME reference by chapter and year



Source: Informal Working Group on MSMEs, 2022

RTA Participation with MSME References

The following table provides indications and insights which meant to show the significance of MSMEs-related provision either as a stand-alone chapter or referred in other chapters. It shows that almost all APEC economies have its own pace on participation and developments concerning MSME-related references in RTAs. It composed of sections related to each of the main areas and chapters in RTAs where MSME provisions have been identified¹³. Table 2 below shows RTAs at global level as indicated by the information on the specific agreements with the related chapters and total number of MSME references¹⁴.

Table 2: List of in-force RTAs with MSME-related language, chapters and total number of references

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
Andean Community	25 May 1988	Cooperation	2
ASEAN - Australia - New Zealand	01 January 2010	Ecommerce	1
ASEAN - China	21 September 2005	Cooperation	1
ASEAN - Hong Kong, China	11 June 2019	Cooperation	2
		Rules of Origin	
ASEAN - India	19 August 2010	Cooperation	2
		Trade in Services	
ASEAN - Japan	01 December 2008	Cooperation	1
	08 July 2010	Cooperation	3

¹³ More detailed information is available in the MSME Group RTA Database (https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmesandtra_e/rtaprovisions_e.htm) and full text of all in-force and notified agreements are available from the WTO Regional Trade Agreements Database available online.

¹⁴ Information in the annexes is derived from Informal Working Group on MSMEs, World Trade Organization, INF/MSME/W/6/Rev.3, 2022. As of 2022, 196 in-force RTAs were notified to WTO.

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
ASEAN - Republic of Korea		Trade in Services	
ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)	01 January 1993	Customs and trade facilitation	3
ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)	17 May 2010	Rules of Origin	3
		Trade Facilitation	
Australia - Chile	06 March 2009	Cooperation	4
		Government Procurement	
		Investment	
Australia - Papua New Guinea (PATCRA), amended	20 September 1991	Cooperation	1
Brunei Darussalam - Japan	31 July 2008	Cooperation	1
Canada - Chile	05 July 1997	Trade in services	1
Canada - Colombia	15 August 2011	Cooperation	6
		Ecommerce	
		Government Procurement	
Canada - Honduras	01 October 2014	Ecommerce	2
Canada - Israel	28 May 2018	Ecommerce	10
		IP	
		Preamble and General Provisions	
		SMEs	
Canada - Republic of Korea	01 January 2015	Ecommerce	1
Canada - Panama	01 April 2013	Ecommerce	3
		Government Procurement	
Canada - Peru	01 August 2009	Cooperation	6
		Ecommerce	
		Government Procurement	
		Trade in Services	
Canada - Ukraine	01 August 2017	Cooperation	1
Caribbean Community and Common Market	14 October 1974	Development	2
		Preamble and General Provisions	
Chile - China	20 July 2007	Cooperation	1
Chile - Colombia	08 May 2009	Cooperation	6
		Ecommerce	
		Government Procurement	
		Labor	

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
Chile - Guatemala (Chile - Central America)	23 March 2010	Subsidies	1
Chile - China	20 July 2007	Cooperation	1
Chile - Guatemala (Chile - Central America)	23 March 2010	Subsidies	1
Chile - Honduras (Chile - Central America)	19 July 2008	Subsidies	1
Chile - Indonesia	10 August 2019	Cooperation	2
Chile - Japan	03 September 2007	Trade in Services	1
Chile - Malaysia	25 February 2012	Cooperation	1
Chile - Thailand	05 November 2015	Cooperation	2
Chile - Viet Nam	01 January 2014	Cooperation	1
China - Costa Rica	01 August 2011	Cooperation	1
China - Hong Kong, China	29 June 2003	Cooperation	1
China - Republic of Korea	20 December 2015	Cooperation	4
		Investment	
China - Macao, China	17 October 2003	Cooperation	1
China - New Zealand	01 October 2008	Cooperation	2
Colombia - Mexico	01 January 1995	Government Procurement	1
Colombia - Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras)	12 November 2009	Administration of the Agreement	12
		Cooperation	
		Ecommerce	
		Government Procurement	
		Investment	
Common Economic Zone (CEZ)	20 May 2004	Development	1
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	08 December 1994	Cooperation	5
		Development	
Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)	30 December 2018	Competition	19
		Cooperation	
		Cooperation	
		Customs and trade facilitation	
		Development	
		Ecommerce	
		Environment	

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
		Government Procurement	
		IP	
		Labor	
		Regulatory Coherence	
		SMEs	
		Transparency	
Costa Rica - Colombia	01 August 2016	Administration of the Agreement	6
		Ecommerce	
		Government Procurement	
		Investment	
		Trade in Services	
Costa Rica - Peru	01 June 2013	Administration of the Agreement	4
		Government Procurement	
		IP	
Costa Rica - Singapore	01 July 2013	Cooperation	3
		Ecommerce	
		Government Procurement	
Dominican Republic - Central America	04 October 2001	Government Procurement	1
Dominican Republic - Central America - United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR)	01 March 2006	Ecommerce	5
		Government Procurement	
East African Community (EAC)	09 October 2000	Cooperation	3
		Development	
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), revised in July 1993	24 July 1993	Cooperation	2
		Preamble and General Provisions	
EFTA - Albania	01 November 2010	Customs and trade facilitation	1
EFTA - Canada	01 July 2009	Customs and trade facilitation	1
EFTA - Central America (Costa Rica and Panama)	19 August 2014	Government Procurement	1
EFTA - Chile	01 December 2004	Government Procurement	2
		Investment	

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
EFTA - Colombia	01 July 2011	Government Procurement	3
		Preamble and General Provisions	
EFTA - Egypt	01 August 2007	Investment	1
EFTA - Georgia	01 September 2017	Government Procurement	1
EFTA - Hong Kong, China	01 October 2012	Customs and trade facilitation	1
EFTA - Republic of Korea	01 September 2006	Trade in Services	1
EFTA - Lebanon	01 January 2007	Investment	1
EFTA - Mexico	01 July 2001	Investment	1
EFTA - Montenegro	01 September 2012	Customs and trade facilitation	1
EFTA - Morocco	01 December 1999	Investment	1
EFTA - Peru	01 July 2011	Government Procurement	2
EFTA - SACU	01 May 2008	Investment	1
EFTA - Serbia	01 October 2010	Customs and trade facilitation	1
EFTA - Singapore	01 January 2003	Investment	1
EFTA - Ukraine	01 June 2012	Government Procurement	1
El Salvador - Ecuador	16 November 2017	Cooperation	6
		Preamble and General Provisions	
EU - Albania	01 December 2006	Cooperation	1
EU - Algeria	01 September 2005	Cooperation	1
EU - Bosnia and Herzegovina	11 July 2008	Cooperation	1
EU - Cameroon	04 August 2014	Cooperation	2
		Customs and trade facilitation	
EU - Canada	21 September 2017	Ecommerce	6
		Government Procurement	
		Investment	
EU - CARIFORUM States EPA	29 December 2008	Cooperation	20
		Investment	
		IP	

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
		Trade in Services	
EU - Central America	01 August 2013	Cooperation	10
		Government Procurement	
		IP	
EU - Chile	01 February 2003	Cooperation	4
EU - Chile	03 February 2004	Cooperation	4
EU - Colombia and Peru	01 March 2013	Administration of the Agreement	6
		Cooperation	
		Customs and trade facilitation	
		Ecommerce	
		Government Procurement	
EU - Côte d'Ivoire	03 September 2016	Customs and trade facilitation	1
EU - Eastern and Southern Africa States Interim EPA	14 May 2012	Cooperation	6
		Cooperation	
EU - Georgia	01 September 2014	Cooperation	2
		Transparency	
EU - Israel	01 June 2000	Cooperation	1
EU - Japan	01 February 2019	Cooperation	10
		Customs and trade facilitation	
		Ecommerce	
		IP	
		Preamble and General Provisions	
		SMEs	
		Transparency	
EU - Jordan	01 May 2002	Cooperation	2
EU - Republic of Korea	01 July 2011	Competition	2
		Government Procurement	
EU - Lebanon	01 March 2003	Cooperation	2
EU - Mexico	01 July 2000	Cooperation	2
EU - Moldova, Republic of	01 September 2014	Cooperation	2
		Customs and trade facilitation	

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
EU - Morocco	01 March 2000	Cooperation	1
EU – Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT)	01 January 1971	Cooperation	3
		Investment	
		Preamble and General Provisions	
EU - Papua New Guinea / Fiji	20 December 2009	Customs and trade facilitation	2
EU - Republic of North Macedonia	01 June 2001	Cooperation	1
EU - SADC	10 October 2016	Cooperation	5
		Customs and trade facilitation	
EU - San Marino	01 April 2002	Cooperation	1
EU - Serbia	31 May 2010	Cooperation	1
EU - Singapore	21 November 2019	Customs and trade facilitation	1
EU - South Africa	01 January 2000	Cooperation	4
		Trade in goods	
EU - Ukraine	23 April 2014	Cooperation	3
		Customs and trade facilitation	
		Transparency	
EU - United Kingdom	01 January 2021	Customs and trade facilitation	12
		Good Regulatory Practices and Regulatory Cooperation	
		Preamble and General Provisions	
		SMEs	
		Subsidies	
		Transparency	
EU - Viet Nam	01 August 2020	Competition	7
		Cooperation	
		Customs and trade facilitation	
		Government procurement	
		State-owned enterprises	
		Transparency	

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
EU Treaty (EC Treaty, amended by the Single European Act, the Treaty on European Union, the Treaty of Nice and the European Constitution)	30 March 2010	Competition	3
		Labor	
		Preamble and General Provisions	
Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)	01 January 2015	Cooperation	2
		Government Procurement	
Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) - Viet Nam	05 October 2016	Government Procurement	1
European Economic Area (EEA)	01 January 1994	Cooperation	2
Guatemala - Chinese Taipei	01 July 2006	Cooperation	3
Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - Singapore	01 September 2013	Cooperation	2
		Government Procurement	
Hong Kong, China - Australia	17 January 2020	Administration of the Agreement	4
		Ecommerce	
		Transparency	
Iceland - China	01 July 2014	Customs and trade facilitation	1
India - Japan	01 August 2011	Cooperation	3
		Investment	
India - Malaysia	01 July 2011	Cooperation	1
India - Nepal	27 October 2009	Trade in Goods	1
Indonesia - Australia	05 July 2021	Ecommerce	1
Japan - Australia	15 January 2015	Ecommerce	1
Japan - Indonesia	01 July 2008	Investment	2
Japan - Malaysia	13 July 2006	Cooperation	2
Japan - Mexico	01 April 2005	Cooperation	3
		Government Procurement	
Japan - Mongolia	07 June 2016	Cooperation	2
		Ecommerce	
Japan - Peru	01 March 2012	Cooperation	4
		Government Procurement	
Japan – The Philippines	11 December 2008	Cooperation	8

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
		Investment	
		Trade in Services	
Japan - Singapore	30 November 2002	Preamble and General Provisions	5
		SMEs	
Japan - Thailand	01 November 2007	Cooperation	6
		IP	
		SMEs	
Japan - Viet Nam	01 October 2009	Cooperation	3
Republic of Korea - Central America	01 October 2019	Cooperation	3
		Ecommerce	
Republic of Korea - Chile	01 April 2004	Government Procurement	1
Republic of Korea - Colombia	15 July 2016	Cooperation	6
		Government Procurement	
Republic of Korea - India	01 January 2010	Cooperation	3
		Investment	
		Trade in Services	
Republic of Korea - New Zealand	20 December 2015	Government Procurement	2
Republic of Korea - Singapore	02 March 2006	Government Procurement	1
Republic of Korea - United States	15 March 2012	Cooperation	3
		Government Procurement	
Republic of Korea - Viet Nam	20 December 2015	Cooperation	2
		Ecommerce	
Latin American Integration Association (LAIA)	18 March 1981	Cooperation	6
		Customs and trade facilitation	
Malaysia - Australia	01 January 2013	Cooperation	1
Mexico - Central America	01 September 2012	IP	1
Mexico - Panama	01 July 2015	Ecommerce	3
		Trade in services	
New Zealand - Malaysia	01 August 2010	Cooperation	1
New Zealand - Singapore	15 November 2018	Ecommerce	2
		Investment	

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
Pacific Alliance	01 May 2016	Ecommerce	5
		Government Procurement	
Pakistan - China	18 January 2008	Investment	1
Panama - Peru	01 May 2012	Administration of the Agreement	4
		Government Procurement	
		Government Procurement	
		IP	
Panama - Singapore	24 July 2006	Cooperation	3
		Ecommerce	
		Government Procurement	
Peru - Australia	11 February 2020	Administration of the Agreement	15
		Competition	
		Cooperation	
		Customs and trade facilitation	
		Government Procurement	
		Regulatory Coherence	
		SMEs	
Peru - Chile	01 March 2009	Customs and trade facilitation	1
Peru - China	01 March 2010	Cooperation	3
		Trade in Services	
Peru - Honduras	01 January 2017	Administration of the Agreement	6
		Government Procurement	
		IP	
Peru - Singapore	01 August 2009	Government Procurement	2
		Trade in Services	
Singapore - Australia	28 July 2003	Government Procurement	1
Singapore - Chinese Taipei	19 April 2014	Ecommerce	1
South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic	01 January 1981	Cooperation	1

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
Cooperation Agreement (SPARTECA)			
Southern African Customs Union (SACU)	15 July 2004	Investment	1
Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) - Egypt	01 September 2017	Investment	1
Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) - Israel	23 December 2009	Cooperation	1
Switzerland - China	01 July 2014	Customs and trade facilitation	1
Thailand - Australia	01 January 2005	IP	2
		Trade in Services	
Thailand - New Zealand	01 July 2005	Investment	1
Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership	28 May 2006	Cooperation	1
Turkey - Chile	01 March 2011	Cooperation	1
Turkey - Jordan		Cooperation	1
Turkey - Malaysia	01 August 2015	Cooperation	2
Turkey - Palestinian Authority	01 June 2005	Cooperation	1
Turkey - Singapore	01 October 2017	Customs and trade facilitation	3
		Ecommerce	
Turkey - Syria	01 January 2007	Cooperation	1
Turkey - Tunisia	01 July 2005	Cooperation	1
United Kingdom - Canada	01 January 2021	See "EU - Canada" for referenced language.	2
United Kingdom - CARIFORUM States	01 January 2021	Agriculture and fisheries	9
		Cooperation	
		IP	
		Preamble and General Provisions	
		Regulatory Coherence	
United Kingdom - Central America	01 January 2021	See "EU - Central America" for referenced language.	1
United Kingdom - Chile	01 January 2021	See "EU - Chile" for referenced language.	1
United Kingdom - Colombia	01 January 2021	See "EU - Colombia and Peru" for referenced language.	1
United Kingdom - Côte d'Ivoire	01 January 2021	Customs and trade facilitation	1

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
United Kingdom - Eastern and Southern Africa States	01 January 2021	Agriculture and fisheries	6
		Development	
United Kingdom - Ecuador and Peru	01 January 2021	See "EU - Colombia and Peru" for referenced language.	1
United Kingdom - Egypt	01 January 2021	See "EU - Egypt"	1
United Kingdom - Georgia	01 January 2021	Industrial policy	2
		Transparency	
United Kingdom - Ghana	05 March 2021	Customs and trade facilitation	1
United Kingdom - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway	01 December 2021	Digital Trade	9
		Government Procurement	
		SMEs	
		Trade in Goods	
United Kingdom - Israel	01 January 2021	See "EU - Israel" for referenced language.	1
United Kingdom - Japan	01 January 2021	Cooperation	12
		Customs and trade facilitation	
		Ecommerce	
		IP	
		Preamble and General Provisions	
		SMEs	
		Trade in services	
		Transparency	
United Kingdom - Kenya	01 January 2021	Cooperation	7
United Kingdom - Republic of Korea	01 January 2021	See "EU - Korea, Republic of" for referenced language.	1
United Kingdom - Kosovo	01 January 2021	See "Central European Free Trade Agreement"	1
United Kingdom - Lebanon	01 January 2021	See "EU - Lebanon" for referenced language.	1
United Kingdom - Mexico	01 June 2021	See "EU - Mexico" for referenced language	1
United Kingdom - Morocco	01 January 2021	See "EU - Morocco" for referenced language.	1

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
United Kingdom - North Macedonia	01 January 2021	See "EU - Republic of North Macedonia" for referenced language.	1
United Kingdom - Palestinian Authority	01 January 2021	See "EU - Palestinian Authority"	1
United Kingdom - SACU and Mozambique	01 January 2021	Cooperation	2
		Customs and trade facilitation	
United Kingdom - Singapore	01 January 2021	See "EU - Singapore" for referenced language.	1
United Kingdom - Switzerland - Liechtenstein	01 January 2021	See "EU - Switzerland - Liechtenstein"	1
United Kingdom - Tunisia	01 January 2021	See "EU - Tunisia"	1
United Kingdom - Turkey	01 January 2021	Customs and trade facilitation	3
United Kingdom - Ukraine	01 January 2021	Customs and trade facilitation	3
		Industrial policy	3
United Kingdom - Viet Nam	01 January 2021	See "EU - Viet Nam" for referenced language.	1
United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA/CUSMA/T-MEC)	01 July 2020	Competition	16
		Digital Trade	
		Government Procurement	
		Preamble and General Provisions	
		SMEs	
		Trade in services	
US - Australia	01 January 2005	Government Procurement	3
		Investment	
US - Bahrain	01 August 2006	Government Procurement	2
		Trade in Services	
US - Chile	01 January 2004	Ecommerce	8
		Environment	
		Government Procurement	
		Investment	
		Labor	
		Trade in Services	

Regional Trade Agreement	Date of entry into force	Chapter(s) with MSME reference(s)	Number of references
US - Colombia	15 May 2012	Administration of the Agreement	3
		Cooperation	
		Government Procurement	
US - Jordan	17 December 2001	Trade in Services	1
US - Morocco	01 January 2006	Trade in Services	4
US - Oman	01 January 2009	Government Procurement	3
		Investment	
US - Panama	31 October 2012	Ecommerce	5
		Government Procurement	
US - Peru	01 February 2009	Administration of the Agreement	7
		Government Procurement	
		Investment	
		Labor	
US - Singapore	01 January 2004	Investment	1

The table above highlights active Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) that include specific provisions for MSMEs, reflecting the growing recognition of their critical role in the global economy. Many of these agreements, like those between ASEAN - China or Canada - Chile, emphasise cooperation to support the growth of smaller businesses. In these chapters, economies commit to working together to foster MSME development, often by sharing best practices or facilitating networking opportunities.

Another common theme is e-commerce, which features prominently in agreements such as ASEAN - Australia - New Zealand and Canada - Israel. With the rise of digital trade, these provisions help MSMEs adapt to and capitalise on online platforms, enabling them to reach wider markets. Additionally, government procurement is another key area, with agreements like Canada - Peru and Chile - Colombia highlighting efforts to give MSMEs better access to public contracts, which are often challenging for smaller companies to secure.

Some agreements go even further, dedicating entire chapters to MSMEs, such as the JSEPA, which includes provisions tailored specifically to the needs of small businesses. These comprehensive approaches reflect a deeper commitment to integrating MSMEs into global trade.

Overall, these RTAs create a supportive framework for MSMEs, helping them overcome barriers to growth and succeed in international markets. Through these targeted provisions,

MSMEs gain better access to cooperation, ecommerce, and procurement opportunities, which are crucial for their development and competitiveness.

CASE STUDY 2:

MALAYSIA'S EFFORTS TO FORMALISE INFORMAL ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH THE INFORMAL ENTREPRENEUR FORMALIZATION PLAN 2023 UNDER THE NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICY 2030

Introduction to Informal Sector Entrepreneurship

Informal sector entrepreneurship is part of the informal economy, which refers to economic activities of unincorporated household enterprises that typically operate on a small scale and are outside of controlled economic and tax systems. In 2021 alone, this sector could contribute between 2.4% and 5.3% to Malaysia's GDP, if properly recorded. This highlights the need to formalize the informal sector to allow its contribution to be captured for better economic development. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a critical role in Malaysia's economy, contributing 37.4% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 11.7% to exports, and 47.8% to domestic employment. In line with Malaysia's direction to provide sustainable, balanced, and inclusive socio-economic development, the government has also prioritized the growth and support of MSMEs domestically.

The informal sector does not account for informal employment within the formal sector. Therefore, based on the description of employment status in the informal sector, individuals who are "self-employed" and "employers" are considered informal entrepreneurs. Their business units are unregistered, and they employ fewer than 10 people. Although "workers" and "unpaid family workers" fall within the informal sector, they are not classified as informal entrepreneurs. Cumulatively, informal entrepreneurs, comprising "self-employed" and "employers," account for approximately 73.4% or 955,200 of the total employment in the informal sector.

Characteristics of the Informal Sector in Malaysia

In Malaysia, the informal sector is largely fuelled by the convenience and flexibility of home-based work, with 37.1% of informal businesses operating from residential settings. Another 29.2% are engaged in traditional services in markets or streets. The remaining portion of this sector operates without a fixed location, or in factories, workshops, and offices.

Regarding education, 61.3% of the informal workforce, excluding those in the agricultural sector, have received formal education up to the secondary level. Only a small percentage, 4.6%, reported needing formal education. Within the urban informal sector, 82.8% of workers are employed in semi-skilled jobs, which suggests that higher education or advanced skills are not a pressing requirement for most workers.

Although men dominate the informal sector, representing 55.6% of the workforce, women's participation has steadily risen. Women comprise 44.4% of the informal workforce, reflecting a 0.7% increase from 2019, showing a gradual shift toward gender balance in the sector.

Issues and Challenges in the Formalisation of Informal Entrepreneurs

Informal entrepreneurs often need help in their efforts to formalize their businesses. These obstacles can generally be categorised into two main areas: limited capacity and lack of incentive to register. Specifically, the challenges include short-sightedness, lack of encouragement and motivation, and limited support and assistance. The challenges related to the formalisation of informal entrepreneurs can be divided into three:

i. Limited Mindset on Business Development Due to Familiarity Bias and Risk Aversion

Mindset Based on Familiarity Bias:

Familiarity bias refers to the tendency to favor what is known and comfortable, which causes small-scale entrepreneurs to avoid taking risks. This is one of the key factors that prevent them from seeking help to grow their businesses and instead maintain a level of comfort, continuing to avoid detection by government authorities. This mindset is commonly found among micro-business operators, particularly in rural areas. The high freedom and flexibility within the informal business sector makes entrepreneurs more inclined to avoid engaging with regulatory authorities and policymakers. Many such businesses operate from home, making it difficult for authorities to track and enforce regulations.

Moreover, both financial and non-financial costs associated with formalization have resulted in short-term benefits for informal businesses that outweigh the perceived long-term gains of formalizing. As a result, many informal entrepreneurs choose to continue operating without formal registration.

Mindset Based on Risk Aversion:

Informal entrepreneurs often do not benefit from legal protections that could help secure their businesses from unfair or risky supply contracts, business partnerships, or customer relationships. This leads to high-income uncertainty, which is typical in the informal economy. Despite these vulnerabilities, informal entrepreneurs are reluctant to take risks or change their daily operations, clinging to familiar patterns.

This risk-averse mindset is particularly evident among seasonal and experimental informal entrepreneurs. These individuals do not see the need to register their businesses, especially when they believe the business may fail or will only operate in the market for a short period. This short-term thinking further discourages efforts toward formalization.

ii. Lack of Business Strategy and Knowledge in Enterprise Management

Lack of Strategy in Managing Business:

Informal entrepreneurs often operate flexibly, resulting in their business strategies needing to be more consistent and transparent due to limited knowledge and conflicting priorities. Many heavily rely on daily sales and use duplicate accounts for personal and business finances. Additionally, most informal entrepreneurs need more technical skills to manage their

businesses efficiently. As a result, they often depend on manual labour and low-value-added activities to generate income.

Informal entrepreneurs also need more business acumen, which limits their ability to develop effective business strategies to compete in the market, especially in the post-pandemic phase. To avoid paying commercial rent, many unregistered entrepreneurs run their businesses in street stalls or unsuitable areas.

Lack of Business Knowledge and Awareness:

Lack of knowledge refers to entrepreneurs needing more information and understanding of the formalisation process due to insufficient education and exposure. This is particularly common in rural areas, with limited access to guidelines on the legal requirements for formalization. On the other hand, lack of awareness refers to situations where entrepreneurs may have some knowledge about formalization but need to fully grasp its importance. This could be due to the need for an explicit guide or reference book to raise awareness and disseminate the benefits of formalization. As a result, many informal entrepreneurs feel they need more time to register, especially those operating from informal locations such as street-side setups or online platforms.

iii. Limited Capacity and Business Resources (Capital, Labor, Infrastructure)

Business resources are closely linked to unrestricted access to financing and government assistance for informal entrepreneurs and according to a survey conducted by Bank Negara Malaysia (Central Bank of Malaysia) in 2018, around 50% of informal entrepreneurs started their businesses with initial capital from personal savings or non-banking financial institutions, where most private market sources provide smaller amounts at higher interest rates. Additionally, only 44% of entrepreneurs could secure start-up capital exceeding MYR10,000, limiting their ability to grow and expand their businesses.

Moreover, informal entrepreneurs often need help attracting skilled labour, as most qualified workers prefer formal employment. A survey among informal entrepreneurs revealed that 54% faced challenges in retaining workers. In comparison, 73% reported either needing to learn about or apply for assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic due to a lack of awareness or knowledge of the available provisions. For informal entrepreneurs in rural areas, their development is further hampered by poor road infrastructure and weak internet connectivity, which restricts their business potential.

Transition from Informal to Formal Entrepreneurs

The Malaysian government has consistently supported entrepreneurial development by implementing various policies and programmes to facilitate the creation of a conducive business ecosystem for entrepreneurs and MSMEs. The Informal Entrepreneur Formalisation Plan was launched in 2023 to continue the Malaysia's agenda of achieving equitable wealth distribution and enhancing the socioeconomic well-being of the economy. This plan has three key objectives, six strategies, and 20 initiatives, as outlined below:

Objectives:

1. Developing a conducive and complementary entrepreneurial ecosystem to encourage the formalization of businesses.
2. Creating ethical and highly integrated entrepreneurs who adhere to best business practices.
3. Providing better social protection for business owners and workers.

This comprehensive approach ensures that informal entrepreneurs can transition into the formal economy while benefiting from the necessary support systems to grow and thrive.

Strategy 1: Enhancing Awareness and Effective Communication about Business Formalisation through 3 Initiatives

One of the key steps in developing a conducive ecosystem for entrepreneurs is establishing an effective communication system across all stakeholders at various levels. This is necessary to identify appropriate communication methods for different categories of informal entrepreneurs (e.g., outreach programs tailored to raise awareness among rural entrepreneurs or easily accessible online platforms for urban entrepreneurs). Moreover, the accuracy and timeliness of the information provided are crucial. This requires strong collaboration, knowledge, and skills across government bodies to coordinate and disseminate information effectively. A clear and direct implementation plan for communication and outreach programs is also a critical factor for the success of this strategy.

Initiative 1:

Developing an official guidebook as a reference for business registration, licensing processes, and their related benefits.

Initiative 2:

Enhancing outreach programs through strategic collaboration with various entrepreneurship development agencies, local authorities, associations, and business organizations.

Initiative 3:

Developing a targeted and holistic communication plan for each category of informal entrepreneurs through various online and offline channels.

Strategy 2: Enhancing Facilitation in the Business Formalization Process through 3 Initiatives

Facilitating the business registration process plays a crucial role in promoting economic growth and development, especially within the context of informal entrepreneurship. Through an accessible and efficient registration process, entrepreneurs can formalise their businesses, gain access to financing and market opportunities, and contribute to the formal economy. To facilitate the transition of informal entrepreneurs to registered businesses, relevant authorities and coordinating agencies must stay informed about the latest developments in the informal sector and possess a deep understanding of the sector's ecosystem. Additionally, regulations

for business registration across all government agencies should be streamlined and standardised to allow for the development of comprehensive training programs.

Initiative 1:

Facilitating informal entrepreneurs in the process of business registration and licensing through collaboration with business associations and private organizations.

Initiative 2:

Leveraging existing Federal and State agencies/institutions as contact centres at the local and grassroots levels to enhance facilitation in the business registration process.

Initiative 3:

Incorporating business registration modules into entrepreneurship development programmes for new or aspiring entrepreneurs.

Strategy 3: Enhancing Competence and Capability of Informal Entrepreneurs Towards Business Formalization through 3 Initiatives

Informal entrepreneurs often lack the necessary entrepreneurial skills, which frequently disqualifies them from receiving government grants and business assistance, as well as hampers their ability to compete in the market. Therefore, a targeted and skill-based development approach is required to nurture informal entrepreneurs with long-term business growth potential. This holistic approach enables them to improve their chances of business survival and ultimately evolve into registered businesses, enhancing their living standards and economic benefits. The development of informal entrepreneurs requires strong public-private sector collaboration to deliver a structured curriculum that builds their competencies. In addition, specific resources and funding are needed to refine development opportunities and provide appropriate support services for informal entrepreneurs as they transition toward formalisation.

Initiative 1:

Providing tailored programs and support to meet the needs of informal entrepreneurs in enhancing their capacity and productivity towards business formalisation.

Initiative 2:

Offering business development opportunities to informal entrepreneurs to encourage formalisation and prevent them from reverting to informal status.

Initiative 3:

Promoting strategic collaboration with e-commerce platform providers to enhance the capacity and capability of informal entrepreneurs towards business formalisation.

Strategy 4: Providing Incentives for Business Formalisation through 4 Initiatives

To address the ongoing issue of informality in the business sector, it is crucial to provide both fiscal and non-fiscal incentives for business registration. One of the primary challenges is the widespread perception that registration imposes an additional burden on entrepreneurs. Therefore, balanced and structured benefits should be offered strategically to effectively reduce these burdens. However, implementing these incentives is not without challenges. Direct and clear financial allocations from the federal level are required, supported by a well-integrated public-private collaboration strategy to improve access to credit for newly formalized entrepreneurs.

Initiative 1:

Providing a "business registration benefit package" that includes fiscal and non-fiscal incentives aligned with business development programs for selected informal entrepreneurs.

Initiative 2:

Offering a Micro Insurance Scheme with low premium rates to encourage business formalization.

Initiative 3:

Introducing tax incentives for informal entrepreneurs to aid their transition toward formalization.

Initiative 4:

Facilitating access to financing through a Loan Guarantee Scheme that requires business registration within a specified timeframe.

Strategy 5: Establishing a Legal and Enforcement Framework Supporting Business Formalisation through 4 Initiatives

Digitalisation has enabled access to various forms of entrepreneurship, but visibility remains a critical issue that limits the government's ability to distribute aid and support to the informal entrepreneurs who need it. Different regulations imposed by local authorities and state governments on home-based and online businesses, combined with a lack of centralized data collection systems, highlight the need to streamline the registration process into an integrated database for optimal efficiency. However, this integration can only be achieved through a coordinated legal framework and communication plan, backed by federal government support. Additionally, agencies and authorities need to be equipped with a holistic and inclusive understanding of labor laws and social protection to facilitate the transition of both formal and informal entrepreneurs toward formalization.

Initiative 1:

Developing a robust legal framework to support the transition towards formalisation and provide effective social protection for informal entrepreneurs.

Initiative 2:

Introducing a special license for selected categories of informal entrepreneurs.

Initiative 3:

Leveraging technology to promote legal compliance in business formalisation.

Initiative 4:

Creating comprehensive information connectivity by listing business registration platforms on ministry and local authority websites.

Strategy 6: Strengthening Governance and Monitoring Systems for Business Formalization through 3 Initiatives

The success of this plan depends on the achievements in both the development and implementation stages of the strategies. Implementing these strategies requires cooperation and commitment from multiple stakeholders, including both public and private sectors. To safeguard the interests of all parties, it is essential to establish an effective monitoring system to assess and oversee the performance of each initiative. The selection of members for the Action Committee and Public Consultation Platform should be done carefully and appropriately. Additionally, dedicated resources and infrastructure are needed to ensure the effective implementation of ICT-based monitoring systems, which will support the overall execution and monitoring of this Formalisation Plan.

Initiative 1:

Establishing an Action Committee to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of formalisation programs, initiatives, and interventions.

Initiative 2:

Developing an integrated database of informal entrepreneurs from various government agencies and private sector sources.

Initiative 3:

Conducting periodic monitoring of individuals with high banking activity based on information from enforcement agencies to identify and track informal entrepreneurs.

CONCLUSION

As highlighted in the first case study, the inclusion of specific provisions for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in regional trade agreements (RTAs) signifies a growing recognition of their vital contribution to the global economy. These provisions often emphasise cooperation, ecommerce, and government procurement, aiming to create an environment where MSMEs can thrive and actively participate in international trade. Notable examples include the Japan-Singapore Economic Partnership Agreement (JSEPA) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), both of which address the unique challenges faced by smaller businesses while promoting growth opportunities. By facilitating access to new markets, enhancing regulatory frameworks, and fostering digital trade, these agreements help dismantle barriers that often prevent MSMEs from fully engaging in the global marketplace.

The second case study on Malaysia reveals the significant role of the informal sector in the economy, providing flexible work opportunities for individuals seeking non-traditional employment. Despite not being formally registered, this sector contributes substantially to economic activity and employment. However, the informal nature of these businesses restricts their growth potential and access to essential benefits such as government support, financing, and legal protections. To tackle these challenges, targeted strategies promoting business formalisation, improving resource access, and enhancing the overall entrepreneurial ecosystem are crucial.

Efforts to formalise the informal sector in Malaysia should prioritize education, incentives, and tailored support programmes to assist informal entrepreneurs in transitioning to the formal economy. By unlocking the potential of these businesses, Malaysia can ensure they contribute more significantly to domestic growth and access the benefits of formalisation, including better social protections, financing opportunities, and long-term sustainability. A comprehensive approach that includes public-private partnerships, streamlined regulations, and targeted outreach will be essential in achieving these goals.