

APEC Non-Binding Guidelines for Customs & Cross-Border E-Commerce

Recognizing the swift and significant shifts in global trade, particularly the exponential rise in cross-border e-commerce transactions, we, the member economies of the APEC Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures (SCCP), discussed "Facilitating the Clearance of E-Commerce Shipments" during the First APEC SCCP Meeting held on February 26, 2025, in Gyeongju, and the Second APEC SCCP Meeting held on July 30, 2025, in Incheon, Republic of Korea.

Guided by the principles and objectives outlined in APEC frameworks, including driver (3) 'Trade and Investment' of the AOTEAROA Plan of Action, focus area (11) 'Facilitation of E-commerce...' of the APEC Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap (AIDER), key action area (A) and (B) of the La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth and Phase Three of the Supply-Chain Connectivity Framework Action Plan 2022-2026 (SCFAP III), and building on SCCP workshops hosted by Thailand in 2022 and the United States in 2024 on cross-border e-commerce shipments,

we affirm our commitment to balancing the facilitation of legitimate cross-border e-commerce trade with robust security measures for high-risk cross-border e-commerce shipments while advancing Customs digitalization to support efficient cross-border e-commerce management.

Member economies of the APEC SCCP are encouraged to implement the following non-binding guidelines:

1. Facilitation of Cross-Border E-Commerce:

We will strive to enhance Customs clearance systems and simplify Customs procedures to facilitate the cross-border movement of e-commerce goods, including by establishing dedicated import modes for low-value shipments. Efforts will be made to reduce bottlenecks, eliminate unnecessary Customs processes, simplify Customs payment and refund procedures, and coordinate across border agencies to create greater trade opportunities for new and existing cross-border e-commerce vendors, especially MSMEs, to support economic growth.

2. Advancing Customs Digitalization for Cross-Border E-commerce Processing:

We will foster the integration of innovative technologies into Customs systems, ensuring adaptability to the dynamic cross-border e-commerce trade environment. Additionally, we will strive to customize operations specifically to transportation modes that enable cross-border ecommerce trade through the adoption of innovative and effective tools, facilities, and computerized systems. In this regard, we will support paperless trading for cross-border e-commerce import procedures more broadly, and strengthen our risk analysis of cross-border e-commerce shipments.

3. Capacity Building and Technical Assistance to Facilitate Cross-Border E-commerce Shipments:

We will cooperate in providing technical assistance and capacity building on cross-border e-commerce matters to develop human resources, Customs expertise, and technology, contributing to the improvement of the efficiency of cross-border e-commerce Customs processes. We will further our capacity building and technical assistance efforts to support each APEC member to publish on the internet, and keep up to date, all of the Customs procedures, facilitations, returns policies, and special

requirements that apply to e-commerce or low-value shipments.

4. Collection and Utilization of Information and Data related to Cross-Border E-commerce Shipments:

We will seek to request “the right data, from the right person, at the right time” on demand, with the goal of obtaining accurate and timely data. We will facilitate the use of information and data on e-commerce shipments in a responsible manner and in accordance with our respective laws and regulations, to combat illegitimate packages while promoting legitimate trade, and maintain the confidentiality of Customs data on cross-border e-commerce shipments.

5. Collaboration with Cross-Border E-commerce Stakeholders:

We will publish laws, regulations, and guidelines relevant to cross-border e-commerce trade within each jurisdiction online for stakeholders, ensuring they are clear, unambiguous, and up-to-date. We will also ensure, where appropriate and consistent with each jurisdiction’s legal framework, that we pursue available opportunities to publish proposals for review and comment on new and amended laws, regulations, and guidelines relevant to cross-border e-commerce trade, prior to their implementation. We will provide training for users of legal frameworks, systems, and IT infrastructure provided by customs administrations and sufficient lead time for them to adjust to new technical requirements. We will foster cooperation with international organizations, border agencies, and the private sector to enhance the efficient processing of legitimate cross-border e-commerce shipments across borders, while also exploring potential benefits, especially for MSMEs.