

**CPTPP Joint Committee on Competitiveness and Business Facilitation
and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises**

2022 Committee Report

1. The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) Joint Committee on Competitiveness and Business Facilitation (CBF) and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) met virtually on 8 September 2022, 9am SGT. Delegates from the following CPTPP Members participated, viz. Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Singapore and Viet Nam. The meeting was chaired by Mr Wong Toon Joon, Director of the International Trade Cluster, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore.

2. The meeting agenda is attached at ANNEX A.

3. A summary of the Committee's discussion and outcomes under the respective agenda items are set out below.

4. AGENDA ITEM 1: Adoption of agenda

The Committee adopted the agenda.

5. AGENDA ITEM 2: Review of Regional Supply Chains (Article 22.3.5)

Canada updated Members on the progress of the empirical analysis of the impact of the CPTPP on supply chains, as part of the supply chains review as stipulated in Article 22.3.5 of the CBF chapter.¹ Canada shared with the meeting that the work would likely be completed next year. As Members had previously discussed utilising the 2019-2020 import data exchanged at the Trade in Goods (TIG) committee, there was a discussion about the possibility of also using the 2021 data. Members noted that the 2021 data could be utilised, subject to confirmation by the TIG committee.

Members noted that it would be useful to supplement the empirical analysis with case studies for the supply chains review. Singapore noted that while there was some interest expressed at the last meeting, there had not been a detailed discussion on what these case studies should entail. Canada agreed to provide

¹ Under Article 22.3.5, CBF Committee Members are tasked to commence a review of the extent to which the CPTPP has facilitated the development, strengthening and operation of supply chains in the free trade area during the fourth year after the date of entry into force of the Agreement. The CBF Committee shall also submit a report to the Commission containing the Committee's findings and recommendations, no later than two years after the review's commencement.

headline figures from its empirical analysis, which would then give Members a better sense of where case studies could supplement the data. This would be circulated by end-October 2022. Members were also requested to provide some preliminary ideas of possible case studies by end-October.

The meeting also discussed possible collaboration with other committees on supply chains analyses. Members noted that this could be reviewed at a later date, given that such an exercise could be informed by the findings of the ongoing supply chains review.

6. AGENDA ITEM 3: Information Exchange (Article 22.3.4)

Members shared about their experiences and best practices in developing and strengthening supply chains.

- Australia said that it was working with international partners on capacity-building initiatives to address supply chain vulnerabilities, including in the context of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) discussions and bilaterally with partners such as Singapore.
- Canada shared that it had conducted extensive research on supply chain issues. While it had previously focused on international supply chains as drivers of growth in trade, the pandemic had triggered a shift towards research that focused on identifying vulnerabilities as well as promoting transparent and resilient supply chains. In particular, Canada was looking towards mapping supply chains shocks and assisting SMEs in having a better sense of their place in supply chains networks vis-à-vis other stakeholders.
- Japan said that it was working with Australia and India on supply chains principles, with a focus on helping the private sector create resilient supply chains and soften the impact from externalities such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Japan also shared about the Asia-Japan Investing for the Future initiative, which aimed to improve the attractiveness of the region as a global supply chains hub through support for the private sector on supply chains diversification and risk management.
- Mexico shared that it was working closely with the United States (US) to identify trade and investment opportunities within its supply chains networks for its SMEs, with a focus on semi-conductors for the automotive sector.
- Singapore shared about its efforts to build supply chain resilience and address disruptions at the domestic level and regional platforms. Domestically, it had adopted a multi-pronged diversification strategy for its food and essential supplies. At the regional level, it had maintained

open trade lines and facilitated the distribution of essential goods and vaccines. Singapore was also leading on the Supply Chain Connectivity Framework Action Plan initiative at APEC, which sets out APEC's overarching supply chain connectivity agenda for the next four years.

7. AGENDA ITEM 4: Information Exchange (Article 24.2.2)

Members shared about their ongoing efforts to support and assist SME exporters.

- Australia said that it had created a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) portal within its Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website, which provides SMEs with free online access to information on Harmonised System (HS) codes, tariffs, rules of origin, market size and other data. This granted SME exporters with ease of access to the information it required within one location. Canada and Singapore shared that they had similar tools for their exporters.
- Canada shared information on existing initiatives to help Canadian SMEs boost their capabilities and diversify their trade linkages, including through Canada's Trade Accelerator Program and Trade Commissioner Service. This included support for exporters from Canada's under-represented groups such as SMEs, women, Indigenous peoples and the 2SLGBTQI+ community.
- Mexico said that it had developed digital tools to support SME exporters in their uptake of digital capabilities and integration in regional value chains. In particular, its economy and finance ministries worked in conjunction with the National Institute for Women to promote the digital transformation of micro-enterprises led by women.
- Singapore shared about its ongoing efforts to help SME exporters, including (i) adoption of digital solutions; (ii) capacity-building for workers and businesses; and (iii) assisting SMEs to have a better understanding of import and export administration details via its online tariff finder tool on the Enterprise Singapore website.

8. AGENDA ITEM 5: Committee Report

The report will be finalised via email circulation and correspondence.

9. AGENDA ITEM 6: Next meeting and AOB

Incoming Chair New Zealand informed the Chair separately that its team was currently in preparations for its Commission chairmanship and would update Members again on its plans for the next meeting.

Annex A

CPTPP Joint Committee on Competitiveness and Business Facilitation (CBF) and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

**8 September, 9am SGT
Virtual Meeting Hosted by Singapore**

AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM 1: Adoption of the Agenda

AGENDA ITEM 2: Review of Regional Supply Chains (Article 22.3.5)

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