

## **DIGITAL ECONOMY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT JOINT COMMITTEE COMMENCES ACCESSION WORK GROUP FOR CANADA**

1 The Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA) Joint Committee has decided to commence the accession process for Canada, following Canada's formal application to join the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA) on 9 May 2022. The Joint Committee has established an Accession Working Group (AWG) to oversee Canada's accession. The AWG to be chaired by New Zealand will examine Canada's accession request, conduct discussions on its ability to comply to the standards and commitments of DEPA, and submit a report to the Joint Committee on the proposed terms and conditions of Canada's accession.

2 An aspirant economy will be required to demonstrate to the AWG (that comprises government representatives from DEPA member countries) its efforts to date, and the changes that will be made to its domestic laws and regulations, if any, so as to meet the DEPA obligations.

3 Minister for Trade and Industry, Gan Kim Yong said, "Singapore welcomes Canada's application to join DEPA and looks forward to having more aspirant economies join the agreement. With countries recovering from COVID-19 that has accelerated digital transformation, more businesses will benefit from the inter-operability across systems that DEPA fosters as well as the benchmark it provides for international trade rules. These will help support businesses with their digitalisation and internationalisation efforts."

4 Current DEPA members consist of Chile, New Zealand and Singapore. AWG discussions for the Republic of Korea are currently ongoing and are chaired by Singapore.

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