

IV. Advancing Agro-trade Facilitation

The analysis has attempted to provide an overview of the agricultural trade facilitation, its status, concerns and remedies in the Asia-Pacific region. The first part of the paper mainly argued that agricultural trade is highly significant for economic growth and there is further potential for Asia-Pacific to gain from this trade. It analyses the growth trend of agricultural trade and compares with leading trading countries globally. Although not beyond manufacturing, a definitive growth-trend of agricultural trade for the Asia-Pacific region is observed. It also looks at the value of trade in comparison with top trading countries in the World. The contribution of Asia-Pacific countries in intra-regional trade was analysed. The analysis mainly recognized the excellent growth trend for agro-trade and significant contribution of few Asia-Pacific countries to such growth. The traded product categories reflected the higher incomes of Asia-Pacific economies. The chapter ended by highlighting why facilitating agricultural trade is important for the Asia-Pacific region.

The growth-trend is of-course coupled with facilitation concerns. The second chapter has identified a number of major constraints and factors behind such constraints across the Asia-Pacific region, supported by examples or cases from various sources. It has attempted to categorize diverse range of issues and defined each of them. Issues related to trade procedures and product standards stood out as two most significant challenges for the developing Asia-Pacific countries, especially for the least developed countries. Logistics (for example for land-locked countries) and finance issues were significant also. This part of the paper used a number of examples from sub-regions of the Asia-Pacific and additional costs related to the constraints for various agricultural products.

The third chapter has broadly identified strategies and specific measures to address the issues mentioned in previous chapter. However, there is no 'one size fit all' solution. Partly, because economic priorities are different, levels of infrastructure development are not same and national agro-trade structure is dissimilar also. It has started by providing some figures that could be saved by adopting such measures. It then described ways of addressing the constraints according to the four categories mentioned in earlier chapter. Many examples were cited as good practices from within and outside the region to elaborate on specific steps to adopt trade facilitation measures.

The field of agricultural trade facilitation needs to be researched extensively. There is very little useful information related to agro-trade finance, for instance. Not surprisingly, the scope of agricultural trade facilitation is quite broad. But each topic needs to be carefully researched and analysed for effective facilitation of agricultural trade in the Asia-Pacific region, especially for developing countries.