

# UNESCAP Survey on trade facilitation

July 27, 2021

## In news

India has scored 90.32% in **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific's (UNESCAP)** latest Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation (with a jump of 78.49%).

## Highlights of the survey

- After evaluation of 143 economies, the 2021 Survey has highlighted **India's significant improvement in the scores** on all **5 key indicators**, as follows:

1. **Transparency:** 100% in 2021 (from 93.33% in 2019)
2. **Formalities:** 95.83% in 2021 (from 87.5% in 2019)
3. **Institutional Arrangement and Cooperation:** 88.89% in 2021 (from 66.67% in 2019)
4. **Paperless Trade:** 96.3% in 2021 (from 81.48% in 2019)
5. **Cross-Border Paperless Trade:** 66.67% in 2021 (from 55.56% in 2019).



- The Survey noted that **India is the best performing country** when compared to **South and South West Asia region** (63.12%) and **Asia Pacific region** (65.85%).
- The **overall score of India** has also been found to be

**greater than many OECD countries** including France, UK, Canada, Norway, Finland etc. and the overall score is greater than the average score of EU.

- India has achieved a **100% score for the Transparency index** and 66% in the “Women in trade” component.

### **Role of The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs(CBIC) in improvement**

1. CBIC, has been at forefront of path breaking reforms under the umbrella of ‘**Turant**’ Customs to usher in a Faceless, Paperless and Contactless Customs by way of a series of reforms.
2. This has had a direct impact in terms of the improvement in the UNESCAP rankings on digital and sustainable trade facilitation.
3. A dedicated single window COVID-19 24\*7 helpdesk for EXIM trade was created on the CBIC website to facilitate quick resolution of issue(s) faced by importers.

### **About the Survey:**

- **The Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation is conducted every two years by UNESCAP.**
- The 2021 Survey includes an **assessment of 58 trade facilitation measures covered by the WTO’s Trade Facilitation Agreement.**
- Survey covers 58 measured in **three main areas:**
  1. **General Trade Facilitation**, referring to the implementation of selected measures under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA);
  2. **Digital Trade Facilitation**, referring to the implementation of innovative, technology-driven measures aimed at enabling the use and exchange of electronic trade data and documents;
  3. **Sustainable Trade Facilitation**, referring to trade facilitation for SMEs, agricultural sector and women

- In addition, **this year survey includes measures covering 2 more areas:**
  1. **Trade Finance**, referring to facilitation of access to trade finance services; and
  2. **Trade Facilitation in Times of Crisis** on immediate and long-term measures aimed at addressing crisis and pandemic situations including the COVID-19.
- The Survey evidences whether or not the trade facilitation measures being taken have the desired impact and helps draw comparison amongst countries.
- A higher score for a country also helps businesses in their investment decisions.

### **The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific(UNESCAP)**

- UNESCAP is one of the five regional commissions under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.
- **Founded:** 28 March 1947
- **Headquarters:** Bangkok, Thailand
- It serves as the United Nations' regional hub promoting cooperation among countries to achieve inclusive and sustainable development.
- It is the largest regional intergovernmental platform with 53 Member States and 9 associate members
- ESCAP has emerged as a strong regional think-tank offering countries sound analytical products that shed insight into the evolving economic, social and environmental dynamics of the region.

**The overall objective of ESCAP** is to promote inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region, with priority accorded to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.