



A New Trade Policy Landscape

Mapping trade-related agreements

2024



Preface

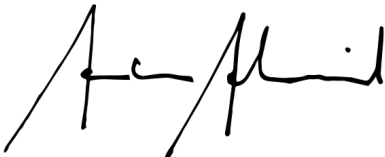
For centuries countries have relied on trade cooperation to achieve their foreign policy goals and a stronger, integrated economy with benefits for their citizens. The world of trade policy and the cooperation taking place have evolved over time, from the days of the Silk Road and the Hanseatic League to the establishment of the World Trade Organization. Our world is currently facing multiple challenges, and the rule-based system for trade is being challenged by protectionist and nationalist influences.

In the margins of multilateral agreements, regional trade agreements and free trade agreements (FTAs), other forms of trade cooperation have begun to receive more attention. We are witnessing countries, including Sweden, cooperating on policy issues in which trade cooperation is a given necessity. Trade is an important tool when it comes to promoting a country's economic interests, facilitating exports and achieving national policy goals.

This trade cooperation differs from conventional trade cooperation such as multi-lateral agreements and FTAs and can be viewed as the third-best option to existing agreements. Such trade cooperation focuses on strengthening transparency and dialogue in certain areas or sectors instead of improving market access by reducing tariffs. The purpose of this report is to increase awareness and knowledge of this type of trade-related cooperation to illustrate the emerging trade policy landscape.

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Stockholm, November 2024



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Summary

Currently, we are experiencing a time in modern history where the multilateral trading system is being challenged. The upward trend regarding free trade agreements (FTAs) continues, albeit at a much slower rate over the last couple of years. At the same time, another kind of trade cooperation has emerged and is receiving more attention. The purpose of this report is to increase awareness and knowledge of a certain type of trade-related cooperation taking place outside of the multilateral arena and conventional FTAs. In this report, we use the term “trade-related agreement” (TRA) to describe and define this type of cooperation and we discuss its potential benefits and challenges.

We have mapped TRAs within four thematic areas of cooperation: horizontal, digital, resilience-focused and ‘green’. Our intention has not been to identify all TRAs, but rather to highlight the kind of trade cooperation that is becoming established in the trade policy landscape. We looked at a total of 114 TRAs and all of them have common traits. They include a trade cooperation dimension without focusing on improving market access by reducing tariffs. We found that most TRAs were also soft-law cooperation in which the focus is on increased dialogue and transparency.

Due to the soft law nature of TRAs, they are flexible and easier to conclude compared to multilateral agreements and FTAs. While there have been limited estimates of their effects on trade, TRAs could have potential for trade policy, as they could be used as building blocks to or complement FTAs and multilateral agreements. However, it is not easy to access information about TRAs and there is a risk that developing countries will be left outside the TRA landscape.

We recommend that policy makers improve the transparency and inclusiveness of TRAs and evaluate their potential trade effects. Ideally, the World Trade Organization (WTO) would monitor TRAs to get a better overview of their development. However, if that is not possible, for example, due to political deadlocks within the WTO, other options should be explored. Due to the limited scope of this report, we recommend that further analysis about TRAs should be conducted before any conclusion on their benefits for trade are drawn.

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1. Introduction

Cooperation is a cornerstone of trade. As well as creating wealth and welfare, trade facilitates interaction and can serve as a political and diplomatic tool to achieve foreign policy interests, build partnerships, and advance peace and stability across the globe. For the last 75 years, multilateralism and integration in the multilateral trading system has been the main platform for trade cooperation, in particular by reducing tariffs and addressing non-tariff barriers (NTBs). The World Trade Organization (WTO) has had success in regulating the scope and transparency of regional trade agreements (RTAs), often in the form of free trade agreements (FTAs).¹ However, it has faced multiple challenges with negotiation deadlocks, the inability to conclude new multilateral agreements and, more recently, a non-functioning appellate body. With geopolitical challenges on the rise, countries resort to alternative platforms for trade.² Against this background, terms like “mini deals” have been given an increased amount of attention, and a discussion on the future of trade policy has started to emerge.

This has prompted us to investigate and explore the trade cooperation that is taking place outside of the formal framework of trade policy. We have chosen to use the term “trade-related agreement” (TRA) to describe and define this type of cooperation. We see that such cooperation can comprise more classic trade cooperation elements, as well as trade promotion elements to strengthen the overall trade relationship. Our ambition is to initiate a discussion on the potential consequences of TRAs and how they can be used.

1.1 Purpose of the report and disposition

The purpose of this report is to increase awareness and knowledge of a certain type of trade-related cooperation taking place outside the multilateral arena and conventional FTAs. To illustrate the emerging trade policy landscape, we conduct an initial mapping of different types of “trade-related agreements” (TRAs). We then discuss their potential benefits and challenges. Our ambition is to initiate a discussion about different kinds of cooperation that may have an impact on trade policy.

First, we describe the current trade policy landscape and the state of play of multilateralism and FTAs. Second, we describe and characterise TRAs. Third, we present and discuss the results of our mapping, and delve deeper into four specific TRAs. This is followed by a general discussion on the potential advantages and challenges of these TRAs. Lastly, we present some concluding remarks and recommendations on how to unlock the potential of TRAs, as well as recommendations for future analysis.

1.2 Method and limitations

We define TRAs as agreements between two countries or more where one of the objectives is to increase *cooperation* with a trade dimension without focusing on improving market access by reducing tariffs. We have interpreted generously when an agreement is “trade-related” in the sense that we have included agreements in which increased trade is one of the desired outcomes of the agreement. The concept of TRAs is explained in more detail in Chapter 3, where we identify and define the typical characteristics of TRAs based on our mapping.

1. Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), “What is Trade Policy?”.

2. Reinsch, “Is Our Trade Policy a Feature or a Bug?”.



We have conducted the report based on literature and open sources such as the websites of governmental and international organisations. We have also used news media and joint statements to identify TRAs. All TRAs included in this mapping (see Annex I) have been analysed and assessed. We included a TRA in our mapping based on the following criteria that the TRA:

- was established in 2016 or later,
- is a government-to-government cooperation,
- did not focus on reducing tariffs and/or barriers to investment.

TRAs were not included in our mapping after 31 July 2024. We only included TRAs that had been concluded, not TRAs that were still under negotiation.

The agreements included in our mapping are of varying scope and can have both a direct and an indirect relation to trade. For example, we have chosen to include agreements that focus on supply chain resilience as functioning supply chains are essential for trade. Agreements focusing on increased cooperation on, for example, energy, e-commerce or critical minerals are also included in our mapping. Thus, the relation to trade has been conducted on a case-by-case assessment of each agreement. Due to the varying scope of the agreements, it is our understanding that they will also differ in their potential to become a trade facilitating tool. However, we believe that it is important to provide a broad overview of where trade is included, as this illustrates how trade is an important component when addressing goals in other policy areas.

During our mapping, we extracted other data from the TRAs to facilitate the analysis based on questions we found relevant, such as the year in which the cooperation was established, who the signatories are, whether they have FTAs with each other, whether or not it is legally binding, whether the official text of the agreement can be found online, etc. The latter was included since it was challenging for us to find official texts of TRAs as many of them are not publicly available online. Annex I illustrates how we conducted our mapping. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first kind of mapping to

explore TRAs in this way. We have therefore chosen not to dive deeper into other aspects that may be relevant to explore, such as the legality and legitimacy of the TRAs in the WTO. We have also not analysed the effectiveness of the agreements, or their cooperative elements in greater detail.

We have also limited the report to TRAs in four specific areas of our own choosing: horizontal, digital, resilience-focused and 'green'. These areas were chosen because we found them to be the most relevant based on current global challenges. We have also chosen one TRA within each area of cooperation which we present in greater detail in order to illustrate how this type of cooperation is built. The selected agreements are intended to show the different forms of cooperation that can take place. We chose comprehensive agreements that we found to be of particular interest for trade policy cooperation.

The four specific TRAs are the Agreement on Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF Agreement), the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA) between New Zealand, Chile and Singapore, the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) and the Green Economy Agreement (GEA) between Singapore and Australia. One of the reasons we chose the IPEF Agreement, the DEPA and the MSP was because they are not bilateral agreements but have several member parties. We chose the GEA because it was one of the most advanced TRAs we identified and out of all the TRAs we identified was the closest to resemble an FTA.

To conclude, the TRAs we present in this report should be viewed as examples that aim to illustrate the different kinds of trade cooperation that are emerging in the international trade policy landscape. Thus, this mapping should not be perceived as an exhaustive list as we have had neither the ambition nor the resources to identify all the TRAs within these four thematic areas. It should be further noted that since we have relied on open sources, the geographical spread of the signatories in our mapping is not fully representative. However, we are confident that most countries have established some form of TRAs, even if our mapping does not show it.

2 The current trade policy landscape

2.1 The end of the golden age of multilateralism?

The WTO has faced multiple challenges over the last decade. Challenges related to negotiation deadlocks and a non-functioning appellate body, in combination with increasing geopolitical tensions, have prevented the WTO from moving forward and concluding new multilateral agreements.³ Thus, some claim that it seems like the golden age of the multilateral trading system is coming to an end.⁴

However, there are ongoing discussions on whether plurilateral agreements or so-called Joint Statement Initiatives (JSIs) could be the solution for the WTO to stay relevant. JSIs lack a clear definition, although they are currently viewed as a negotiating tool to achieve consensus on new trade rules between like-minded WTO members.⁵ JSIs have been a standard feature of the multilateral trading system from its inception and one of their main benefits is that they can be negotiated and implemented faster than multilateral agreements since there are fewer parties involved.⁶ JSIs can also cover specific issues unlike FTAs, which need to have substantial coverage.⁷ However, JSIs still require the consensus of all WTO members at WTO Ministerial Conferences (MC) in order for them to be incorporated into the WTO legal framework.⁸ There are also WTO members who question whether JSIs are within the mandate of the Doha Round Agenda.⁹ Consequently, the JSI on Investment Facilitation for Development could not be incorporated into the WTO legal framework at the MC13 in February 2024 even though it had the support of over 120 WTO members (out of 166 members).¹⁰ This demonstrates the difficulty of succeeding in multilateral trade cooperation.

One concept that has been described as an alternative to multilateralism is ‘minilateralism’. The concept of minilateralism is based on a smaller group of countries negotiating with each other, making it easier to achieve consensus.¹¹ We will use the term ‘minilateral’ in this report when describing TRAs between more than two parties.

2.2 Are “mini deals” the answer to fewer FTAs?

Since negotiations to conclude the WTO’s Doha Round Agenda stalled in 2008, the main efforts by many countries, including the EU, to liberalise trade have been through FTAs as a second-best option to multilateral agreements, and there has been great interest

3. World Bank Group, *World Development Report 2020 – Trading for Development in the Age of Global Value Chains*, p. 17.

4. Brummer, *Minilateralism – How trade alliances, soft law, and financial engineering are redefining economic statecraft*, p. 48.

5. Boklan, Starshinova and Bahri, “Joint Statement Initiatives: A Legitimate End to ‘Until Everything is Agreed?’”.

6. National Board of Trade Sweden, *Trade and Climate Change – Promoting Climate Goals with a WTO Agreement*, p. 51.

7. According to Article XXIV of the GATT 1994 and Article V of the GATS, a PTA must substantially cover all trade in goods and/or have substantial sectoral coverage of services.

8. National Board of Trade Sweden, *Trade and Climate Change – Promoting Climate Goals with a WTO Agreement*, p. 52.

9. Boklan, Starshinova and Bahri, “Joint Statement Initiatives: A Legitimate End to ‘Until Everything is Agreed?’”, 342.

10. WTO, “Investment Facilitation for Development”.

11. CFR, “Making Sense of “Minilateralism”: The Pros and Cons of Flexible Cooperation”

in making them more effective in order to stimulate trade.¹² The number of signed FTAs continues to increase, but the rate has slowed down during the past few years.

In the 2000s, 13 FTAs were signed on average per year while only three FTAs were concluded and notified to the WTO's database in 2023.¹³ While it is easy to assume that the decline of signed FTAs is about increased protectionism, geopolitical conflicts or challenges within the multilateral trading system, there is a more nuanced picture of this. Some believe that this assumption partly has to do with the fact that countries have already signed so many FTAs.¹⁴ However, countries such as the US are tending to show less interest in negotiating FTAs.¹⁵

Based on this, discussions on trade cooperation outside FTAs, as a third-best option to multilateral agreements and a second-best option to FTAs, have started to emerge. Terms such as “mini deals” and “trade executive agreements” (TEAs) have received increased attention. Kathleen Claussen, professor at Georgetown University, has analysed the US TEAs, which she defines as *a written commitment between the United States and another country that relates to cross-border movements of goods and services that has not been subject to congressional approval between its negotiations and its entry into force*.¹⁶ The Head of Global Regulatory Cooperation and International Procurement Negotiations at the European Commission, Lucian Cernat's, concept of “mini deals” was inspired by Claussen's description of TEAs. Cernat describes “mini deals” as agreements between countries that in some way influence trade flows and trade volumes. Cernat states that “mini deals” have been a common trade instrument for the EU for a long time and that the EU has over 2000 “mini deals” compared to its 40 FTAs.¹⁷ Claussen found that the US has over 1200 TEAs¹⁸ compared to its current 14 FTAs.¹⁹

Both Cernat and Claussen state that “mini deals” and TEAs are a faster and easier way to conclude trade cooperation agreements compared to conventional FTAs.²⁰ This has been one of the main reasons for the discussion on whether these types of trade cooperation could be viewed as alternatives to FTAs. However, as highlighted by Claussen, the constitutionality and legality of TEAs could be questioned since they are not ratified by the US Congress.²¹ Based on Claussen and Cernat's reports, one possible explanation as to why “mini deals” and TEAs are easier to conclude could be that unlike FTAs, many of them are not legally binding. However, studies of FTAs show that legally binding measures and agreements tend to have statistically significant trade effects, whereas non-binding provisions have zero or weaker effects.²² To the best of our knowledge, few studies have estimated the trade effects of TRAs. Thus, it remains to be seen whether TEAs, “mini deals” and TRAs are the answer to fewer FTAs.

12. The National Board of Trade, *The trade effects of EU regional trade agreements – evidence and strategic choices* and *The National Board of Trade, Economic integration works – The trade effects of regional trade agreements*.

13. The Economist, “Rumours of the trade deal's death are greatly exaggerated”.

14. The Economist, “Rumours of the trade deal's death are greatly exaggerated”.

15. Harrell, “Time to Reset the U.S Trade Agenda”.

16. Claussen, “Trade's Mini-Deals”, p. 325.

17. Cernat, *The Art of the Mini-Deals: The Invisible Part of EU Trade Policy*, p. 4.

18. Claussen, “Trade's Mini-Deals”.

19. WTO, Regional Trade Agreements Database, *United States of America*.

20. Claussen, “Trade's Mini-Deals”, and Cernat, *The Art of the Mini-Deals: The Invisible Part of EU Trade Policy*, p. 10.

21. Claussen, “Trade's Mini-Deals”.

22. See for example Kohl, Brakman and Garretsen, “Do Trade Agreements Stimulate International Trade Differently? Evidence from 296 Trade Agreements”.

3 What are trade-related agreements (TRAs)?

To carry out our mapping we have chosen to use the term “trade-related agreement”. We define TRAs as agreements between two countries or more where one of the objectives is to increase *cooperation* with a trade dimension, without focusing on improving market access by reducing tariffs. We have also chosen to exclude mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) since they are already well-established in trade policy and are encouraged in the WTO’s Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement.²³ Our definition of TRAs also excludes multilateral agreements, RTAs and FTAs.

TRAs are inspired by Claussen and Cernat’s concepts of “TEAs” and “mini deals”.²⁴ However, none of these terms seemed appropriate to use in this report since our outlook is slightly different from these concepts. It seems misguided to use “mini deals” since many of these TRAs do not seem to be so “mini” in practice and may involve comprehensive forms of cooperation. Further, compared to Claussen, we have not limited ourselves to the way in which these agreements are ratified, or the country that has adopted them. Also, both Claussen and Cernat have included MRAs²⁵ in their definitions, which are not part of the scope of this report.

Overall, the TRAs in this report come in many different shapes and sizes and have different labels. However, there are some overarching common denominators when analysing them, which we have attempted to describe below. See Annex I for the detailed mapping.

3.1 The characteristics of TRAs

3.1.1 Cooperation, transparency and dialogue

In general, the main purpose of TRAs is to strengthen and increase cooperation, transparency and dialogue to promote trade between the partners. Many TRAs establish or aim to establish some kind of platform or forum where the cooperation and dialogue between the trading partners takes place. In some cases, these platforms or forums are also used to supervise the implementation of TRAs and follow up the work that is carried out under them. Different forms of regulatory cooperation are also a recurring theme in the TRAs.²⁶

3.1.2 Thematic areas or sector specific

Unlike FTAs, which usually grant preference utilisation and cover broad areas, TRAs aim to facilitate trade in certain sectors or thematic areas. Examples include the digital economy, the green transition and resilience. These thematic areas can then be broken down into areas that are even more specific, such as ensuring resilient value chains, driving the twin transition, or accelerating technological advancements. The areas of

23. The WTO TBT Agreement Article 6.3, in relation to conformity assessment procedures.

24. Claussen, “Trade’s Mini-Deals”, p. 322, 332–333 and Cernat, *The Art of the Mini-Deals: The Invisible Part of EU Trade Policy*, p. 4.

25. MRAs are a form of agreement that recognise equivalence between trading partners when it comes to conformity assessment. Thus, they limit non-tariff barriers in the trade of goods.

26. To read more on regulatory cooperation, see National Board of Trade Sweden, *An All-Star Approach to Regulatory Cooperation in the Area of Technical Barriers to Trade – Identifying the “best of the best” and how to promote sustainability*.

cooperation are typically built around key sectors or politically prioritised issues that could strengthen the overall trade relationship of the parties.

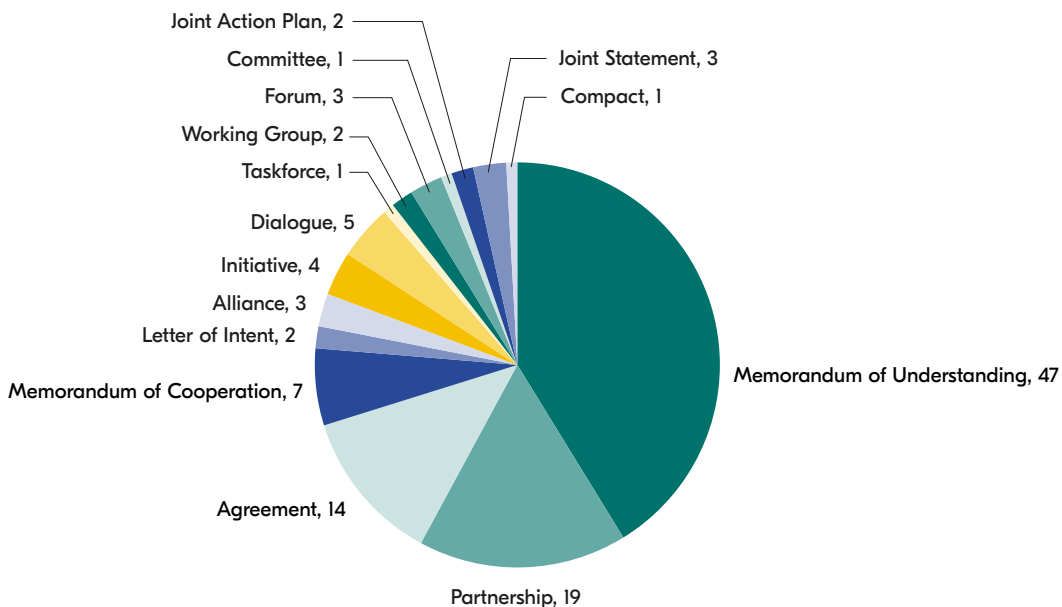
3.1.3 Soft commitments

Compared to conventional trade cooperation such as FTAs and multilateral agreements that are legally binding, TRAs can be described as “soft-law cooperation”. They are not necessarily legally binding and are often more of a statement of intention to conduct work and cooperate on trade-related issues. It is usually stated if the TRAs do not create legally binding obligations for the parties, or, conversely, whether TRAs or some provisions within them are legally binding. If nothing is stated, it can be assumed that TRAs are not legally binding. One interesting aspect is that despite the soft law nature of the cooperation, some TRAs include provisions on dispute settlement that is often associated with legally binding rules. However, these dispute settlement provisions are often vaguer than the provisions found in FTAs and the emphasis is on consultations rather than sanctions if one of the parties believes that the other party is in breach of the TRA.

3.2 The structure of TRAs

TRAs are not structured or established in a uniform manner, which makes it difficult to gain a comprehensive overview of the current trade policy landscape. It is also challenging to find official texts for TRAs, something that both Claussen and Cernat also mentioned²⁷ To add to this, TRAs are referred to differently. Figure 1 illustrates the different labels of TRAs we found during our mapping.

Figure 1. Examples of TRA labels



27. Claussen, “Trade’s Mini-Deals”, and Cernat, *The Art of the Mini-Deals: The Invisible Part of EU Trade Policy*, p. 10.



The scope of cooperation in TRAs varies and sometimes they are interconnected. For example, there could be a horizontal TRA that establishes more sectoral TRAs. There could also be TRAs that include provisions to create more specific TRAs. Lastly, we have found TRAs that seem to be used as a sectoral complement or even replace parts of existing FTAs.

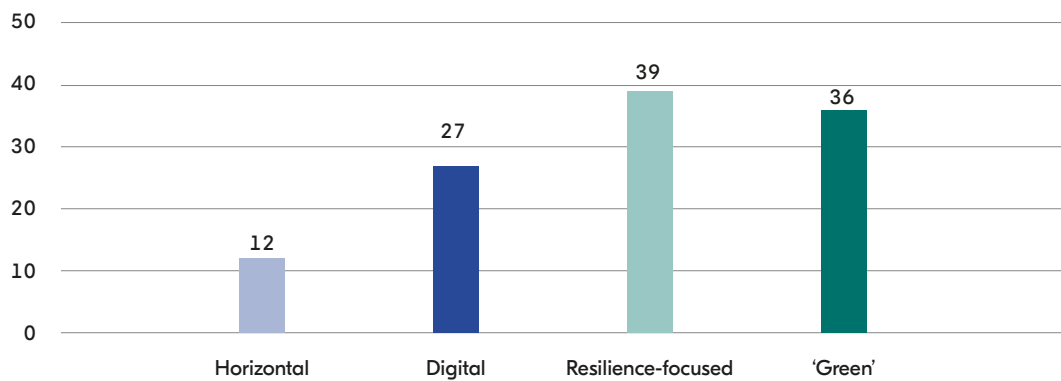
TRAs often include a follow-up mechanism to assess the effectiveness and results of the trade cooperation. The review can be conducted at ministerial level, governmental level or working group level. Some TRAs are time limited but often do not state how long they are in force. Instead, they frequently include provisions on automatic renewal unless the parties agree to end the cooperation prior to the renewal.

4 Mapping of TRAs

In this section, we present the rest of our mapping. As mentioned in section 1.2, we have limited ourselves to mapping TRAs in four thematic areas: horizontal, digital, resilience-focused and 'green'. This mapping should not be viewed as exhaustive.

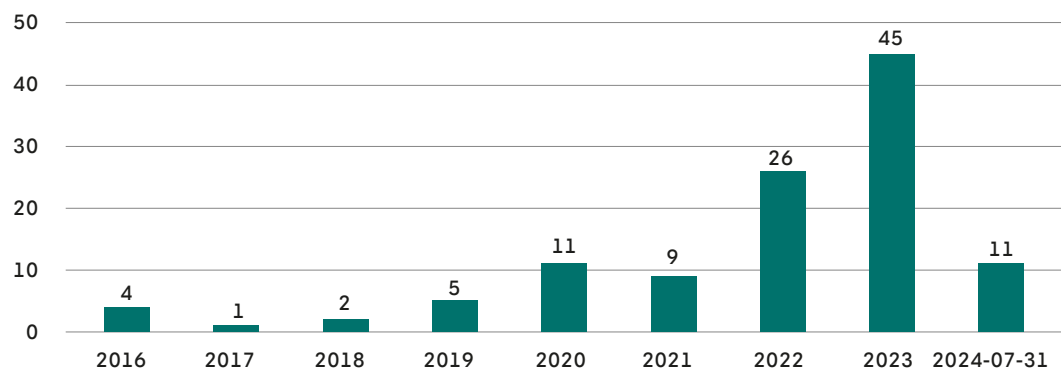
We found a total of 114 TRAs. Figure 2 below shows that most of the TRAs we found are in the resilience category, which is then closely followed by the 'green' category. One possible explanation for this could be that the latest global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and climate change have exposed the dependencies and vulnerabilities of countries, making them more eager to show political determination and cooperate with other countries to address those challenges.

Figure 2. Total number of TRAs per category



As illustrated in Figure 3, most of the TRAs we have identified were signed in 2023 whereas very few TRAs were signed between 2016 and 2018.

Figure 3. Number of TRAs established between 2016 and 2024



We also expect that the number of TRAs that were established in 2024 will increase. In our mapping, we have excluded several TRAs that are being negotiated but have not yet been concluded, such as the EU-US Critical Minerals Agreement.

Figure 4. Number of TRAs by country including the EU

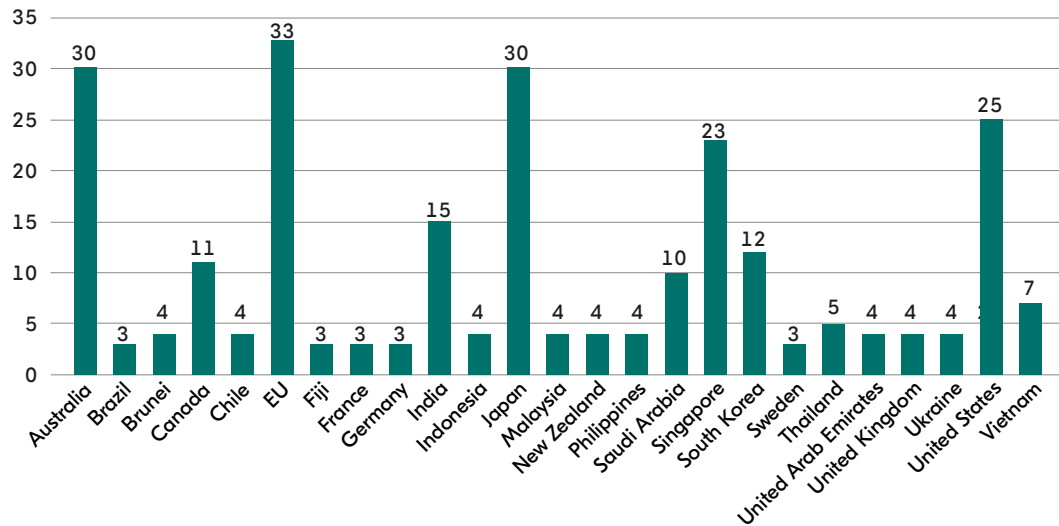


Figure 4 shows a summary of the countries with more than two signed TRAs out of the 114 covered in this report. We found a total of 50 countries that have at least one TRA in force. Figure 4 shows that the EU, followed by Japan, Australia, US and Singapore have the most signed TRAs. It should also be noted that we did not identify any African country with more than two TRAs.

It is also interesting to note that we identified several TRAs in which one or more of the parties are individual EU Member States. For example, Canada, along with France, Germany, Japan, the UK and the US launched the Sustainable Critical Minerals Alliance in 2022.²⁸ Sweden joined in June 2024.²⁹ This illustrates how the different scopes of TRAs can affect the different competencies between the EU and its Member States due to their varying scope, especially since trade policy is an exclusive competence of the EU.³⁰ It also shows that there are TRAs in other policy areas that include a trade dimension.

Even though terms like “mini deals” are relatively new, regulatory trade cooperation such as facilitating market access and limiting NTBs is not.³¹ However, we cannot state whether the thematic areas of the cooperation have changed over time. Our mapping indicates that the areas of cooperation are increasingly of more strategic and geopolitical importance in which factors such as resilience are included.

Our mapping shows that trade cooperation is taking place outside of the multilateral arena and conventional FTAs. We identified a plethora of cooperation in important sectors in which trade and functioning value chains are important components. In many of the TRAs, trade is not necessarily the main objective. In fact, we only found a couple of TRAs that were specifically about limiting NTBs. Instead, they focus on

28. Government of Canada, “Sustainable Critical Minerals Alliance”.

29. Government Offices of Sweden, “Sweden Joins the Sustainable Critical Minerals Alliance, Committing to the Sustainable Development and Sourcing of Critical Minerals”.

30. Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 3 and 207.

31. See, for example, OECD, *International Regulatory Co-operation: Addressing Global Challenges*.

strengthening the relationship between partners by increased dialogue and transparency that can promote and facilitate trade. TRAs also seem to be an attractive instrument to maintain or improve trade relations between countries. However, based on our mapping, we did not find that TRAs are used as substitutes to FTAs since many countries have both TRAs and FTAs.

4.1 Horizontal TRAs

Horizontal TRAs either focus on several thematic areas or have a slightly more overarching approach. These TRAs aim to strengthen the overall economic relationship and tend to include several sectors. For example, the US-UK Atlantic Declaration for a Twenty-First Century aims to build a stronger partnership in the geo-economic sphere. Linked to the declaration, an Action Plan has been established that sets out several actions, such as launching collaborative work in prioritised technologies, and negotiating a critical minerals agreement.³² Another example of a horizontal TRA is the EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC), which serves as a forum to coordinate approaches to key global trade, economic and technology issues. The TTC has 10 underlying working groups in different areas. It has also launched separate TRAs, such as the Transatlantic Initiative on Sustainable Trade (TIST).

Figure 5. Number of horizontal TRAs established between 2016 and 2024

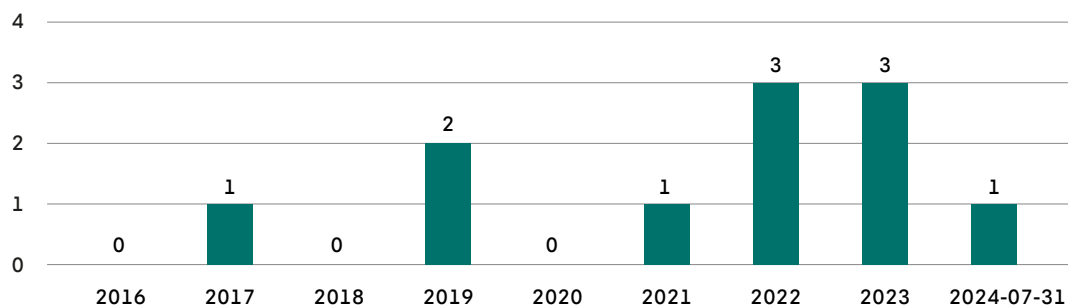


Figure 5 shows that we found a total of 11 horizontal TRAs. The most recent agreement we identified is the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Clean Economy Agreement. Compared to the other TRA categories in this report, we found the least number of horizontal TRAs. One possible explanation for this could be that the horizontal TRAs are much broader in scope and include several areas of cooperation compared to the other TRA categories, which could make them more difficult to conclude.

32. The Atlantic Declaration: A Framework for a Twenty-First Century U.S-UK Economic Partnership.

Figure 6. Number of horizontal TRAs by country including the EU

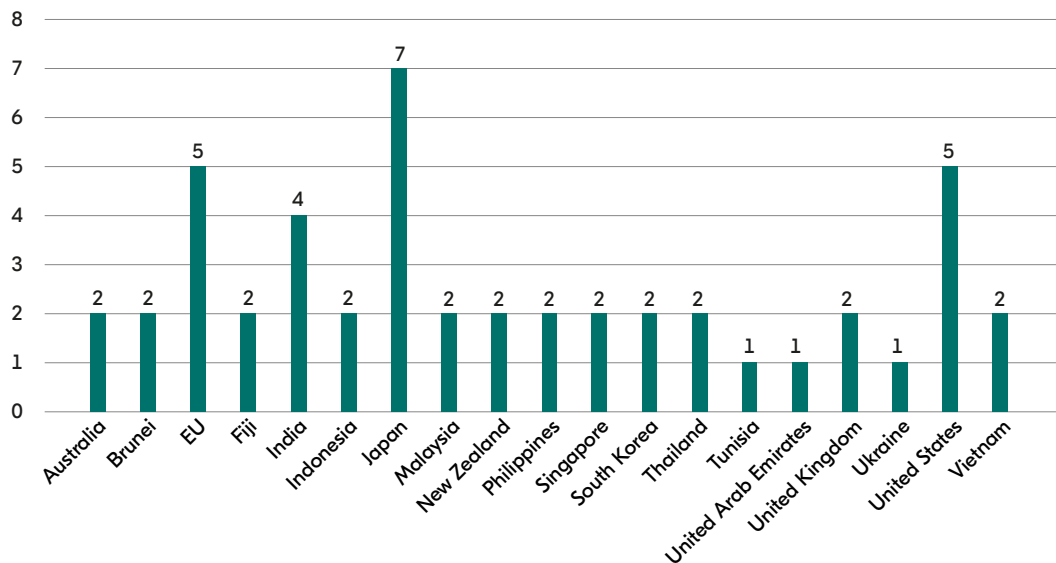


Figure 6 shows that Japan stands out as the country with the most horizontal TRAs, closely followed by the US and the EU. Compared to the EU’s 40 FTAs, both Japan and the US have fewer FTAs (18 and 14, respectively).³³ Even if we cannot draw a far-reaching conclusion based on our results, it could be questioned whether the US is using horizontal TRAs as substitutes for FTAs, especially since the US has been clear that it will not negotiate any new FTAs in the foreseeable future.

Table 5 also shows that there are no individual EU Member States that are part of a horizontal TRA or countries from Latin America and Africa, except for Tunisia. Furthermore, it should be noted that several of the countries listed in Figure 6 are part of the IPEF.

In comparison to the resilience-focused and ‘green’ TRA categories, the information on horizontal TRAs is more accessible, probably because they cover a broad set of issues that receive more attention. However, it was not as easy to find the official texts of the horizontal TRAs. This made it difficult to find information on what happens if, for example, a dispute was to arise under a TRA, if they are time limited or if they are legally binding. Based on our mapping, we noted that most of the horizontal TRAs are bilateral. One exception is the IPEF agreement, which we look at more closely below.

4.1.1 The Agreement on the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)

In 2022, the IPEF was launched between the US, Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.³⁴ The agreement aims to advance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness and competitiveness between the partners, who represent 28 per cent of global trade in goods and services.³⁵

The overarching IPEF agreement stipulates detailed proceedings for the parties’ commitments to the IPEF. It establishes the IPEF Council and a Joint Commission that steers and oversees the cooperation, the negotiation of new agreements, as well as

33. WTO, Regional Trade Agreements Database, *Japan and United States of America*.

34. U.S Department of Commerce, “Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity”.

35. U.S Department of Commerce, “Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity”.

operational and implementing measures under the IPEF. The IPEF agreement states that the partners are obligated to be part of the agreement for three years before they may withdraw from the agreement.³⁶ The language of the IPEF agreement is of a more legally binding nature compared to other TRAs, but still differs from the language used in traditional FTAs and includes provisions on implementation and depositary of the agreement.³⁷ However, there is no clear dispute settlement mechanism in the overarching agreement. The overarching agreement also allows for other partners to accede, and the areas within the IPEF might also expand and be further developed in the future.³⁸

The IPEF partners have launched negotiations connected to four different pillars; I) trade, II) supply chains, III) clean energy, decarbonisation and infrastructure and IV), tax and anti-corruption.³⁹ The IPEF agreement is designed to be flexible, meaning that the IPEF partners are not required to join all pillars.⁴⁰ Within these four pillars, other agreements and initiatives can be initiated. This means that other TRAs can be developed under the IPEF agreement to deepen the level of cooperation in specific areas within each pillar. For example, in connection with the supply chain pillar, the IPEF initiated a critical minerals dialogue to strengthen its supply chains in this sector.⁴¹

In June 2024, the parties signed agreements on Clean Economy (Pillar III) and the Agreement Relating to a Fair Economy (Pillar IV) to complement the already signed agreement on supply chains.⁴² The proposed IPEF trade pillar includes provisions on, for example, labour, the digital economy, good regulatory practices, competition policy and trade facilitation. Thus far, the parties have been unable to reach consensus related to this trade pillar due to disagreement on issues such as labour and the digital economy.⁴³ Nevertheless, the remaining pillars and signed agreements still include aspects of trade such as supply chain resilience and the promotion of trade in emerging low emissions products.⁴⁴

4.2 Digital TRAs

Digital TRAs focus on digital trade cooperation. Based on our mapping, there seems to be three types of digital TRAs: either they are overarching, focus on a specific issue within the digital area, or they update existing FTA chapters. An example of an overarching TRA is the EU-Japan Digital Partnership (EUJDP) and an example of a digital TRA that focuses on a specific issue is the Mexico-Singapore MoU on Personal Data Protection Efforts.

We found several examples where TRAs update existing FTA chapters, and where other TRAs are established to support the implementation of these TRAs. One example is the South Korea-Singapore Digital Partnership Agreement, which is supported by three Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs). Another example is the Australia-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement, which is supported by seven MoUs. Technically, it could be argued that these digital agreements fall outside the scope of this report since they

36. U.S Department of Commerce, "Agreement on IPEF", Article 31.

37. U.S Department of Commerce, "Agreement on IPEF", Article 9.

38. U.S Department of Commerce, "Agreement on IPEF", Articles 32–33.

39. U.S Department of Commerce, "Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity".

40. Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), "Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity".

41. The White House, "Leaders' Statement on Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity".

42. U.S Department of Commerce, "Press Statement on Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity Ministerial Meeting in Singapore".

43. US Congressional Research Service, "Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)".

44. U.S Department of Commerce, "Press Statement on Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity Ministerial Meeting in Singapore".

update existing FTAs and therefore focus on improving market access by reducing tariffs. However, since there is more to these agreements, such as the additional MoUs and that they are presented as new agreements and not as FTAs, we have chosen to include them in our report.

Figure 7. Number of digital TRAs that were established between 2016 and 2024

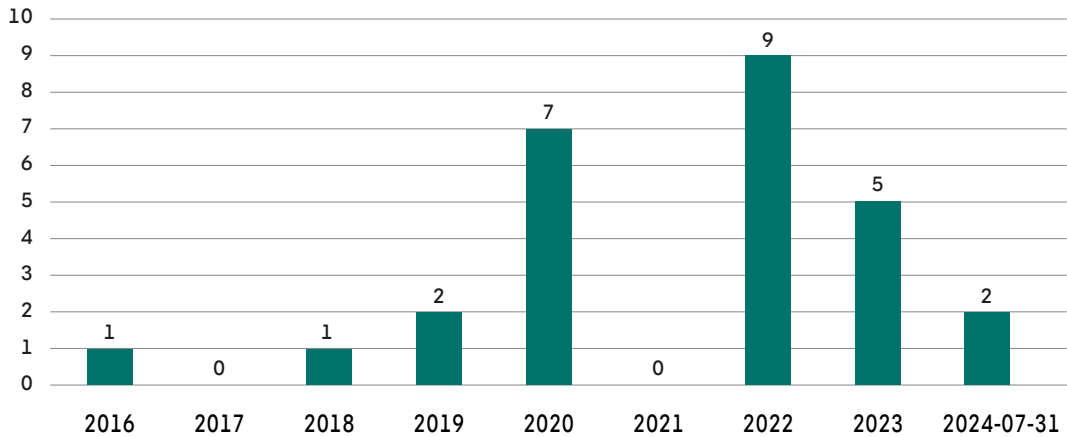


Figure 7 shows that we found a total of 27 digital TRAs and many of them were signed in 2022. The most recent digital TRA we found is the EU-Canada Digital Partnership, which was established in 2024.

Figure 8. Number of digital TRAs by country including the EU

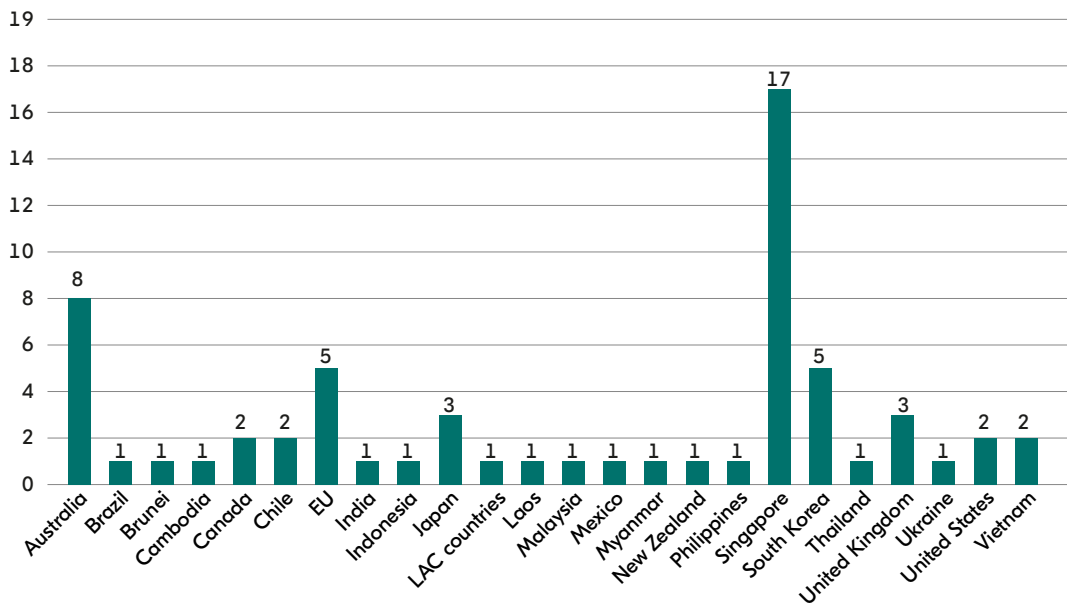


Figure 8 shows that we have not identified any African country with a digital TRA. However, this does not necessarily mean that no African country has established TRAs but could be an indication that these TRAs are not as accessible. Also, since Singapore established several supporting TRAs in connection with its overarching digital TRAs, it is not surprising that it stands out in Figure 8 as the country with the most digital TRAs, and that its bilateral trading partners such as Australia and South Korea are next.



However, the EU-Singapore Digital Partnership (EUSDP) has not updated its existing FTA or has any supporting TRAs. The EUSDP is much more overarching, similar to the EUJDP. One explanation for this could be that the EU’s approach to digital TRAs is more overarching and does not aim to update existing FTA chapters, while in most cases, Singapore’s digital agreements update existing FTAs.

Most official texts of digital TRAs can be found online. This could be because digital TRAs aim to enhance and facilitate transparency and cooperation within the digital area. Several digital TRAs include some sort of dispute settlement mechanism, such as the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce and the Australia-Singapore MoU on Cooperation in Personal Data Protection. Similar to the horizontal TRAs, most digital TRAs are bilateral, except for three. One of them is the Digital Economic Partnership Agreement (DEPA), which we will take a closer look at next.

4.2.1 The Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA)

The DEPA was launched in 2020 between New Zealand, Chile and Singapore to complement other international negotiations on digital trade, such as the WTO JSI negotiations on e-commerce.⁴⁵ The DEPA is also open to WTO members who meet its requirements.⁴⁶ In May 2024, South Korea joined the DEPA and Canada, Costa Rica, China, Peru, the United Arab Emirates and El Salvador have applied to join.⁴⁷

The agreement is described as a first of its kind and aims to advance trade by promoting cooperation on digital trade issues.⁴⁸ The agreement covers a range of areas including topics such as paperless trade, cross-border data flows and AI.⁴⁹ The agreement is struc-

45. New Zealand’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs & Trade, “The Digital Economy Partnership is a new initiative with Chile and Singapore”.

46. New Zealand Ministry for Foreign Affairs & Trade, “The Digital Economy Partnership is a new initiative with Chile and Singapore”.

47. Singapore’s Ministry of Trade and Industry, “Digital Economy Partnership Agreement”.

48. Singapore’s Ministry of Trade and Industry, “Digital Economy Partnership Agreement”.

49. Singapore’s Ministry of Trade and Industry, “Digital Economy Partnership Agreement”.

tured around 16 different modules, each managing different DEPA topics. The structure of the modules allows for countries to utilise individual components in their own bilateral or plurilateral agreements, providing flexibility and interoperability.⁵⁰

The language of the agreement indicates some “harder” commitments (‘shall’), for example, on cross-border data flows and against data localisation. The agreement also provides an opportunity to use a selection of more formal tools such as mutual recognition and harmonisation in the implementation of the agreement. However, as with most TRAs, the agreement primarily constitutes a platform for cooperation between the partners, rather than agreeing on binding rules. The DEPA has also established a Joint Committee that oversees the whole agreement, such as its implementation or any amendments.⁵¹ Notably, the DEPA contains a dispute resolution settlement process that is similar to those used in FTAs.⁵² The dispute settlement provisions found in the DEPA are some of the most comprehensive among the TRAs we have identified.

4.3 Resilience-focused TRAs

Resilience-focused TRAs aim to achieve resilience in either specific sectors or in specific materials. Most resilience-focused TRAs we found focus on critical minerals, raw materials and semiconductors. One example of a resilience-focused TRA that focuses on critical minerals is the US-Mongolia MoU to Collaborate on Critical Minerals. Examples of resilience-focused TRAs regarding raw materials are the EU’s MoUs on Strategic Partnerships on Sustainable Raw Material Value Chains with, for example, Namibia, Kazakhstan, Greenland, Zambia, Ukraine, Rwanda and Australia. Another example of a resilience-focused TRA that focuses on a specific sector is the UK-Vietnam Workforce Development Initiatives to Support Semiconductor Capacity.

Figure 9. Number of resilience-focused TRAs established between 2016 and 2024

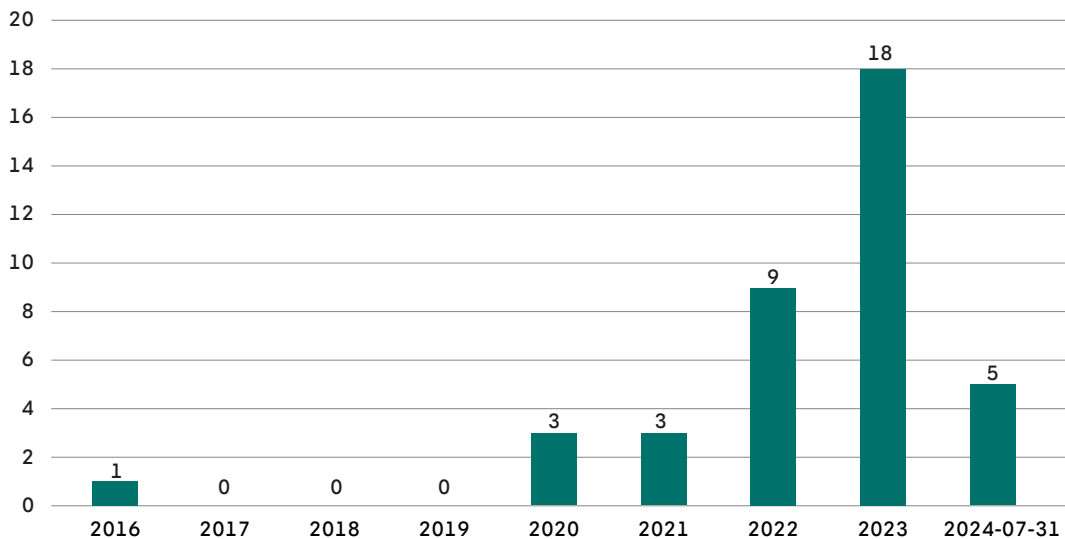


Figure 9 shows that we found a total of 39 resilience-focused TRAs. The earliest resilience-focused TRA we identified is the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP), which we

50. National Board of Trade Sweden, *The digital-only-trade agreements – what is new?*. Reg. no 2022/00663-1.

51. Digital Economy Partnership Agreement, Article 12.5.

52. Digital Economy Partnership Agreement, Article 14.

delve deeper into in section 4.3.1. One explanation as to why we see an increase in 2023 of resilience-focused TRAs could be an increased awareness of how important these critical minerals and raw materials are for the green and digital transition.

Figure 10. Number of resilience-focused TRAs by country including the EU

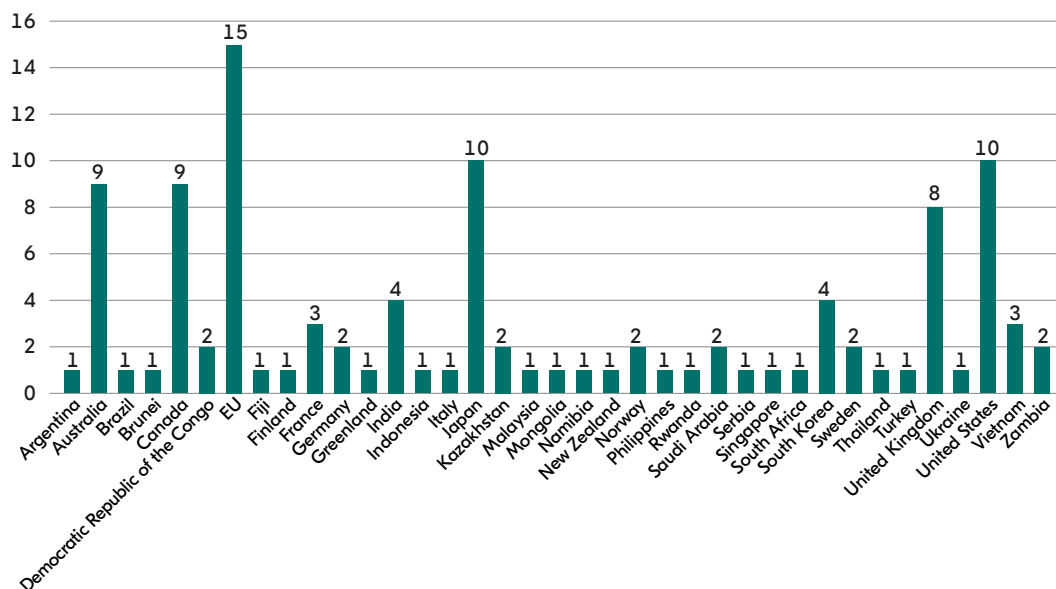


Figure 10 shows that the EU has the most resilience-focused TRAs followed by the US and Japan. Compared to the other TRA categories, the resilience-focused TRAs have the most signatories that are developing countries. This could be because many developing countries are resource-rich in critical minerals and raw materials. However, we have not identified a single resilience-focused TRA from one of the most resource-rich countries in minerals and materials in the world, namely, China. This does not necessarily mean that China does not have resilience-focused TRAs with other countries, but this mapping supports the theory that high-income countries (such as the US and EU Member States) are trying to “de-risk” from China by finding other trading partners that also have critical minerals and raw materials.⁵³

Another interesting aspect is the discussion we had in section 2.2 on whether TRAs are a response to fewer FTAs being signed. In 2023, there were high expectations that the EU and Australia were going to conclude their FTA negotiations, but the negotiations stalled. Despite this, in 2024 the EU and Australia concluded an MoU on a Strategic Partnership on Sustainable Critical and Strategic Minerals. This shows that TRAs are easier to conclude than FTAs. This could be because TRAs focus on one specific area or that they are not legally binding.

Compared to digital TRAs, it was more difficult to find official texts of the resilience-focused TRAs. We identified half of the resilience-focused TRAs through news media and joint statements about TRAs. It was therefore unclear how many of them have a dispute settlement mechanism and whether they are subject to time constraints. Compared to the other TRA categories, the resilience-focused TRAs have the most ministerial cooperation, with a total of four.

53. Benson and Sicilia, “A Closer Look at De-Risking”.

4.3.1 Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)

The MSP was launched in 2022 as a “a new multilateral initiative to bolster critical mineral supply chains essential for the clean energy transition.”⁵⁴ The MSP is a collaboration between 14 countries and the EU (represented by the EU Commission) with the purpose of developing diverse and sustainable supply chains in critical energy minerals.⁵⁵ A key feature of the MSP is that it includes aspects relating to both political and economic priorities regarding increased trade between the parties, as well as specific measures that also can involve industry and private stakeholders to achieve the goals of the MSP.

The MSP operates through projects that aim to cover all parts of the value chain, from mining to the refining and recycling of minerals that are essential for the green and digital transition that MSP partners may support. The projects provided under the MSP aim to address four challenges; 1) diversifying and stabilising global supply chains, 2) investment in supply chains, 3) promoting high environmental, social and governance standards in the mining, processing, and recycling sectors; and 4), increased recycling of critical minerals.⁵⁶

As part of the MSP, the ‘MSP Forum’ has been launched as a platform for the partners to further cooperate on critical raw material issues. The forum includes aspects such as policy dialogues on regulatory cooperation and boosting the production of critical raw materials. In April 2024, it was announced that the EU’s “Critical Raw Materials Club” had become a partner of the MSP Forum. The EU Commission states that the forum “will bring together resource-rich countries and countries with high demand for these resources”.⁵⁷

The MSP includes aspects that are also found in horizontal TRAs since it allows for further cooperation in specific projects and initiatives. The information on the structure of the MSP is limited, and there is much that seems to take place through the projects or in the high-level meetings held on the platform. The steering of the cooperation seems to be via the joint statements provided by the MSP partners rather than a legally binding document.

4.4 ‘Green’ TRAs

‘Green’ TRAs focus on tackling climate change and increased cooperation in areas related to the green transition, such as the energy sector. The ‘green’ TRAs we identified can help to achieve sustainability goals since they can promote trade and regulatory harmonisation in certain products and raw materials that are required for the green transition. They can also serve as an important indicator that trade in this area is prioritised in order to achieve the climate goals.

Based on our mapping, most ‘green’ TRAs are focused on energy, climate, sustainability and hydrogen. One example of a TRA that focuses on energy is the Saudi Arabia-Türkiye MoU on Energy Cooperation, which covers the production, marketing, distribution and trade of refined petroleum products, but also includes cooperation in the field of renew-

54. U.S Department of State, “Minerals Security Partnership Convening Supports Robust Supply Chain for Clean Energy Technologies”.

55. Australia, Canada, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.

56. U.S Department of State, “Minerals Security Partnership”.

57. European Commission, “EU and international partners agree to expand cooperation on critical raw materials”.

able energy.⁵⁸ One example of a TRA that focuses on climate is the China-Germany MoU to launch a climate and transformation dialogue. One example of a TRA that focuses on sustainability is the EU-Guyana Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade in Timber Products to the EU. Lastly, a ‘green’ TRA that focuses on hydrogen is the Australia-Netherlands MoU on Cooperation in the field of Hydrogen.

Figure 11. Number of ‘green’ TRAs established between 2016 and 2024

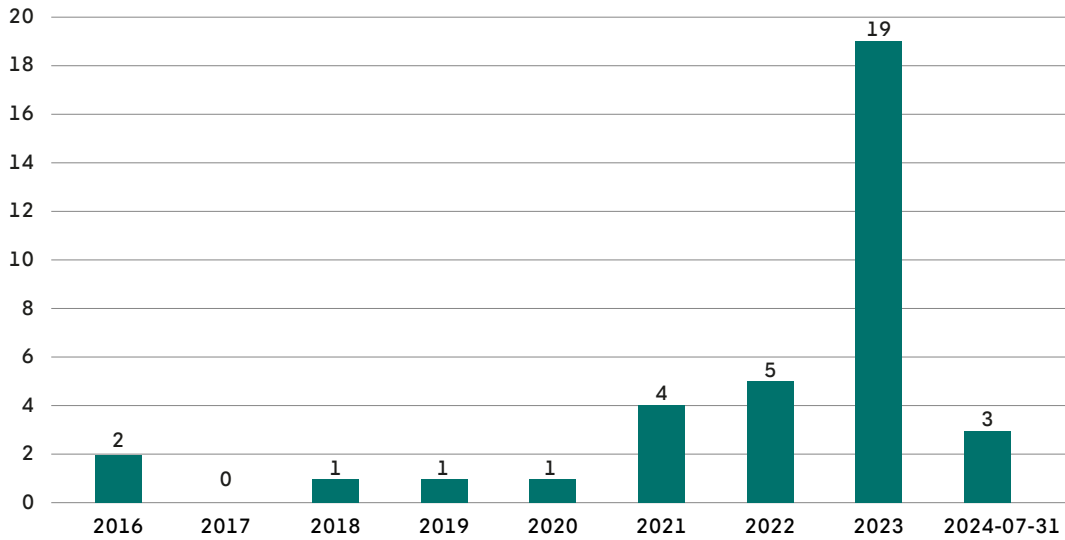
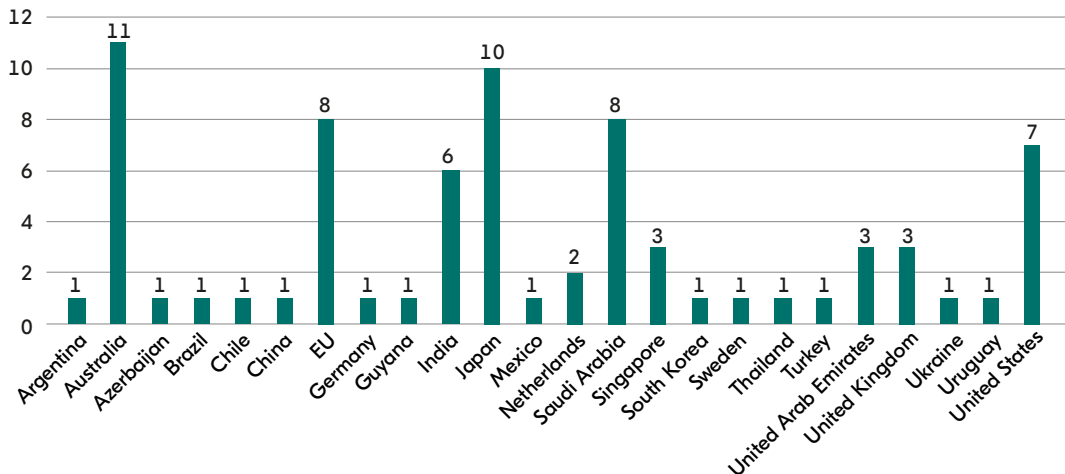


Figure 11 shows that we found a total of 36 ‘green’ TRAs. The most recent TRA we found is the Chile-Sweden Roadmap, which was established in 2024. However, we were unable to find the official text of this TRA, only a press release. One explanation as to why Table 10 shows that most ‘green’ TRAs were established in 2023 could be that energy issues have been high on the international agenda after Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Also, renewable energy has been given more attention in discussions on how to combat climate change.

Figure 12. Number of ‘green’ TRAs by country including the EU



58. Arab News, “Saudi Arabia and Turkiye sign energy cooperation agreement”.

Figure 12 shows that Australia and Japan have the highest number of ‘green’ TRAs and they are closely followed by Japan, the EU and Saudi Arabia. We only found a few overarching ‘green’ TRAs, one of which is the Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement, which we look into more closely in section 4.4.1. It should be further noted that we found no African country with a ‘green’ TRA.

Similar to the horizontal and resilience-focused TRAs, it was difficult to find official texts of the ‘green’ TRAs. Thus, it is hard to know whether these ‘green’ TRAs are legally binding or if they have a dispute settlement mechanism. Interestingly, we found that the International Energy Agency (IEA) has a “Policies and Measures Database” that provides information on past, existing or planned government policies and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency and support the development and deployment of renewables and other clean energy technologies.⁵⁹ We identified several of our ‘green’ TRAs through this database.

4.4.1 Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement (GEA)

The GEA was signed in 2022 and is described as ‘a world-first agreement that combines trade, economic and environmental objectives.’⁶⁰ The agreement aims, among other things, to promote trade in environmental goods and services, foster business collaboration in green sectors, and promote sustainable finance and green investment between the partners. The agreement stands out in comparison to other ‘green’ TRAs given its comprehensive scope and it reaffirms the provisions related to tariffs and NTBs that are established in the FTA between the partners.⁶¹

The GEA stipulates a broad range of far-reaching commitments and cooperative measures, from exchange of knowledge and expertise to promoting the convergence of standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures to reduce NTBs in environmental goods and services.⁶² Annex A of the GEA lists 17 specific measures that the partners are committed to collaborate on, ranging from themes such as ecotourism to green shipping.⁶³ For example, the GEA has resulted in the partners signing additional TRAs, such as an MoU on a green and digital shipping corridor.⁶⁴

These measures collectively aim to increase economic integration and trade in green goods between the partners.⁶⁵ The implementation of the GEA is overseen by an implementation committee but does not create any binding obligations between the partners.⁶⁶ If any disputes were to arise related to the agreement, it states that the partners should settle through consultations without involving any international court, tribunal or forum.⁶⁷

59. International Energy Agency (IEA) Policies database.

60. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, “Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement: Propelling Our Sustainable Future”.

61. Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement, p. 9a(ii).

62. Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement, p. 7(f-g), p. 9(a-b).

63. Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement, Annex A, p. 4.2.

64. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, “Singapore and Australia Green and Digital Shipping Corridor”.

65. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, “Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement”.

66. Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement, p. 21.

67. Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement, p. 24.

5 What can be observed regarding TRAs?

5.1 What are the potential benefits of TRAs?

A flexible way to promote trade cooperation

Even though we have not looked at the legal ratifying process of TRAs, they are a faster way to improve trade cooperation due to their soft law nature. TRAs therefore provide governments with a level of legal flexibility that makes it easier to establish TRAs with partners, compared to entering into legally binding commitments under international law. It should be noted, however, that the reason why legally binding trade agreements sometimes take longer to negotiate is often political rather than technical.⁶⁸

TRAs ambition to increase cooperation, transparency and dialogue indicates a will to improve relations between the partners. Most of the TRAs focus on addressing NTBs and building resilient supply chains. TRAs flexibility and adaptability can also allow for more detailed and specific provisions compared to what might be possible in FTAs or multilateral agreements. If these cooperative measures are implemented correctly and efficiently, including followed up regularly, they can provide benefits by reducing trade costs, improving predictability and promoting regulatory coherence.

Building blocks for FTAs

A potential benefit of TRAs is that they could be used as building blocks towards a future FTA. This is because TRAs could build confidence between the partners and create forums in which the parties could discuss trade matters on a regular basis. They could potentially increase mutual trust between the partners, which could also provide the basis for future and more formal trade cooperation. From this point of view, TRAs can be seen as a second-best option to FTAs. The EU-US TTC is an example of this. TRAs can also be negotiated in parallel even when the parties are already negotiating an FTA. One example is the EU-Australia Strategic Partnership on Sustainable Critical and Strategic Minerals.

A complement to FTAs?

However, as previously illustrated, many countries enter into both FTAs and TRAs with the same partners. This shows that FTAs and TRAs typically have different objectives and are therefore not mutually exclusive. Instead, they can potentially complement each other. For example, TRAs provide an opportunity to focus on specific issues or certain sectors. Our mapping also showed that TRAs can be used to update parts of existing FTAs, which is quicker than updating an entire FTA.

⁶⁸. As an example, the original GATT took just six months to negotiate. Another famous example, the European Coal and Steel Community, was proposed by Robert Schuman on 9 May 1950 and was signed less than a year later.

5.2 What are the challenges with TRAs?

Lack of transparency

One of the challenges with TRAs is their lack of transparency. Most TRAs do not have any official texts available. For example, we found many TRAs through news media or joint statements but could not find any public records of the TRAs. This lack of transparency is challenging in several ways. For example, the full potential of TRAs will not be fully realised if only a few parties know what the agreement entails; and if two trading partners establish a TRA that focuses on supply chain resilience but the industry does not know that such an agreement exists, it is hard to see how the TRA could impact a company's decision-making. For an agreement to have an impact, it is necessary that companies know and understand the new conditions under the TRA. This would hardly be possible without access to official agreement itself.

This lack of transparency also makes it more challenging to hold governments accountable to their commitments. Also, a lack of transparency could lead to a multitude of conflicting agreements or duplications since it makes it difficult to get an overview of all the ongoing agreements.⁶⁹

Questionable long-term effects

There are currently few, if any, estimates of the TRAs' trade effects, meaning it is unclear whether TRAs have any real benefits on trade.

The fact that TRAs allow for a more sectorial or thematic approach, such as critical raw minerals or environmental goods, is positive. However, there is also a risk that countries will prioritise short-term interests over long-term goals or will only cherry pick those areas that are of domestic interest and which would not be as impactful as if they were negotiating a traditional FTA.⁷⁰ This might cause the TRA to erode after a few years when and if new strategic interests emerge.

Legal ambiguity and uncertainty

TRAs also include a great variety of terminology, types of cooperation and a mixture of binding and non-binding language.⁷¹ Here we identify a risk related to creating ambiguity regarding the legal implications of TRAs compared to conventional FTAs. With a few exceptions, it is unclear what legal implications TRAs may have, if any, and how their implementation will be ensured by the parties. We therefore see a risk that the lack of a standardised approach could lead to the under-utilisation of the agreements and a lower level of adherence to TRAs. This observation also suggests that part of the motivation behind some TRAs is political signalling, rather than creating enforceable commitments.

Also, we have previously mentioned that Claussen highlighted that the US TEAs have not been ratified by the US Congress, meaning their constitutionality could be questioned. It is unclear how other countries, including the EU, ratify their TRAs. However, if they bypass their parliaments, their legitimacy could also be questioned. This should be further investigated.

69. The Washington Institute, "Minilateralism: A Concept That Is Changing the World Order".

70. The Washington Institute, "Minilateralism: A Concept That Is Changing the World Order".

71. For similar reasonings, see OECD, *Compendium of International Organisations' Practices Working Towards More Effective International Instruments*.



Possible power imbalances and exclusion

Another challenge with TRAs is that they are less inclusive compared to multilateral agreements, thereby increasing the risk of power imbalances. For example, there is a risk that developed countries only establish TRAs with other developed countries in specific areas because they have similar negotiating capacities. Thus, we see there is a risk that developing countries could be either entirely or partly excluded from many TRAs. The context of power imbalances is obvious and would benefit from further analysis by analysts and researchers.

6 Are TRAs the way forward for trade policy?

The current pressing global challenges require multilateral, regional, minilateral and bilateral trade cooperation. It is reasonable to assume that the world is not going back to the way the global trade system worked during the heydays of the establishment of the WTO. At the same time, it is important to continue to build support structures for the rule-based multilateral trading system. FTAs are currently the best alternative to the WTO, but the political will must be there to conclude them. However, there seems to be greater willingness to conclude TRAs, which feeds into the discussion of whether TRAs could be a viable option when partners cannot conclude or resolve issues in multilateral agreements and FTAs.

The structure, flexibility and adaptability of TRAs could help to unlock issues that cannot be resolved in other negotiations. Even if the most preferable choice would be to make TRAs legally binding, their soft law nature is one reason why they could bring trading partners together. Thus, making them legally binding could undermine the concept of TRAs as a complement or building block to multilateral agreements and FTAs.

However, as previously mentioned, the effectiveness of TRAs needs to be proven before it would be possible to claim that TRAs are the way forward for trade policy. Apart from assessing the trade effects of TRAs, their constitutionality and compatibility with the WTO should also be analysed. This means that TRAs should not become a substitute for the multilateral trading system or FTAs. However, there is potential for TRAs to be used on a complementary basis or as an alternative when other options have been exhausted.

6.1 Recommendations to unlock the potential of TRAs

6.1.1 Increase transparency

When TRAs are established, the signatories should make the official text publicly available to increase the transparency of the agreement. For example, increasing the transparency of TRAs could encourage the private sector to utilise their benefits more which, in turn, could increase trade between the signatories. The private sector, together with other stakeholders, such as civil society organisations and consumers, could also hold their governments accountable to their commitments if they are aware of TRAs. This could be one way to increase the effectiveness of TRAs, even though they are not legally binding.

If the transparency of TRAs increases and the official texts of TRAs are made public, TRAs could inspire and be replicated by other countries that are interested in cooperating in the same area. This is one of the objectives of the DEPA. It could also permit other countries to join TRAs.

6.1.2 The WTO or other institutions could monitor TRAs

If an international organisation monitored and kept track of all TRAs, this could not only increase the transparency of TRAs and make it easier to get a better overview of their landscape, it could also reduce the risk of a TRA having overlapping rules, different regulatory standards, duplications of the “same” type of cooperation, etc.

The WTO would appear to be the most appropriate organisation for this role. It could adopt a similar concept to the IEA, which keeps track and provides information on energy cooperation. One reason why the WTO would appear to be the most appropriate

organisation for this role is because several TRAs in our mapping refer to the WTO's rules. Thus, even if we recommend that the WTO "only" monitors TRAs, the WTO could also ensure compliance with its legal framework. Moreover, as mentioned in section 2.1, the WTO's relevance has been called into question. Since some believe that TRAs (or similar concepts such as "mini deals") are a complementary way of concluding trade deals, it would be natural for the WTO to keep track of such developments. However, given the deadlocks in the WTO, other options also should be investigated.

6.1.3 Make TRAs more inclusive

As our analysis has shown, there is a risk that some countries, especially developing countries, are left outside the TRA landscape. We believe that the TRAs that are established, especially minilateral TRAs, should be inclusive and open to all countries that are interested in joining and supporting the provisions of the TRAs. If more signatories are able to join the TRAs, it could further reduce fragmentation.

6.2 Recommendations for future analysis of TRAs

Given the limitations of this report, we recommend that future analysis is conducted regarding TRAs. This report only mapped TRAs that were established between 2016 and the end of July 2024. It would therefore be interesting to **conduct a historical mapping of all TRAs**, either within the four areas of cooperation we have chosen or in more areas. By conducting an historical overview, it may be possible to address the following: when were TRAs first used, if the use of TRAs as a trade policy tool is increasing, if there are any differences in areas in which trading partners choose to cooperate, or if there are changes regarding the trading partners with which they choose to establish TRAs.

Further, this report has not analysed countries' process of ratifying TRAs as Claussen did with the US TEAs, though it would be interesting to gain a better understanding of this. From our perspective, it would be especially interesting to **analyse how TRAs, when the EU is a party, are established** and how, or if, EU Member States and the European Parliament are consulted. It would also be interesting to analyse the compatibility of TRAs with the WTO.

This report has not been able to determine whether TRAs are effective because we could not evaluate their potential impact on trade. Given the different types of cooperation, the potential impact might also differ as the extent of them varies. Analysing the **impact and effectiveness** of TRAs would ideally follow established methods used in economics, such as gravity estimates and/or matching techniques. With a historical overview of TRAs, their impact on trade might also be easier to evaluate.

In this report we have not conducted an in-depth **analysis of the different mechanisms used in TRAs** to facilitate trade between the partners. Instead, we have simply chosen to state that they often contain different aspects of regulatory cooperation, such as transparency provisions or cooperation on the development of standards. The format of this report has not allowed us to analyse these mechanisms further and assess in what way or form they are applied. This is something we would like to further explore in a future report.

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Annex I – Mapping of 114 different trade-related agreements

Table I. How the TRA mapping was conducted and which data that was gathered

Name of trade cooperation	Signatories	Main area of cooperation	Established in year	Focus on the removal tariffs	Soft commitments	Non-binding	Legally binding	Dispute settlement	Bi-lateral	Mini-lateral	Stand-alone TRA	Within a horizontal TRA	Limited in time	Official text available online	Do they have an FTA, RTA or EPA
ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce	Brunei – Cambodia – Indonesia – Laos – Malaysia – Myanmar – Philippines – Singapore – Thailand – Vietnam	Digital	2019	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Australia – France Strategic Dialogue on Critical Minerals	Australia – France	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
Australia – Japan Partnership in the Area of Critical Mineral Supply Chains	Australia – Japan	Resilience	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Australia – Japan Partnership on Decarbonisation through Technology	Australia – Japan	Green	2021	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	No	No	Unknown	No	Yes
Australia – Netherlands MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Hydrogen	Australia – Netherlands	Green	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, 5 years	Yes	No
Australia – Singapore MoU on Artificial Intelligence	Australia – Singapore	Digital	2020	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, it will be reviewed biannually	Yes	Yes
Australia – Singapore MoU on Cooperation in Personal Data Protection	Australia – Singapore	Digital	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes, it will be reviewed biannually	Yes	Yes
Australia – Singapore MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Digital Identity	Australia – Singapore	Digital	2020	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Australia – Singapore MoU on Data Innovation	Australia – Singapore	Digital	2020	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes, it will be reviewed biannually	Yes	Yes
Australia – Singapore MoU on Electronic Certification Cooperation	Australia – Singapore	Digital	2020	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Australia – Singapore MoU on FinTech	Australia – Singapore	Digital	2022	No	Yes	Unknown	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Australia – Singapore MoU on Trade Facilitation	Australia – Singapore	Digital	2020	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Australia – South Korea Low and Zero Emissions Technology Partnership	Australia – South Korea	Green	2021	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
Australia – US Climate, Critical Minerals and Clean Energy Transformation Compact	Australia – USA	Green	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
Australia – US Net Zero Technology Acceleration Partnership	Australia – USA	Green	2022	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
Brazil – Chile MoU aimed at Bilateral Cooperation in the Area of Telecommunications and the Digital Economy	Brazil – Chile	Digital	2020	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	No	No	Unknown	No	Yes
Canada – Australia Joint Statement on Cooperation on Critical Minerals	Canada – Australia	Resilience	2024	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	No	No	Unknown	No	Yes
Canada – Japan MoC concerning Battery Supply Chains	Canada – Japan	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Canada – Japan Sectoral Working Group on Critical Minerals	Canada – Japan	Resilience	2020	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Unknown	No	Yes

Name of trade cooperation	Signatories	Main area of cooperation	Established in year	Focus on the removal tariffs	Soft commitments	Non-binding	Legally binding	Dispute settlement	Bi-lateral	Mini-lateral	Stand-alone TRA	Within a horizontal TRA	Limited in time	Official text available online	Do they have an FTA, RTA or EPA
Canada – South Korea MoU on Cooperation in Critical Mineral Supply Chains, the Clean Energy Transition and Energy Security	Canada – South Korea	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, 5 years	Yes	Yes
Canada – UK Critical Minerals Supply Chain Dialogue	Canada – UK	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
Canada – US Joint Action Plan on Critical Minerals	Canada – USA	Resilience	2020	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
China – Germany MoU to launch Climate and Transformation Dialogue	China – Germany	Green	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, 5 years	Yes	No
Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA)	Singapore – New Zealand – Chile	Digital	2020	No	Yes	Partly	Partly	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Some of them have
EU – Argentina MoU establishing a Partnership on a Sustainable Raw Materials Value Chains	EU – Argentina	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
EU – Argentina MoU on Energy Cooperation	EU – Argentina	Green	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
EU – Australia MoU on Sustainable Critical and Strategic Minerals	EU – Australia	Resilience	2024	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
EU – Canada Digital Partnership	EU – Canada	Digital	2024	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
EU – Canada MoU on a Strategic Partnership on Sustainable Raw Material Value Chains	EU – Canada	Resilience	2021	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	No	No	Unknown	No	Yes
EU – Chile MoU on a Strategic Partnership on Sustainable Raw Material Value Chains	EU – Chile	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
EU – DRC MoU on a Strategic Partnership on Sustainable Raw Material Value Chains	EU – Democratic Republic of Congo	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
EU – Greenland MoU on a Strategic Partnership on Sustainable Raw Material Value Chains	EU – Greenland	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
EU – Guyana Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade in Timber Products to the EU	EU – Guyana	Green	2023	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
EU – India Trade and Technology Council (TTC)	EU – India	Horizontal	2022	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
EU – Japan Digital Partnership	EU – Japan	Digital	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
EU – Japan Energy Security Dialogue on Global LNG Architecture	EU – Japan	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
EU – Japan Green Alliance	EU – Japan	Green	2021	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
EU – Japan MoC on Hydrogen	EU – Japan	Green	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
EU – Japan MoC on promoting and establishing a Liquid, Flexible and Transparent Global Liquefied Natural Gas Market	EU – Japan	Green	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, 10 years.	Yes	Yes
EU – Japan Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure	EU – Japan	Horizontal	2019	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
EU – Kazakhstan MoU on a Strategic Partnership on Sustainable Raw Material Value Chains, Batteris and Renewable Hydrogen Value Chains	EU – Kazakhstan	Resilience	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

Name of trade cooperation	Signatories	Main area of cooperation	Established in year	Focus on the removal tariffs	Soft commitments	Non-binding	Legally binding	Dispute settlement	Bi-lateral	Mini-lateral	Stand-alone TRA	Within a horisontal TRA	Limited in time	Official text available online	Do they have an FTA, RTA or EPA
EU – Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Digital Alliance	EU – Latin America and the Caribbean Countries	Digital	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	No	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
EU – Namibia MoU on a Strategic Partnership on Sustianable Raw Material Value Chains	EU – Namibia	Resilience	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
EU – Norway MoU on a Strategic Partnership on Sustianable Raw Material Value Chains and Battery Value Chains	EU – Norway	Resilience	2024	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
EU – Rwanda MoU on a Strategic Partnership on Sustianable Raw Material Value Chains	EU – Rwanda	Resilience	2024	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
EU – Serbia Letter of Intent on Strengthening and Expand Cooperation on Critical Raw Materials and Electric Vehicles Value Chains	EU – Serbia	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
EU – Singapore Digital Partnership	EU – Singapore	Digital	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
EU – South Korea Digital Partnership	EU – South Korea	Digital	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
EU – Tunisia MoU on a Strategic and Global Partnership	EU – Tunisia	Horizontal	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	Yes	Yes
EU – Ukraine High Level Industrial Dialogue (HLID)	EU – Ukraine	Horizontal	2017	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
EU – Ukraine MoU on a Strategic Energy Partnership	EU – Ukraine	Green	2016	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, 10 years	Yes	Yes
EU – Ukraine MoU on a Strategic Partnership on Sustainable Raw Material Value Chains	EU – Ukraine	Resilience	2021	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
EU – Uruguay MoU on Energy Cooperation	EU – Uruguay	Green	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
EU – US Trade and Technology Council (TTC)	EU – USA	Horizontal	2021	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
EU – Zambia MoU on a Strategic Partnership on Sustainable Raw Material Value Chains	EU – Zambia	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
India – Australia Green Hydrogen Taskforce	India – Australia	Green	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	Yes	Yes
India – Australia Letter of Intent on New and Renewable Energy Technology	India – Australia	Green	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
India – Japan Clean Energy Partnership	India – Japan	Green	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
India – Japan Industrial Competitive-ness Partnership Roadmap	India – Japan	Horizontal	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
India – Saudi Arabia MoU in Electrical Interconnections, Green/Clean Hydrogren and Supply Chains	India – Saudi Arabia	Green	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
India – Saudi Arabia MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Energy	India – Saudi Arabia	Green	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, 5 years	Yes	No
Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)	Australia – Brunei – Fiji – India – Indonesia – Japan – Malaysia – New Zealand – Philippines – Singapore – South Korea – USA – Thailand – Vietnam	Horizontal	2022	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Some of them have

Name of trade cooperation	Signatories	Main area of cooperation	Established in year	Focus on the removal tariffs	Soft commitments	Non-binding	Legally binding	Dispute settlement	Bi-lateral	Mini-lateral	Stand-alone TRA	Within a horizontal TRA	Limited in time	Official text available online	Do they have an FTA, RTA or EPA
IPEF Agreement Relating to Supply Chain Resilience (Supply Chain Agreement)	Australia – Brunei – Fiji – India – Indonesia – Japan – Malaysia – New Zealand – Philippines – Singapore – South Korea – USA – Thailand – Vietnam	Resilience	2022	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Some of them have
IPEF Clean Economy Agreement	Australia – Brunei – Fiji – India – Indonesia – Japan – Malaysia – New Zealand – Philippines – Singapore – South Korea – USA – Thailand – Vietnam	Horizontal	2024	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Japan – India MoC on Digital Partnership	Japan – India	Digital	2018	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, 3 years	Yes	Yes
Japan – India MoC on Semiconductor Supply Chain Partnership	Japan – India	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, 5 years	No	Yes
Japan – Saudi Arabia Lighthouse Initiative for Clean Energy Cooperation	Japan – Saudi Arabia	Green	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
Japan – Thailand MoC on the Realization of Energy Partnership	Japan – Thailand	Green	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, 5 years	Yes	Yes
Japan – UAE Innovation Partnership (UIP)	Japan – United Arab Emirates	Horizontal	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
Japan – UAE Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) on Hydrogen	Japan – United Arab Emirates	Green	2021	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
Mexico – UAE MoU on Clean Energies and Energy Issues Related to Climate Change	Mexico – United Arab Emirates	Green	2016	No	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)	USA – Australia – Canada – Finland – France – Germany – India – Italy – Japan – Norway – South Korea – Sweden – UK – EU	Resilience	2016	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	No	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Some of them have
Quad Statement of Principles on Clean Energy Supply Chains in the Indo-Pacific	Australia – India – Japan – USA	Green	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	No	Some of them have
Saudi Arabia – Azerbaijan Energy Cooperation Agreement	Saudi Arabia – Azerbaijan	Green	2024	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
Saudi Arabia – Netherlands MoU on Energy Cooperation	Saudi Arabia – Netherlands	Green	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
Saudi Arabia – Turkey MoU on Energy Cooperation	Saudi Arabia – Turkey	Green	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
Saudi Arabia – US Partnership Framework for Advancing Clean Energy	Saudi Arabia – USA	Green	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
Singapore – Australia Digital Economy Agreement	Singapore – Australia	Digital	2022	No	Unknown	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Singapore – Australia Green Economy Agreement	Singapore – Australia	Green	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Singapore – Australia MoU for Cooperation on Low-Emissions Solutions	Singapore – Australia	Green	2020	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Singapore – Australia MoU on a Green and Digital Shipping Corridor	Singapore – Australia	Green	2024	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
Singapore – Mexico MoU on Personal Data Protection Efforts	Singapore – Mexico	Digital	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes

Name of trade cooperation	Signatories	Main area of cooperation	Established in year	Focus on the removal tariffs	Soft commitments	Non-binding	Legally binding	Dispute settlement	Bi-lateral	Mini-lateral	Stand-alone TRA	Within a horizontal TRA	Limited in time	Official text available online	Do they have an FTA, RTA or EPA
South Korea – Singapore Digital Partnership Agreement	South Korea – Singapore	Digital	2022	No	Partly	Partly	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
South Korea – Singapore MoU on Cooperation on Artificial Intelligence	South Korea – Singapore	Digital	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
South Korea – Singapore MoU on Implementing the South Korea – Singapore Digital Economy Agreement	South Korea – Singapore	Digital	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, 3 years	Yes	Yes
South Korea – Singapore MoU on the Electronic Exchange of Data to Facilitate the Implementation of the Digital Partnership Agreement	South Korea – Singapore	Digital	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Supply Chain Resilience Initiative	India – Japan – Australia	Resilience	2021	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	No	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
Sustainable Critical Minerals Alliance	Australia – France – Germany – Japan – UK – US – Canada – Sweden	Resilience	2022	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	No	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Some of them have
Sweden – Chile Roadmap	Sweden – Chile	Green	2024	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
The Atlantic Declaration for a Twenty-First Century US – UK Economic Partnership	UK – USA	Horizontal	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Transatlantic Initiative on Sustainable Trade	EU – USA	Green	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	No	Yes	Unknown	Yes	No
Turkey – Saudi Arabia MoU aimed at Forging Further Cooperation in the Field of Critical Minerals	Turkey – Saudi Arabia	Resilience	2022	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
UK – Australia Joint Statement of Intent on Collaboration on Critical Minerals	UK – Australia	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
UK – Canada MoU concerning Scientific Research and Innovation	UK – Canada	Digital	2024	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
UK – Kazakhstan Memorandum of a Strategic Partnership in the Field of Critical Minerals	UK – Kazakhstan	Resilience	2024	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
UK – Saudi Arabia MoU on Clean Energy	UK – Saudi Arabia	Green	2018	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
UK – Saudi Arabia MoU on Critical Minerals	UK – Saudi Arabia	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Unknown	No	No
UK – Singapore Digital Economy Agreement	UK – Singapore	Digital	2022	No	Partly	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
UK – South Africa Partnership on Minerals for Future Clean Energy Technologies	UK – South Africa	Resilience	2022	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
UK – UAE MoU Clean Energy	UK – United Arab Emirates	Green	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	No	Yes	Unknown	No	No
UK – Ukraine Digital Trade Agreement	UK – Ukraine	Digital	2023	No	Partly	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
US – Brazil Critical Minerals Working Group	USA – Brazil	Resilience	2020	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
US – Brazil Energy Forum	USA – Brazil	Green	2019	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
US – DRC – Zambia MoU concerning Support for the Development of a Value Chain in the Electric Vehicle Battery Sector	USA – Democratic Republic of Congo – Zambia	Resilience	2022	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

Name of trade cooperation	Signatories	Main area of cooperation	Established in year	Focus on the removal tariffs	Soft commitments	Non-binding	Legally binding	Dispute settlement	Bi-lateral	Mini-lateral	Stand-alone TRA	Within a horizontal TRA	Limited in time	Official text available online	Do they have an FTA, RTA or EPA
US – Japan Agreement on Strengthening Critical Minerals Supply Chains	USA – Japan	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, 2 years	Yes	No
US – Japan Competitiveness and Resilience (CoRe) Partnership	USA – Japan	Horizontal	2021	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
US – Japan Digital Trade Agreement	USA – Japan	Digital	2019	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
US – Japan Economic Policy Consultative Committee	USA – Japan	Horizontal	2019	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
US – Japan Energy Security Dialogue (ESD)	USA – Japan	Green	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
US – Mongolia MoU to collaborate on Critical Minerals	USA – Mongolia	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
US – South Korea MoU to launch Supply Chain and Commercial Dialogue (SCCD)	USA – South Korea	Resilience	2022	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	Yes
US – Vietnam E-Commerce Agreement	USA – Vietnam	Digital	2016	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
US – Vietnam Semiconductor Partnership to Support Resilient Semiconductor Supply Chains	USA – Vietnam	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No
US – Vietnam Workforce Development Initiatives to Support Semiconductor Capacity	USA – Vietnam	Resilience	2023	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	No	No

Sammanfattning på svenska

Summary in Swedish

Vi befinner oss i en tid där det multilaterala handelssystemet utmanas. Den uppåtgående trenden för antagandet av frihandelsavtal fortsätter visserligen, men under de senaste åren har detta skett i en alltmer långsam takt. Samtidigt har en annan sorts handels-samarbeten nyligen börjat uppmärksammas. Syftet med denna rapport är att öka medvetenheten och kunskapen om en viss typ av handels-samarbete som pågår utanför det multilaterala handelssystemet och frihandelsavtal. Vi har valt att kalla dessa för handelsrelaterade samarbeten (trade-related agreements, TRAs). I rapporten diskuterar vi vilka potentiella fördelar och utmaningar dessa samarbeten kan medföra.

Vi har kartlagt handelsrelaterade samarbeten inom fyra tematiska områden: horisontella, digitala, resiliensfokuserade och 'gröna'. Vår avsikt har inte varit att hitta alla samarbeten, utan snarare att lyfta fram de handels-samarbeten som i detta nu etableras i det handelspolitiska landskapet. Vi har totalt analyserat 114 handelsrelaterade samarbeten och dessa har flera gemensamma nämnare, såsom att de inkluderar en handelsdimension utan att fokusera på att förbättra marknadsstillträdet genom att sänka tullar. Vi fann också att majoriteten inte var byggda på rättsligt bindande åtaganden utan innehöll mjukare åtaganden för samarbete, såsom främjande av dialog och transparens.

De handelsrelaterade samarbetena är mer flexibla och även enklare att slutföra jämfört med multilaterala avtal och frihandelsavtal. Trots att det har gjorts begränsade uppskattningar om de faktiska handelseffekterna av dessa samarbeten, ser vi potential i att kunna använda de handelsrelaterade samarbetena som byggstenar eller komplement till frihandelsavtal och befintliga multilaterala strukturer. Samtidigt är det svårt att få tillgång till information om dessa samarbeten och det finns en risk att utvecklingsländer lämnas utanför dessa samarbeten.

Även om dessa handelsrelaterade samarbeten kan stödja ett närmande mellan handelspartner ser vi också behov av att analysera deras handelseffekter innan de till fullo kan ses som ett framtida verktyg för handelspolitiken. Vidare behöver dessa samarbetens förenlighet med WTO:s regler utvärderas, något som troligen beror på samarbetenas uppbyggnad.

Utifrån vår rapport presenterar vi följande tre rekommendationer för att kunna utveckla de handelsrelaterade samarbetenas potential.

- 1. Öka transparensen:** När de handelsrelaterade samarbetena ingås bör texterna göras offentliga, dels för att stärka efterlevnaden, dels för att uppmuntra privat sektor och civilsamhälle att utnyttja de möjligheter som samarbetena kan medföra.
- 2. Kartläggning av handelsrelaterade samarbeten:** En internationell organisation, helst WTO, bör kartlägga de handelsrelaterade samarbetena som ingås för att förhindra överlappande regler och duplicerande samarbeten. Om WTO inte har möjlighet att kartlägga samarbetena bör det utvärderas om andra organisationer har den möjligheten.
- 3. Inkludering av utvecklingsländer:** Vi ser en möjlig risk att utvecklingsländer helt eller delvis utesluts från de handelsrelaterade samarbetena. Därför ser vi att dessa samarbeten, och särskilt de samarbetena som flera länder ingått ihop, bör vara inkluderande och öppna för alla länder som vill ansluta.

Sammanfattningsvis ser vi att dessa handelsrelaterade samarbeten kan vara ett potentiellt verktyg för att främja handel, men det bör betonas att de inte bör ersätta befintliga system som det multilaterala handelssystemet eller traditionella frihandelsavtal – däremot kan de användas som möjliga komplement eller byggstenar för framtida samarbeten.

På grund av den begränsade omfattningen av denna analys rekommenderar vi också att ytterligare studier om handelsrelaterade samarbeten bör genomföras innan en bredare slutsats om deras fördelar för handeln kan dras.

The National Board of Trade Sweden is the government agency for international trade, the EU internal market and trade policy. Our mission is to facilitate free and open trade with transparent rules as well as free movement in the EU internal market.

Our goal is a well-functioning internal market, an external EU trade policy based on free trade and an open and strong multilateral trading system.

We provide the Swedish Government with analyses, reports and policy recommendations. We also participate in international meetings and negotiations.

The National Board of Trade, via SOLVIT, helps businesses and citizens encountering obstacles to free movement. We also host several networks with business organisations and authorities which aim to facilitate trade.

As an expert agency in trade policy issues, we also provide assistance to developing countries through trade-related development cooperation. One example is Open Trade Gate Sweden, a one-stop information centre assisting exporters from developing countries in their trade with Sweden and the EU.

Our analyses and reports aim to increase the knowledge on the importance of trade for the international economy and for global sustainable development. Publications issued by the National Board of Trade only reflect the views of the Board.

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