



Simplified Trade System (STS) Stakeholder Consultation Paper

The Government is co-designing the STS with business to ensure their needs are at the centre of Australia's future cross-border trade environment. This consultation paper seeks views, on the development and makeup of this new system.

Background to the STS reform agenda

The Australian Government is working to make cross-border trade cheaper, faster, and easier for Australian businesses. The STS is a significant microeconomic reform agenda that will streamline Australia's international trade regulations and modernise outdated ICT systems. It will contribute to Australia's post-COVID-19 economic recovery, strengthen our economic resilience and help build future prosperity. An overview of the STS is at **Attachment A**.

The whole-of-government STS Implementation Taskforce (Taskforce) established by the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment is leading the coordination and alignment of the STS. The Taskforce is working over the remainder of **2021** to review cross-border trade regulations and ICT systems, and align delivery of existing STS government reforms. We are also mapping the end-to-end trade journey for Australian importers and exporters to understand pain points and opportunities for improvements. This baselining work will inform options for Government for a 'tell us once' digital service for import and export interactions by **February 2022**.

The STS reforms build on earlier and ongoing work to streamline trade processes undertaken by business and Australian government agencies. In bringing together and building on this work, the Taskforce taking an end-to-end view of how businesses experience the cross-border trade environment. The scope of the STS reforms is shown at **Attachment B**.

We are considering global best practice, and lessons from our international trading partners. We are taking a national approach and looking to align with cross-border trade reform initiatives underway in states and territories.

The importance of views from small and medium enterprises

For small and medium enterprises, we know that getting your product to, from and across, the border can be time consuming and costly. That's why **we would particularly value hearing from small and medium enterprises** (those with fewer than 200 employees) about how Government can make this process easier and quicker.

We're seeking your input

Only by understanding your challenges and your views on opportunities can we design a system that simplifies cross-border trade regulation. We welcome your written **ideas and insights** on the questions posed in this consultation paper. Your time is valuable - not all questions need to be answered, so please respond to the themes that are most relevant to you.

Your responses will be used to inform the Taskforce's comprehensive review of cross-border trade regulations and ICT systems. They will also tell us what's working well, and what should be improved.

Please provide responses via written submission by **14 January 2022**.

More information on the STS is available at www.simplifiedtrade.gov.au.

Please note, we will publish your submissions on our website unless you advise otherwise. Let us know in your response if you wish for your submission to remain confidential.

The Taskforce will collect, handle and disclose your personal information in accordance with Austrade's privacy policy, available [here](#). Collection and handling of your personal information are authorised by the Privacy Act 1988. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact info@simplifiedtrade.gov.au.

General

- Tell us about your business, sector, product or service and location/s.
- What is your role in the end-to-end trade environment?
- What are the major pain points for your business to get your product to, from and across the border?
- Where and how do you believe the cross-border trade system can be simplified?
- What changes in the trade process have you incorporated or seen as result of the COVID-19 pandemic that would be beneficial to continue?
- What have you seen in other countries' current trade processes that you think could be implemented in Australia?

1. Reviewing red tape

The Taskforce is conducting a comprehensive review of cross-border trade regulations and will identify opportunities for future regulatory reform and more integrated approaches across the trade system.

We want to understand which regulations are difficult, confusing and costly for your business. We invite examples and suggestions for practical improvements to make things easier and more efficient.

- Which government processes or regulations could be improved (made simpler, more integrated or less duplicative)?
- Which government requirements take the most time to meet and what impact does that have on your business?
- If available, please provide data on the time taken to complete these processes/ regulations, and/ or the costs to your business.

2. Digital transformation

The rise of digital technologies has changed the cross-border trade system in fundamental ways. The internet has made it easier, quicker and cheaper to trade goods, services and exchange

information globally, and the digital economy is increasingly recognised as a platform for international trade¹.

The Taskforce is looking at options to deliver a simplified 'tell us once' digital service for importers and exporters. What this looks like will be informed by you, but its goal is for businesses to enter information once, or less times, or not at all if the information is available from other appropriate sources and for Australian Government agencies to provide a seamless, 'tell us once' digital service to support you in conducting cross-border trade.

- What tools or systems are you using to move goods across Australia's borders? Do you use the systems of brokers or other third-party service providers to facilitate trade activity? If you use brokers or other third-party services, why?
- Which part/s of your trade processes are still using paper and/or scanned documents and attachments to emails?
- How old is your current technology? What is your future technology roadmap, and what is the timeframe?
- What technology changes have you incorporated or seen because of the COVID-19 pandemic that you would like to continue?
- What changes would you like to see to government systems and what impact could this have on your business?
- What aspects of a 'tell us once' digital service would have the biggest impact on your business and why?

3. Data

Data is at the core of the cross-border trade system and is key to you effectively managing your business operations. Our goal is to make it easier for traders by streamlining the data government collects during trade processes. Better use of data at the border and new ways to share data within government and with businesses will be at the core of our future trade system.

- What opportunities do you see for government to make information requirements clearer or less duplicative?
- How could government better support use of common trade-related data standards within the trade sector?
- Do you have examples of where your business has experienced increased administrative complexity, cost or delays because government systems do not 'talk to' or share data with each other?

¹ Trade and Digital Economy Inquiry, Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth, 2018

4. Federal, state and territory governments

We know that navigating multiple levels of government and their different requirements to move goods across the border can be complex. We want to understand how your trade journey interacts with federal, state and territory governments so we can streamline processes. We want to build a future trade system where you can focus on your business, not navigating government.

- What is currently working well in interactions across government jurisdictions that could be expanded or replicated?
- Which information required by federal, state or territory government is difficult or costly to obtain?
- Which processes or information requests are duplicated by federal, state or territory authorities and how does this impact your business?

5. Measuring performance

It will also be critical to track and measure Australia's trade performance as we develop the new cross-border trade system. The STS is fundamentally about improving the international competitiveness of Australian businesses and increasing the efficiency of government processes. Measuring the progress and impact of STS reforms will also give a view of how Australian trade processes are placed, compared to our trade competitors. Effective performance and reporting regimes are central to good governance and continuous improvement. The STS reform process is also an opportunity for government to learn from businesses who are increasingly using performance data to make critical business decisions.

- Where have you seen data used effectively across the trade environment to measure success?
- What data sources does your business use to measure and track its performance?
- Can you provide examples of metrics measuring cross-border trade?

6. Innovation in the future trade system

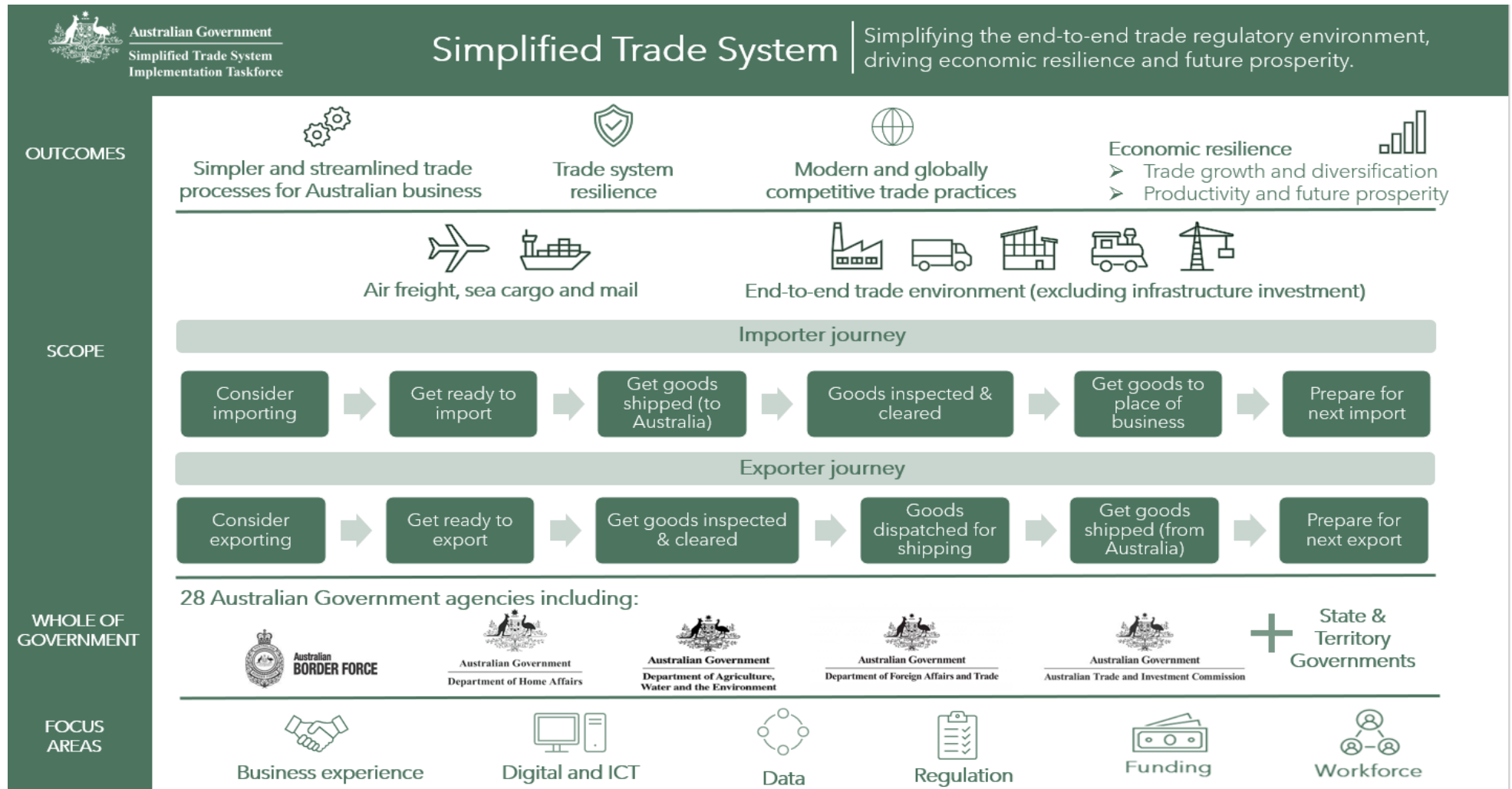
There's a lot that government can learn from businesses across the trade environment. This research will ensure any reforms will complement business changes that are in the pipeline. We want to hear from industry about the innovations underway or planned to support development of a well-integrated future trade system.

- What innovations does your business use, or plan to use, to improve the way you trade?
- What innovations have you used or seen elsewhere – including those introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic - that would be valuable to continue?
- What barriers prevent you from incorporating innovation or emerging technology?

Help design the future trade system

We will be conducting further research with businesses through interviews and co-design sessions. Please let us know if you, or anyone you know, are interested in being involved by emailing info@simplifiedtrade.gov.au with your business name, contact details (phone number and email address), a brief description of the goods you import or export and/or your role in the trade environment.

Attachment A: Simplified Trade System overview



Attachment B: STS Scope

	In STS scope	Not in STS scope
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation, frameworks, licences, permits Review, reform and alignment of Commonwealth regulations, licenses and permits affecting cross-border trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliant with but not re-/prosecuting Free trade agreements and multilateral trade engagement Visas and people movement
Digital and ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common and shared ICT platforms enabling Government-business trade transactions Interoperability with industry and international platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business-as-usual changes and maintenance for existing trade systems
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harmonised export and import trade data standards Agency and industry data sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services sector Digital goods International privacy standards
Freight and Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interoperability with freight and logistics platforms Streamlined trade clearance activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air and sea port capacity and infrastructure Domestic rail and road regulation and infrastructure Financial support for freight/logistics operations Workplace relations reforms