



RESEARCH BRIEF · ASPC-RB-013

Trade Capacity and Customs Modernization

Which institutional capabilities allow firms and public authorities to participate in cross-border trade?

EVIDENCE-INFORMED ASPC ANALYSIS

Supporting publication to ASPC-IB-003

August 2026 · 6-page edition

Status, question and scope

ASPC RESEARCH SYNTHESIS.

Research question

Which institutional capabilities allow firms and public authorities to participate in cross-border trade?

Scope

Trade capacity combines firm-level capability with predictable border administration, standards, information and recourse.

Evidence cutoff: August 21, 2026. Government findings, agency-reported information and ASPC analysis are distinguished throughout.

Key findings

The reviewed sources support the following bounded findings.

- CRS describes trade-capacity programs supporting ministries, regional organizations, firms, associations and financial intermediaries.
- Trade facilitation can include information access, procedural simplification, advance processing, risk-based compliance and review mechanisms.
- Infrastructure and digital portals are only useful when authority, process, staff capability and maintenance are aligned.

Findings are paraphrased from the cited official records. Source scope and date remain controlling.

Evidence interpretation

What the evidence establishes

- CRS describes trade-capacity programs supporting ministries, regional organizations, firms, associations and financial intermediaries.
- Trade facilitation can include information access, procedural simplification, advance processing, risk-based compliance and review mechanisms.

What requires judgment

Trade capacity combines firm-level capability with predictable border administration, standards, information and recourse.

Application beyond the source setting is ASPC analysis and should be tested against the authority, capability, risk and conditions of the institutions involved.

ASPC application and limitations

Proposed application

- Map the end-to-end trader journey, responsible authority, data exchange and appeal path.
- Measure clearance reliability, administrative burden and use—not system installation alone.
- Include small and medium enterprises when testing whether procedures are understandable and usable.

Limitations

- This brief does not evaluate a particular customs administration or recommend a specific technology.

These applications are proposed by ASPC. Citation does not imply endorsement by any source institution.



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ASPC RELEVANCE

This research supports economic development and constructive partnership where stronger local capability can create durable value and advance shared interests with the United States.

CRS R47007

[Official source →](#)

CRS Trade Policy Primer

[Official source →](#)

ASPC IS A U.S.-BASED STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND NOT A UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ENTITY.

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