



Australia-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement – Fact sheet

Why has the Australian Government negotiated a Digital Economy Agreement with Singapore?

The Australia-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement (DEA) will help ensure that Australian businesses and consumers can continue to benefit from growing digital trade opportunities.

An ever-greater share of global trade and commerce is being conducted digitally. Technology and digitisation are transforming our economies and creating new opportunities for businesses and consumers.

In the Southeast Asia region, a growing middle class, youthful populations, and easy accessibility to devices are key factors driving a rapid and extraordinary digital transformation.

Singapore has a dynamic, innovative and sophisticated economy, and is regarded as a major regional centre for doing business in Asia. Singapore is Australia's largest trade and investment partner in ASEAN and one of the few countries with which Australia has a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP). The digital economy is an important pillar of the CSP.

We are working with Singapore, as a partner of choice, to jointly set digital trade rules and standards that can serve as benchmarks in our region. Our collaborative work with Singapore is also demonstrated in the ongoing WTO e-commerce negotiations, where Australia and Singapore hold leadership positions, and regional fora such as APEC.

What are the benefits of the DEA to Australian businesses and consumers?

The DEA upgrades the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) through a new Digital Economy chapter, providing modernised trade rules that reduce barriers and assist businesses and consumers to engage with and benefit from digital trade and the digital economy.

The DEA features enhanced digital trade rules that are the most ambitious Australia and Singapore have ever agreed.

These include:

- **preventing unnecessary restrictions on the transfer and location of data** to support businesses operating between Australia and Singapore, including in the financial sector, to transfer data and to not be required to store it in either jurisdiction;
- **improved protections for source code**, so that businesses will not be forced to disclose or transfer their product source code as a condition for the import, distribution, sale or use of software, subject to certain exceptions;
- **new commitments on e-invoicing and e-payment frameworks**, to ensure these are implemented in a way that is compatible and based on international frameworks;
- **enhanced business and consumer trust in digital trade**, including improved enforcement and compliance provisions that support online consumer protection, personal information protection, and discourage unsolicited commercial electronic messages (spam);
- **cooperation in creating a safe online environment** to protect citizens, especially children and vulnerable members of the community, from harmful online experiences;

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- a new commitment to improve the accessibility of publicly available, anonymised government information, for the purpose of economic, social and research benefit; and
- enhanced transparency between Australia and Singapore to make available measures related to the digital economy, including online, providing greater certainty to Australian individuals and businesses seeking to trade and invest in Singapore.

Important information

- None of the provisions in the DEA:
 - affect the ability of Australia to enforce existing regulations on privacy;
 - require changes to Australian regulations, including the Privacy Act and the My Health Records Act.
- Confidential business information, as well as confidential information of consumers and individuals, would be protected from unlawful disclosure under Australian law.

MoUs associated with the DEA

The DEA is supported by seven Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) which facilitate practical cooperation initiatives on:

- data innovation
- artificial intelligence (AI)
- e-invoicing
- e-certification for agricultural exports and imports
- trade facilitation
- personal data protection
- digital identity

Treaty text

The DEA entered into force on 8 December 2020.

The full text of the DEA is available at: <http://dfat.gov.au/au-sg-dea>

The DEA amends the [SAFTA](#) to replace the existing Electronic Commerce chapter with a new Digital Economy chapter, along with other amendments.

For more information

Further information on the DEA is available at: <http://dfat.gov.au/au-sg-dea>

We welcome your feedback on further potential areas of cooperation with Singapore on digital economy issues.

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