

Digital Economy | ASEAN DEFA

Negotiations on ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) Concluded

On 31 May 2026, the Ministry of Trade and Industry announced that Singapore and ASEAN Member States had successfully concluded negotiations on the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (**DEFA**) at the Second Meeting of the 57th ASEAN Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM) held in Manila, Philippines, from 27 to 29 May 2026.

Signing is targeted to take place at the 47th ASEAN Summit in November 2026.

Building on ASEAN's existing digital economy commitments, the DEFA is ASEAN's first comprehensive, region-wide agreement dedicated to the digital economy, establishing common rules and frameworks across several areas. These include:

- Facilitating digital trade and simplifying digital trade procedures;
- Supporting trusted cross-border data flows;
- Enhancing digital payments and electronic transactions;
- Strengthening online consumer protection;
- Promoting greater digital interoperability across the region; and
- Addressing emerging areas such as artificial intelligence, financial technology (fintech), and source code protection.

The DEFA is intended to make it easier for businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises, to access opportunities in Southeast Asia's growing digital economy, enable consumers to transact with greater confidence, support quality jobs and equip Singapore and ASEAN for the next phase of economic development.

If you would like information and/or assistance on the above or any other area of law, you may wish to contact the Partner at WongPartnership whom you normally work with or any of the following Partners:



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