



Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation

# Gender and Services Trade: Activities of the APEC Group on Services

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Seattle, Washington  
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**Advancing** Free Trade  
for Asia-Pacific **Prosperity**

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# APEC Group on Services has carried out several activities on Gender and Trade in Services in 2022 and 2023

## ➤ Various Discussions and Dialogues held

1. Panel on Women and Services Trade, SOM 2, Bangkok, Thailand, May 2022
2. Deep Dive: Cross-cutting priorities – The GOS and PPWE, SOM 1, Palm Springs, US, Feb 2023
3. Deep Dive: How can we influence gender-responsive policy for trade in services?, SOM 1, Palm Springs, US, Feb 2023
4. Panel on Inclusive Growth – Gender and Trade in Services, SOM 2, Detroit, May 2023

These dialogues responded to:

- APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap (ASCR),
- 2021 mid-term review of the ASCR, and
- 2019 La Serena Roadmap

## ➤ Policy Brief developed : *Gender and Trade in Services in APEC*



The goal is put services trade at the forefront of building greater inclusive economic development and participation of women in the Asia-Pacific region

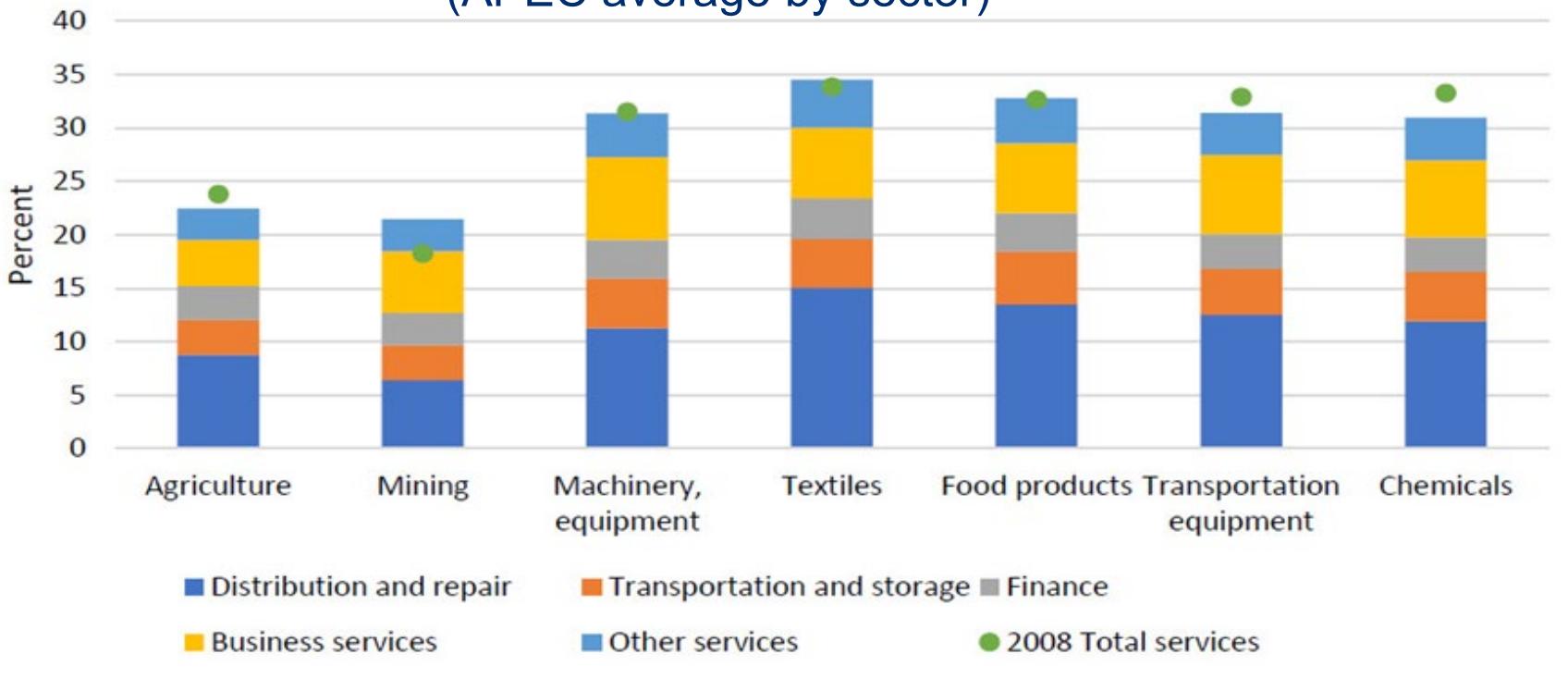
# Why is the area of services trade so important for achieving greater gender equality and women's empowerment?

- **SEVERAL REASONS**

1. Most women work in services activities
2. Most women entrepreneurs start businesses in the area of services
3. Services activities offer better paid jobs and an access to trade on international markets
4. The relative importance of services is growing in all areas of the economy – “**Servicification**”
5. More than half of world trade is now composed of services as measures on a value-added basis
6. Digitalization of services trade allows easier access to world markets at lower cost

# Servicification is on the rise; services now represent more than 50% of world trade on a VA basis

## Services Share of Value-Added in Merchandise Exports, 2018 (APEC average by sector)



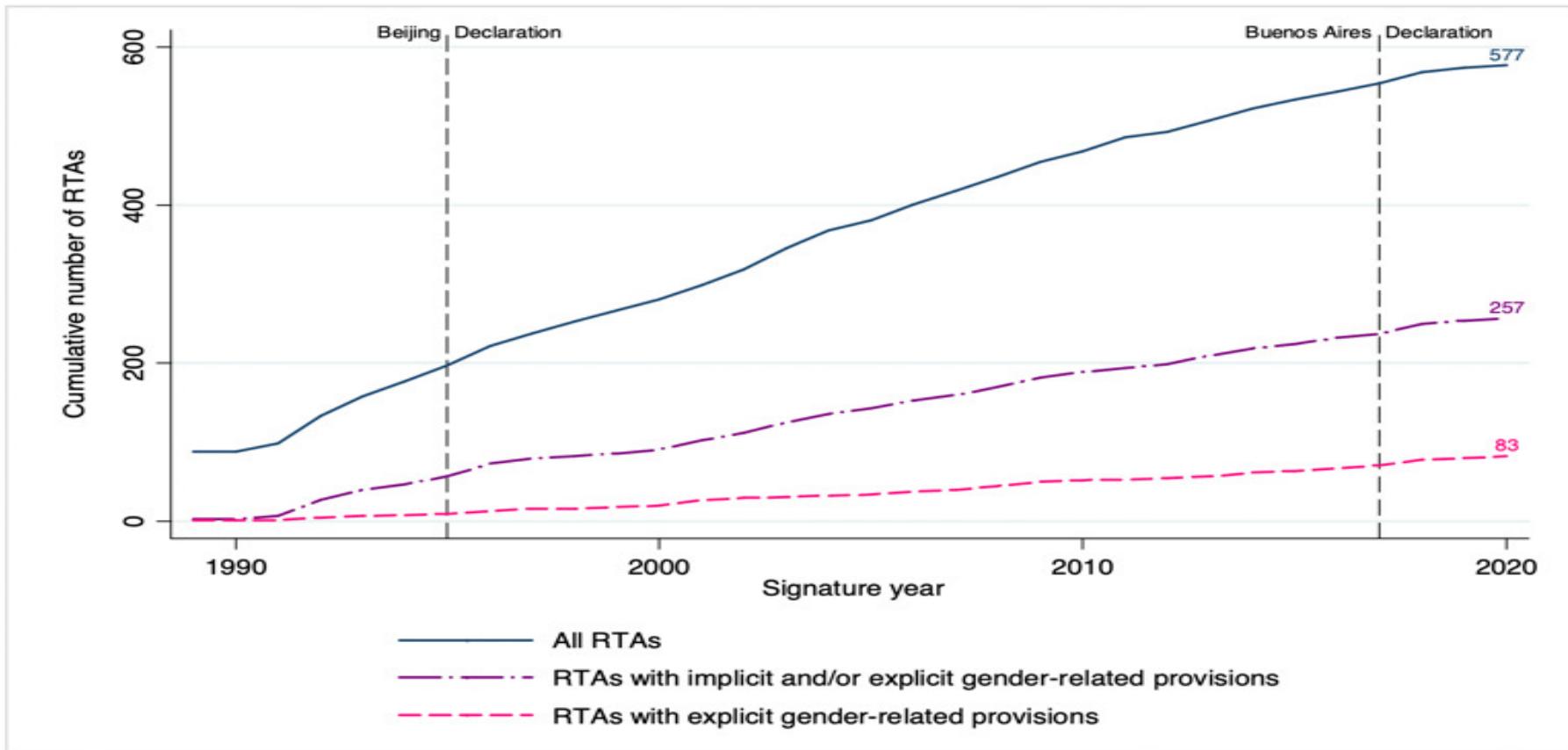
Source: OECD Trade in Value-added TiVA 2021. <https://www.oecd.org/sti/ind/measuring-trade-in-value-added.htm> Note: This data set includes 20 APEC economies (Papua New Guinea is not included).



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There are a growing number of gender provisions in trade agreements but many are “best endeavour”

## Gender Provisions in RTAs



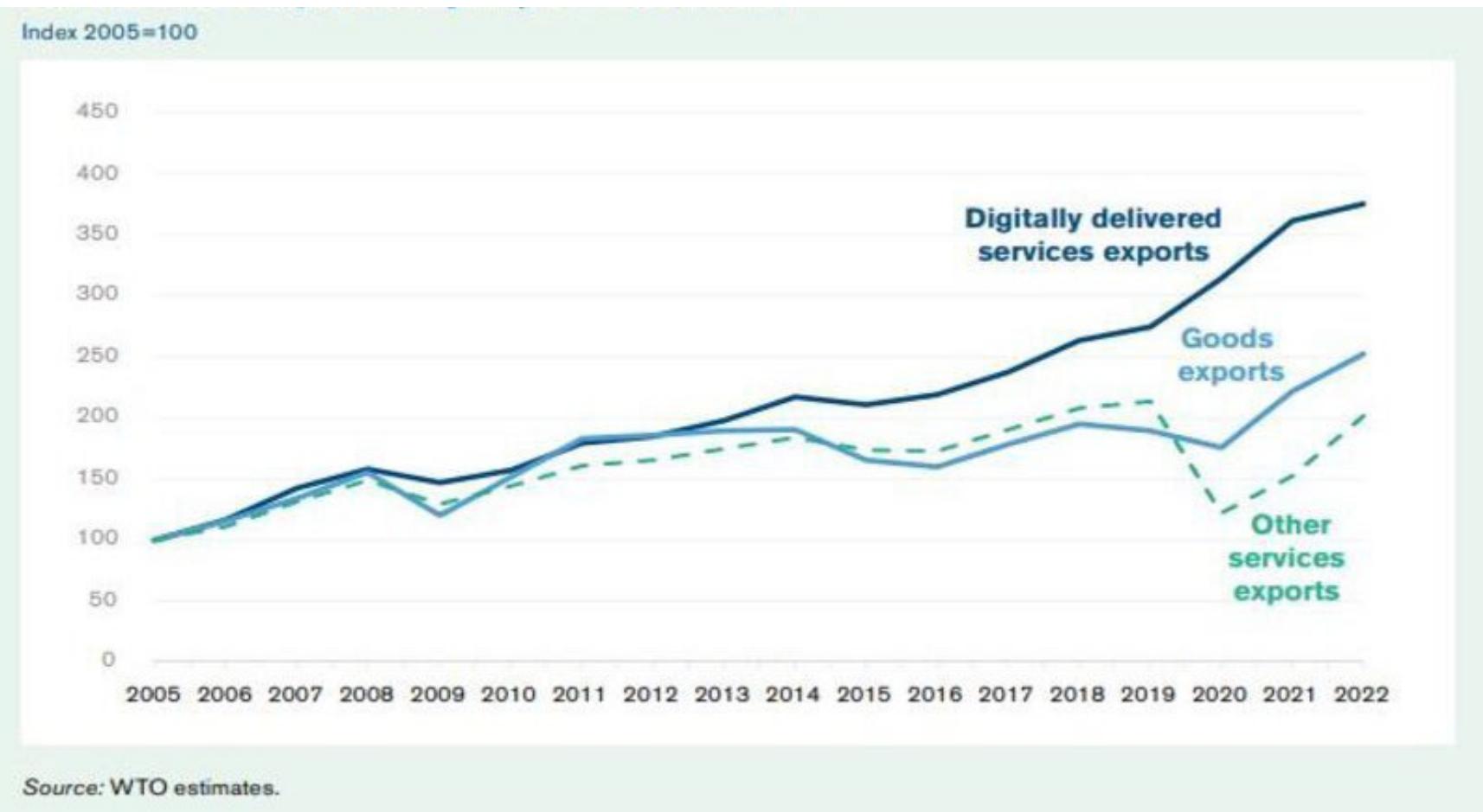
Source: José-Antonio Monteiro, The Evolution of Gender-Related Provisions in Regional Trade Agreement, WTO, 2021



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# Increasing digitalization of services trade offers opportunities for women to trade services – mode 1

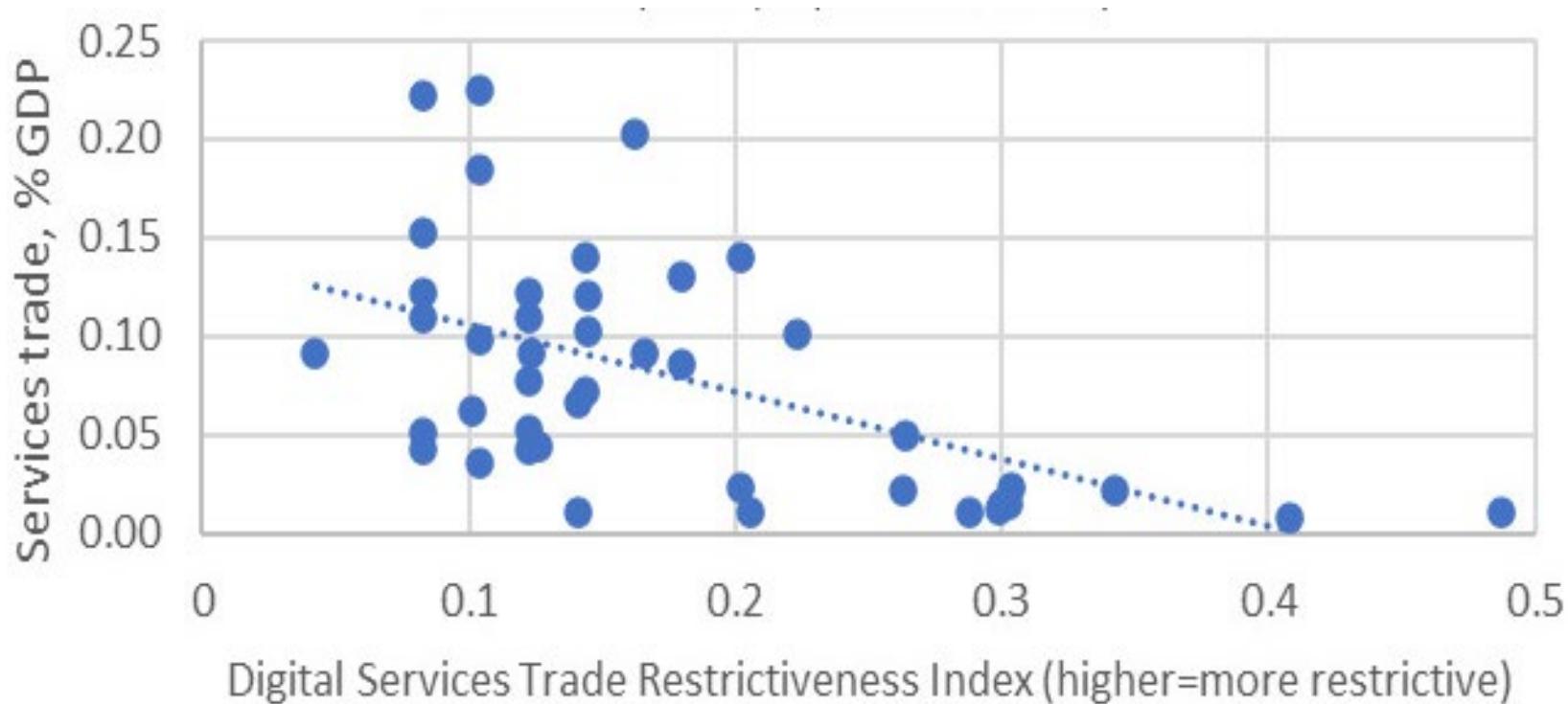
Growth in global exports of digitally delivered services 2005-2022



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# Growing digital trade restrictions affect the ability of women to participate in services exports

The Impact of Digital Trade Restrictions on Services Exports (as % of GDP)



Source: Author's calculations based on UNCTAD and OECD data

# Panel on Women and Services Trade

## SOM 2, May 2022 (Bangkok, Thailand)

We have come a long way in accumulating qualitative evidence related to women's participation in trade (and the remaining obstacles). Unfortunately, much less is still understood about gender-differentiated impacts of services trade, particularly in some of the modes of supply. This session attempted to draw attention to considerations related to women and trade in services and, in particular, through mode 1.

**Moderator:** Bonnie Rivendell, Program Director, the Australian APEC Study Centre

**Keynote Speaker:** Grace Gown, Head of Global Government Advisory, Access Partnership, Sydney

### Roundtable Discussion:

- Deborah Elms, Executive Director of the Asian Trade Centre, Singapore
- Maria Esperanza Alconcel, National Project Coordinator for ARISE Plus/ITC in the Philippines
- Stephanie Honey, Director of Honey Consulting, New Zealand

# Deep Dive: Cross-cutting priorities – The GOS and PPWE

## SOM 1, Feb 2023 (Palm Springs, US)

Moderator: Bonnie Rivendell, Program Director, the Australian APEC Study Centre

Panelists:

- Thomas Fine, GOS Chair: Welcome Remarks and GOS/ASCR priorities
- Andrea Boron, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR): US priorities and the intersection between Gender and Services
- Chantelle Stratford, PPWE Chair: 2023 PPWE priorities

# Deep Dive: How can we influence gender-responsive policy for trade in services?

## SOM 1, Feb 2023 (Palm Springs, US)

This session asked the discussants to provide concrete examples or realistic proposals towards influencing gender-responsive policy in trade in services. Three key aspects were considered:

- 1) Influencing – what would that entail (e.g., could it be done if not linked to laws or binding international agreements – APEC has made progress in many areas without having such “sticks”)?;
- 2) Identifying what a gender responsive policy is. Is there an agreement (or could there be) on the main elements of such policy? and
- 3) Facilitating through cross-country and cross-fora collaboration

Moderator: Mia Mikic, Research Fellow, The University of Waikato, New Zealand

Discussants: Tanya Spisbah, Director, Australian Office for Women

- Anoush der Boghossian, Head of the Trade and Gender Unit, World Trade Organization
- Sherry Stephenson, International Trade Policy Expert, US PECC

# Inclusive Growth – Gender and Trade in Services

## SOM 2, May 2023 (Detroit, US)

Although services trade in APEC economies has experienced substantial growth, gender disparities persist within the sector. Trade provisions in RTAs must be complemented with gender-responsive measures to effectively tackle these inequalities. The servicification trend highlights the need to value and recognize the predominantly female workforce in many services activities. The digitization of services offers both opportunities and challenges for women, requiring efforts to ensure equitable access and benefits. Better policies on the part of APEC economies can unlock the full potential of services trade and contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

**Moderator:** Andrea Boron, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

**Panellists:** Carolina de la Paz, Lenovo, Mexico

- Katrin Kuhlmann, Centre on Inclusive Trade & Development, Georgetown University
- Sherry Stephenson, International Trade Policy Expert, US PECC
- Mia Mikic, The University of Waikato, New Zealand
- Barbara Kotschwar, Visa Economic Empowerment Institute, VISA, US

# Policy brief: *Gender and Services Trade in APEC*

## SOM 3, Aug 2023 (Seattle, US)

The policy brief is directly inspired by the panel held at SOM 2 this year in Detroit. It also builds on the discussions in other sessions held under the GOS in 2023 and in 2022, including the breakout small group discussions with government officials and other stakeholders, especially those from the business community

The content of the brief is as follows:

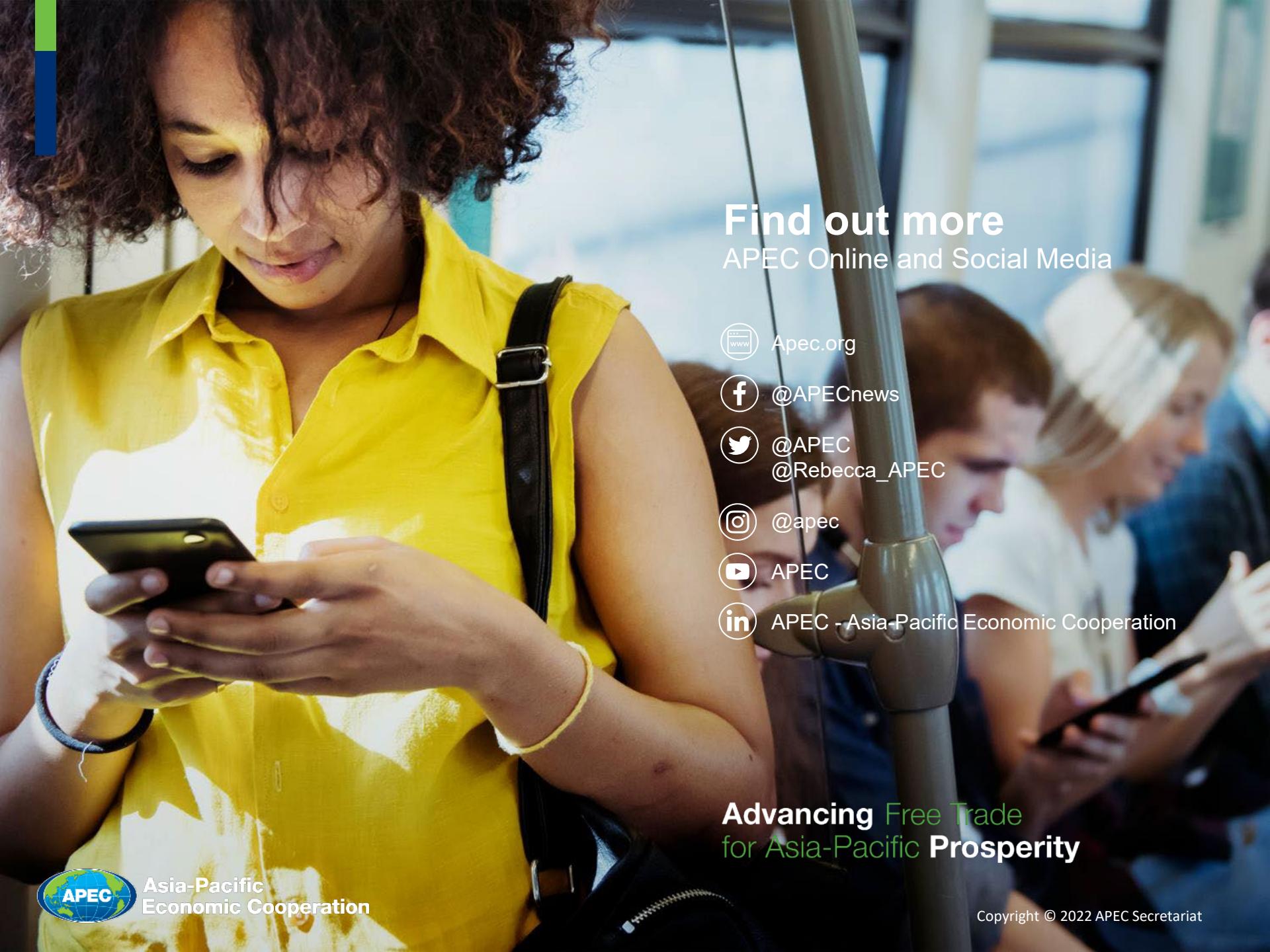
- Introduction
- Servicification
- Gender and Trade Agreements
- Digitalization of Services Trade and Opportunities for Women's Inclusive Growth
- Empowering women through trade: small businesses and digitalization
- What additional research is required to support women's participation in services trade?
- Annex – Summary of breakout group discussions

# ACTIVITIES OF THE APEC GROUP ON SERVICES IN AREA OF GENDER AND SERVICES TRADE

- Panel on Women and Services Trade, SOM 2, May 2022 (Bangkok, Thailand)
- Deep Dive: Cross-cutting priorities – The GOS and PPWE, SOM 1, Feb 2023 (Palm Springs, US)
- Deep Dive: How can we influence gender-responsive policy for trade in services?, SOM 1, Feb 2023 (Palm Springs, US)
- Inclusive Growth – Gender and Trade in Services, SOM 2, May 2023 (Detroit, US)
- Policy Brief : *Gender and Services Trade in APEC*

# Selected recommendations for actions in APEC to advance gender participation in services trade

1. Address the obstacles to services and digital services trade to in APEC  
Contribute to the collection of gender-differentiated statistics relevant to trade in services (including employment, skills, wages, firms' revenue, by sector and possibly by mode of service supply)
2. Create a searchable database on gender provisions in RTAs in the APEC region to inform current and future negotiations and enhance use of binding provisions
3. Consider putting in place a gender-focused impact analysis of proposed trade agreements before they are signed
4. Consider joining the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement (GTAGA)
5. Improve access to finance and digital technology which is dedicated to vulnerable gender groups
6. Adopt education and training policies to further enable women to develop their human capital and also increase capacity building in the area of gender-aware policy making



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