

Joint press release on the substantial conclusion of discussions for Costa Rica's accession to the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement

The Parties to the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA) are pleased to announce that discussions for Costa Rica to accede to this world-leading digital trade agreement have substantively concluded.

Digitally signed in 2020 by Chile, New Zealand and Singapore, the DEPA is the world's first standalone digital trade agreement, representing a leading-edge form of economic engagement and trade in the digital era. It reinforces commercially meaningful trade rules, establishes new approaches and collaborations in digital trade issues, promotes interoperability between different settings, and addresses the new issues brought about by digitalisation. It is designed to be an inclusive framework, open to economies that meet the high standards of the Agreement. The Republic of Korea joined the Agreement on 3 May 2024, the first new member economy to do so.

Costa Rica formally requested accession to the DEPA on 23 December 2022, and an Accession Working Group to assess this request was established on 6 October 2023. This Accession Working Group, chaired by New Zealand, has agreed that Costa Rica has demonstrated the means by which it will comply with the DEPA's high standards, as well as a commitment to working collaboratively on projects of mutual interest, in areas such as electronic invoicing, consumer protection, and cross-border data transfers.

The DEPA Parties will now work with Costa Rica to finalise its accession process in a timely manner consistent with each Party's domestic procedures and the DEPA Accession Process.

Chile's Vice Minister of International Economic Relations Claudia Sanhueza said, *"We are delighted to announce, together with the other DEPA members, the substantive conclusion of Costa Rica's negotiations for its accession. Chile is pleased with this achievement, which will undoubtedly enhance the agreement's impact by extending its high digital economy standards to new members, this time to a Latin American country. Costa Rica has demonstrated remarkable dedication and commitment throughout this process, and we look forward to collaborating on projects of mutual interest for our countries."*

New Zealand's Minister for Trade Hon. Todd McClay said, *"New Zealand is pleased that Costa Rica is on track to become the DEPA's next member. Costa Rica shares our commitment to progressive, high-quality digital trade rules and aligns with DEPA's vision. Their accession will strengthen DEPA as a leading agreement and attract other like-minded economies with similar ambitions in the digital economy."*

Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong said, *"As the second aspirant economy to accede to the DEPA, Costa Rica will add to the dynamism and diversity of the Agreement, reinforcing the DEPA's standing as an open, relevant, and inclusive plurilateral agreement for digital trade rules. Singapore, together with DEPA Parties, looks forward to collaborating with Costa Rica to foster an*

enabling environment for digital trade to thrive. I welcome Costa Rica as the fifth Party to the DEPA and look forward to our continued partnership.”

The Republic of Korea’s Minister for Trade Cheong Inkyo said, *“Korea is delighted to see the successful conclusion of substantive discussions for Costa Rica’s accession to the DEPA. This milestone highlights the growing importance of the DEPA in shaping global digital trade rules and enhancing cooperation. We expect that Costa Rica’s accession to the DEPA will unlock new opportunities for digital trade cooperation between DEPA member countries and Costa Rica.”*

Costa Rica’s Minister of Foreign Trade Manuel Tovar said, *“Costa Rica’s successful conclusion of accession negotiations to the DEPA marks a significant step in our journey to creating opportunities for all through trade, technology, and innovation. Costa Rica’s participation in the DEPA underscores our ambition to lead in digital trade policy and foster open markets, while strengthening conditions for cross-border services, attraction of quality investment and inclusive trade. This Agreement is a commitment to the future, establishing a new frontier for digital trade. We deeply appreciate the opportunity extended to Costa Rica and we look forward to the fruitful cooperation among Members – New Zealand, Singapore, Chile and South Korea — that it promises.”*

China, Canada and Peru currently have AWGs established to assess their DEPA accession requests. The United Arab Emirates, El Salvador and Ukraine have also lodged formal DEPA accession requests.

Jointly issued by the Vice Ministry of International Economic Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand; Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore; Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, Republic of Korea; and Ministry of Foreign Trade, Costa Rica.