

Moving From Framework to Action: APKIC Driving the Digital Trust Dialogue at Paperless Trade Week 2026

Focusing on Digital Trust in Action: Global Best Practices for Paperless Trade Infrastructure



Bangkok, Thailand 9 - 12 June 2026

The Asia PKI Consortium (APKIC) was out in full force at Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum x Paperless Trade Week 2026 (APTF x PTW 2026) in Bangkok, co-organizing a pivotal session with the United Nations ESCAP and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) titled **"Digital Trust in Action: Global Best Practices for Paperless Trade Infrastructure"**.

As cross-border paperless trade accelerates, establishing robust, interoperable Digital Trust Infrastructure has become a critical operational necessity. We are thrilled to share the key highlights of our leadership team's participation in this high-level forum.

Panel Highlights: Bridging the Interoperability Gap

A major highlight of the session was the active participation of APKIC Vice Chair and Co-Chair of our Business Applications Working Group (BAWG), **Mr. Biju Varghese**, on the

flagship panel: **"Best Practices for Adopting Interoperability Frameworks in Cross-Border Recognition and Governance"**.

Joined by esteemed global experts—including Mr. Steve Capell (Vice-Chair, UN/CEFACT) and Mr. Luca Castellani (Subject Expert)—Biju championed the critical bridge between cryptographic trust and real-world commercial application. Key insights from his discussion included:



- **Operationalizing Trust:** Focusing on moving past conceptual models and into scalable, day-to-day cross-border validation for logistics, finance, and government agencies.
- **Next-Gen Tech as Catalysts:** Embedding the operational reality of integrating emerging tools like Verifiable Credentials (VCs), Privacy-Enhancing Technologies (PETs), and Zero-Knowledge Proofs (ZKP) into customs and trade finance to reinforce security without sacrificing confidentiality.



- **Regional Ecosystems:** Highlighting the urgent need for public-private collaboration in the Asia-Pacific region to ensure mutual recognition of data and credentials across diverse legal jurisdictions.

Opening Address: Setting a Unified Vision for Regional Collaboration



The strategic groundwork for these intense panel discussions was perfectly laid during the Opening Remarks, where APKIC Chairperson **Ms. Eva Chan** addressed the assembly alongside UN ESCAP leadership, represented by Ms. Rupa Chanda (Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP).

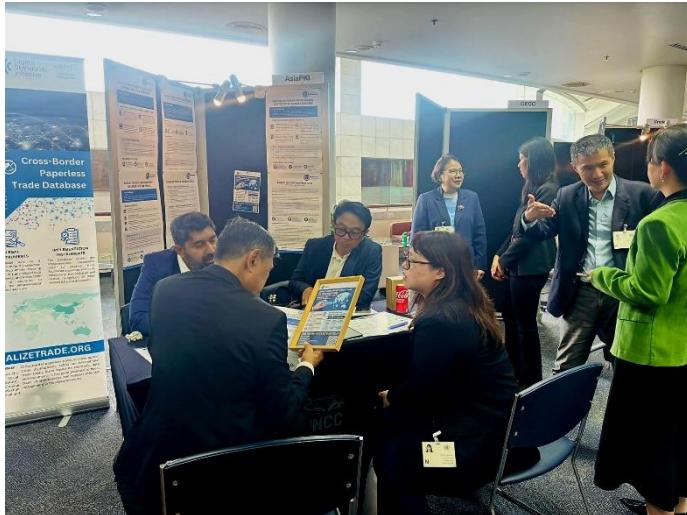
Ms. Chan emphasized APKIC's foundational role in driving cross-border trust and highlighted how public-private collaboration is vital to establishing the mutual recognition needed for seamless, secure regional supply chains.

Program Highlights

The session agenda showcased an unparalleled alignment of policy, technology, and execution, structured as follows:

- **Opening Remarks:** Welcoming perspective from Ms. Rupa Chanda (Director, ESCAP) and Ms. Eva Chan (Chairperson, Asia PKI Consortium).
 - **Setting the Scene:** An analysis of the *"Building blocks of digital trust infrastructure"* delivered by Mr. Tahseen Ahmad Khan (Member, UNNExT Advisory Committee, former UN/CEFACT Vice-Chair).
 - **Expert Panel Discussions:** A dive into *"Best Practices for Adopting Interoperability Frameworks in Cross-Border Recognition and Governance,"* moderated by Ms. Runqiu Du (Consultant, ESCAP), with panelists Mr. Biju Varghese (Vice Chair, APKIC), Mr. Steve Capell (Vice-Chair, UN/CEFACT), and Mr. Luca Castellani (Expert).
 - **Closing Remarks:** Concluding insights shared by Mr. Yern Fai Lee (Associate Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP).
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At the APTFF x PTW 2026 forum held at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Bangkok, the Business Applications Working Group (BAWG) of the Asia PKI Consortium (APKIC) also showcased a prominent exhibition booth dedicated to advancing secure, legally admissible, and interoperable cross-border digital transactions. Branded under the "AsiaPKI" banner, the booth



served as an interactive knowledge-sharing hub featuring comprehensive informational displays on critical pillars of digital commerce, including "Cross-Border Trade Facilitation Through Digital Signatures," "Cross-Border Paperless Trade," "Digital Trust Infrastructure," and the "Mutual Recognition of Digital Certificates

Across Borders". These exhibits demonstrated how PKI interoperability, standardized technical audits, and cross-border legal harmonization can seamlessly streamline international trade through mechanisms like electronic bills of lading and digital certificates of origin. Positioned alongside regional digital trade initiatives—such as the Digital Standards Initiative's Cross-Border Paperless Trade Database—the BAWG booth successfully engaged policymakers, international delegates, and technical experts in meaningful dialogues aimed at building a trusted, scalable, and inclusive paperless trade ecosystem across the Asia-Pacific region.



Closing and Looking Ahead

A huge thank you to UN ESCAP, ADB, our fellow panelists, and all the delegates for an incredible week of driving the future of global digital trade infrastructure forward. The blueprint is ready—now it's time to execute.

APKIC and the BAWG remain committed to leading this charge, working alongside regional regulators and international partners to build the foundation for secure, trustworthy, and interoperable digital ecosystems.