# CPTPP Supply Chain Risks

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## 1 Introduction

This note provides a very brief overview of how CPTPP views and manages supply-chain risks. When helpful, the note also makes reference to ASEAN's perspective on the comparable challenges that face it. Four of ASEAN's 11 member states are CPTPP members, making up a third of the latter organisation. Three more of ASEAN's member states have applied to join CPTPP. And obviously all of ASEAN-10 are already part of RCEP.

From CPTPP (and related ASEAN) official documents and statistical research undertaken at my institution, three key messages emerge.

First, the important vulnerabilities on trade rest inside supply chains, not outside. Investment, manufacturing activity, and exports can all grow even as production diversifies. But the best ways to undertake that diversification all still include reliance on Chinese intermediaries and components: semiconductors, EV inputs, critical minerals, and solar energy technologies. Aggregate trade shares conceal product-level possible vulnerabilities. At the same time, however, reliance, does not imply weaponisable chokepoints. What matters is the degree and speed of substitutability.

Second, de-risking can indeed reduce external reliance. But the evidence for now shows that de-risking in practice has also simply shifted reliance, especially into areas of tariff exposure and relocation possibilities. Not unexpected, there is considerable variation in the exposures across different member states of CPTPP (and ASEAN).

Third, with focus primarily on standards and trade, CPTPP does not produce sharp implications on risk and resilience. Individual examples of explicit moves towards greater resilience—e.g., Vietnam's increased connections with Thailand (in an ASEAN agreement) was, in Vietnam, viewed

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as a push for increasing resilience. But CPTPP provided no causal contribution. CPTPP's cumulative rules of origin might in due course make for greater intra-CPTPP sourcing.

## 2 Consequences

Despite layers having built up over time, much remains to be done by CPTPP for better mapping critical dependencies and monitoring alerts.

ASEAN, however, describes for itself now a supply-chain resilience roadmap, although with mapping and information-sharing still only developing. The 2024 ASEAN framework—obviously from before the most significant of geoeconomic actions—establishes priorities for digitalisation, crisis response, economic corridors, and diversification. ASEAN now continues a still-emerging action plan that envisions critical-chain mapping, regional data-sharing, and dashboarding resilience indicators.

Having noted these ambitions, ASEAN—like CPTPP—has a risk infrastructure that is backwards-looking, in the sense that it focuses on natural disaster monitoring and response. Included are capabilities that anticipate physical disruptions to ports, roads, and industrial areas. These and others will need to be repurposed and built anew to track instead supplier concentration, critical inputs, and trade-flow exposure.

New work being done at my research centre begins that pivot towards from the earlier natural-risk tools to ones that look at intentioned, economic statecraft risks: upstream input criticality, export market concentration, and product exposure to supply chain disruption. Much work remains to be done to establish an early-warning service, whether ASEAN or CPTPP.

What progress ASEAN can showcase comes from its continuation of an organisation that is six decades old, and focused on challenges that go beyond trade, production, and supply chains. The much younger CPTPP does not have that legacy infrastructure, neither to hold it back or rapidly build on. Moreover, although its origins should have made it sensitive to actions of Great Power economic statecraft, its focus has been on trade and standards. So, CPTPP's great strengths remain in customs and treaty processes, not strategic dependency alerts and asymmetric weaponisation. Within its customs provisions are assessment procedures for high-risk shipment. The CPTPP Agreement provides for a body to examine supply-chain performance. These are valuable foundations, but much remains to be done

to build them out more fully. CPTPP Ministers have asked officials to explore timely information exchange and resilience upgrades—but that was only in 2026. The agenda is developing but there is as yet no mature regional warning system.

Singapore has been more directly involved in more concrete response channels at bilateral or plurilateral levels: There is a Singapore-New Zealand agreement on trade in essential supplies, but that came into force only in July 2026. It does, however, establish national contact points and provide for emergency meetings and information sharing, when the agreed-upon essential supplies face imminent or actual disruption. Similar points of agreement appear in a separate Future of Investment and Trade Partnership (FIT-P ) which again includes Singapore and New Zealand but is a growing group. To be clear, these are separate initiatives—they are neither ASEAN-wide or CPTPP-integrated.

## 3 Conclusion

CPTPP does a better job at standards and trade than on strategic dependency. Its attention to risks are from an era when those risks were general, rather than today when they emanate from nations and bear intentionality. This does not mean it is impossible to repurpose risk-management and crisis-alert structures on supply-chain dependencies, where new risks are strategic and intentional.

Valuable lessons can also come from studying what ASEAN has done in building on legacy structures of natural-disaster risk management.

A yet second area to explore are the kinds of initiatives that Singapore has developed in bilateral or plurilateral arrangements.