

Joint Committee Decision on the Republic of Korea's Request to Commence an Accession Process to
the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA)
4th October 2021

Taking into consideration the formal request to commence negotiations for accession to the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (herein after referred to as "DEPA") received from the Republic of Korea (hereinafter referred to as "Korea") on 13th September 2021; and

Pursuant to Article 12.2 (a) (Functions of the Joint Committee), Article 12.3 (Decision-Making), Article 12.4 (Rules of Procedure of the Joint Committee) and Article 16.4 (Accession) of the DEPA, and the Accession Process agreed by Chile, New Zealand and Singapore on 13th May 2021 (hereinafter referred to as "Accession Process");

The Joint Committee decides as follows:

1. Commencement of the Accession Process:

Pursuant to paragraph 3 ("Request to commence accession process") of the Accession Process, the accession process requested by Korea as an aspirant economy is hereby commenced.

2. Establishment of an Accession Working Group:

A working group to negotiate the accession of Korea (hereinafter referred to as "Accession Working Group") is hereby established:

(a) **Terms of Reference:** Pursuant to Article 16.4 (Accession) of the DEPA and paragraph 4 of the Accession Process, the Accession Working Group is tasked to (i) examine the request of Korea to accede to the DEPA, including documentation provided by Korea to demonstrate its ability to comply with the terms of the DEPA and any other information requested from Korea during the accession process; (ii) conduct negotiations on Korea's accession to the DEPA and, (iii) submit to the Joint Committee, after finalising negotiations, a written report on the terms for Korea's accession to the DEPA.

(b) **Membership:** The Accession Working Group will comprise government representatives from Chile, New Zealand and Singapore.

(c) **Chair:** Singapore will act as Chair for the Accession Working Group. The responsibilities of the Chair include: coordinating the overall conduct of the Accession Working Group, including its organizational matters; presiding over all meetings of the Accession Working Group; and coordinating the drafting of a written report of the Accession Working Group.

The Accession Working Group does not include government representatives from Korea. However, it may invite Korea to its meetings to review the accession terms, or for any other reasons that the Accession Working Group may decide.

This decision is effective as of 4th October 2021, and shall be made publicly available by Chile, New Zealand, and Singapore through individual public statements.