

Joint Committee Decision on the Republic of Costa Rica's Request to Commence Accession Processes
to the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA)
29 September 2023

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 Costa Rica (hereinafter referred to as "Costa Rica") on 23 December 2022; 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 13 May 2021 (hereinafter referred to as "Accession Process");

The Joint Committee decides as follows:

1. Commencement of the Accession Processes for Costa Rica:

Pursuant to paragraph 3 ("Request to commence accession process") of the Accession Process, the accession process requested by Costa Rica as an aspirant economy will commence on 6 October 2023 .

2. Establishment of an Accession Working Group for Costa Rica:

A working group to negotiate the accession of Costa Rica (hereinafter referred to as "Accession Working Group for Costa Rica") will be established on 6 October 2023 :

(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 Costa Rica to accede to the DEPA, including documentation provided by Costa Rica to demonstrate its ability to comply with the terms of the DEPA and any other information requested from Costa Rica during the accession process; (ii) conduct negotiations on Costa Rica's accession to the DEPA and, (iii) submit to the Joint Committee, after finalising negotiations, a written report making a recommendation regarding the terms for Costa Rica's accession to the DEPA.

(b) Membership: The Accession Working Group for Costa Rica will comprise government representatives from the DEPA Parties.

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

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

3. Effective Date of Decision

This Joint Committee Decision is effective as of 29 September 2023, and shall be made publicly available by the DEPA Parties through individual public statements.