

SOLOMON ISLANDS

**REGIONAL DIGITAL TRADE INTEGRATION INDEX (RDTII) 2.1
ECONOMY PROFILE 2026**

**ESCAP-ECA-ECLAC INITIATIVE ON DIGITAL
TRADE REGULATORY INTEGRATION**

Suggest Citation: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), 2026. Regional Digital Trade Integration Index (RDTII) 2.1 Economy Profile: Solomon Islands. June 2026. Bangkok: ESCAP. Available at: <https://www.unescap.org/kp/2026/regional-digital-trade-integration-index-rdtii-21-economy-profile-2026-solomon-islands>

SOLOMON ISLANDS¹

Based on the RDTII 2025 scores², Solomon Islands has 22% lower regulatory complexity for cross-border digital trade than the Asia-Pacific average and 2% lower than the Pacific average.³ Its complexity is lower than the Asia-Pacific average in several areas, particularly regulations related to content access, non-technical non-tariff measures (NTMs), and foreign direct investment. However, the economy has relatively higher complexity compared to the Asia-Pacific average for tariffs and trade defence, intellectual property rights, and internet intermediary liability. (See the Figure for more comparisons)

Among 12 policy areas, the highest complexity for Solomon Islands is in regulations related to tariffs and trade defence, internet intermediary liability, and domestic data protection and privacy. In contrast, the lowest complexity is in those related to content access, non-technical NTMs, and foreign direct investment.

Table: Solomon Islands' RDTII 2025 overall score and pillars' scores

Solomon Islands	Index score (0: low complexity, 1: high complexity)	Differences from Asia-Pacific average complexity (%)	Differences from subregional average complexity (%)
Overall score	0.29	-22%	-2%
Pillar 1: Tariffs and trade defence	0.78	126%	98%
Pillar 2: Public procurement	0.18	-50%	-20%
Pillar 3: Foreign direct investment	0.04	-91%	-91%
Pillar 4: Intellectual property rights	0.44	74%	70%
Pillar 5: Telecommunication regulations and competition	0.43	-10%	-11%
Pillar 6: Cross-border data policies	0.08	-75%	-49%
Pillar 7: Domestic data protection and privacy	0.47	13%	6%
Pillar 8: Internet intermediary liability	0.63	16%	32%
Pillar 9: Content access	0.00	-100%	-100%
Pillar 10: Non-technical NTMs	0.00	-100%	-100%
Pillar 11: Standards and procedures	0.20	-10%	2%
Pillar 12: Online sales and transactions	0.23	-2%	24%

Source: ESCAP calculation, data as of January 2026, available at: <https://www.unescap.org/projects/rcdtra>

¹ This brief was prepared by a team of researchers under the supervision of Witada Anukoonwattaka at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The initial draft was prepared by Jai Sung Hong, with subsequent review and finalization by Juntong Hou. The document incorporates comments and feedback received during the national data verification process with government focal points and national experts, where applicable.

² To find out the details of the RDTII methodology and framework structure, please refer to: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), 2025. The Regional Digital Trade Integration Index (RDTII) Guide 2.1, available at <https://www.unescap.org/kp/2025/regional-digital-trade-integration-index-rdtii-21-guide>

³ For further comparative analysis, please see: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), 2025. Digital Trade Regulatory Review for Asia and the Pacific, 2025, available at <https://www.unescap.org/kp/2025/digital-trade-regulatory-review-asia-pacific-2025>; ESCAP, 2026. Digital Trade Regulatory Review for the Pacific, 2025, available at <https://www.unescap.org/kp/2026/digital-trade-regulatory-review-pacific-2025>; Other subregional and national reviews are accessible via: <https://www.unescap.org/projects/rcdtra/databases-kp>

NEW POLICY MEASURES AND PROPOSALS

Solomon Islands has recently taken steps to advance its digital trade agenda in digital payments, cybersecurity, and data protection, in line with priorities identified in the National E-commerce Strategy 2022-2027, adopted in March 2023, which provides a comprehensive roadmap for developing the enabling environment for e-commerce across seven priority areas.⁴

In 2022, the Payment Systems Act was enacted, affecting the national payment system and digital financial services.⁵ The new legislation establishes the legal framework for payment systems, clearing systems, and settlement systems, and designates the Central Bank of Solomon Islands as responsible for regulating and overseeing the national payment framework to ensure its safety and efficiency.⁶ The Act introduces mandatory licensing requirements for operators of payment systems and providers of payment services, with criteria including capital adequacy requirements, technical and organizational skills, and risk management procedures.⁷

In November 2023, the Telecommunications Commission of Solomon Islands issued the Telecommunications (Subscriber Registration) Directives 2023, affecting data protection and privacy in the telecommunications sector. The Directives establish obligations on subscriber data protection, breach notification, controlled access to subscriber records through the National Subscriber Registry, and penalties for non-compliance, under the Telecommunications (Amendment) Act 2021.⁸

Apart from legislation, in August 2024, the National Cybersecurity Policy was launched, affecting the cybersecurity regulatory framework across sectors.⁹ While the economy does not yet have comprehensive cybersecurity legislation, the policy framework provides strategies for ensuring a safe and secure cyber environment and guided the subsequent establishment of the Solomon Islands Computer Emergency Response Team (SICERT) in March 2025, which serves as the national focal point for cybersecurity incident response to government, statutory bodies, law enforcement agencies, businesses, and the public.¹⁰

While the Telecommunications (Subscriber Registration) Directives 2023 provide data protection provisions within the telecommunications sector, a comprehensive economy-wide Data Protection and Privacy Bill is currently under development by the Ministry of Communication and Aviation with technical support from UNCTAD.¹¹ The proposed legislation will establish a legal framework for the protection of personal data across all sectors, regulating how organizations collect, store, and use

⁴ United Nations Capital Development Fund, Solomon Islands National E-commerce Strategy 2022-2027 (2023), pp. 1-5, 13-25, available at https://pacificcommerce.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Solomon-Islands-National-E-commerce-Strategy-2022-2027_web.pdf. The seven priority areas include: Policy framework and institutional coordination; ICT infrastructure and services; Trade logistics and trade facilitation; Legal and regulatory framework; Electronic payment solutions; E-commerce skill development; Access to finance for e-commerce.

⁵ Payment Systems Act 2022 (No. 2 of 2022).

⁶ Ibid., sections 5, 6, 7, and 12.

⁷ Ibid., sections 17 and 19.

⁸ Telecommunications (Subscriber Registration) Directives 2023, Legal Notice No. 83 (Solomon Islands), section 1 (made November 24, 2023). The Directives require providers to protect subscriber details including full names, addresses, identification documents, photographs, and billing data (s.18(2)(a),(c)). Service providers must notify the Commission within seven working days of a breach and inform affected subscribers accordingly (s.18(2)(e),(f)). The National Subscriber Registry limits disclosure to cases of written consent or court order (s.6-7). Penalties apply for non-compliance (s.20, 22(1)(d)).

⁹ Solomon Islands Ministry of Communication and Aviation, "Advertisement Notice - Launching of the National Cybersecurity Policy and the National Aviation Symposium," August 20, 2024, available at <https://www.mca.gov.sb/news-updates/519-advertisement-notice-launching-of-the-national-cybersecurity-policy-and-the-national-aviation-symposium.html>.

¹⁰ Solomon Islands Ministry of Communication and Aviation, "Solomon Islands launches SICERT project to combat cybersecurity threats," March 2025, available at <https://www.mca.gov.sb/news-updates/520-solomon-islands-launches-sicert-project-to-combat-cybersecurity-threats.html>.

¹¹ Pacific Ecommerce Initiative, "Solomon Islands Data Protection and Privacy Legislation," accessed January 2026, available at <https://pacificcommerce.org/pei-project/solomon-islands-data-protection-and-privacy-legislation/>.

personal information, thereby safeguarding individuals' privacy and building trust in digital economy systems.¹² Additionally, a draft regulation regarding cybercrime remains under review by the Attorney General's Office, which will establish legal provisions identifying cybercrime offences and consequent penalties, complementing the National Cybersecurity Policy launched in 2024.¹³

EXAMPLES OF POLICIES SUPPORTING SOLOMON ISLANDS' DIGITAL TRADE INTEGRATION

Content Access

Solomon Islands imposes no government-mandated blocking or filtering of commercial web content. Based on V-Dem data, the government rarely interferes with internet access or shut down the internet.¹⁴ Additionally, Solomon Islands places no special licensing, pre-approval, or content-based restrictions on online advertising beyond general consumer-protection rules against misleading ads. Furthermore, online content providers may operate in Solomon Islands without obtaining sector-specific licenses.

Non-technical NTMs

Solomon Islands maintains no import bans on ICT goods or online services. No discriminatory quotas, licensing, registration, or other non-tariff import restrictions apply to ICT goods or online services in Solomon Islands. Furthermore, Solomon Islands has no local-content rules mandating that ICT goods or online services contain domestically sourced components, technology, or labour. Additionally, there are no export bans or licensing requirements on ICT goods or online services. Firms may freely export without additional authorization.

Foreign Direct Investment

Solomon Islands imposes no foreign equity caps in sectors relevant to digital trade and full ownership is allowed. Foreign investors are not required to form joint ventures to operate in digital trade-related sectors in the economy. According to the Foreign Investment Act (2005) and the Companies Act (2009), there are no nationality or residency requirements for directors or senior managers of firms engaged in digital trade activities. Additionally, foreign service suppliers may provide cross-border online services without establishing a local commercial presence within the economy. However, Solomon Islands maintains a screening regime for foreign investments. Under the Foreign Investment Act (2005), non-Solomon Islanders or overseas registered companies must register and obtain approval for their investment activity before commencing business.¹⁵

¹² Ibid.,

¹³ United Nations Capital Development Fund, Solomon Islands National E-commerce Strategy 2022-2027 (2023), Measure 4.1.4, p. 41, available at https://pacificcommerce.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Solomon-Islands-National-E-commerce-Strategy-2022-2027_web.pdf.

¹⁴ See the indicator "6.2.4 - Government Internet shut down in practice" of the V-Dem Dataset, which measures whether the government has the technical capacity to actively make internet service cease, thus interrupting domestic access to the internet or whether the government has decided to do so. Available at: <https://www.v-dem.net/vdemds.html>

¹⁵ Foreign Investment Act No.7 (2005), Section 20.

EXAMPLES OF POLICY CHALLENGES TO SOLOMON ISLANDS' DIGITAL TRADE INTEGRATION

Tariffs and Trade Defence

Solomon Islands maintains an effective tariff rate¹⁶ of 9.4% on ICT goods imported from economies within the Asia and the Pacific region. The rate is higher than the average rate of Asia-Pacific region, which is 4%. Furthermore, only 0.56% of digital goods tariff lines are subject to a zero rate, which is significantly lower than the average Asia-Pacific coverage of 50.08%. This limits its access to affordable ICT products crucial for digital infrastructure development. Solomon Islands is not a party to the WTO Information Technology Agreement (ITA I, 1996) or its 2015 expansion (ITA II), which eliminates tariffs on ICT products. In addition, Solomon Islands has not imposed any trade-defence measures – such as anti-dumping duties, countervailing duties, or safeguards – on ICT goods imported from other economies within the Asia-Pacific region.

Internet Intermediary Liability

Solomon Islands provides no statutory safe harbour for online intermediaries. Platforms may be held strictly liable for any user-generated copyright infringement, exposing them to substantial damages and takedown demands. Online service providers in Solomon Islands can be held criminally and civilly liable for user content relating to defamation, hate speech, and other unlawful acts. Under the Telecommunications Act, mandatory SIM registration is required in Solomon Islands. Users need to provide their name, date of birth, home address, and proof of identification in order to activate a new prepaid mobile service.¹⁷ Solomon Islands imposes no general obligation on intermediaries to actively monitor user activity. Under the Telecommunications Act, service providers are explicitly prohibited from intercepting, monitoring, altering, or modifying message content, except as permitted.¹⁸

Domestic Data Privacy and Protection

Solomon Islands has no horizontal framework to address privacy and data protection concerns. The Telecommunications Act includes restrictions on the collection of consumer data and ensures confidentiality of communications, which applies only to the telecommunications sector.¹⁹ In Solomon Islands, Cybersecurity is guided by policy frameworks, including the National Cybersecurity Policy, but comprehensive legislation remains limited. Moreover, telecommunications service providers must retain SIM card registered information for a minimum of 5 years under the Telecommunications Act.²⁰

¹⁶ The effective tariff rate, sourced from the World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS) database, is a weighted average of the tariffs it actually applies to its imports. The calculation is based on the "effectively applied tariff," which is the lowest rate available for each specific import—either the standard Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) tariff or a preferential rate from a trade agreement. This tariff is then weighted by the import's value, ensuring that tariffs on heavily traded goods have a greater impact on the final rate than those on rarely imported items. By accounting for both preferential agreements and import volumes, the effective tariff rate offers a more accurate reflection of the tariff cost of trade than a simple average MFN rate.

¹⁷ Telecommunications (Amendment) Act No.3 (2021), Sections 78B and 78E.

¹⁸ Telecommunications Act No. 20 2009, Section 73(2).

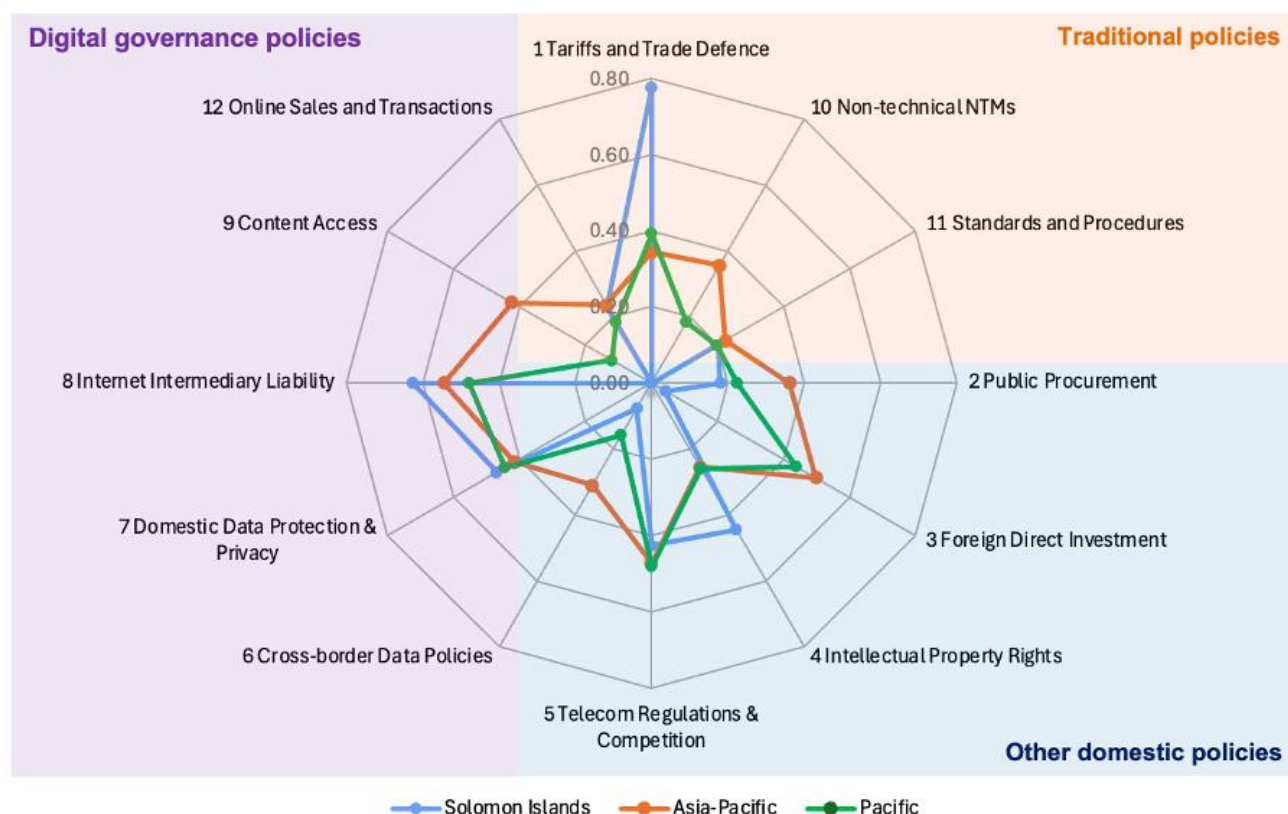
¹⁹ Telecommunications Act No.20 (2009), Sections 72 and 73. Last amended December 2021

²⁰ Ibid., Section 78B.

Additionally, operators of payment systems must retain records and documents for a minimum of 10 years under the Payment Systems Act.²¹

Data-protection impact assessments and the appointment of data-protection officers are not mandatory under Solomon Islands' legislation. Government agencies in Solomon Islands may access personal data only pursuant to lawful authorization under existing laws.

Figure: Comparison between Solomon Islands' RDTII scores, Asia-Pacific average scores and subregional average scores



Source: ESCAP calculation, data as of January 2026, available at: <https://www.unescap.org/projects/rcdtra>

SOLOMON ISLANDS' PARTICIPATION IN TRADE NEGOTIATIONS INVOLVING DIGITAL TRADE

Solomon Islands' engagement in digital trade-related negotiations is advancing. As of September 2025, Solomon Islands has signed a few preferential trade agreements, generally with other economies within the Pacific, for example, Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus,²² Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA),²³ Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG),²⁴ and

²¹ Payment Systems Act No.2 (2022), Section 51.

²² Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus (PACER Plus), signed 14 June 2017, entered into force 13 December 2020, available at: <https://pacerplus.org/pacer-plus/>

²³ Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA), signed 18 August 2001, entered into force 13 April 2003, available at: <https://rtais.wto.org/UI/PublicShowRTAIDCard.aspx?rtaid=582>

²⁴ Trade Agreement among the Melanesian Spearhead Group Countries (MSG Trade Agreement), entered into force 1 September 1993, available at: <https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/treaties/textdetails/12611>

South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (SPARTECA)²⁵, though SPARTECA has been practically superseded by PACER Plus for Solomon Islands following its ratification²⁶. Besides, Solomon Islands has also acceded to the EU–Pacific States and Pacific States–United Kingdom Interim Economic Partnership Agreements.²⁷ Of these, only PACER Plus contains digital or e-commerce provisions. However, Additionally, Solomon Islands has not concluded a stand-alone Digital Economy Agreement (DEA).

The Solomon Islands is currently a member of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), which promotes regional cooperation and integration among Pacific Island economies. As part of its membership, Solomon Islands participates in regional initiatives related to digital trade. For example, under the Pacific Regional E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap, Solomon Islands engages in joint efforts with other members to create a transformative Blue Pacific economy through domestic and cross-border electronic commerce, focusing on areas such as e-commerce readiness, ICT infrastructure, trade facilitation, and electronic payment solutions.²⁸

Globally, Solomon Islands is a member of both the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Under the WTO framework, Solomon Islands is bound by the multilateral Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS),²⁹ though it has not joined specific plurilateral initiatives such as the Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on E-commerce. Regarding the WIPO treaties, Solomon Islands has not yet joined the Patent Cooperation Treaty, Copyright Treaty, or Performances and Phonograms Treaty. However, it has joined Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works for the protection of works and the rights of their authors.³⁰

Regarding other agreements relevant to digital trade, Solomon Islands has not acceded to the United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts. Additionally, Solomon Islands has not formally informed the UNCITRAL Secretariat of its adoption of the UNCITRAL Model Laws on Electronic Commerce, Electronic Signatures, or Electronic Transferable Records. Moreover, Solomon Islands has not acceded to the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA), which promotes the electronic exchange of trade-related data and documents among participating economies.

²⁵ South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (SPARTECA), entered into force 1 January 1981, available at: <http://www.mfaet.gov.sb/external-trade/free-trade-agreements/regional/sparteca.html>

²⁶ See <https://www.un.org/ldcportal/content/pacific-agreement-closer-economic-cooperation-pacer-plus>

²⁷ EU – Pacific States Interim Economic Partnership Agreement, entered into force for Solomon Islands in May 2020, available at: <https://rtais.wto.org/UI/PublicShowMemberRTAIDCard.aspx?rtaid=759> ; Pacific States – United Kingdom Economic Partnership Agreement, entered into force for Solomon Islands on 1 January 2021, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-pacific-economic-partnership-agreement>

²⁸ Pacific Regional E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap (2021). Available at: <https://pacificcommerce.org>

²⁹ Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) – Agreement under the WTO, enacted since 26 July 1996. Available at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/legal_and_interpretive_texts_e.htm

³⁰ Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, adopted in 1886, enter into effect with respect to Solomon Islands in July 2019. Available at: <https://www.wipo.int/en/web/treaties/ip/berne/index>



ESCAP

Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific

DIGITAL TRADE REGULATORY INTEGRATION INITIATIVE

