

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SBF's Future of Trade Forum 2026 SBF Deploys Trade AI Advisor to Help Businesses Navigate Complex Global Trade Rules

Future of Trade Forum 2026 also highlights new partnerships in trade training, AI adoption and paperless trade

- **SBF has made its Trade AI Advisor (TAIA)** - the world's first generative AI-powered trade advisory platform – fully available to businesses in Singapore. It combines authoritative trade data, AI assistance, and expert human advisory into a single end-to-end solution. TAIA provides practical guidance on tariffs, Free Trade Agreements, Rules of Origin, and trade compliance.
- **Three new partnerships** with Amazon Web Services, the International Chamber of Commerce Academy and the Centre for Trade Excellence were presented to help businesses strengthen trade capability, advance paperless trade and adopt AI.

Wednesday, 30 September 2026 [Singapore]

The Singapore Business Federation (SBF) today brought together more than 600 attendees from across government, business and industry at the Future of Trade Forum (FOTF) 2026 to discuss how businesses can respond to a more uncertain and complex global trade environment.

2. The Forum opened with a Welcome Address by Mr Mark Lee, Chairman of SBF, a Keynote Address by Ms Johanna Hill, Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), a Special Address by Mr John Denton, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and an Opening Keynote and Fireside Chat with Guest of Honour Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations, moderated by Ms Ang Shih-Huei, Vice Chairman and Honorary Secretary of SBF.

AI-Powered Trade Support for a More Complex World

3. At the Forum, SBF announced the deployment of the **Trade AI Advisor (TAIA)** — the world's first generative AI-powered trade advisory platform. First launched in September 2025, TAIA is now fully available to businesses in Singapore. Built on Amazon Web Services, TAIA turns complex trade rules and Free Trade Agreement (FTA) information into clear, practical answers within seconds. Businesses can use the platform to:

- Check tariffs and other trade requirements;
- Understand FTAs and Rules of Origin;
- Identify compliance obligations;

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

- Assess their export readiness; and
- Connect with SBF's trade advisors when more detailed support is needed.

4. TAIA draws on MendelOnline's global trade intelligence, SBF's FTA database and the expertise of Centre for the Future of Trade and Investment (CFOTI) trade advisory service. The initiative is supported by Enterprise Singapore. Businesses can access TAIA at <https://cfoti.org>

New Partnerships to Strengthen Business Capabilities

5. SBF also presented **three signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)** at the Forum.

Trade Capability Building:

- **With the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Academy** — to give Singapore businesses greater access to internationally recognised trade training and certification.
- **With the Centre for Trade Excellence (TE)** — to help businesses build practical knowledge in areas such as trade compliance and the use of FTAs.

Digital Transformation and Advancing Paperless Trade:

- **With Amazon Web Services (AWS)** — to launch a programme to help SMEs move their AI projects beyond experimentation into practical use. Participating companies will receive access to cloud credits, workshops, training and support from AWS partners and IMDA. AWS will also support capability building and pilot projects for paperless trade under the SBF-led APEC Centre of Excellence for Paperless Trade (ACCEPT).

6. The two training partnerships will support SBF's **Trade & Investment Competency Framework**, which sets out the skills businesses need in trade compliance, FTAs, digital trade and sustainability. SBF will also continue its work with the ICC Digital Standards Initiative (ICC-DSI) to promote common standards and compatible digital trade documents under ACCEPT.

Helping Businesses Respond to a Changing Trade Environment

7. A panel on Navigating the Future of Trade, moderated by Mr Chuin Wei Yap of the Hinrich Foundation, examined how geopolitical rivalry, reshoring and regionalisation are reshaping global trade and investment flows, and how businesses can move from defensive hedging towards opportunity-seeking strategies. The discussion brought together senior leaders - Ms Alpana Roy, Director General of International Trade & ASEAN from the Ministry of Trade and Industry Singapore, Ms Johanna Hill, Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Mr John Denton, Secretary General of International Chamber of

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Commerce, Ms Tan Su Shan, CEO of DBS Group and Mr Trevor Kellogg, Principal of Squire Patton Boggs.

8. At the luncheon fireside chat, Mr Teo Chee Hean, Chairman of Temasek Holdings, shared his perspectives on navigating a more fragmented global landscape marked by shifting geopolitical relationships, changing patterns of trade and investment, and heightened uncertainty. Moderated by Ms Lee Sze Yeng, Managing Partner, KPMG in Singapore, the fireside chat explored how businesses can rethink their strategies for resilience and growth amid global fragmentation, and how ASEAN can reinforce its position as a trusted and connected region for trade and investment.

Building the Infrastructure for Digital Trade

9. A panel on Digitalising Trade Flows explored how paperless trade, electronic documentation and interoperable cross-border payments are streamlining the movement of goods, data and capital, while addressing emerging interoperability and cybersecurity risks. Moderated by Mr Gordon Lawson, Partner, Head of International Tax, KPMG in Singapore, the discussion featured senior leaders from the Ministry of Digital Development and Information of Singapore, DHL Express Singapore, Bangkok Bank, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Singapore Management University.

Turning Trade Compliance into Competitive Advantage

10. The afternoon featured three concurrent breakout tracks featuring senior leaders from DBS Bank, PwC Singapore, Pacific International Lines (PIL), DHL Express Singapore, Rajah & Tann Singapore, Centre for Trade Excellence, the EU Delegation to Singapore and more:

- **Sustainable Trade in a Fragmented World** examined how companies can decarbonise supply chains and meet ESG expectations without compromising competitiveness.
- **Navigating Trade Compliance & Maximising FTAs** addressed how businesses can identify compliance risks and unlock opportunities for market expansion and cost savings amid rising scrutiny over supply chains.
- **Dealing with Emerging Non-Trade Regulations** covered forced labour import bans, security export controls and due diligence laws.

11. Mr Kok Ping Soon, CEO of the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), said, "Global trade is changing quickly, and businesses need practical support to respond. TAIA gives companies faster and easier access to trusted trade information and expert advice. Together with our new partnerships with AWS, the ICC Digital Standards Initiative, ICC Academy and the Centre for Trade Excellence, it will help Singapore businesses strengthen their capabilities, manage risks and pursue new opportunities overseas."

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12. FOTF 2026 is organised by the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) and its Centre for the Future of Trade and Investment (CFOTI), with the support of:

- **Special Supporting Organisation:** Ministry of Trade and Industry Singapore
- **Supporting Organisations:** Singapore Economic Development Board, Enterprise Singapore, and Singapore Customs
- **Knowledge Partner:** KPMG in Singapore
- **Gold Partners:** Amazon Web Services, DBS Bank, DHL Express Singapore and Pacific International Lines
- **Supporting Partner:** Hinrich Foundation

For media queries please contact:

Sophie Fung

FINN Partners *on behalf of Singapore Business Federation*

Tel: +65 6779 5514

Email: SBF@finnpartners.com

Christina Thung

Singapore Business Federation

Tel: +65 9662 4174

Email: christina.thung@sbf.org.sg

About Future of Trade Forum:

Inaugurated in 2024, the Future of Trade Forum (FOTF) is SBF's strategic platform and a high-level public-private forum that builds on the foundations of the earlier Free Trade Agreement Day events held in 2019, 2020 and 2022. It was conceived in response to a rapidly evolving trade environment marked by growing pressures on the multilateral trading system, rising border and regulatory measures, and the increasing prominence of sustainability considerations. These challenges have become even more pronounced in 2026.

FOTF 2026 brought together global and regional government, industry and thought leaders to discuss the next phase of globalisation. As geopolitical, technological and climate fault lines deepen, the Forum shifted its focus from diagnosing disruption to co-designing a more diversified, digital and decarbonised trade architecture, while preserving openness and rules-based cooperation.

About Singapore Business Federation:

Singapore Business Federation (SBF) is the apex business chamber with over 34,000 members across diverse industries. With a vision to advance Singapore towards a globally competitive and sustainable economy, SBF mobilises the business community to be future-ready and magnify transformation opportunities through policy advocacy, partnership platforms and capability programmes.

For more information, please visit: www.sbf.org.sg

Additional Quotes from Partners

13. “Digitalisation and AI are reshaping trade. For Singapore Customs, the focus is on harnessing technology to augment our people and deliver practical benefits for businesses. We are pleased to have contributed to the development of the AI Trade Advisor (TAIA), reflecting our commitment to help businesses navigate trade compliance and Free Trade Agreements with greater ease and confidence. We will continue working with the industry to use AI responsibly to enable simpler, smarter and more trusted trade.” - **Mr Lim Teck Leong, Deputy Director-General (Policy & Facilitation), Singapore Customs**

14. **Gordon Lawson, Head of International Tax, KPMG in Singapore**, said: “As global trade fragments, businesses need to make faster choices about where they invest, source and operate. Digital trade should not just digitise transactions; it should sharpen those decisions by making obligations, risks and opportunities clearer and more consistent across markets. Its real value will be measured by whether businesses can use that visibility to adapt supply chains, respond to regulatory change and pursue growth across ASEAN and beyond.”

15. “Singapore's SMEs have shown they're willing to experiment with AI. The next step is making sure they have the support to turn those experiments into real business outcomes,” said **Priscilla Chong, Managing Director for AWS Singapore**. “We want a mid-sized manufacturer or trading firm here to have the same access to production-grade AI as a large multinational.”

16. **Chen Ze Ling, Group Head of Corporate and SME Banking, DBS** said: “As global trade, investments and supply chains are reorganising, businesses have to adapt to an environment that is more dynamic and complex than before. While this creates uncertainty, it is also opening up new opportunities across Asia and beyond. We are seeing businesses build greater resilience, flexibility and optionality into how they operate. At DBS, we help businesses make sense of these shifts, reduce friction and act with confidence. Whether it's entering new markets, finding new partners, improving cash flow visibility or accessing growth capital, our role is to help businesses turn complexity into opportunity.”

17. “Cross-border trade and the flow of goods across the globe are changing rapidly with technology,” said **Christopher Ong, Managing Director, DHL Express Singapore**. “Greater supply chain visibility and more connected trade systems, with digitalization as an enabler, can help reduce friction for businesses, and serve as a good starting point for them, especially SMEs, to navigate the complexities of cross-border trade, such as customs requirements and documentation. FOTF provides an important platform for advancing these conversations across the trade ecosystem.”

18. “ASEAN's continued growth as a trading region depends on strong connectivity, resilient supply chains, and the ability of businesses to adapt to evolving trade patterns,” said

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

William Ng, Chief Financial Officer of Pacific International Lines (PIL). “As an enabler of trade, the shipping industry is a critical link in the eco-system. For PIL, particularly in the Global South where we operate, we are committed to supporting sustainable and competitive supply chains. Through greater collaboration, digitalisation, operational efficiency, and investment in lower-carbon maritime solutions, we can strengthen long-term economic growth and trade flows across the region and beyond.

19. “As geoeconomic statecraft is actively in play as part and parcel of global trade, Singapore, the business community, and the world at large now have to contend with a rising weaponization of myriad chokepoints from the geographic to the digital,” said **Chuin Wei Yap, Program Director, International Trade Research at the Hinrich Foundation.** “With multilateral trade negotiations on a back foot even as new forms of international trade emerge, the Hinrich Foundation is pleased to partner with the Singapore Business Federation for the second Future of Trade Forum to navigate these unprecedented tests.”