

Lang Son

Provincial performance in implementing Free Trade Agreements

Average

BAND 5 OF 6

PERFORMANCE TIER

Average

Band 5 of 6 — **29th of 34** assessed provinces and cities.

OVERALL SCORE

15.16

 / 40

Below the national average of 21.66 by **6.49 points**.

WEAKEST PILLAR

30 / 34

Sustainable development — the widest gap of the four pillars (**-2.54**).

FOUR PILLARS AT A GLANCE

A INFORMATION ACCESS

RANK 24 / 34

3.59

 / 10 **-1.20 vs national average**

B LEGAL IMPLEMENTATION

RANK 27 / 34

3.38

 / 10 **-1.83 vs national average**

C SUPPORT POLICIES

RANK 28 / 34

5.12

 / 10 **-0.70 vs national average**

D SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

RANK 30 / 34

3.42

 / 10 **-2.54 vs national average**

★ RELATIVE STRENGTHS

- #8 A8 — Quality of forecasting and market-orientation information from local authorities
- #12 A7 — Quality of FTA-related events
- #17 C3 — FTA utilisation activities
- #19 A3 — Channels through which enterprises access information on FTAs

CRITICAL GAPS

- #34 D6 — Forms of support for compliance with sustainable development commitments
- #33 D4 — Effectiveness of support from local authorities
- #30 B1 — Understanding of legal documents
- #29 A1 — Knowledge of FTAs

SOURCE: FTA INDEX 2025, PREPARED BY FOREIGN TRADE UNIVERSITY FOR THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE; SURVEY OF 4,066 EXPORTING AND IMPORTING ENTERPRISES. COMPONENT SCORES ARE ON A 10-POINT SCALE AND THE OVERALL SCORE IS ON A 40-POINT SCALE. RANKINGS COVER 34 PROVINCES AND CITIES.

01 Overview of results

Lang Son scored **15.16 out of 40**, placing it in the “Average” tier and ranking **29th of 34** provinces and cities. Despite its role as a **major trade gateway to the Chinese market**, the province still sits in the bottom third on FTA implementation. Market information is the standout bright spot, with export forecasting and market-orientation information ranking **8th** and the quality of FTA-related events ranking **12th**, fitting for a border-trade hub. The institutional support base, however, remains weak — above all in **sustainable development, the province's most urgent gap**, where the quality of business support ranks last in the country.

PERFORMANCE ACROSS THE FOUR PILLARS

Lang Son National average

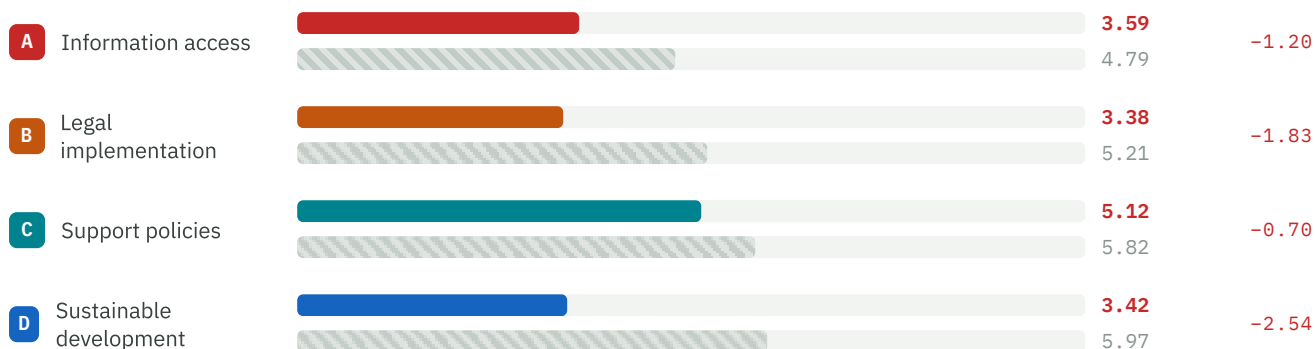


TABLE 1 · COMPONENT SCORES ON A 10-POINT SCALE · LANG SON VS. NATIONAL AVERAGE ACROSS 34 PROVINCES AND CITIES AND CITIES

02 Detailed analysis by component



COMPONENT 1 Information access

3.59 /10

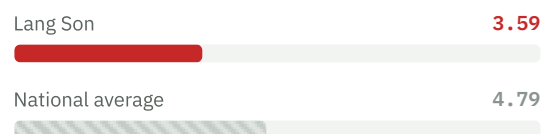
RANK 24 / 34 · -1.20

OVERVIEW

Lang Son's results are sharply uneven. Export forecasting and market-orientation information (A8) ranks **8th** and the quality of FTA-related events (A7) ranks **12th**. The quality of information on the local online portal (A9), however, ranks only **30th**, knowledge of FTAs (A1) ranks **29th** and sources of information on FTA-related events (A6) rank **27th**. Firms can therefore reach market information reasonably well, but the FTA dissemination system still lacks coverage and does not serve all firm groups evenly.

CHANNELS & PARTICIPATION

Mass media and social networks are the two main routes in. Large firms look mainly to web portals, while small firms attend conferences and seminars more often. Only about a third of firms say information from central or local agencies meets most or all of their needs; local information rates only marginally better than central, at 35.8% against 33.6%. Participation in FTA-related events is also limited: just 40.4% of firms attend even occasionally, while 47.7% never attend at all. Small and private domestic firms generally rate things lower than large and FDI firms, indicating that information is not tailored to each group's needs and absorptive capacity.



NATIONAL RANK BY INDICATOR

- #8 Quality of forecasting and market-orientation information from local authorities
- #12 Quality of FTA-related events
- #19 Channels through which enterprises access information on FTAs
- #27 Sources of information on FTA-related events
- #29 Knowledge of FTAs
- #30 Quality of FTA-related information on the online portal



COMPONENT 2 Implementation of Legal Documents

3.38 /10

RANK 27 / 34 · -1.83

OVERVIEW

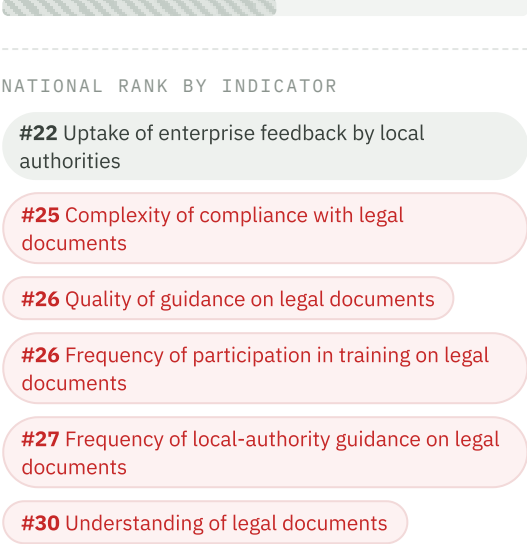
Lang Son shows a fairly comprehensive weakness in helping firms implement the FTA legal documents. Understanding of those documents (B1) ranks **30th**, frequency of guidance (B2) ranks **27th**, while the quality of guidance (B3) and participation in training



(B5) both rank **26th**. Uptake of enterprise feedback by local authorities (B7, **22nd**) and complexity of compliance (B4, **25th**) fare slightly better but remain in the bottom half of the table. Firms are not equipped with the knowledge and guidance they need to apply the FTA rules with confidence.

GRASP & GUIDANCE

Only about 15–18% of firms have a clear grasp of the main legal areas, while 60–70% hold a basic understanding or none at all; medium-sized firms score lowest. The share receiving guidance frequently or very frequently runs at just 20–25%, highest for TBT (27.6%) and lowest for tariff preferences (16.4%) — even though that is the most widely used commitment. Guidance quality rates best in tax, customs and investment (46.1%), followed by labour (42.1%); the remaining areas reach only around 27–33%. Meanwhile some 57–64% of firms consider the rules complex, TBT and intellectual property above all.



COMPONENT 3
Policies Supporting Enterprises' FTA Utilisation

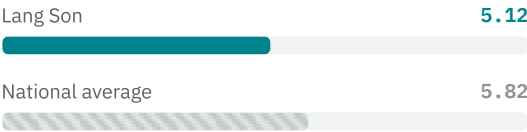
5.12 /10
RANK 28 / 34 · -0.70

OVERVIEW

Lang Son comes close to the national average on FTA utilisation activities (C3, **17th**) and the FTA commitments utilised (C4, **20th**), but lags on the support environment. Barriers to FTA utilisation (C5) rank **28th**, participation in trade promotion (C9.1) ranks **27th** and access to competitiveness support policies (C6) ranks **25th**. Firms therefore maintain a degree of FTA utilisation even though the support ecosystem is not developed enough to widen its reach or raise its effectiveness.

UTILISATION MIX BY FIRM SIZE

FTA utilisation concentrates on the traditional market-access commitments: tariff preferences (73.5%), rules of origin (62.6%) and trade facilitation (48.4%). More than half of firms lack information on FTA markets or do not clearly understand the commitments, while about a third struggle to reach partners; these constraints are sharpest among medium-sized firms. Local competitiveness programmes draw only about 24–39% positive ratings. Large firms rate them better, particularly support for connection with foreign firms, brand-building and access to finance, each at 80% positive. Support policy therefore benefits large and FDI firms considerably more than small, medium-sized and private domestic ones.



NATIONAL RANK BY INDICATOR



COMPONENT 4
Sustainable development commitments

3.42 /10
RANK 30 / 34 · -2.54

OVERVIEW

This is Lang Son's weakest pillar and its most urgent policy gap. The forms of support available to help enterprises meet sustainable development requirements (D6) ranks last, **34th**; support from local authorities (D4) and the perceived importance of complying with



import-market sustainable development commitments (D5) both rank **33rd**. Understanding of the commitments (D1, **23rd**) and readiness to comply (D3, **22nd**) fare less badly but remain low. The gap matters especially for a border province whose firms target EVFTA and CPTPP markets, where environmental and sustainability standards keep tightening.

AWARENESS & SUPPORT COVERAGE

Firms understand the traditional commitments better than the newer international requirements. About 39–43% have some understanding of labour, environment, biodiversity, and marine and forest protection, but fewer than 22% understand CSDDD, CBAM or the circular economy. Only around 8–13% see the sustainability requirements as having a major effect on their business. Local support also reaches firms unevenly: just 31–37% rate it effective, while in some areas up to 40% report receiving none at all. The most worrying gap is among medium-sized firms, where 50–57% report no support in the main areas.

National average

5.97



NATIONAL RANK BY INDICATOR

#22 Readiness to comply with sustainable development commitments

#23 Understanding of sustainable development commitments

#33 Effectiveness of support from local authorities

#33 Perceived importance of compliance with import-market sustainable development commitments

#34 Forms of support for compliance with sustainable development commitments

03 Conclusions & implications

STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON

- **Export forecasting and market-orientation information ranks 8th and the quality of FTA-related events ranks 12th**, a reasonably favourable information base for border trade.
- **FTA utilisation activities (17th) and the FTA commitments utilised (20th) both sit close to the national average**, showing that firms have begun turning FTA commitments into actual trade.
- **Readiness to meet sustainability requirements ranks 22nd**, better than the other indicators in the same pillar and a possible starting point for building compliance capacity.

INDICATORS THAT NEED TO IMPROVE

- **Support for meeting sustainability requirements is among the weakest in the country**, with support formats last in the table and support from local authorities ranking **33rd**.
- **Understanding of the legal documents ranks only 30th**, showing that firms lack regular, practical and usable guidance channels.
- **The digital information channels are not working**, with FTA information on the local online portal ranking **30th**, while firms' general knowledge of FTAs ranks only **29th**.

What to do next

prioritise sustainability, strengthen institutions

NOW • 0–12 MONTHS

NEXT • 1–3 YEARS

1 Step up sustainable development support

Provide practical compliance support to border exporters facing ever tighter EVFTA and CPTPP standards.

Pillar D • 30 → improve rank

2 Scale up legal guidance

Run regular, in-depth, situation-based legal guidance so firms understand and apply the FTA implementing rules effectively.

Pillar B • 27 → improve rank

3 Widen access to digital information

Raise awareness and effectiveness of the online portal, diversify event information sources, and build firms' FTA knowledge.

Pillar A • 24 → improve rank

4 Set up a dedicated FTA support unit

Build a single FTA coordination and support mechanism, matched to Lang Son's role as a key trade gateway to China.

Goal: stronger institutional capacity



TARGET

Move from the “Average” tier to “Fair” – build institutional support that matches the province's role as a trade gateway