

Phu Tho

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

14.55

 / 40

Below the national average of 21.66 by **7.11 points**.

WEAKEST PILLAR

31 / 34

Legal implementation — the lowest-ranked of the four pillars (**-2.20**).

FOUR PILLARS AT A GLANCE

A INFORMATION ACCESS

RANK 30 / 34

2.97

 / 10 **-1.82 vs national average**

B LEGAL IMPLEMENTATION

RANK 31 / 34

3.01

 / 10 **-2.20 vs national average**

C SUPPORT POLICIES

RANK 31 / 34

4.95

 / 10 **-0.87 vs national average**

D SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

RANK 28 / 34

3.62

 / 10 **-2.34 vs national average**

★ RELATIVE STRENGTHS

- #10** A8 — Quality of forecasting and market-orientation information from local authorities
- #13** C1 — FTA utilisation
- #20** C7 — Effectiveness of support policies and programmes implemented by local authorities
- #22** A4 — Quality of FTA information relative to business needs

CRITICAL GAPS

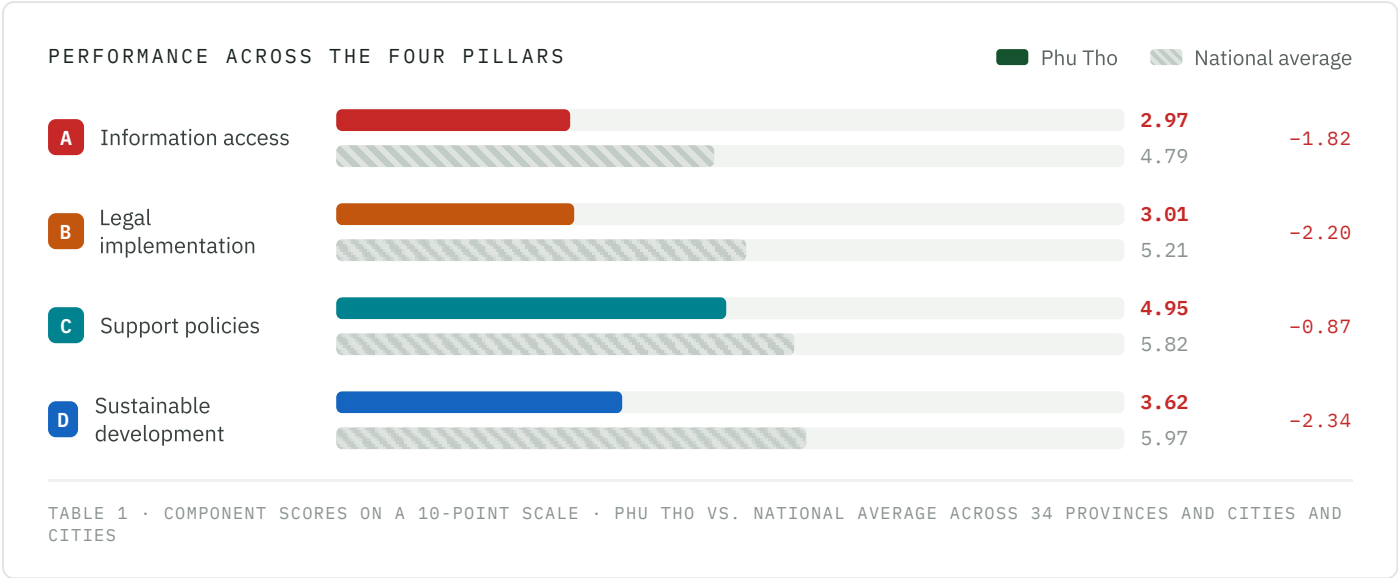
- #32** B7 — Uptake of enterprise feedback by local authorities
- #32** B2 — Frequency of local-authority guidance on legal documents
- #31** B5 — Frequency of participation in training on legal documents
- #30** D3 — Readiness to comply with sustainable development commitments

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

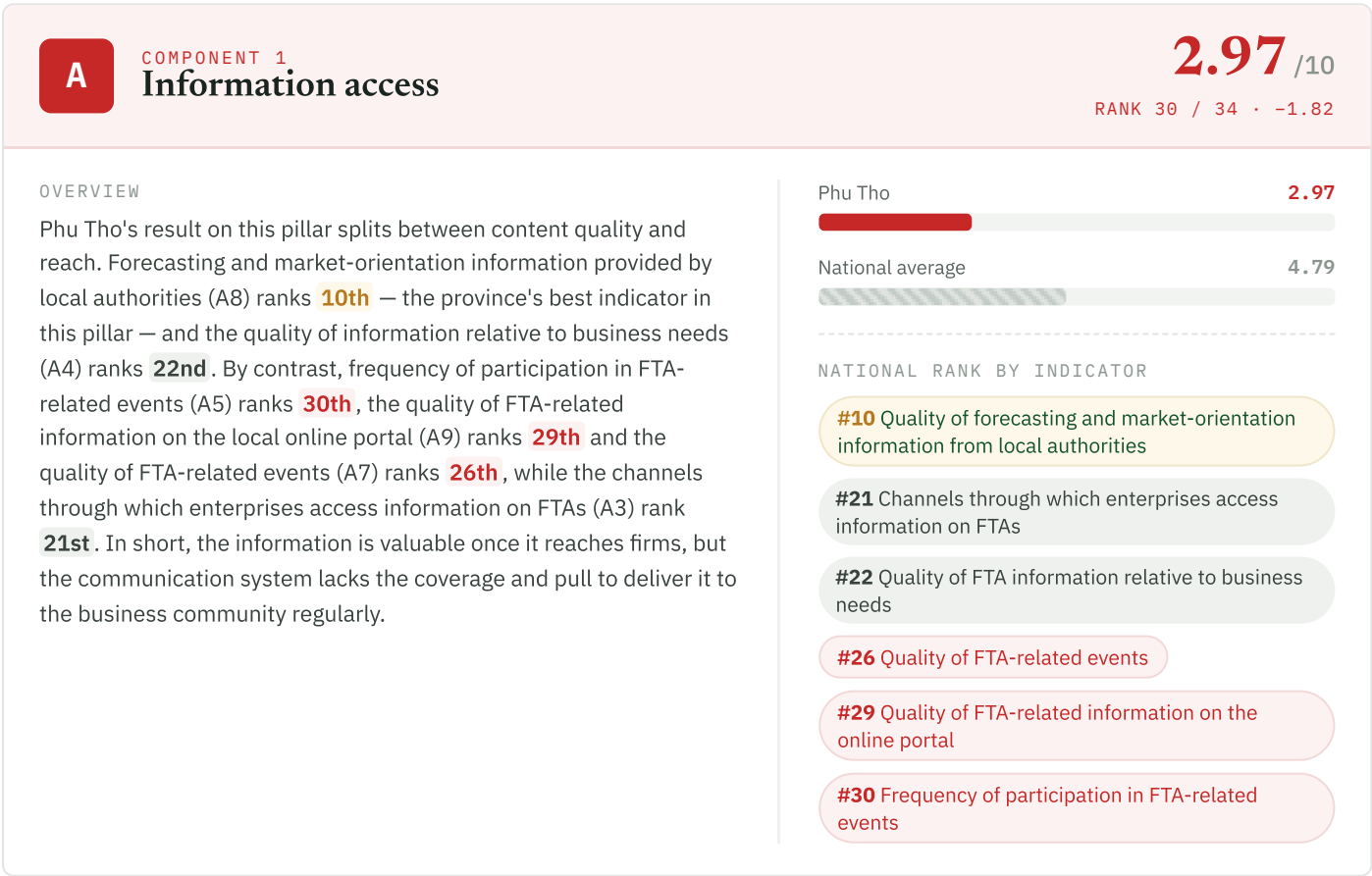
Phu Tho scored 14.55 out of 40, placing it in the “Average” tier and ranking **29th of 34** provinces and cities. All four pillars fall below the national average, so the weaknesses are not confined to one area but reflect a broadly incomplete FTA implementation support system. Legal implementation ranks lowest (31st of 34), while sustainable development shows the widest points gap to the national mean (**-2.34** points). Firms' FTA utilisation, however, ranks **13th** — an important signal that firms have both the demand and some capacity to exploit FTAs. If the province improves

information provision, legal guidance and compliance support, that base could translate into stronger implementation results.



02

Detailed analysis by component





COMPONENT 2

Implementation of Legal Documents

3.01 /10

RANK 31 / 34 · -2.20

OVERVIEW

This is Phu Tho's lowest-ranked pillar. The frequency of guidance from local authorities (B2) and the uptake of enterprise feedback by local authorities (B7) both rank **32nd**; participation in training on legal documents (B5) and enterprise feedback on those legal documents (B6) both rank **31st**. Understanding of those legal documents (B1, **25th**) and complexity of compliance (B4, **22nd**) fare better, but not enough to offset the shortfall in legal accompaniment.

HOW FAR GUIDANCE ACTUALLY REACHES

Nearly half of firms report receiving no guidance from the local government on the FTA implementing rules, or not knowing such guidance exists. The bottleneck is therefore not that the rules are beyond firms entirely, but that regular guidance, training and advice are absent. Firms are largely left to work out and handle fairly complex legal requirements on their own.

Phu Tho

3.01

National average

5.21

NATIONAL RANK BY INDICATOR

#22 Complexity of compliance with legal documents

#25 Understanding of legal documents

#31 Frequency of participation in training on legal documents

#31 Frequency of enterprise feedback on legal documents

#32 Frequency of local-authority guidance on legal documents

#32 Uptake of enterprise feedback by local authorities



COMPONENT 3

Policies Supporting Enterprises' FTA Utilisation

4.95 /10

RANK 31 / 34 · -0.87

OVERVIEW

This pillar has the smallest gap to the national average. Firms' FTA utilisation (C1) reaches a notable **13th**, while the effectiveness of support policies and programmes implemented by local authorities (C7) ranks **20th**. Firms are therefore exploiting FTAs on their own initiative even though the support ecosystem has not developed to match.

CONSTRAINTS & RATINGS BY FIRM SIZE

The frequency of trade promotion activity (C9.1), however, ranks **28th**, the need for FTA support programmes and policies (C8) ranks **29th**, barriers to FTA utilisation (C5) rank **27th** and the FTA commitments utilised (C4) ranks **26th**. About 60% of firms, regardless of size or ownership, rate support policy effectiveness as no better than average. Even so, 40–50% of small firms rate connection with FDI and foreign firms positively. That could be a base on which to build more targeted support programmes and widen the scope of FTA utilisation.

Phu Tho

4.95

National average

5.82

NATIONAL RANK BY INDICATOR

#13 FTA utilisation

#20 Effectiveness of support policies and programmes implemented by local authorities

#26 FTA commitments utilised

#27 Barriers to FTA utilisation

#28 Participation in trade promotion programmes

#29 Need for FTA support programmes and policies



OVERVIEW

Sustainable development shows the widest points gap to the national average. The forms of support available from local authorities (D6) ranks **31st**, firms' readiness to meet sustainability requirements (D3) ranks **30th**, while understanding of the sustainable development commitments (D1) and perceived impact on business operations (D2) both rank **28th**. The effectiveness of support from local authorities (D4) ranks **26th**, and the perceived importance of complying with import-market sustainable development commitments (D5) ranks **27th**.

HOW PREPARED FIRMS ARE

Firms generally judge the labour, environmental and supply-chain due-diligence commitments to have some effect on their business. Around 60%, however, have made no preparation at all or have only an idea, with no concrete plan or implementation. The gap matters especially for Phu Tho's textile and manufacturing firms entering the high-standard EVFTA and CPTPP markets.

Phu Tho

3.62

National average

5.97

NATIONAL RANK BY INDICATOR

#26 Effectiveness of support from local authorities

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

#28 Understanding of sustainable development commitments

#28 Perceived impact of sustainable development commitments

#30 Readiness to comply with sustainable development commitments

#31 Forms of support for compliance with sustainable development commitments

03 Conclusions & implications

STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON

- **Access to export forecasting and market-orientation information ranks 10th**, a favourable base on which to build a more proactive and substantive market information system.
- **FTA utilisation ranks 13th despite a thin support system**, showing that firms' demand and capacity to exploit FTAs have real room to grow.
- **Complexity of compliance with legal documents ranks 22nd**, better than many of the legal support indicators — the main obstacle is the absence of guidance and accompaniment rather than the difficulty of the rules themselves.

WEAKNESSES TO ADDRESS

- **Legal accompaniment is among the weakest in the country**, with guidance frequency, training, enterprise feedback and uptake by local authorities all ranking **31st–32nd**.
- **Readiness to meet sustainability requirements is very low (30th)**, a latent risk for textile and manufacturing firms in international supply chains.
- **The communication system does not reach or engage firms effectively**, with event attendance ranking **30th** and FTA information on the local online portal ranking **29th**.

Action agenda

build the support system firms need

NOW • 0–12 MONTHS

NEXT • 1–3 YEARS

1 Step up legal accompaniment

Run regular training, guidance and situation-based advice so firms understand and apply the FTA implementing rules.

Pillar B • 31 → improve rank

2 Reach out and communicate proactively

Build on the forecasting strength through events with reach, a usable online portal, and trade promotion tailored to each firm group.

Pillar A • 30 → improve rank

3 Raise sustainable development readiness

Help textile and manufacturing firms assess their compliance gaps, build plans, and meet sustainability standards in the key FTA markets.

Pillar D • 28 → improve rank

4 Set up a provincial FTA focal point

Create a single point that supplies information and legal guidance, receives problems, and connects firms to the right support policies.

Goal: stronger institutional capacity



TARGET

Strengthen institutional capacity and lift Phu Tho from the “Average” tier to “Fair”