

Thai Nguyen

Provincial performance in implementing Free Trade Agreements

Fair

BAND 3 OF 6

PERFORMANCE TIER

Fair

Band 3 of 6 — **7th of 34** assessed provinces and cities.

OVERALL SCORE

26.72

/ 40

Above the national average of 21.66 by **5.06 points**.

CENTRAL CHALLENGE

33 / 34

Barriers to utilisation — second worst nationally, even though the policies themselves are delivered effectively.

FOUR PILLARS AT A GLANCE

A INFORMATION ACCESS

RANK 4 / 34

6.69

/ 10

+1.89 vs national average

B LEGAL IMPLEMENTATION

RANK 6 / 34

6.54

/ 10

+1.33 vs national average

C SUPPORT POLICIES

RANK 20 / 34

5.73

/ 10

-0.09 vs national average

D SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

RANK 7 / 34

7.41

/ 10

+1.44 vs national average

★ STRENGTHS

- #6 D1 — Understanding of sustainable development commitments
- #7 B3 — Quality of guidance on legal documents
- #8 B2 — Frequency of local-authority guidance on legal documents
- #9 A7 — Quality of FTA-related events

WEAKNESSES

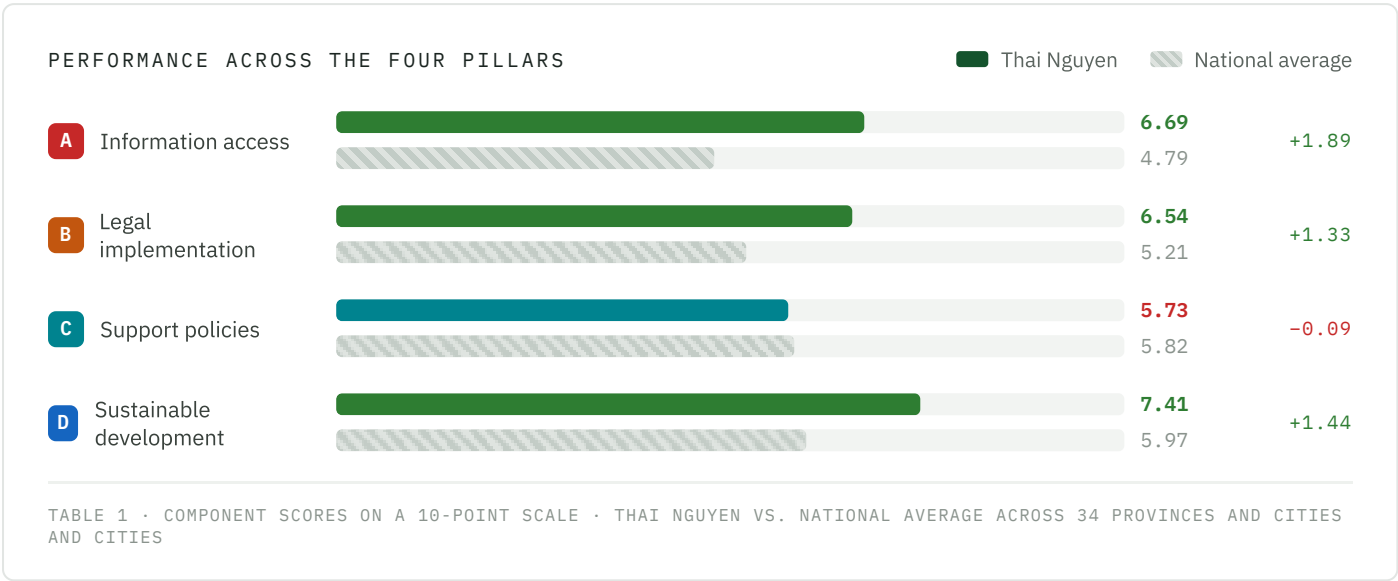
- #33 C5 — Barriers to FTA utilisation
- #20 C6 — Access to competitiveness support policies
- #18 B4 — Complexity of compliance with legal documents
- #18 C9.1 — Participation in trade promotion programmes

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

Thai Nguyen scored 26.72 out of 40, placing it in the “Fair” tier and ranking **7th of 34** provinces and cities. As one of the country's major electronics manufacturing and FDI hubs, the province places in the top 8 on three pillars: information access (**4th**), legal implementation (**6th**) and sustainable development (**7th**). That reflects a reasonably comprehensive communication and legal support system, delivered effectively and reaching many firm groups. Notably, small and private domestic firms take part in FTA communication activity more actively than large and FDI firms, so

information is not confined to those with the greatest scale and resources. The main weakness lies in the support policy pillar (**20th**): firms rate the programmes highly once they reach them, but still face substantial barriers and difficulty getting into the support system at all.



02 Detailed analysis by component

A

COMPONENT 1

Information access

6.69 /10

RANK 4 / 34 · +1.89

OVERVIEW

Thai Nguyen scores high and fairly evenly across the information indicators. The quality of information supplied relative to business needs (A4), sources of information on FTA-related events (A6), and the quality of FTA-related information on the local online portal (A9) all rank **7th**. FTA-related information provided by the authorities (A2) and the channels through which enterprises access information on FTAs (A3) both rank **8th**; the quality of FTA-related events (A7) ranks **9th**, and forecasting and market-orientation information from local authorities (A8) ranks **11th**. The system therefore combines wide coverage with information that is reasonably useful and well matched to business needs.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS & PARTICIPATION

Among the channels, the press reaches 81.4% of firms and conferences and seminars 75.7%, while web portals and social media each reach at least 70%. Training reaches more than half of firms, though large firms attend less than medium-sized ones. Some 72.1% of firms attend FTA events at least occasionally and 14.7% attend regularly. Local government notices are an important source of event information, reaching 65.7% of firms. Large and FDI firms nonetheless participate less actively than medium-sized and private domestic ones, leaving room to tailor the communication formats by firm group.

Thai Nguyen

6.69

National average

4.79

NATIONAL RANK BY INDICATOR

#7 Quality of FTA information relative to business needs

#7 Sources of information on FTA-related events

#7 Quality of FTA-related information on the online portal

#8 Authorities providing FTA information

#8 Channels through which enterprises access information on FTAs

#9 Quality of FTA-related events

#11 Quality of forecasting and market-orientation information from local authorities



COMPONENT 2

Implementation of Legal Documents

6.54 /10

RANK 6 / 34 · +1.33

OVERVIEW

Thai Nguyen's strength lies in legal guidance and accompaniment. The uptake of enterprise feedback by local authorities (B7) ranks **6th**, the quality of guidance on legal documents (B3) ranks **7th** and the frequency of that guidance (B2) ranks **8th**. Understanding of legal documents (B1), participation in training on legal documents (B5) and enterprise feedback on FTA-related legal documents (B6) all rank **10th**. Complexity of compliance (B4) ranks **18th**, the only indicator closer to the national average.

DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING BY AREA

Despite the high ranks, understanding varies considerably by area. About 63–65% of firms have a clear grasp of tariff preferences and rules of origin, but the share falls to 22.4% for SPS, 29.4% for environmental rules, 30.9% for TBT and 36.8% for intellectual property. Some 60–70% of firms still find the rules on tariffs, origin, SPS, TBT, intellectual property and trade remedies complex. The knowledge gap is most striking among large and FDI firms, particularly on labour and environmental requirements.

Thai Nguyen 6.54

National average 5.21

NATIONAL RANK BY INDICATOR

#6 Uptake of enterprise feedback by local authorities

#7 Quality of guidance on legal documents

#8 Frequency of local-authority guidance on legal documents

#10 Understanding of legal documents

#10 Frequency of participation in training on legal documents

#10 Frequency of enterprise feedback on legal documents related to FTA commitments

#18 Complexity of compliance with legal documents



COMPONENT 3

Policies Supporting Enterprises' FTA Utilisation

5.73 /10

RANK 20 / 34 · -0.09

OVERVIEW

Thai Nguyen has built some good-quality support programmes. The effectiveness of support policies and programmes implemented by local authorities (C7) ranks **9th**, the need for FTA support programmes and policies (C8) ranks **10th**, and FTA utilisation activities (C3) and the quality of trade promotion (C9.2) both rank **12th**. Barriers to FTA utilisation (C5), however, rank only **33rd**, and access to competitiveness support policies (C6) ranks **20th**. Policy therefore works when firms can reach it, but its coverage and its ability to clear obstacles do not match the quality of delivery.

UTILISATION MIX & FIRM DIFFICULTIES

FTA utilisation concentrates on the traditional commitments: tariff preferences (91.4%) and rules of origin (84.3%). Other commitments are barely exploited — not one firm reports using SPS, and TBT reaches just 4.3%. On difficulties, firms cite reaching partners as the biggest (38.6%), followed by a lack of market information (27.1%), limited understanding of the commitments and problems with rules of origin (25.7% each). Competitiveness programmes draw roughly 54–69% positive ratings, with training and business matching performing best. Technology support, however, delivers less for large firms.

Thai Nguyen 5.73

National average 5.82

NATIONAL RANK BY INDICATOR

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

#10 Need for FTA support programmes and policies

#12 FTA utilisation activities

#12 Quality of trade promotion programmes

#20 Access to competitiveness support policies

#33 Barriers to FTA utilisation



OVERVIEW

Sustainable development is one of Thai Nguyen's standout pillars. Enterprises' understanding of the sustainable development commitments (D1) and the effectiveness of support from local authorities (D4) both rank **6th**. That is an important base for electronics and FDI firms facing ever tighter labour, environmental and supply-chain due-diligence requirements in EVFTA and CPTPP markets.

READINESS BY AREA

About 65–67% of firms understand the labour and environmental commitments, but the share falls to 32–45% for biodiversity, CITES sustainable forest management, EUDR, CSDDD, CBAM and the circular economy. Labour, environmental and green-standard requirements are judged to have a large business impact by 36–39% of firms; the figure is only 12–18% for the other specialised areas. Around three-quarters of firms have begun preparing for the labour and environmental requirements, while 61–62% have prepared for public participation and green standards. Readiness remains lower for CSDDD, CBAM and the circular economy, especially among large firms.

Thai Nguyen 7.41

National average 5.97

NATIONAL RANK BY INDICATOR

#6 Understanding of sustainable development commitments

#6 Effectiveness of support from local authorities

03 Conclusions & implications

STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON

- **Information access ranks 4th, legal implementation 6th and sustainable development 7th**, putting Thai Nguyen in the leading eight on three pillars.
- **Legal guidance and accompaniment are delivered effectively**, with uptake of enterprise feedback by local authorities ranking **6th**, guidance quality **7th** and guidance frequency **8th**.
- **The effectiveness of support policies and programmes ranks 9th**, showing that the programmes deliver for the firms that can reach them.

WEAKNESSES TO ADDRESS

- **Barriers to FTA utilisation rank 33rd**, the single biggest bottleneck and the reason the support policy pillar trails the other three.
- **Access to competitiveness support policies ranks only 20th**, showing that the system's coverage does not match the programmes' effectiveness.
- **Understanding of SPS, TBT, intellectual property and environmental rules is limited**, even among large and FDI firms, despite a fairly solid grasp of the tariff and rules-of-origin commitments.

What to do next

clear the one remaining obstacle

NOW • 0–12 MONTHS

NEXT • 1–3 YEARS

1 Clear the barriers to FTA utilisation

Review and resolve the specific obstacles around rules of origin, certificates of origin, market information and partner matching, and simplify access to the support programmes.

C5 • 33 → aim for the top 15

2 Raise understanding of specialised commitments

Run sector-specific, situation-based training on SPS, TBT, intellectual property, and labour and environmental rules, prioritising the groups with the widest knowledge gaps.

B1 • deepen specialised knowledge

3 Widen the coverage of support policy

Set up a single information point and connect firms proactively to programmes on training, technology, finance and partner development.

C6 • 20 → improve access

4 Hold the lead on pillars A, B and D

Keep building the information, legal support and sustainability systems so they serve the electronics, FDI and domestic business communities well.

A/B/D • stay in the top 8

★ **TARGET**
Lift Thai Nguyen from the “Fair” tier to “Good” by cutting barriers and widening access to the FTA support system