

# SWOT ANALYSIS OF INDONESIA'S TRADE IN SERVICES IN FACING THE ASEAN TRADE IN SERVICES AGREEMENT (ATISA)

## *Analisis SWOT Perdagangan Jasa Indonesia dalam Menghadapi ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATiSA)*

Jerry Sambuaga<sup>1</sup>, Endah Ayu Ningsih<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Master of International Relation, Universitas Pelita Harapan  
Jl. M.H Thamrin Boulevard 1100 Lippo Village, Tangerang 15811, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Trade Policy Agency, Ministry of Trade, Jl. M.I Ridwan Rais No. 5, Jakarta 10110, Indonesia  
Email: ayuningsih.endah@gmail.com

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### Abstract

The liberalization of services within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been a key focus since the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) was signed in 1995. This effort reached a new milestone by introducing the ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATiSA) in 2019, which seeks to enhance further the integration and liberalization of the services sector across ASEAN member states (AMS). ATiSA aims to create a stable and predictable environment for service trade by reducing discriminatory regulatory barriers and increasing transparency. This study explores the best strategy for Indonesia to leverage the benefits of ATiSA by conducting a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The distributed questionnaires are filled out by 43 individual respondents from 19 government institutions representing nine ministry or national agencies, seven private sectors, and two academic institutions. The SWOT results show that Indonesia can take the Strengths-Opportunity strategy to benefit from ATiSA implementation. To maximize the strength, moderate support is still needed to regulate and develop certified workers. Meanwhile, opportunities to win the ASEAN market include considerable market potential, investment opportunities, enhanced international trade, and positive consumer perception of Indonesian services driven by quality, technology, and digital marketing strategies.

**Keywords:** ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement, Services Liberalization, SWOT Analysis

### Abstrak

*Liberalisasi jasa dalam Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) telah menjadi fokus utama sejak ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) ditandatangani pada tahun 1995. Upaya ini telah mencapai tonggak sejarah baru dengan diselesaikannya ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATiSA) pada tahun 2019, yang berupaya untuk lebih meningkatkan integrasi dan liberalisasi sektor jasa di seluruh negara anggota ASEAN. ATiSA bertujuan untuk menciptakan lingkungan yang stabil dan dapat diprediksi untuk perdagangan jasa dengan mengurangi hambatan regulasi yang diskriminatif dan meningkatkan transparansi. Studi ini mengeksplorasi strategi terbaik bagi Indonesia untuk memanfaatkan ATiSA dengan melakukan analisis Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). Kuesioner yang didistribusikan diisi oleh 43 responden individu dari 19 lembaga pemerintah yang mewakili sembilan kementerian atau lembaga nasional, tujuh sektor swasta, dan dua lembaga akademis. Hasil SWOT menunjukkan bahwa Indonesia dapat mengambil strategi Strength-Opportunity untuk mendapatkan keuntungan dari implementasi ATiSA. Untuk memaksimalkan kekuatan, masih diperlukan dukungan pemerintah untuk mengatur dan mengembangkan tenaga bersertifikat. Sementara itu, peluang untuk memenangkan pasar ASEAN meliputi potensi pasar yang besar, peluang investasi, peningkatan perdagangan internasional, dan persepsi konsumen yang positif terhadap jasa Indonesia yang didorong oleh strategi kualitas, teknologi, dan pemasaran digital.*

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**Kata kunci:** *Perjanjian Perdagangan Jasa ASEAN, Analisis SWOT, Liberalisasi Jasa*  
**JEL Classification:** F13, F15, L80

## INTRODUCTION

ASEAN has been pursuing services liberalization since 1995 by expanding the scope of its commitments in the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS), which has become a guide for services liberalization in ASEAN (Yean, 2019; Ningsih & Rapmeriah, 2023). AFAS has concluded ten packages, and its 11<sup>th</sup> AFAS Package commitments were transferred to the ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATiSA). ATiSA was initiated at the 25<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting (AEM) in Phuket, Thailand, in April 2019, replacing AFAS as the basis for services sector trade liberalization in ASEAN and extending of what has been achieved in AFAS.

ATiSA marks a crucial new phase in the liberalization and integration of the services sector for ASEAN for several reasons. First, the transition from AFAS negotiations to the ATiSA agreement signifies that ASEAN has been able to move forward in its services sector negotiations. Second, ATiSA aims to create a more stable and predictable environment and to form a medium for future integration and liberalization of trade in services by setting commitments that can serve to reduce discriminatory

regulatory barriers, thereby helping ASEAN member states (AMS) move towards a more transparent regime (Yean, 2019; Rais, 2021). The "negative" list approach locks out non-compliant measures and increases transparency as investors can see non-compliant measures in each service sub-sector (Yean, 2019; Rais, 2021).

Following the development of ATiSA negotiation since its first establishment, several researchers have conducted studies on the impact of ATiSA implementation (Natanael & Verico, 2019; La, 2021; Ningsih & Rapmeriah, 2023; Findlay & Roelfsema, 2023). La (2021) examined the progress of the AFAS and its impact on the economy of AMS. The research concluded that despite the significant achievement in services liberalization, intra-ASEAN service trade has stagnated or even decreased, partly due to increasing service trade with extra-regional countries like China and the unequal liberalization across different service sectors and member states. The impact of service liberalization varies by industry, depending on whether services are complements or substitutes across different supply modes. The empirical analysis suggests that complementarity

between certain modes (e.g., Mode 1 and Mode 3) can limit overall trade if one mode faces restrictions.

Findlay & Roelfsema (2023) examined the effect of trade services openness on the Global Value Chain (GVC) participation share. The research showed that AMS has made progress in reducing restrictions on goods trade but lags in liberalizing services trade. The results suggested that countries that are more open regarding services trade have a higher substantial value chain position. The results also showed that stronger backward integration increases forward opportunities by supporting goods higher in the value chain. These findings implied that lower restrictions on services trade could enhance ASEAN's competitiveness, further integrating the region into GVCs and enabling it to add higher value at multiple stages of production.

Ningsih & Rapmeriah (2023) conducted a Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) simulation to count the effect of ATiSA on Indonesia's economy. The CGE results indicate that ATiSA contributed positively to the economy of all AMS. For Indonesia itself, ATiSA will provide a trade surplus of USD702.9 million, with the sectors that receive the surplus being transportation and communication. The manufacturing

sectors that receive a surplus from ATiSA are mining, processed food, textiles, and sectors in the light manufacturing category.

Natanael & Verico (2019) analyzed the effect of service liberalization through the ASEAN Agreement on Moving of Natural Persons (AAMNP) on Indonesian services worker. The findings suggested that the AAMNP encourages skills movement in Indonesia, exceptionally skilled workers in services trade through intra-corporate transfers and temporary movement of business visitors. This finding also prevailed when job titles classified skilled migrant workers after implementing the AAMNP. The impact of AAMNP on skilled workers' stock as the manager, director, consultant, and commissioner was significantly positive.

Given the considerable progress in ASEAN's services liberalization, exploring the role of the services sector in the region's economy has become an increasingly interesting topic for researchers who have studied different aspects of services liberalization and its impact on ASEAN economies. For instance, Tongzon (2011) examined the logistics sector, Saengchai et al. (2015) focused on enhancing university competitiveness in the education services sector, and Situmorang & Agustina (2022) analyzed the

determinants of service exports within AMS.

Tongzon (2011) conducted a study through a survey to uncover the underlying factors that hinder or may affect the ability of ASEAN countries to implement their liberalization commitments in the logistics sector fully. The survey results show two main factors that impede the implementation of logistics services liberalization in ASEAN. The first is a significant difference in the strength and capacity of each country's logistics industry. The second is the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the existing institutional and regulatory/legal framework.

Saengchai et al. (2015) conducted qualitative research to develop the capacity of universities and create a competitive advantage in ASEAN regarding free trade in education services. The framework of various strategies to lead the university to success as a top-quality university was defined through Focused Group Discussion. The strategies include developing a management system, building good relationships with the community and alums, raising the standard of teaching, becoming a centre of learning and leading academic service, promoting and maintaining

cultural arts internationally, and reforming resource management (Saengchai et al., 2015).

Situmorang & Agustina (2022) analyzed the determinant factors affecting the export of services among AMS. The results showed that the ASEAN services exports doubled from 2010 to 2019 with the top average exports of the services subsector among AMS being travel, other business, and transportation services. The lowest average export value for construction. The research also found that foreign direct investment, nominal exchange rate, gross domestic product, value-added services, gross domestic product, labor force, human capital, and communication facilities significantly affect ASEAN's service exports. The nominal exchange rate and labor force harm ASEAN's service exports, while the rest of the variables positively affect ASEAN's service exports.

In January 2023, Indonesia ratified ATiSA through Presidential Regulation (Perpres). Four other countries ratified earlier: Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia. The implementation of ATiSA marks a substantial shift in the liberalization of the services sector in the ASEAN region, with specific implications for Indonesia's economy.

Many academics believe that services liberalization brings numerous opportunities, such as promoting GVC participation (Findlay & Roelfsema, 2023), increasing international trade (Tyagi et al., 2017), increasing foreign exchange rate (Su et al., 2020), and foreign direct investment (La, 2021). For Indonesia, the potential benefits span a wide range of sectors, including transportation, communications and manufacturing, as previous research has shown (Ningsih & Rapmeriah, 2023). However, behind these opportunities, there are still several threats, such as uneven liberalization in various sectors (Yean, 2019; Rais, 2021), competition with non-ASEAN countries (IDEAS, 2022), and limited backward integration (La, 2021).

ATiSA aims to reduce regulatory barriers, enhance transparency and promote integration, thereby enabling AMS to enhance the competitiveness of its services sector. However, several AMS including Indonesia, have internal constraints that prevent them from utilizing ATiSA optimally. As the sector with the largest contribution to the economy, the balance of trade in services in the last three years has recorded a deficit and has yet to show any recovery (BI, 2023; BPS, 2024). In addition, there are also areas for

improvement in meeting the compliance requirements in ATiSA due to domestic regulations, language limitations, and professional worker competition (Rais, 2021; La, 2021; IDEAS, 2022).

Some argue that the full-scale liberalization of services under ATiSA may be impracticable due to the developmental gaps between the AMS (Rais, 2021), national treatment issues (IDEAS, 2022), domestic regulations that hinder the moving of services professionals (La, 2021), and the different level of commitment among AMS (La, 2021).

This study aims to evaluate Indonesia's readiness to fully exploit ATiSA's potential by balancing the opportunities for economic advancement with the challenges posed by existing structural and regulatory constraints. It will contribute to shaping effective strategies to support Indonesia's growth in the liberalized ASEAN services landscape and strengthen the country's position in a progressively integrated regional economy.

## **METHOD**

We use the SWOT analysis to analyze the Indonesia's capacity to effectively implement ATiSA. SWOT is a robust framework that is commonly used to evaluate the competitive position of

organizations by scanning their internal and external factors to identify strategic plans for business growth (Pickton & Wright, 1998; Sammut-Bonnici & Galea, 2015; Jain et al., 2022). The SWOT is carried out by archival research, interviews with experts, and a review of the available literature (Puyt et al., 2023). "Strengths" refers to the internal positive factors and resources that the organizations efficiently use to achieve anticipated objectives. While "Weaknesses" are the internal negative factors and the limitations in organizations' processes that prevent them from accomplishing their objectives. "Opportunities" are the external factors favorable in the business environment that may contribute to the organization's success. The last term, "Threats," refers to external unfavorable factors or situations that may harm the organizational strategy.

The internal factor analysis (IFA) is used to identify resources, capabilities, core competencies, and competitive advantages inherent to the organization. The external factor analysis (IFA) identifies market opportunities and threats by looking at competitors' resources, the industry environment, and the general environment (Sammut-Bonnici & Galea, 2015).

## **Data Collection**

For data collection, this study uses a qualitative approach through two stages, as carried out by Jain et al. (2022). The first stage is determining external and internal factors. The second stage is distributing questionnaires to collect respondents' perceptions of external and internal factor indicators.

To identify internal factors and external factors, we conduct a literature review regarding the services liberalization in ASEAN (Yean, 2019; Natanael & Verico, 2019; IDEAS, 2022), the effect of the services sector on the economy and region (Sharma et al., 2010; Tyagi et al., 2017; Su et al., 2020; La, 2021; IDEAS, 2022; Ningsih & Rapmeriah, 2023; Findlay & Roelfsema, 2023), the factor affected trade in services (Harms & Shuvalova, 2020), also the recent situation related to services sector in global economy (Hayakawa et al., 2020; Ando & Hayakawa, 2022). We also interviewed four experts, one from a high-level official in Ministry of Trade with more than ten years experience leadership in research agency, one from a managerial-level official in Ministry of Trade with more than ten years experience related to trade in services affairs, and two academics from well known University with lengthy experience working on service-related

issues. We use secondary data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2024) and Indonesian Economic and Financial Statistics (SEKI) data from Bank Indonesia. We managed to identify 12

internal and external factors regarding Indonesia's trade in services, each of which is described extensively in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1. Internal Factors for SWOT Analysis**

No.	Factors	Description	References
1.	Services in Indonesia's economy	The contribution of the services sector to Indonesia's GDP is the largest (53 percent) compared to other sectors. It could be viewed as an initial strength or a weakness if one is concerned that liberalization may harm domestic services sectors.	Biro Pusat Statistik (2024)
2.	Deficit trade balances in services	The trade balance in the services sector after the pandemic has not recovered yet. The deficit trade balance represents the efficiency and productivity of domestic industry.	BI (2023); Ando & Hayakawa (2022);
3.	Cultural and language	Foreign language literacy and different cultures hinder the opportunity to enter the ASEAN market.	Harms & Shuvalova (2020)
4.	High-level skills	The ATiSA ensures that the professional or service providers have high skills. Indonesia already has competent human resources from various fields.	IDEAS (2022)
5.	Domestic investment in services	The contribution of the service sector to domestic investment reached 51 percent of the investment value. As much as 83 percent of investment activities came from the service sector.	BPS (2024)
6.	Certified professionals	The professionals in the services sector in Indonesia still need official certification ownership.	Interview
7.	Certification Agency	Indonesia already has the infrastructure or government institutions that carry out competency certification in the service sector.	Interview
8.	Networking constraint	The capabilities and limitations of business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-government (B2G) networks hinder promotional efforts for market expansion.	Interview
9.	Domestic regulation	The national treatment principles issues faced by Indonesia relate to the liberalization of services, especially regarding taxation policies, land use, and professional qualifications.	Interview, Magdariza (2017), IDEAS (2022)
10.	Domestic market	Professionals in the Indonesian service sector is more interested in the domestic market, which has a large market—for example, professional consultants and IT services.	Interview
11.	Domestic company capability	Indonesia's corporate management technology system is relatively advanced.	Interview
12.	Capital capacity	The capital resources of Indonesian service companies are already high.	Interview

Source: Authors.

**Table 2. External Factors for SWOT Analysis**

No.	Factors	Description	References
1.	Increase competition	The AFAS refers specifically to the temporary movement of natural persons with highly skilled and professional, and the restrictions and sector-specific commitments identified in AFAS ensure that service providers have a high level of skills.	IDEAS (2022)
2.	Negative Economic issue	Negative issues on local and global economic conditions, such as the impact of COVID-19 on trade in services, have not fully recovered.	Ando & Hayakawa (2022)
3.	New entry for a foreign company	Liberalization of the service sector positively impacts the entry of foreign companies with more competent human resources.	Hayakawa et al. (2020), IDEAS (2022)
4.	Increase foreign exchange	Expanding Indonesia's service market access to AMS increases foreign exchange reserves through increased exports. Trade in services positively impacts the economy and increases sophisticated exports.	Su et al. (2020), Ningsih & Rapmeriah (2023)
5.	Increase outward Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in ASEAN	Services liberalization increased investment opportunities for AMS. Relaxation on Mode 3 potentially replaces Mode 1 among ASEAN countries.	La (2021)
6.	Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA)	MRA or competency certification cooperation in several categories of professional services (engineers, nurses, architects, surveyor qualifications, accounting, medical, and dentists) facilitates the mobility of service providers in ASEAN.	Natanael & Verico (2019); IDEAS (2022); Nasution et al. (2024)
7.	Increase international trade	Similar to tariffs, liberalization in the services sector encourages international trade between regions.	Tyagi et al. (2017)
8.	GVC participation	Liberalization of services in ASEAN encourages industry participation in the GVC.	Findlay & Roelfsema (2023)
9.	The gap in economic and commitment level	Economic disparities and differences in levels of commitment between ASEAN countries have different effects on trade depending on whether each service sector has intermodal substitution or complementarity. Member of ASEAN have different Margin of Preference Estimation (MoP Estimate) and different Hoekman Index; also, not all ASEAN countries have a negative approach to their previous agreements.	Yean (2019); La (2021); Rais (2021); IDEAS (2022); Ningsih & Rapmeriah (2023)
10.	Market perception	The interest of foreign consumers in Indonesian companies is already high (for example, Alfamart, which has significantly developed in the Philippines).	Interview
11.	Market potential	ASEAN people's increasing income levels and welfare drive demand in the services sector.	Interview
12.	Support making Indonesia 4.0	Liberalization through ATiSA provides more comprehensive access to service products from other ASEAN members to support other domestic sectors, such as manufacturing, and to support the Making Indonesia 4.0 program.	Interview

Source: Authors.



The next stage of data collection is the distribution of questionnaires to several respondents. The targeted respondents comprised of government institutions, private sectors, and academics. The government representative respondents are those whose tasks are related to trade in services affairs and actively take in services negotiation in various international trade forums. All government respondents consist of 19 government institution representing 9 ministry or national agency such as the Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Ministry of Investment, Ministry of Communication and Information, Indonesian Migrant Workers Protective Agency, National Professional Certification Agency, Financial Services Authority.

The seven respondents from the private sector consist of Indonesia Services Dialog, the Indonesian Business Association, the Center for the Association of Indonesian Training and Course Providers, the National Construction Services Development Institute, the Indonesian Shopping Center Management Association, the Association of Indonesian Tourism Industry, the Indonesian National

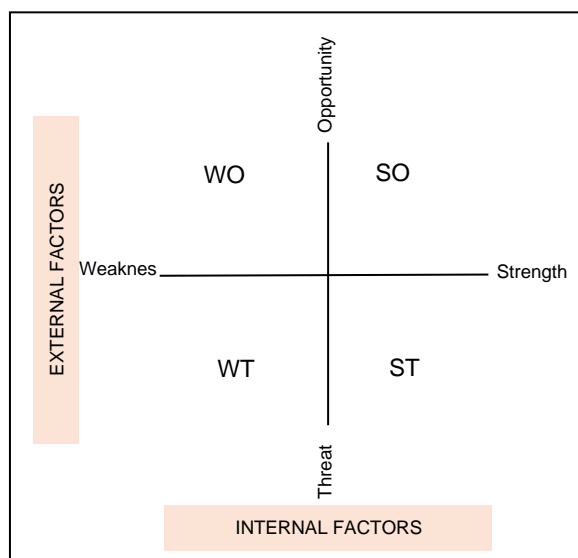
Construction Implementation Association. Respondents from academics come from the Faculty of Economics and Management - Bogor Agricultural University and the Faculty of Economics - State University of Jakarta. The academics respondents are those have focus of study in international trade issue and services liberalization. After circulating the questionair, we accepted 43 individual valid responses. Respondents were asked to give a rating scale of importance for each item of internal and external factors on a Likert scale (Koo & Koo, 2007). Since internal and external factors have 12 factors in each group, the highest score indicating the highest importance factor is 12, and the least important factor is 1.

Furthermore, respondents were asked to provide an assessment on a scale of 1-6 for each factor. In the internal factor score, the number 1 indicates "Weakness," and the higher number indicates "Strength". Likewise, with external factors, the number 1 indicates "Threats," and the higher score indicates "Opportunity" (Koo & Koo, 2007; Leigh, 2010).

### **Interpreting Findings**

Following the return of completed questionnaires, we compile the data into a spreadsheet to synthesize the findings and summarize the results of the internal

and external factor analyses (Leigh, 2010). Treating these data as coordinates, they can be plotted within a two-dimensional graph—called a SWOT quadrant—such as that illustrated in Figure 1. This allows for the location and magnitude of each factor in SWOT to be seen in relation to all others (Leigh, 2010). The quadrant identifies potential tactical strategies that could be deployed to exploit opportunities or defend against threats by leveraging existing strengths and reducing weaknesses (Sammut-Bonnici & Galea, 2015). The SWOT quadrant seeks to develop tactical strategies based on four different positions (Sammut-Bonnici & Galea, 2015).



**Figure 1. SWOT Quadran**

Source: Sammut-Bonnici & Galea, (2015).

The WO strategy in the first quadrant attempts to maximize opportunities arising from the external environment and eliminate the organization’s internal weaknesses that hinder its growth. The SO strategy in the second quadrant is ideal for an organization to maximize strengths and opportunities. The ST strategy uses the organization’s internal strengths to counteract threats from competitors. The WT strategy in the fourth quadrant is the worst-case scenario when an organization must minimize its weaknesses and threats.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Trade liberalization in services between AMS involves several initiatives that laid the groundwork for achieving a regionally integrated market for services in the ASEAN region (IDEAS, 2022). The process formally began when the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) was signed in 1995, and the various rounds of negotiations took place under AFAS to liberalize intra-regional services trade. The agreement followed the AMS recognition of the fundamental role of trade in services for economic growth and job creation and the importance of a concerted effort to work towards the free flow of trade in services within the (IDEAS, 2022). ASEAN

concluded ten packages of commitments. After signing the 10<sup>th</sup> AFAS package, the package negotiations were replaced by the ATiSA (La, 2021). The 10<sup>th</sup> package of AFAS, the 8<sup>th</sup> package of financial services, and the 11<sup>th</sup> package of air transport services have become an integral part of ATISA (La, 2021; IDEAS, 2022).

The AFAS provisions comply with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) – a treaty of the World Trade Organization (WTO) – in 1994, and the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) for trade in goods liberalization in 1993 (Rais, 2021; IDEAS, 2022). The agreement aims to eliminate restrictions to liberalize trade in services and

enhance cooperation amongst the AMS to achieve a free trade area where services, investment, and skilled labor can move freely across the borders of ASEAN countries by 2015 (IDEAS, 2022). The scope of liberalization in AFAS was agreed to exceed the member states' commitment under GATS, and its implementation is expected to bring not only efficiency and competitiveness but also a diversified production capacity, supply, and distribution of services (IDEAS, 2022). Since AFAS's approach was built upon GATS – that is, to achieve trade liberalization in services – the guidelines provided by AFAS also follow GATS's "four modes of supply" shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. The Four Modes of Supply Adopted in AFAS**

Type of Modes	Note	Definition
Mode 1	Cross Border Supply	Cover services flow from one member's territory (as services supplier) into another (services consumer) territory, for example, banking or architectural services transmitted via telecommunications or mail.
Mode 2	Consumption Abroad	Service consumers (e.g., tourists or patients) move into another member's territory to obtain a service, for example, tourists, students, or patients who consume the respective services.
Mode 3	Commercial Presence	The service supplier of one member establishes a territorial presence, including through ownership or lease of premises, in another member's territory to provide a service, for example, domestic subsidiaries of foreign insurance companies or hotel chains.
Mode 4	Movement of natural persons	It refers to a person of one member entering the territory of another member to supply a service, for example, accountants, doctors, or teachers.

Source: WTO (2024).

The achievement of service liberalization completed by ASEAN can be summarized as follows (La, 2021): (i) ASEAN eliminates restrictions on all 128 subsectors for Mode 1 and Mode 2 supply of services; (ii) ASEAN allows equity participation up to 70 percent; (iii) ASEAN significantly eliminate restrictions regarding market access on Mode 3 supply of services; (iv) ASEAN eliminate restrictions regarding national treatment on Mode 3 except for a maximum of one out of 128 subsectors. Allowing a restriction in one subsector means that each ASEAN country can maintain a protectionist measure in a single subsector while eliminating restrictions in the other 127 subsectors.

Compared to massive liberalization in Mode 1, mode 2, and Mode 3, ASEAN is taking a passive stance on the liberalization of Mode 4's supply of services (La, 2021). Liberalization of services for Mode 4 was carried out through the ASEAN Agreement on Movement of Natural People (AAMNP), which came into effect in 2016. Since April 2021, Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) have been signed for eight professional services, including engineering, nursing, architecture, surveying qualifications, accounting, medical practitioners, dental practitioners, and tourism professionals

(Natanael & Verico, 2019; La, 2021). MRA is one of the declarations made to accelerate the realization of the AFAS. The MRAs for these eight professions are the progress made by the ASEAN to facilitate the movement of service professionals in the region (IDEAS, 2022). The MRA aims to mobilize the movement of the goods trade and specific service sectors in the region (Nasution et al., 2024).

The AMS adopt the negative approach to list the specific commitment to ATiSA (Rais, 2021). There are three different techniques of listing specific commitments used for establishing services liberalization, so-called scheduling approaches, namely the GATS-type positive list approach, the NAFTA-type negative list approach, and the hybrid approach (Zhang & Sasanabanchakul, 2022). Under the positive list approach, parties to a service agreement list the sectors and subsectors where specific commitments are undertaken. Market access and national treatment are granted only to those listed sectors and sub-sectors and subject to limitations and conditions inscribed in the Schedule. Under the negative list approach, parties list reservations- usually called non-conforming measures (NCM)- to their obligations contained in the agreement. These reservations

typically feature in two lists ("Annex I and Annex II"), which include existing non-conforming and future non-conforming measures, respectively. All measures and sectors within the scope of the agreement presumably conform with the obligations except for the listed reservations. The hybrid approach is usually a combination of the above two approaches.

The Schedules of NCMs submitted by AMS cannot undermine the existing levels of commitments under the final AFAS packages, and they are required to be submitted to the ASEAN Secretariat within 13 years (Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar), within seven years (Vietnam) and five years (the rest of ASEAN) of ATISA coming into force (Rais, 2021; La, 2021). The application of the negative approach assumes that all sectors are liberalized unless otherwise specified. Therefore, this approach is expected to advance services liberalization and encourage closer regional economic integration.

Instead of its meaningful success in liberalization, ASEAN still faces some challenges regarding implementation. Most member states have met their target commitment levels in the Priority Integration Sectors (PIS). However, some members could not meet the target levels in the other sectors. For example,

the level of commitment for Mode 3 remained low in Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam compared to that of the other member states (La, 2021; IDEAS, 2022). National treatment for member countries is very weak as the differences between intra-ASEAN and extra-ASEAN trade policy treatment are insignificant (IDEAS, 2022). It means that, practically, the AMS received the same treatment as non-preferential or Most Favoured Nation (MFN) policies (IDEAS, 2022). MRAs have currently been implemented in eight areas, but in reality, the cross-border movement of people supplying services is limited due to national regulations, concerns over job losses, and different education and qualification systems (La, 2021).

### **SWOT Analysis Result**

From the questionnaire, the respondents have identified the main factors: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Furthermore, the respondents scored each factor based on its importance level. The average level of importance then became the basis for determining the weighting (Koo & Koo, 2007). The results of the Internal Factor Analysis (IFA) are given in Table 4, and the results for External Factor Analysis are given in Table 5.

**Table 4. Internal Factors Analysis (IFA)**

No.	Internal Factors	Important Score		Strength/Weakness Score		Weighted Score (AxB)
		Average	Weight (A)	Average (B)	Note	
1.	Services in Indonesia's economy	6.06	0.08	4.39	S	0.34
2.	Deficit trade balances in services	7.22	0.09	2.94	W	0.27
3.	Cultural and language	6.05	0.08	2.78	W	0.22
4.	High-level skills	6.94	0.09	4.06	S	0.36
5.	Domestic investment in services	5.83	0.08	4.06	S	0.31
6.	Certified professionals	7.22	0.09	2.72	W	0.25
7.	Certification Agency	6.94	0.09	3.50	S	0.31
8.	Networking constraint	7.28	0.09	2.72	W	0.26
9.	Domestic regulation	6.28	0.08	3.17	S	0.26
10.	Domestic market	4.33	0.06	3.17	S	0.18
11.	Domestic company capability	6.44	0.08	3.83	S	0.32
12.	Capital capacity	6.94	0.09	3.72	S	0.33
<b>Total</b>		<b>78</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>3.41</b>

Source: Authors' calculation

The IFA results show four internal factors are considered as weaknesses. The highest importance score on “networking constraints” with the weakness indication implies that building and maintaining effective networks in services sectors is a critical challenge or opportunity for the domestic services supplier. The respondents also view the “deficit trade balance” as a weakness, with a high importance score suggesting that services sectors may face

substantial difficulties balancing their trade in services, which could impact profitability, sustainability, or growth. Based on the Statistik Ekonomi dan Keuangan Indonesia (SEKI) from Indonesia's central Bank, Indonesia struggled to recover the deficit trade balance in services sectors (Bank Indonesia, 2024).

The high importance of “certified professionals” at the same time is considered a weakness, suggesting that

the availability and quality of certified professionals are crucial for Indonesia to compete effectively in the services sector in ASEAN. Cumberland et al. (2018) found the different motives for individuals pursuing certification, such as networking, career advancement, and gaining knowledge. There should be changes in laws and regulations, as well as new technologies that create the need for professional association certification programs to help individuals remain current and refresh their skills.

The IFA results also show that “culture and language” are deemed to be weaknesses. Harms & Shuvalova (2020) explain that, due to the necessary interaction between customers and producers, the services trade is sensitive to various types of communication failures. When cultures are very different, it's harder for countries to engage in services trade because they struggle to find common ground for effective communication and interaction. However Harms & Shuvalova (2020) also found that not all types of services are equally affected by cultural distance. Financial and travel services are more vulnerable to cultural differences, whereas transportation services are not as impacted.

The rest of the internal factors are viewed by respondents as strengths. The

high-level skill factor has the highest weighted score (0.36), indicating that Indonesia's skilled workforce is a significant strength. This finding is in line with Natanael & Verico (2019), where Indonesia hosts more skilled professionals; it could improve workforce capabilities and create new opportunities for local skilled labor to collaborate and learn from their ASEAN counterparts. The importance of the services sector's contribution to the Indonesian economy is another major strength, suggesting that the country has a solid foundation to leverage ATiSA for growth in this area. The capital capacity is also considered a strength, indicating that Indonesian businesses may have the financial resources needed to compete and expand under ATiSA.

Some internal factors have mixed results interpretation. “Domestic regulation” is considered a strength, but the moderate score (0.26) suggests this factor needs more support. To support the conformity of domestic regulation with the liberalization of services in ASEAN, Indonesia's government has included the issue of trade in services in three articles in Trade Law No. 7 of 2014, which covers 12 service sectors committed to the service agreement. One of the articles explains that service providers engaged in trade in services

must still be supported by competent technical personnel by the legislation and related legislation provisions.

“Certification agencies” and “domestic investment” in services were also revealed as strengths but with moderate impact (0.31 both), indicating that while there are positive elements, challenges or limitations may need addressing. According to Dewi dkk (2022), through various policies, the Indonesian government has supported the development of competent workers and allowed the participation of foreign companies. However, Indonesia still lacks certified workers. Cooperation between universities, government, and companies has also been carried out, but financial limitations are a barrier to increasing competence.

The total score of internal factor analysis is 3.41, which suggests that Indonesia has several strengths that could be leveraged for success under ATiSA, particularly in terms of skilled labor, economic reliance on services, and capital capacity. However, there are also notable weaknesses, such as trade deficits in services, cultural and language barriers, and a shortage of certified professionals, which could pose challenges. Addressing these weaknesses will be crucial for

maximizing the benefits of ATiSA for Indonesia.

Three out of twelve external factors were revealed as threats concerning ATiSA implementation, namely “increased competition”, “negative economic issues”, and a “new entry for foreign companies”. ATiSA facilitates greater market access for service providers across ASEAN (IDEAS, 2022). Indonesian companies may face intensified competition from more established or efficient foreign firms, which could be particularly challenging for local businesses that must be better equipped to compete in price, quality, or innovation. According to Sutrisno & Mahardhika (2022), as a consequence of the liberalization of the banking sector, foreign banks have occupied nearly 50% of the Indonesian banking industry, and there are only a few units of Indonesia's domestic banks that are present in its ASEAN neighbors. In other cases, the commitment to economic integration in the aviation sector is still a domestic dispute that has delayed its implementation (Permana et al., 2020). This is because each business actor considers the benefits obtained from liberalization unequal and demands a level playing field to compete.



**Table 5. External Factors Analysis (EFA)**

No.	External Factors	Important Score		Strength/Weakness Score		Weighted Score (AxB)
		Average	Weight (A)	Average (B)	Note	
1.	Increase competition	6.50	0.08	2.94	T	0.25
2.	Negative economic issue	3.17	0.04	2.28	T	0.09
3.	New entry for a foreign company	4.89	0.06	2.28	T	0.14
4.	Increase foreign exchange	5.33	0.07	4.67	O	0.32
5.	Increase outward FDI in ASEAN	6.83	0.09	4.72	O	0.41
6.	Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA)	7.22	0.09	3.00	O	0.28
7.	Increase international trade	7.61	0.10	4.28	O	0.42
8.	GVC participation	6.39	0.08	4.50	O	0.37
9.	The gap in economic and commitment level	7.56	0.10	3.50	O	0.34
10.	Market perception	8.06	0.10	4.33	O	0.45
11.	Market potential	9.44	0.12	4.50	O	0.55
12.	Support making Indonesia 4.0	4.94	0.06	4.22	O	0.27
<b>Total</b>			<b>1</b>			<b>3.88</b>

Source: Authors' calculation

Regarding the threat from “negative economic issue, Wibowo (2023) reveal that Indonesia's economy is significantly vulnerable to geopolitical tensions, disrupted supply chains, inflationary pressures, and uncertainties in employment rates. While Indonesia faces economic challenges such as slow growth, inflation, and unemployment, the added pressure from opening the services sector to more foreign competition could exacerbate these issues.

“Market potential” has the highest weighted score (4.50) and high important score (9.44), indicating that the perceived market potential due to ATiSA is the most significant opportunity for Indonesia. An illustration of the potential of the ASEAN market is shown by the size of purchasing power, which has continued to increase in the last 10 years with an average growth in purchasing power in ASEAN of 5.45 percent per year (WEO, 2024). The “increase in outward foreign direct investment” is also seen as a strong opportunity, with a high important

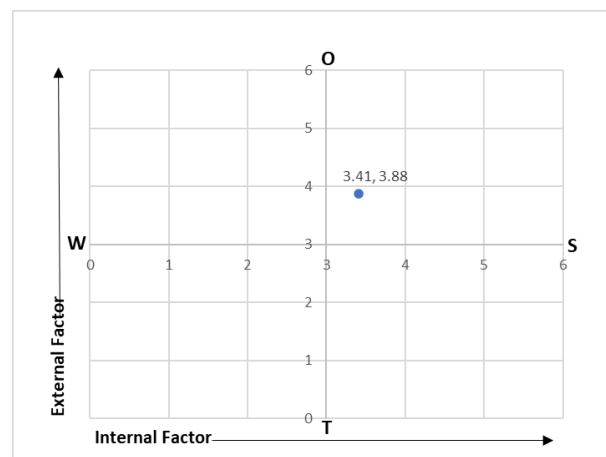
score (6.83) reflecting the potential benefits of ATiSA for Indonesian companies looking to invest in ASEAN. This finding inline with Vo & Ho (2021) which stated that trade oppennes has positive impact on FDI flow among AMS and liberalization provides moderating effect significantly. According to Al-Fadhat (2022) big business capital expansion of Indonesian companies is not only the result of corporate strategy but is a positive impact of regional governance of ASEAN-led economic integration initiatives.

Another critical opportunity regarding ATiSA implementation is an “increase in international trade”, with a highly important score (7.61). According to Ningsih and Rapmeriah (2023), ATiSA not only increases trade in services but also trade in the manufacturing sector and improves the Indonesian economy.

The favorable market perception of Indonesia’s services is seen as a significant opportunity, with a high important score of 8.06. Based on Sudiby et al. (2023), international consumer perceptions of Indonesian goods and services tend to be influenced by several factors, including quality, innovation, and technology adaptation. Technology, e-commerce, and social media help increase the exposure and image of Indonesian products in the eyes

of global consumers. Strong branding and effective digital marketing strategies have been essential in building positive consumer perceptions of Indonesian goods and services, especially when they meet international standards regarding quality and sustainability.

The total score of external factor analysis is 3.88, indicating that instead of there being some threats associated with ATiSA implementation, particularly in terms of competition and new foreign entrants, the opportunities far outweigh these concerns (Figure 2). Indonesia stands to gain significantly in terms of market potential, trade expansion, and foreign investment, making the overall outlook favorable for the country under ATiSA.



**Figure 2. The SWOT Quadrant Result**

Source: Author calculation.

We incorporate the five recommended S-O strategic plans that could be taken by Indonesia’s government, service providers, and

professionals based on the strengths and opportunities identified in IFA and EFA. The strategic plans focus on strengthening the areas where Indonesia already excels, such as high-level skills, domestic investment, and company capabilities, and effectively leveraging

the significant opportunities such as capitalizing market potential, investing in ASEAN, access to technology and partnership, and utilizing MRA. Table 6 below shows the recommended strategic plans that Indonesia can use to succeed in implementing ATiSA.

**Table 6. Strategic Planning Regarding ATiSA Implementation**

<b>Recommended Strategic plan</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Strategy</b>
Leveraging High-Level Skills for Market Expansion	Utilize Indonesia's skilled workforce to capitalize on the growing market potential and increased international trade opportunities within ASEAN.	Invest in technology upgrades, process improvements, and innovation in domestic companies. Support initiatives that foster collaboration between local businesses and international partners, facilitating knowledge transfer and enhancing the competitiveness of Indonesian firms in the regional market.
Enhancing Domestic Investment and Capital Access	Strengthen the financial capacity of domestic companies to compete effectively in the ASEAN services market.	Encourage increased domestic investment in the services sector by offering incentives such as tax breaks, grants, or low-interest loans. Additionally, it creates partnerships between local financial institutions and service providers to improve access to capital, enabling them to expand and innovate.
Strengthening Domestic Company Capabilities	Improve the competitiveness of Indonesian companies to take advantage of ATiSA's market potential and opportunities for outward foreign direct investment (FDI).	Invest in technology upgrades, process improvements, and innovation in domestic companies. Support initiatives that foster collaboration between local businesses and international partners, facilitating knowledge transfer and enhancing the competitiveness of Indonesian firms in the regional market.
Maximizing Benefits from Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA)	Leverage MRAs to enhance the mobility of Indonesian professionals and services across ASEAN.	Promote the certification of Indonesian professionals according to ASEAN standards and ensure widespread awareness and utilization of MRAs.
Capitalizing on Favorable Market Perceptions	Enhance Indonesia's image as a reliable and competitive provider of services in ASEAN.	Launch marketing and branding campaigns that highlight the strengths of Indonesia's services sector.

## **CONCLUSION AND POLICY**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

ASEAN has actively pursued services liberalization since 1995

through the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS), which laid the groundwork for trade in services within the region. This effort culminated

in the ATiSA, initiated at the 25th ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting in 2019. ATiSA represents a significant milestone in ASEAN's journey towards a more integrated services market, aiming to create a stable and predictable environment for trade in services by reducing regulatory barriers and enhancing transparency through a "negative list" approach. This approach ensures that non-compliant measures are clearly identified, fostering greater transparency for investors and businesses.

Preceding research on the impact of ATiSA and the broader issues on the services sector in ASEAN, which is used as the basis for determining IFA and EFA, has revealed various outcomes. Previous studies indicate that ATiSA and related agreements, like the ASEAN Agreement on Movement of Natural Persons (AAMNP), have positively influenced skilled labor mobility and services trade within ASEAN. For instance, Indonesia has benefited from increased movement of skilled workers and a trade surplus in certain sectors due to ATiSA. However, challenges remain, such as the stagnant intra-regional trade in services and the high restrictions on international trade that hinder ASEAN countries' participation in GVC.

The SWOT analysis framework is employed in this study to explore Indonesia's best strategies for implementing ATiSA by identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Strengths include the significant contribution of the services sector to Indonesia's GDP and its relatively advanced corporate management technology. However, weaknesses such as the deficit in the services trade balance and the lack of certified professionals pose challenges. Opportunities arise from increased competition, foreign investment, and international trade, while threats include economic disparities and the varying levels of commitment among AMS. Data for this study were collected through a qualitative approach involving literature reviews, expert interviews, and questionnaires distributed to various stakeholders.

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report of the Trade Policy Agency, Ministry of Trade in 2020. We expanded the scope of the research by adding several internal and external factors, updating the data according to the latest developments, identifying the newest findings in recent literature regarding the ATiSA issues, and redistributing the SWOT questionnaire to respondents.

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