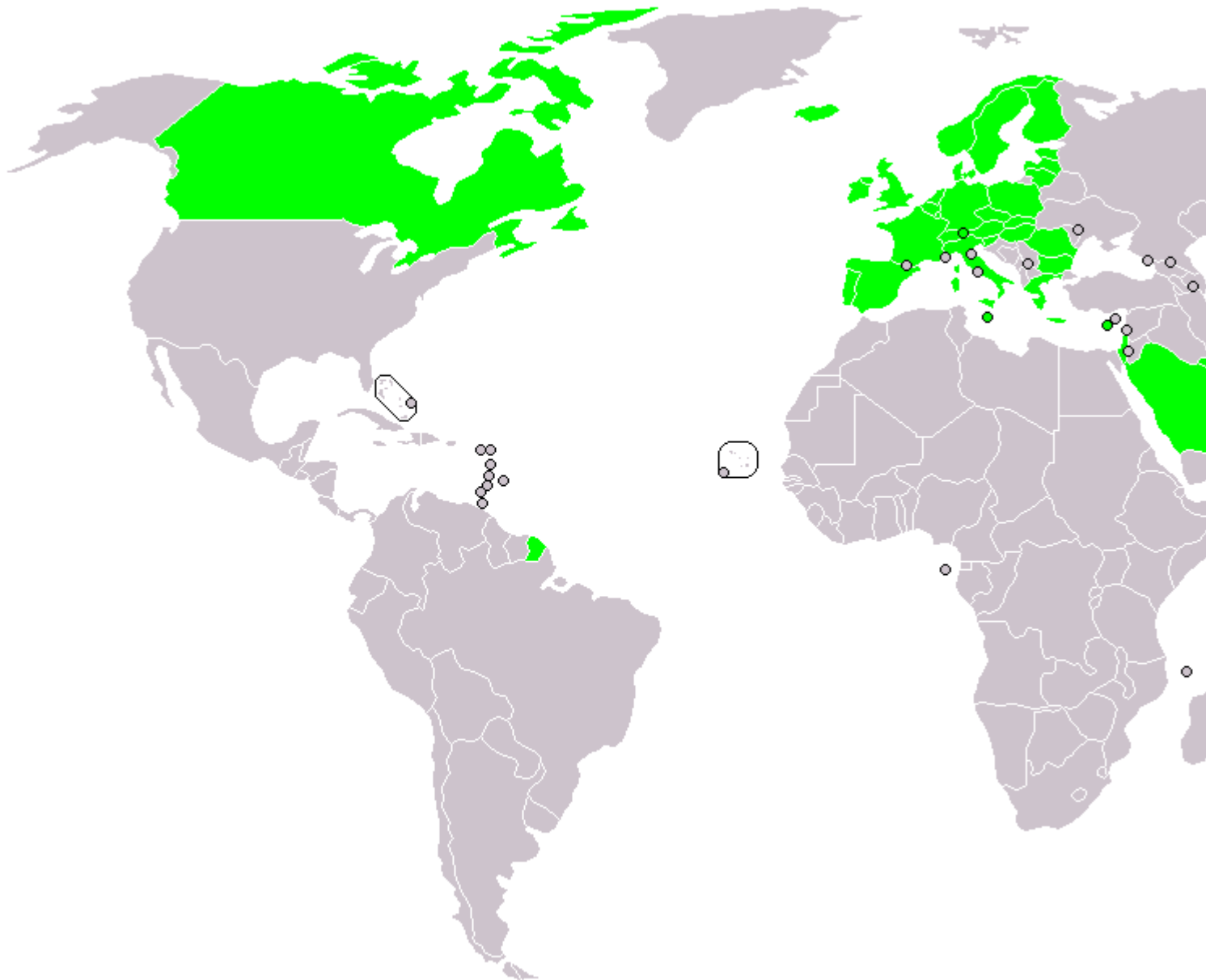




India and FTAs

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India needs to accept that mega regional Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) are going to become an inevitable part of Asia's evolving economic landscape. These agreements are used by like-minded countries to align common commercial interests and frame rules and regulations to facilitate mutual trade in goods and services. There is no reason India cannot benefit from such groupings, provided we first put our own infrastructure in order. In an age of global value chains (GVCs), it is counterproductive to remain for too long outside international trading systems. India needs to do a serious rethink on joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) if it is to expand its influence in the rapidly growing Indo-Pacific region. FTAs with the US or the EU cannot substitute for the RCEP as currently they are not the

most dynamic regions in the world in terms of either economic growth or GVC activity.

**Photo Credit: Google*