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Research Article

Supply Chain Finance (SCF) Digital Transformation Solution for Enterprises in Vietnam based on SWOT matrix analysis

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ABSTRACT

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Introduction: Digital transformation of supply chain operations in general and supply chain finance (SCF) in particular is an inevitable trend for domestic and international enterprises to contribute to improving financial efficiency and optimizing cash flow. This article focuses on proposing solutions to apply digital transformation technology to build SCF digital transformation solutions to support Vietnamese enterprises participating in digital SCF activities, contributing to ensuring that the supply chain is regularly connected, avoiding interruptions, breaks and maintaining sustainable connections. The author uses the SWOT analysis method to assess the current status of SCF digital transformation of enterprises in Vietnam, thereby proposing solutions to support enterprises to apply digital SCF more effectively when participating in the supply chain.

Objectives: Researching the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of digital transformation for SCF activities of enterprises and organizations that sponsor enterprises participating in the supply chain. Thereby, the article researches and uses the SWOT matrix analysis model to analyze and propose solutions for strategic consulting on SCF digital transformation activities, connecting enterprises and organizations that sponsor the supply chain.

Methods: The article uses survey methods, investigating businesses to collect data; Use descriptive statistics to synthesize, analyze and process survey data. At the same time, use SWOT matrix analysis method to analyze strengths, weaknesses, point out opportunities and challenges of SCF digital transformation in businesses. Thereby, propose solutions to effectively implement SCF digital transformation.

Results: This article has researched and proposed solutions to apply digital transformation technology to build SCF digital transformation solutions to support Vietnamese businesses participating in SCF digital transformation activities by analyzing the SWOT matrix with 4 main factors (S, W, O, T) to survey and evaluate the current status of SCF digital transformation of 50 businesses and organizations in Vietnam. Through this solution, it will help ensure that the supply chain is regularly connected, avoid interruptions, breaks and maintain sustainable connections between parties including: Supplier (seller) - Sponsor/financial institution - Enterprise (buyer).

Conclusions: The article focuses on the current status of SCF operations and SCF digital transformation to support businesses in Thai Nguyen province, Vietnam to participate in the supply chain based on the collection, synthesis and analysis of related studies, and a survey of 50 businesses in Thai Nguyen province. At the same time, the article presented and used the SWOT matrix analysis method to analyze the strengths and weaknesses, pointing out the opportunities and challenges of SCF digital transformation in businesses. Proposed solutions and recommendations for effectively implementing SCF digital transformation in businesses.

Keywords: Finance, supply chain, supply chain finance, SCF, Digital Transformation.

INTRODUCTION

A supply chain is a system that links organizations, people, activities, information, and resources involved in the production, marketing, and distribution of products from raw materials to the end customer [1,2]. Supply chain finance is a set of solutions that optimize cash flow by allowing businesses in the supply chain to extend payment terms to their suppliers while providing options for large suppliers and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to be paid early, through the planning, directing, and controlling of financial resource flows at the interorganizational level (Hofmann, 2005) [3]. Supply chain finance (SCF) focuses primarily on optimizing working capital, financial liquidity, and integrating the role of outsourced service providers. Both buyers and suppliers benefit from this, with buyers optimizing their working capital while suppliers have additional cash flow to support their business, thus reducing risk for the entire supply chain. Therefore, the characteristics of SCF include application for transactions based on post-payment method; combining the three main flows in the supply chain: physical flow, cash flow, information flow. With SCF allowing for receivables-based financing, there can be financing solutions such as receivables discounting; import financing of goods; accounting; payables, if based on loans or advances, can be financed as: based on receivables or inventory; for distributors; pre-shipment financing.

During the covid-19 years, supply chain activities in the world and Vietnam have encountered many difficulties due to social distancing, which has caused the supply chain to break down, leading to disruptions in the market, global supply activities and Vietnam [4,5,6,7,8]. However, after the covid-19 pandemic, from 2021 to now, the world and domestic economies have basically stabilized and global and domestic supply chain activities have gradually recovered and reconnected. In recent years, the SCF solution has partly supported domestic and international supply chain activities to be regularly connected, ensuring the connection between the components in the chain. However, the reality shows that limitations still exist for traditional SCF, which is requiring chain components such as sellers or buyers to go to the sponsoring organization to carry out transactions to request funding. This is a difficult problem and makes stakeholders in the chain hesitate to approach the funding organization, especially in cases where the seller or buyer is far away, such as abroad... Thus, they will not be able to immediately approach the funding organization to apply for funding. So this has somewhat affected the funding activities according to the traditional SCF method.

A current solution to overcome the above difficulties is to apply information technology or digital transformation of SCF for funding activities [9,10,11]. The SCF digital transformation solution has received much research attention from many scientists and managers in the world as well as in the country.

In the world, in recent years, many scientific research results and practical applications have been published, such as: Research by Treleaven et al. (2017) [12], applying Blockchain in Supply Chain Finance (SCF), helping to improve transparency, reduce transaction costs and enhance security. Kouhizadeh et al. (2020) [13], research explores barriers in applying blockchain technology to sustainable supply chain management, using the technology-organization-environment (TOE) framework and force field theory for analysis. The results show that supply chain and technology barriers are the most important, and propose further research directions to promote blockchain implementation in sustainable supply chains. McKinsey & Company (2022) offers a solution to optimize the financing model for businesses based on big data in providing detailed information on payment behavior and credit risk of suppliers [14]. In addition, the application of IoT technology to support financing activities is also of interest to research and implementation. Research by Korpela et al. (2017) has shown that IoT can help automatically track goods and update financial status in real time, thereby reducing risks for financing parties [15].

In addition, many key companies in the supply chain have now recognized the importance of SCF to ensure sustainable supply chain operations. The trend of integrating sustainability into SCF programs has not only appeared in traditional supply chains but has also been rapidly implemented by online retail platforms [16,17]. In the SCF project of the online retail platform Alibaba, SCF is used to provide suppliers with access to cheap and convenient financial resources (Zhou et al., 2018) [18]. With the development of e-commerce, some studies have focused on the role of retail platforms in providing financial solutions that promote sustainability using digital transformation platforms to support [22].

Through the above analysis, it can be concluded that: Current sustainable SCF studies only focus on a single solution approach and have not yet provided a theoretical framework to link the unique characteristics of the supply chain with the unique features of each SCF solution towards the goal of improving the sustainability and flexibility of the chain, have not yet provided a full assessment of the drivers, benefits, costs and obstacles when integrating sustainability associated with digital transformation into SCF programs, and there are not many solutions that exploit the potential and strengths of digital transformation to support increasing sustainability among components. Furthermore, the cost of technology implementation is quite high, issues of data security and privacy... This leads to a lack of necessary guidelines to effectively deploy and integrate sustainability standards into SCF programs for businesses.

Therefore, it is necessary to have a comprehensive and objective assessment of the strengths, limitations, opportunities and challenges of digital transformation for SCF for businesses in supply chain operations.

Domestically and internationally, supply chain financing activities for businesses in Vietnam have received attention and implemented digital transformation technology applications to enhance connections and links between sellers, buyers and financing organizations more effectively, initially receiving much attention from scientists and managers. It can be mentioned that: According to (PwC Vietnam, 2020), this study will reaffirm whether the application of SCF brings benefits in terms of operational efficiency for Vietnamese businesses or not and provide new directions in integrating digital transformation applications into SCF operations [19]. Communist Magazine [20], a number of large commercial banks in Vietnam have provided supply chain financing services such as BIDV Investment and Development Bank, VietinBank, ACB Bank, HSBC Vietnam... and have initially built appropriate solutions, piloting digital transformation applications to support SCF operations. Specifically: BIDV provides working capital financing solutions for businesses based on linkage policies, purchasing policies, payment policies, support/commitment policies of the central enterprise to promote supply chain business activities [21]. Today, there are a number of organizations that have applied information technology to build digital SCF solutions such as: BIDV was honored as "The best Supply Chain Finance (SCF) Service Provider in Vietnam in 2022" in the International Finance Magazine, https://scf.bidv.com.vn/. Techcombank has researched and developed online supply chain finance (SCF) (https://scf.techcombank.com.vn/). According to Ms. Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen (2022), Nam Phong Development and Service Joint Stock Company, the implementation of technology platforms and Fintech in building SCF solutions still has many limitations. However, recently, major banks in Vietnam have actively and proactively deployed SCF types to serve many customer groups, some types have been improved and upgraded with the application of technology platforms in the digital transformation trend. SCP Supply Chain Finance Platform Joint Stock Company has also launched the digital SCP solution (https://www.scp.com.vn/service.html).

From the research that has been synthesized and analyzed on scientific and practical works on digital transformation of supply chain finance (SCF) in the world and in the country, it shows that many funding organizations/credit institutions/banks have researched, built and deployed digital transformation technologies to support businesses in accessing financial resources on a technology platform quickly, promptly and effectively. At the same time, through preliminary surveys on different information channels and sources, it shows that initially, SCF digital transformation has brought many practical effects to businesses. Although, SCF digital transformation is an important step to help improve cash flow, minimize financial risks and optimize the supply chain. Research and practical applications in the world show the great potential of digital technology in improving the efficiency of supply chain finance. SCF digital transformation helps businesses optimize the supply chain, minimize financial risks and improve cash flow. However, in Vietnam, the implementation of digital SCF still faces many difficulties due to limitations in technology, law and awareness. There are still many challenges that need to be resolved to ensure successful implementation and have a more objective view in implementing SCF digital transformation in enterprises in Vietnam. This article will focus on researching and analyzing the advantages, difficulties, opportunities and challenges through the SWOT analysis method as a basis for proposing solutions to continue implementing SCF digital transformation solutions. SWOT analysis will help identify influencing factors and propose appropriate strategies to promote digital SCF. The structure of the article is presented in the following sections: (1). Introduction; (2). Presentation of theoretical basis; (3). SWOT matrix analysis method on SCF digital transformation for Vietnamese enterprises and proposed solutions; (4). Conclusion.

OBJECTIVES

Researching the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of digital transformation for SCF activities of enterprises and organizations that sponsor enterprises participating in the supply chain. Thereby, the article researches and uses the SWOT matrix analysis model to analyze and propose solutions for strategic consulting on SCF digital transformation activities, connecting enterprises and organizations that sponsor the supply chain.

METHODS

A supply chain is a system of organizations, people, activities, information and resources involved in moving a product or service from a supplier or manufacturer to a consumer (consumer). Supply chain activities involve transforming natural resources, raw materials and components into a finished product for delivery to the end customer (consumer) [1].

Supply chain finance is a set of solutions that optimize cash flow by allowing businesses in the supply chain to extend payment terms to their suppliers while providing options for large suppliers and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to be paid early, through planning, directing and controlling the flow of financial resources at the interorganizational level (Hofmann, 2005) [3].

SWOT is an important strategic analysis tool that helps assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of a business, organization or individual [25,25]. The SWOT model allows strategic analysis to help assess important factors affecting an organization, business or project. The SWOT matrix will still be based on 4 factors: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. But strengths and weaknesses will be combined with opportunities and challenges to provide solutions and competitive strategies for each specific category. Below is an illustration of the SWOT matrix:

S - Strengths : Internal advantages help organizations/businesses have a competitive advantage.	
O - Opportunities: External factors can be beneficial if used wisely.	T - Threats: External factors can negatively influence or threaten development

Based on the SWOT matrix, businesses or individuals can use it to support the following goals:

- ❖ Identify competitive advantages and how to take advantage of them.
- Identify weaknesses to have an improvement strategy.
- ❖ Discover opportunities for expansion and development.
- Anticipate risks to have a timely response plan

In this article, the authors use the SWOT analysis tool in the form of a SWOT matrix to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges in proposing SCF digital transformation solutions in enterprises and financial/credit organizations in Vietnam. Thereby, helping to advise organizations on recommendations when participating in digital transformation of SCF activities on how to avoid risks, challenges and take advantage of strengths and opportunities in the global digital transformation trend.

RESULTS

Digital transformation in supply chain finance plays an important role for funding organizations and businesses in Vietnam. For funding/financial organizations, SCF digital transformation contributes to improving operational efficiency, automating the appraisal and loan approval process, and reducing paperwork to shorten processing time. Expanding customer access: Thanks to data analytics technology, financial institutions can evaluate corporate credit based on actual cash flow, not just on collateral. Improving customer experience through digital technology applications helps businesses access capital faster and more transparently. Optimizing risk management based on blockchain technology, AI helps track and verify transactions in the supply chain, limiting fraud and errors. For businesses, contributing to creating favorable conditions for accessing cash flow and working capital such as receiving

early capital from financial providers without having to wait for payment partners. Help reduce financial costs by taking advantage of supply chain financing forms such as confirmation of payables, invoice discounting with lower interest rates than traditional loans. Help businesses track cash flow, invoices and orders in the supply chain accurately and in real time. In particular, strengthening relationships with partners and improving payment capabilities helps businesses build reputation and maintain long-term relationships with suppliers.

In the trend of global digital transformation, businesses in Vietnam that want to survive and develop sustainably must keep up with and go along with that trend. For businesses, it is necessary to join and participate in the global supply chain and domestic supply chain operations, develop into logistics networks to make the most of production and business activities, optimize financial flows, facilities, raw materials as well as equipment and technical machinery to maximize profits. In particular, credit institutions/banks need to build funding solutions, financial funding funds, information, etc. to support businesses participating in supply chain operations, ensuring sustainable development and avoiding disruptions. At the same time, organizations need to research, apply and deploy digital transformation solutions into business support activities such as digital funding. However, through the preliminary survey analysis above (section 2), it shows that up to now, there are not many credit institutions/banks and funding organizations in the country that have implemented digital transformation applications to support businesses in accessing financial funding sources and businesses are still confused and do not really understand the SCF activities of funding organizations to be able to participate in this activity. Meanwhile, businesses are in great need of funding, funding organizations are in great need of funding and disbursing their financial resources. This is considered one of the remaining limitations in domestic supply chain operations.

Therefore, to help advise businesses/organizations on the best solutions based on analyzing their conditions in terms of advantages, strengths, weaknesses as well as the opportunities they have and anticipating risks and challenges before they want to implement the SCF digital transformation solution for their unit so that they know whether to implement it or not? If so, what conditions need to be prepared to ensure the successful implementation of SCF digital transformation for businesses and sponsoring organizations. The article uses the SWOT matrix analysis method to analyze and advise on SCF digital transformation solutions in Vietnam as follows:

The steps to conduct a SWOT matrix analysis are as follows:

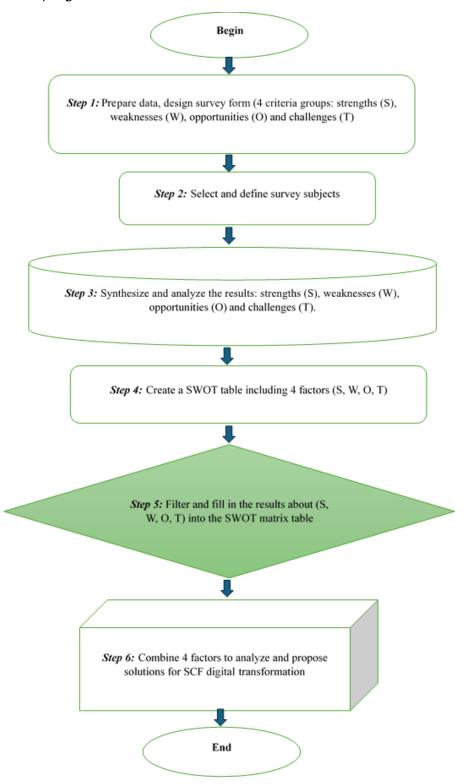
Step 1: Prepare data, build a survey form with 4 main groups of indicators associated with the SCF digital transformation activities of the enterprise such as: strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) and challenges (T).

Step 2: Select and identify survey subjects at manufacturing and processing enterprises in Thai Nguyen province (50 enterprises).

Step 3: Synthesize and analyze survey responses according to 4 main criteria groups: strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) and challenges (T).

- Step 4: Set up a SWOT table including 4 factors (S, W, O, T) distributed into 4 cells in the table.
- Step 5: Filter and fill in the results of the factors (S, W, O, T) into the SWOT matrix through the survey.
- **Step 6:** Combine 4 factors to analyze and propose solutions for SCF digital transformation activities for sponsoring businesses/organizations..

Below is a SWOT matrix analysis process diagram for SCF digital transformation solutions for sponsoring businesses/organizations:



Identify SWOT factors: based on survey data analysis related to 4 main survey criteria on strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) and challenges (T) from 50 businesses/organizations when implementing specific SCF digital transformation:

(1). Strengths

o Strengthen the connection between Suppliers (seller) - Financial institutions - Enterprises (buyer).

Help the parties to link more closely, improve the efficiency of cash flow and supply chain management

o Strengthen and facilitate businesses to easily access cash flow, capital, information in a flexible, fast and timely manner with digital SCF.

Help parties participating in SCF activities to conveniently transact with each other, support businesses to access cash flow and information more easily. Transaction activities through online.

o Optimize processes, increase transparency and minimize risks.

Help automate the financing process, reduce paperwork and save costs, creating favorable conditions for businesses to participate in SCF activities.

o Funding organizations/banks/enterprises are increasingly interested in digital SCF. Help diversify SCF activities, businesses access SCF more and more diversely, promptly with many options.

(2). Weaknesses

o Initial investment costs in technology are still high for small businesses:

Businesses need to invest in equipment, transfer software systems and train human resources to receive the transfer...

o The financial system is not synchronized between businesses, many small and medium-sized businesses have not yet applied digital technology.

Because the current financial management and transaction systems of businesses are developed on different technology platforms, leading to a lack of data synchronization. This makes it difficult to integrate current financial systems into the new digital SCF system.

o Lack of awareness and digital skills, fear of risks when applying new digital financial solutions.

Because SCF activities are quite new in Vietnam, many businesses have not yet implemented them. Therefore, many business leaders have not yet approached or even fully understood SCF. In addition, many businesses are hesitant to participate and deploy activities on digital SCF, worrying about safety and security issues.

o There may be risks regarding security and legal compliance.

Converting data from traditional data to digital data can lead to data loss and especially the legal system is not fully and tightly regulated.

(3). Opportunities

o Global and domestic digital transformation trends create favorable conditions for SCF digital transformation.

The Vietnamese government is promoting digital transformation, creating a favorable environment for SCF digital transformation to support businesses and funding organizations.

- o The development of financial technology such as blockchain, AI and digital platforms supports safe and transparent SCF solutions. Facilitating the deployment of SCF digital transformation applications and helping businesses have more financial funding options.
 - o The need for financial supply chain financing from businesses has promoted SCF digital transformation.
 - o The 4.0 industrial revolution has opened up opportunities for digital finance models.

(4). Threats

o Competition from traditional financial institutions and non-bank platforms

Financial institutions are developing their own SCF solutions, creating competitive pressure with new digital SCF platforms.

o Businesses do not have a proper and widespread awareness of digital SCF.

- o Legal and regulatory barriers on data. In which, the legal system is not complete and has not kept up with the pace of technological development.
 - o Risks of information security and safety in digital financial transactions, risks of fraud and cyber attacks.

When participating in and using digital SCF, funding organizations and businesses may face security risks such as cyber attacks, financial fraud and theft of information and data.

Based on the above analysis, the article provides a SWOT matrix on consulting the current status of SCF digital transformation solutions as follows:

	Strengths:	Weaknesses:
SWOT	 ✓ Increase connectivity between Suppliers (sellers) – Financial Institutions – Enterprises (buyers). ✓ Enhance and facilitate businesses to easily access cash flow, capital, information flexibly, quickly and promptly with digital SCF. ✓ Optimize processes improve 	 ⚠ Initial investment costs in technology are still high for small businesses ⚠ The financial system is not synchronized between businesses, Many small and medium-sized enterprises do not have the ability to apply digital technology. ⚠ Lack of digital awareness
	 Optimize processes, improve transparency and reduce risks. Financing organizations/banks/ enterprises are increasingly interested in digital SCF. 	 Lack of digital awareness and skills. Fear of risks when applying new digital financial solutions. Possible security and legal compliance risks.
	SO	WO
 Opportunities: The global and domestic digital transformation trend facilitates SCF digital transformation. The development of financial technology such as blockchain, 	 Take advantage of the opportunities of digital transformation and the 4.0 industrial revolution to digitize SCF operations. Expand the connection between businesses and financial institutions based on financial 	 Increase investment in technology and cybersecurity to minimize security risks.
AI and digital platforms support secure and transparent SCF solutions The need for financial supply chain financing from businesses has promoted SCF digital transformation. The 4.0 industrial revolution has opened up opportunities for digital financial models.	technology such as blockchain, AI and digital platforms. - Promote innovation in the supply chain financing process on a digital platform. - Build traditional channels, support businesses to participate in digital SCF to access information and capital flows from financial institutions.	 Improve the legal system for SCF financing transactions on digital platforms. Promote data synchronization between businesses.

Threats:

- ▲ Competition from traditional financial institutions and non-banking platforms
- ⚠ Businesses do not have a proper and widespread awareness of digital SCF.
- ▲ Legal barriers and regulations on data. In which, the legal system is not complete and has not kept up with the pace of technological development.
- A Risks of information security and safety in digital financial transactions, risks of fraud and cyber attacks.

- Training and raising awareness of digital SCF activities such as benefits and ways to implement digital SCF
- Strengthening the development of legal regulations, ensuring the security of financial transaction information.
- Leveraging advanced technology in digital transformation of SCF to compete with traditional financial institutions and non-bank platforms.

- Develop a SCF digital transformation strategy for funding organizations and businesses to enhance competitiveness.
- Promote cooperation in SCF digital transformation to minimize costs and reduce risks.
- Raise awareness of SCF transaction digital transformation at all levels.
- Develop support policies:
 authorities need to complete
 the legal framework, support
 businesses in accessing capital
 flows, information and digital
 SCF technology.

DISCUSSION

Through the above SWOT matrix, it can be seen that the combination of SO, WO, ST, WT factors together can form a SWOT matrix and show the necessary solutions for sponsoring organizations and businesses in Vietnam regarding the ability to transform SCF digitally. In particular, based on the SWOT analysis in the table above, it shows that sponsoring organizations and businesses have many opportunities to research and deploy the application of SCF digital transformation in financial sponsorship transactions. However, sponsoring organizations and businesses still need to address challenges in technology, policy and awareness. Taking advantage of strengths, exploiting opportunities and minimizing risks will help businesses access information, capital flows and especially contribute to improving the efficiency of use, financial transactions and promoting sustainable development through ensuring the connection, continuity and uninterrupted supply chain operations.

The recommended solutions are given in the SWOT matrix, represented by the combined elements of SO, WO, ST and WT. Cu thể:

SO- Take advantage of opportunities and promote the internal strengths of the business

As well as financial institutions, the article recommends solutions for organizations and businesses that want to digitally transform SCF operations as follows:

- Take advantage of the opportunities of digital transformation and the 4.0 industrial revolution to digitize SCF operations.
- Expand the connection between businesses and financial institutions based on financial technology such as blockchain, AI and digital platforms.
- Promote innovation in the supply chain financing process on a digital platform.
- Build traditional channels, support businesses to participate in digital SCF to access information and capital flows from financial institutions.

WO – Take advantage of and seize opportunities, promote digital transformation solutions to limit and overcome weaknesses

– Increase investment in technology and cybersecurity to minimize security risks.

- Improve the legal system for SCF financing transactions on digital platforms.
- Promote data synchronization between businesses.
- ST Identify and prevent, limit potential risks

Leveraging strengths to deal with challenges and threats: is another optimal decision-making method, in which we use the strengths of the business to eliminate or minimize risks that may affect the SCF digital transformation activities before launching.

- Training and raising awareness of digital SCF activities such as benefits and ways to implement digital SCF
- Strengthening the development of legal regulations, ensuring the security of financial transaction information.
- Leveraging advanced technology in digital transformation of SCF to compete with traditional financial institutions and non-bank platforms

WT- Identify, identify and eliminate threats:

Overcome, limit, reduce weaknesses and avoid threats: focus on solving to minimize risks and negative impacts. This means we will predict negative impacts and build contingency plans and be ready to deal with and resolve them. Ensure SCF digital transformation activities, digital financial transactions take place smoothly and effectively. Focusing on risk mitigation also helps ensure stability and sustainability for businesses in the future.

- Develop a SCF digital transformation strategy for funding organizations and businesses to enhance competitiveness.
- Promote cooperation in SCF digital transformation to minimize costs and reduce risks.
- Raise awareness of SCF transaction digital transformation at all levels.
- Develop support policies: authorities need to complete the legal framework, support businesses in accessing capital flows, information and digital SCF technology.

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