

Module 2 – Objectives and Challenges of NTP/Rs

Online Workshop on Enhancing National Trade Portals/Repositories

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The objective of this module

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- ▶ To define **what is a National Trade Portal/Repository***, and **why** it is needed (its expected benefits)?
- ▶ To briefly discuss **the challenges** of establishing and maintaining an effective NTP/R

What is a National Trade Portal/Repository*?

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*In some economies, the term “**Trade Information Portal**” (TIP) is used with a similar meaning.

- ▶ **NTP/R is a website** where one can obtain all information on regulatory requirements needed to undertake international trade for a particular country.
- ▶ It is **an information resource** provided by governments to traders in order to obtain, from one single source, all the information that importers or exporters in a given country may require in order to comply with their regulatory obligations in relation to all the government agencies that control export, import or transit business.

* According to the World Bank, "Developing a Trade Information Portal," 2012.

What is a National Trade Portal/Repository*? (cont.) (aka, Trade Information Portal – TIP)

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NTP/R is a website* that

- ▶ **aggregates** and **publishes all trade related regulatory information** originating from the government agencies that perform control functions in relation to imports, exports, transits or trans-shipments
- ▶ **allows importers, exporters or anyone involved in international trade** to easily find and understand any legal requirements and procedures pertaining to specific commodities that are necessary to comply with national obligations for **clearing goods** at the border as well as **before** or **after clearance**.

[*According to UN/CEFACT – ITP-PDA/SWD TIP – P1085 – draft Recommendation,
Guidelines for establishing a Trade Information Portal, public review draft, 8 July 2020]

Benefits of National Trade Portals/Repositories

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- ▶ **To enhance regulatory transparency and certainty** for the private sector to comply with all import, export or transit requirements of a country
- ▶ **To make related regulations and measures easily accessible to all in one place/one portal**, as a way to reduce difficulty and consequently reduce costs of traders for trade compliance
- ▶ **To increase the predictability of trade transactions**
- ▶ **To promote openness and accountability** of a government's actions by disclosing information in a way that the public can readily access and use
- ▶ **To comply with the WTO TFA**, e.g. Article 1 - Publication and Availability of Information

Expected Contents on a NTP/R

[according to WTO TFA Article 1 - Publication and Availability of Information]

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1.1 Publication

Each Member shall promptly publish the following information in a non-discriminatory and easily accessible manner in order to enable governments, traders, and other interested parties to become acquainted with them:

- (a) **procedures** for importation, exportation, and transit (including port, airport, and other entry-point procedures), and required forms and documents
- (b) **applied rates of duties and taxes** of any kind imposed on or in connection with importation or exportation;
- (c) **fees and charges** imposed by or for governmental agencies on or in connection with importation, exportation or transit;
- (d) **rules for the classification or valuation** of products for customs purposes;
- (e) **laws, regulations, and administrative rulings** of general application relating to rules of origin;
- (f) import, export or transit **restrictions or prohibitions**;
- (g) **penalty provisions** for breaches of import, export, or transit formalities;
- (h) **procedures for appeal or review**;
- (i) **agreements or parts thereof** with any country or countries relating to importation, exportation, or transit; and
- (j) **procedures** relating to the administration of tariff quotas

Assumptions

- ▶ Most of the countries have already developed some forms of National Trade Portals or Repositories but with different features & functions, different levels of effectiveness, and different governance structures.
- ▶ There are still **several challenges** to increase the effectiveness and operational sustainability of those existing ones.

Challenges of an NTP/R to be effective

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- ▶ **Inaccuracy of information**
- ▶ **Information is out-of-date**
- ▶ **Incomplete/Not-comprehensive** - Not all regulatory information from all relevant government agencies are included.
- ▶ **Information not consolidated in one single source**
 - the users may need to search information from different locations, or from different government's web sites.
- ▶ **Information are in conflicts**
 - because of overlapping authorities of different government agencies.
- ▶ **Absence of a single authoritative reference point**
 - to resolve conflicts and consolidate the information.

Challenges of the NTP/R to be well maintained

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- ▶ **Challenges not only in developing, but also in continuously maintaining the portal/repository** e.g.
 - ▶ Lack of ongoing adequate resources, e.g. funding and personnel for continuous operationalization of the portals
 - ▶ Difficulty in collaboration across multiple regulatory agencies
 - ▶ Lead agency does not have high-level enough support to manage and coordinate the work across multiple agencies
 - ▶ Lack of the single authority to resolve conflicts related to regulatory requirements and obligations from different agencies

Case Study: ASEAN Trade Repository

atr.asean.org

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As parts of the AEC Blueprint 2025, ASEAN Trade Repository (ATR) and ten National Trade Repositories (NTRs) have been developed – one by each of the ASEAN member states

- **Purpose:** to promote transparency and certainty on the trade and customs laws and procedures of all ASEAN countries by revealing and sharing regulatory information.
- **Challenges:** ATR doesn't combine or integrate the information, e.g. not integrating all non-tariff measures from each country, only providing a source of basic links to each country's NTR site.

The screenshot displays the ASEAN Trade Repository (ATR) website. At the top, the header includes the ASEAN logo and the text 'ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS'. The main title 'ASEAN TRADE REPOSITORY' is prominently displayed. Below the title, a navigation bar contains links: Home, About, ATR, NTRs, Enquiries, Topics, Standards, Contact, and Disclaimer. A large 'ATR SEARCH' button with a magnifying glass icon is featured. To the left of the search button, a vertical list of categories is shown: TRANSPARENCY, LAWS, REGULATIONS, RULES, REQUIREMENTS, and STANDARDS. On the right side, there is a search bar with the text 'ENHANCED BY Google' and a search icon. Below the search bar, a section titled 'ASEAN MEMBER STATES' lists the ten member states with their respective flags: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. To the right of the member states, a 'TOPICS' section lists various trade-related topics: Tariff nomenclature, MFN tariffs, preferential tariffs offered under the ATIGA and other Agreements of ASEAN with its Dialogue Partners, Rules of origin, Non-tariff measures, National trade and customs laws and rules, Procedures and documentary requirements, Administrative rulings, Best practices in trade facilitation applied by each Member State, and List of authorised traders of AMSs. At the bottom right, there is a section titled 'HARMONIZED STANDARDS SEARCH' with a checkmark icon, and a red button labeled 'FILE A COMPLAINT'.

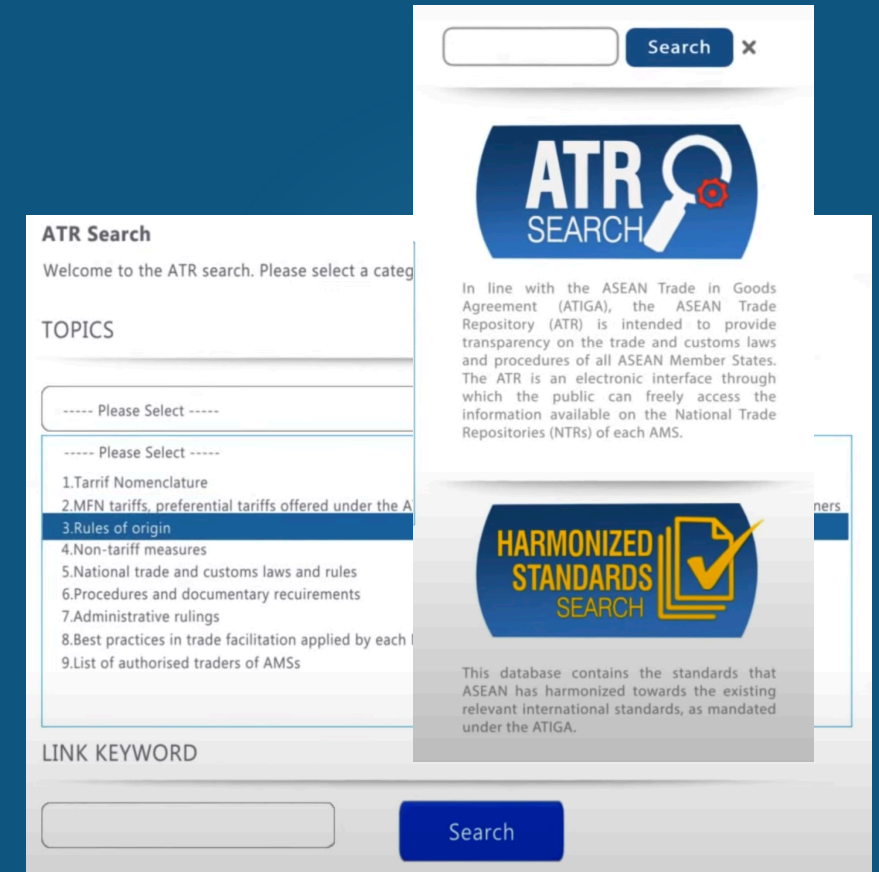
Case Study: ASEAN Trade Repository

atr.asean.org

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Topics on the ATR accessible both by 'topic' and by 'country' (ten ASEAN Member States).

1. Tariff nomenclature;
2. MFN tariffs, preferential tariffs offered under the ATIGA and other Agreements of ASEAN with its Dialogue Partners;
3. Rules of origin;
4. Non-tariff measures;
5. National trade and customs laws and rules;
6. Procedures and documentary requirements;
7. Administrative rulings;
8. Best practices in trade facilitation; and
9. List of authorized economic operators



Please take a look at this short introductory vdo
<https://youtu.be/VLnCG7C9IWU>

Conclusion for this module

The following topics have been discussed

- ▶ Scope and benefits of National Trade Portals/Repositories
- ▶ Challenges of NTP/Rs

Individual assignment

[after studying/listening to this VDO presentation]

- ▶ Please take the review questions at the end of this module to reflect your understanding.

For your country's NTP/R assessment study

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- ▶ Try to navigating through the portal
- ▶ Think about
 - ▶ What are major challenges in **aggregating** and **publishing all trade related regulatory information that are effective and useful for importers, exporters, or anyone involved in international trade** to **easily find** and **understand**?

In the next module

We're going to introduce

a governance framework for assessing and enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of an NTP/R.