

Increasing Transparency Through a National Trade Portal

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Transparency of Trade Information

Transparency is an international commitment

Article X of GATT, 1947

Publication and Administration of Trade Regulations

Laws, regulations, judicial decisions and administrative rulings of general application, made effective by any contracting party, pertaining to the classification or the valuation of products for customs purposes, or to rates of duty, taxes or other charges, or to requirements, restrictions or prohibitions on imports or exports or on the transfer of payments therefor, or affecting their sale, distribution, transportation, insurance, warehousing inspection, exhibition, processing, mixing or other use, **shall be published promptly in such a manner as to enable governments and traders to become acquainted with them.**

Transparency of Trade Information

Article 1 of TFA, 2017

Publication and Availability of Information

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:

...

2 Information Available Through Internet

Each Member shall make available, and update to the extent possible and as appropriate, the following **through the internet**:

...

Members are encouraged to **make available further trade-related information through the internet, including relevant trade-related legislation** and other items...

The Benefits of Transparency

- Transparency reduces costs both for traders and government
 - Less time to discover information
 - Less time spent dealing with enquiries or errors
- Greater predictability for traders
 - Less likelihood of rejection because of wrong procedures
 - Less opportunity for interpretation of laws, regulations, etc.
- Transparency increases compliance
- Transparency attracts investment

What is the WB Trade Information Portal?

- NOT a *B2B Marketplace*
- NOT an *Export Promotion* website
- NOT a *domestic trade information* website

A solution and a Methodology that enable the development of a website that contains all **regulatory trade related information** for import/export/transit combining information from all Agencies involved in import/export and transit control, e.g.

- Customs
- Agriculture
- Health
- Quarantine
- Transport
- Science/Technology
- Etc.

The WB Trade Information Portal?



The World Bank

Trade Information Portal



- Open source industry standard technology
- Detailed system documentation and manuals
- World Bank provides source code
- World Bank provides installation support and training
- Methodology provided World Bank for good practice implementation

Flexibility is important...

Configurable “look and feel”

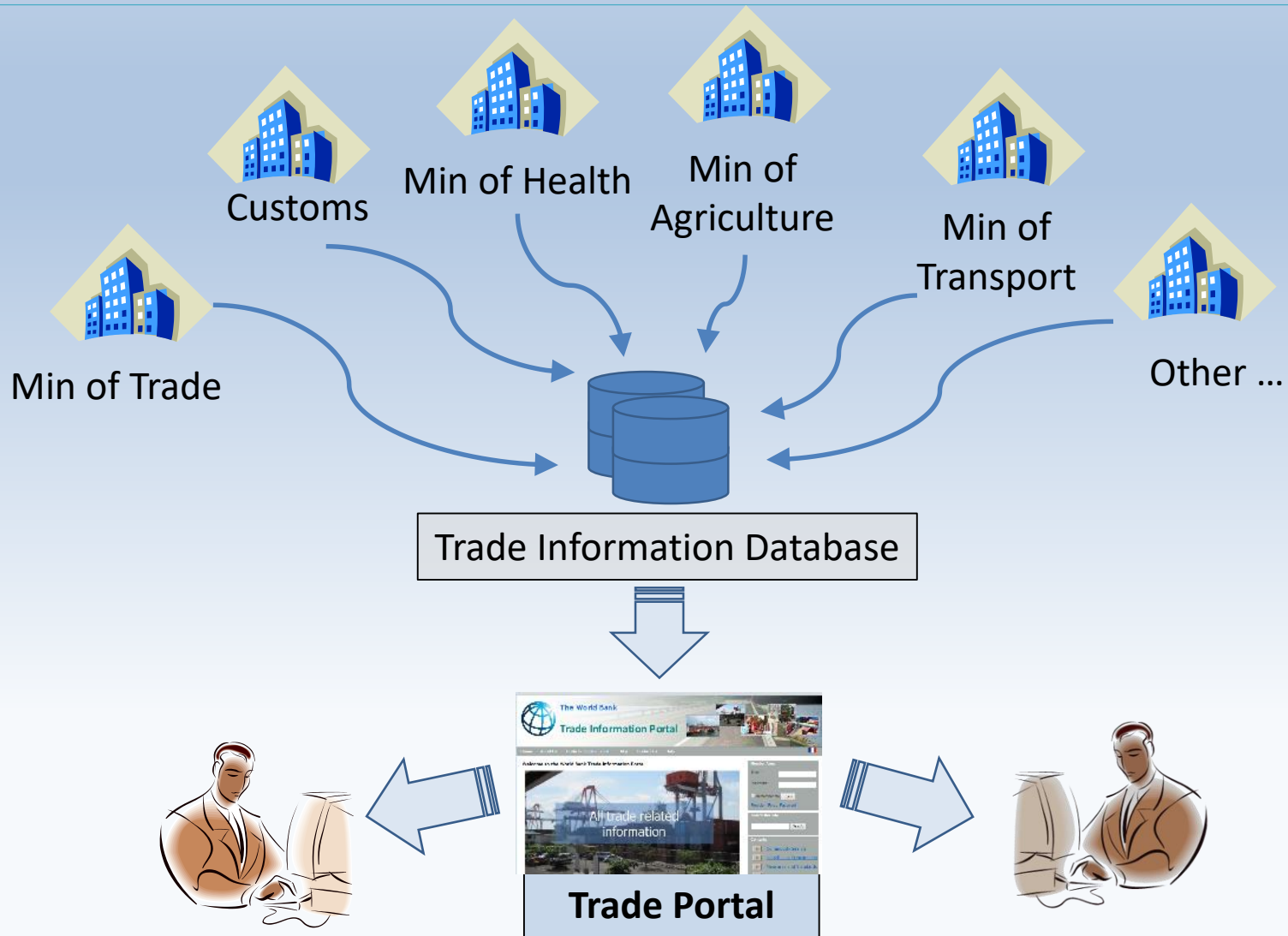
The screenshot shows the Lao PDR Trade Portal. The header features the LTP logo and the text "Lao People's Democratic Republic Lao PDR Trade Portal". Navigation links include "News", "Announcements", "Guide to Import - Export", "SPS-TBT Enquiry Points", and "Preferences". A "Member Area" section contains fields for "Email" and "Password", with "Remember me" and "Login" options, and links for "Register" and "Forgot Password". A search bar is also present. The main content area includes a "Welcome to the Lao PDR Trade Portal" message, a brief description of the portal's purpose, and a "Contents" sidebar with links to "Commodity Search", "Search Legal Documents", "Forms", "Procedures", "Measures Standards Requirements", "Articles", "Publications", and "Border Trade".

The screenshot shows the Bangladesh Trade Portal. The header features the Bangladesh Trade Portal logo and the text "BANGLADESH TRADE PORTAL MINISTRY OF COMMERCE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH". Navigation links include "Home", "About Us", "Guide to Import - Export", "FAQs", "Contact Us", and "Help". A "Member Area" section contains fields for "Email" and "Password", with "Remember me" and "Login" options, and links for "Register" and "Forgot Password". A search bar is also present. The main content area includes a "Welcome to the Bangladesh Trade Portal" message, a large image of a cargo ship, and a "Contents" sidebar with links to "TBT Enquiry Points", "SPS Automation (Textile)", "Commodity Search", "Legal, SPS/HS Documents", "Forms", "Procedures", "Measures, Standards, SPS/HS Contacts", "Bangladesh Standard (BIS)", and "Measures for Imported Products".

The screenshot shows the Jamaica Trade Information Portal. The header features the Government of Jamaica logo and the text "Government of Jamaica JAMAICATRADEPORTAL.GOV.JM". Navigation links include "Home", "About Us", "FAQs", "Contact Us", "Help", "Trade in Goods", "Market Access", and "Guide to Export/Import". A "Member Area" section contains fields for "Email" and "Password", with "Remember me" and "Login" options, and links for "Register" and "Forgot Password". A search bar is also present. The main content area includes a "Welcome to the Jamaica Trade Information Portal" message, a large image of various fruits and vegetables, and a "Contents" sidebar with links to "Commodity Search", "Search Legal Documents", "Forms", "Procedures", and "Measures Standards Requirements".

The screenshot shows the Lesotho Trade Portal. The header features the Kingdom of Lesotho logo and the text "Kingdom of Lesotho Lesotho Trade Portal". Navigation links include "Home", "About Us", "Guide to Import - Export", "SPS-TBT Enquiry Points", "FAQs", "Contact Us", and "Help". A "Member Area" section contains fields for "Email" and "Password", with "Remember me" and "Login" options, and links for "Register" and "Forgot Password". A search bar is also present. The main content area includes a "Welcome to the Lesotho Trade Portal" message, a large image of a modern building, and a "Contents" sidebar with links to "Commodity Search", "Search Legal Documents", "Forms", "Procedures", and "Measures Standards Requirements".

How does it work ?



What is collected and uploaded...

Information

- All laws, regulations and other legal instruments
- All license and permit requirements, prohibitions, restrictions, technical standards, SPS measures (NTMs)
- Entire commodity classification and tariffs
- Duties and Fees
- All procedures for license/permit application and clearance
- Copies of all forms

What is collected and uploaded...

- Database designed to allow logical structuring of information
- All information indexed, cross-referenced and dynamically presented
- Extensive plain language instructions
- Contact Form for queries targeted to specific agencies
- Help features
- Market access information
- Latest news, announcements, events and publications
- SPS and TBT Enquiry Points
- Value added subscription facilities
- Multiple languages
- Feedback and survey

Challenges

- Lack of commitment to transparency
- Lack of full initial understanding of scope
- Lack of culture of collaboration between agencies
- Gathering unstructured information from many different agencies, e.g. laws, regulations not kept systematically
- Provide for on-going sustainability
- How to encourage public to use

Collaboration is a key driver....

- Create a collaborative management structure (e.g. Steering Committee)
- Formalize collaborative arrangements between stakeholders (e.g. MOU or legal instrument)
 - Define “information”
 - Define roles and responsibilities of Lead Agency and stakeholders
 - Define on-going collaboration
 - Appoint “Focal Points” for each stakeholder

Information Gathering

- Appoint dedicated Project Team
- Develop detailed Implementation Plan quantifying effort and resources required
- Task each agency with collecting information
- Follow up regularly
- Report regularly to Steering Committee

Sustainability

- Consider low cost third-party hosting model that allows high reliability, high availability and scalability
- Website software offered by WB includes source code and training and is free of license costs
- Use local ICT resources (future support)
- Establish dedicated website Management Team
 - Manager
 - Webmaster
 - Content Coordinator
 - Data entry operators
- Allocate budget as soon as possible



Key Success Factors

- Clear definition of strategic objectives with early buy-in from stakeholders
- Structured project management methodology
- Inclusive governance structure to ensure collaboration
- Commitment to on-going sustainability
- Pro-active campaign to encourage use

Additional Benefits of Trade Information Portal

- **Collaboration is required to implement all provisions of the TFA, e.g.**
 - National Single Window
 - Risk Management, etc.
- Establishes institutional structure for collaboration
- Can be leveraged to review the trade legal regime
- Can be leveraged to simplify trade regulations and procedures
- Can lead to implementation of National Single Window
 - Leverage technology
 - Leverage institutions

12 Completed Portals



Jamaica



Nepal



Myanmar



Laos



Laos Services



Malawi



Bangladesh



Cambodia



Lesotho



Vietnam



Botswana



Sri Lanka

The Trade Information Portal

Thank You