

UNECE

Trade Information Portals

Recommendation No. 38



**United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation
and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)**



UNITED NATIONS

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

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United Nations
Geneva, 2021

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This publication is issued in English, French and Russian.

United Nations publication issued by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

ECE/TRADE/465

eISBN 978-92-1-005843-8

Foreword

Accessing accurate information about the rules governing international trade is key to facilitate international commercial transactions. It is essential to know the regulatory requirements for importing or exporting goods as well as all applicable duties and taxes well before engaging in any commercial exchange. This allows trading partners to negotiate prices and conditions with full knowledge of the requirements and in turn reduce unexpected trade costs and boost efficient and effective operations.

A Trade Information Portal (TIP) is an online facility that aggregates and publishes all regulatory and procedural, import and export trade-related information on an internet portal accessible to all stakeholders and the public at large. It allows traders to consult a single source to obtain searchable, accurate, comprehensive, and up-to-date information. This levels the playing field in terms of access to information and enables governments to publish information in a user-friendly and non-discriminatory manner. A Trade Information Portal promotes transparency and unambiguity of rules through detailed and practical descriptions from a user's point of view. It ensures that information is accessible to all which can also allow micro- small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to better approach other markets.

Predictability and transparency are cornerstones to the agreements of the World Trade Organization. Publishing cross-border trade related requirements is an integral part of the obligations established in its Trade Facilitation Agreement (Article 1). This can be achieved through a Trade Information Portal.

Beyond the time and cost savings that such a portal can help to achieve for the private sector, it can also help establish collaboration between government entities that may not have existed previously. For example, this can facilitate creating an institutional structure for collaboration that will have spill over effects in terms of streamlining and harmonizing procedures and can be seen as a precursor to a National Single Window as outlined in UNECE Recommendation 33.

This Recommendation 38 developed by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) is a complete guide on setting up a Trade Information Portal. It outlines the technical requirements and procedures but draws particular attention to the key success factors related to the management and legal framework/environment. It is an important trade facilitation measure which all countries should implement. I therefore invite all government entities to make effective use of this Recommendation.



Olga Algayerova

United Nations Under-Secretary-General

Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Note

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The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

Simple, Transparent and Effective Processes for Global Commerce

UN/CEFACT's mission is to improve the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transitional economies, to exchange products and relevant services effectively. Its principal focus is on facilitating national and international transactions, through the simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and information flows, and so contribute to the growth of global commerce.

Participation in UN/CEFACT is open to experts from United Nations Member States, Intergovernmental Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations recognised by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Through this participation of government and business representatives from around the world, UN/CEFACT has developed a range of trade facilitation and e-business standards, recommendations and tools that are approved within a broad intergovernmental process and implemented globally.

UN/CEFACT is committed to ensuring that the gender dimension is reflected in norms, roles, procedures, and access to resources. Government and trade are encouraged to promote equal opportunities for women and men within the scope of Trade Facilitation activities. UN/CEFACT specifically encourages the collection, analysis, and monitoring of gender disaggregated data in order to better understand and support women's engagement in international trade and transport facilitation.

This Recommendation encourages governments, business communities, development partners, international organizations, and other policymakers to follow UN/CEFACT's commitment to ensure inclusiveness for women.

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