

UNCTAD's lens: supporting SIDS in building new development models

# **Session 3 – Strengthening Trade Resilience through Transparent and Adaptive Regulatory Frameworks: UNCTAD's Non-Tariff measures programme**

10 October 2025

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UNCTAD

# Roadmap of today's presentation

1. What are Non-Tariff Measures?
2. The impact of NTMs
3. UNCTAD's programme on NTMs
4. NTMs and SIDS
5. Key takeaways

# **1. What are Non-Tariff Measures?**

# ➤ What are Non-Tariff Measures: examples



## Exporting agri products

- ➔ Coffee beans: Residues of ochratoxin A should be lower than 5.0 (µg/kg)
- ➔ Virgin coconut oil: Label need to have a “best before date”
- ➔ Voluntary sustainability standards → not NTMs



## Importing cars

- ➔ Motor vehicles: Emission levels of hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides should be lower than 0.024 (g/km) and 0.009 (g/km).
- ➔ Electric vehicles: Battery should pass a safety test.

# ➤ Non-Tariff Measures

Policy measures, other than ordinary customs tariffs, that can potentially have an economic effect on international trade in goods, changing quantities traded, or prices or both

*(UNCTAD Group of Eminent Persons on NTBs)*

A photograph of a port at sunset or sunrise. A large dark ship is docked on the left, and a tall green crane is on the right. The sky is orange and yellow from the low sun. In the foreground, there are railway tracks and some dry grass.

Neutral concept

Export and Import

Often domestic measures

# ➤ NTMs are not Non-Tariff *Barriers*

Eliminating NTMs is not always an option



Designed to achieve  
**legitimate public policy  
objectives** -

- ▶ Health
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Product quality
- ▶ Public moral
- ▶ ...

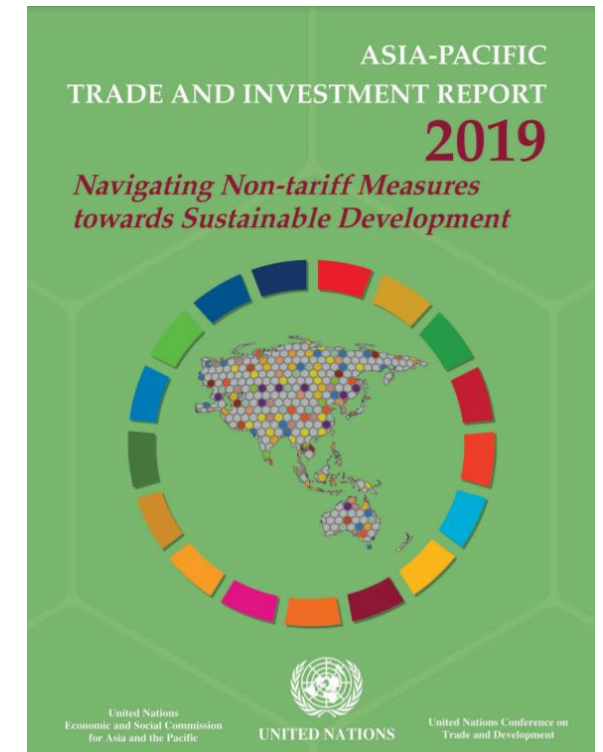
Incurring **costs**, particularly -

- ▶ Information cost
- ▶ Compliance cost
- Lack of transparency
- High complexity
- Lack of cooperation

→ Relatively higher burden  
on **MSMEs and SIDS**

# ➤ NTMs are linked with the SDGs

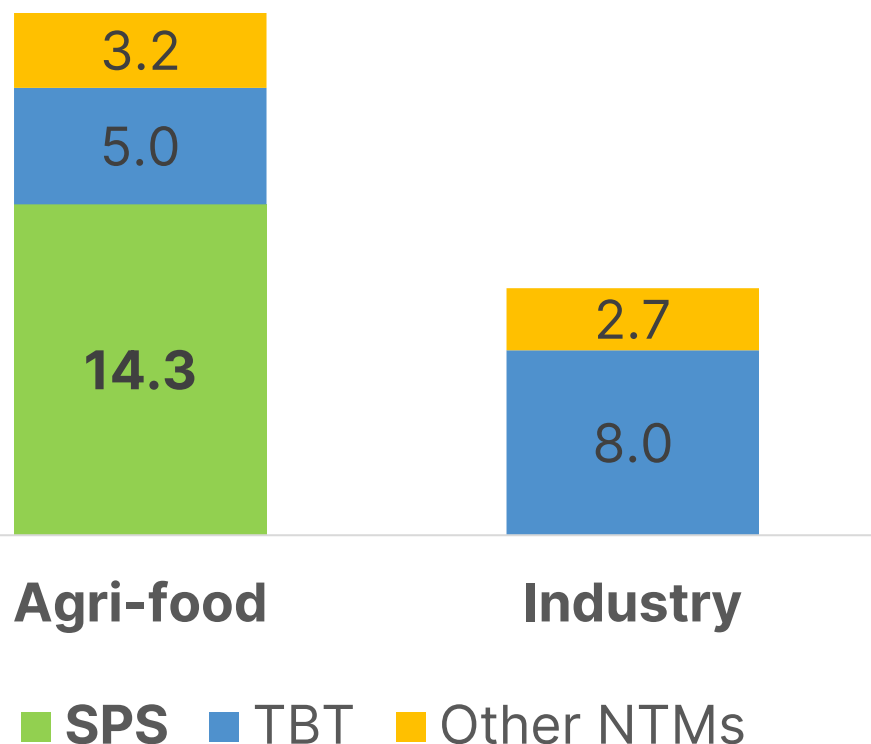
- ▶ Economic pillar:
  - NTMs -> Trade -> Income, Employment, Poverty reduction
- ▶ Environmental and social pillar:
  - Health warning label on alcohol -> (**SDG Target 3.5**) Strengthen the prevention and treatment of ... harmful use of alcohol
  - Ban on cigarette-shaped toys in order to implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (**SDG Target 3.a.**)



## **2. The impact of NTMs**

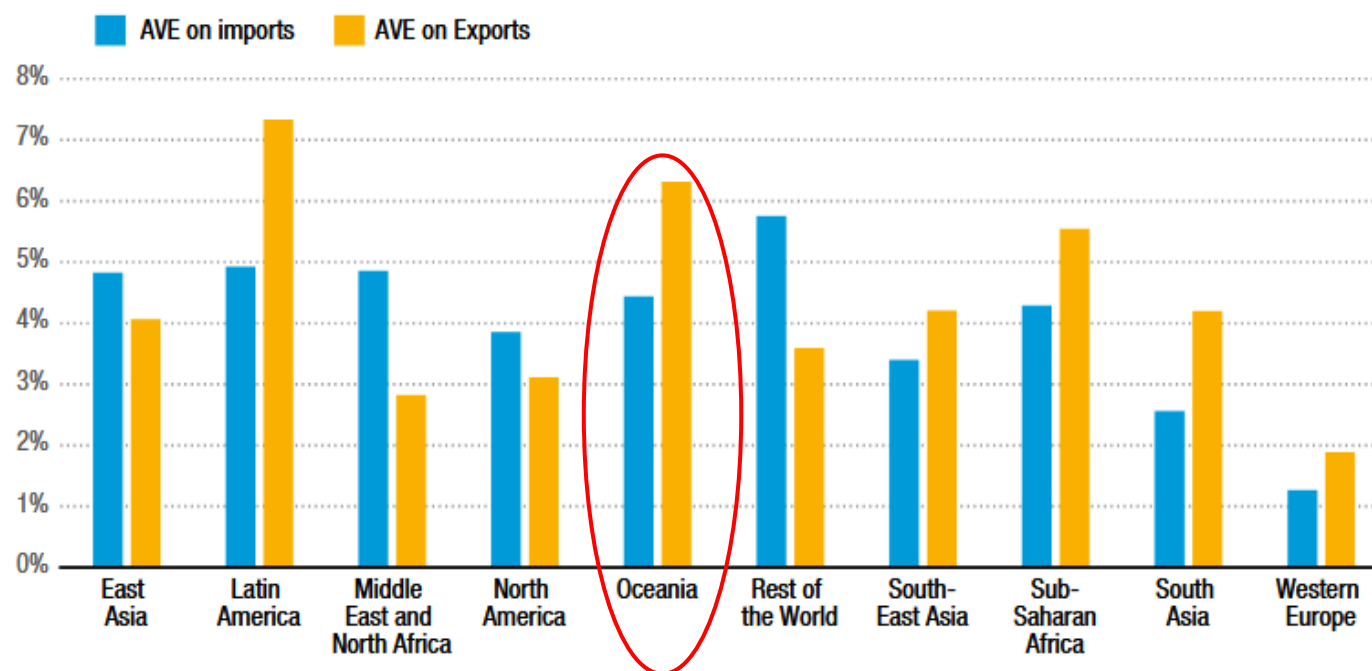
# ➤ What is the impact of NTMs?

Price impact (in %)



- On aggregate, SPS measures and TBT are the costliest of all non-tariff measures.
- However, elimination is not an option due to critical public benefits of health or environmental protection.
- Still, venues exist that reduce costs while maintaining regulatory benefits.

# ➤ NTMs can be costly



Source: UNCTAD, 2025. Available at: <https://unctad.org/publication/non-tariff-measures-border-gtap-level-analysis>

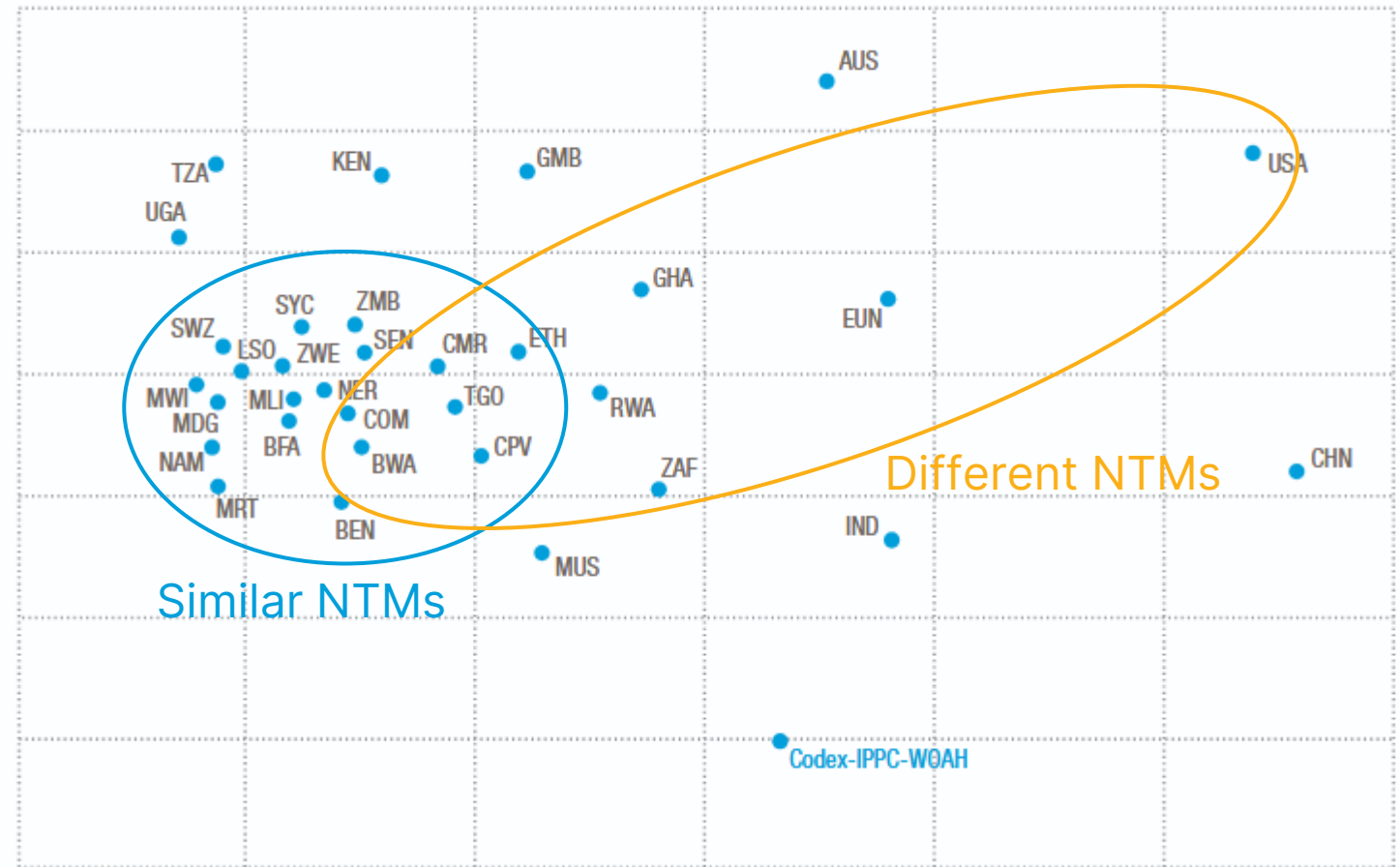
- Ad valorem equivalent (AVE) vary considerably at the bilateral level
- AVEs are higher when bilateral trade consists of mostly agricultural products

# Transparency and harmonization can reduce costs

Transparency can reduce impact of technical NTMs by **~25%** (OECD, 2021).

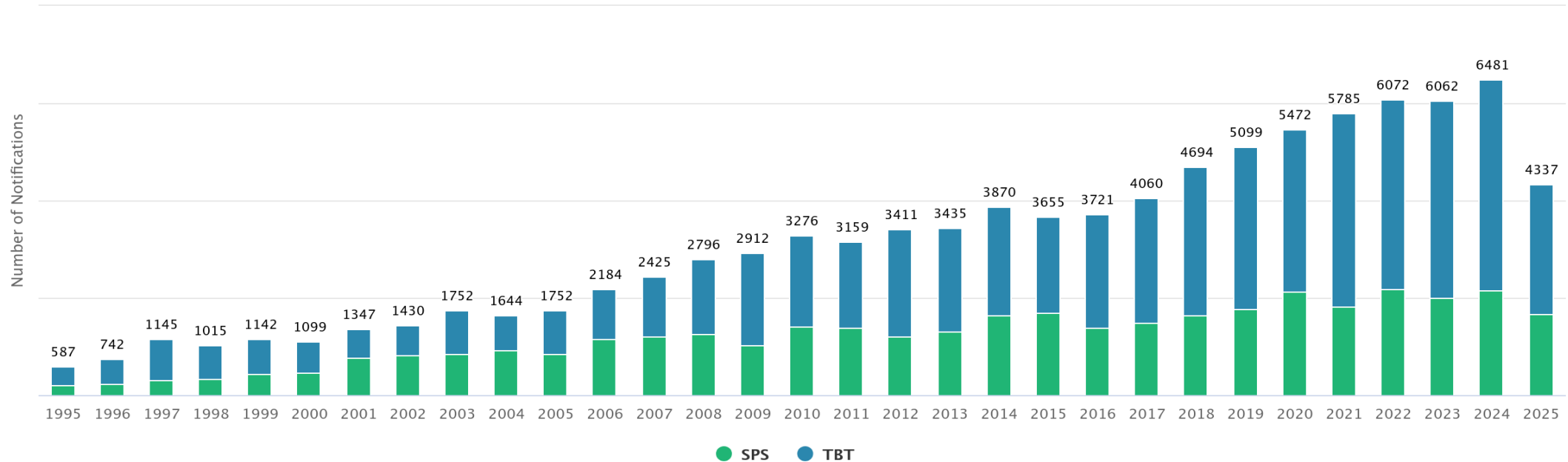
Regulatory convergence can also have a positive impact.

## Regulatory distance in agri-food: an African example



Source: UNCTAD, 2024. Available at:  
<https://unctad.org/publication/making-sense-non-tariff-measures-users-guide-accessing-and-analysing-data>

# ➤ The number of NTMs is on the rise



Source: WTO, 2025.

There has been a steady increase in the number of notified SPS and TBTs to the WTO.

# ➤ Transparency provisions in trade agreements

## WTO SPS Agreement

### Article 7

#### Transparency

Members shall notify changes in their sanitary or phytosanitary measures and shall provide information on their sanitary or phytosanitary measures in accordance with the provisions of Annex B.

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## AfCFTA Annex 4 Trade Facilitation

### Article 4

#### Publication

1. Each State Party shall, to the extent possible, promptly publish on the internet the following information in a non-discriminatory and easily accessible manner in order to enable State Parties, traders, and other interested parties to become acquainted with them:
  - (a) a description of procedures and practical steps needed for importation, exportation, and transit, including port, airport, and other entry-point procedures, and required forms and documents;
  - (b) the documentation and data it requires, and the form that needs to be completed for import into, export from, or transit through its territory;
  - (c) its laws, regulations, and procedures for import into, export from or transit through its territory;
  - (d) applied rates of duties and taxes of any kind imposed on or in connection with importation or exportation;

## EPA

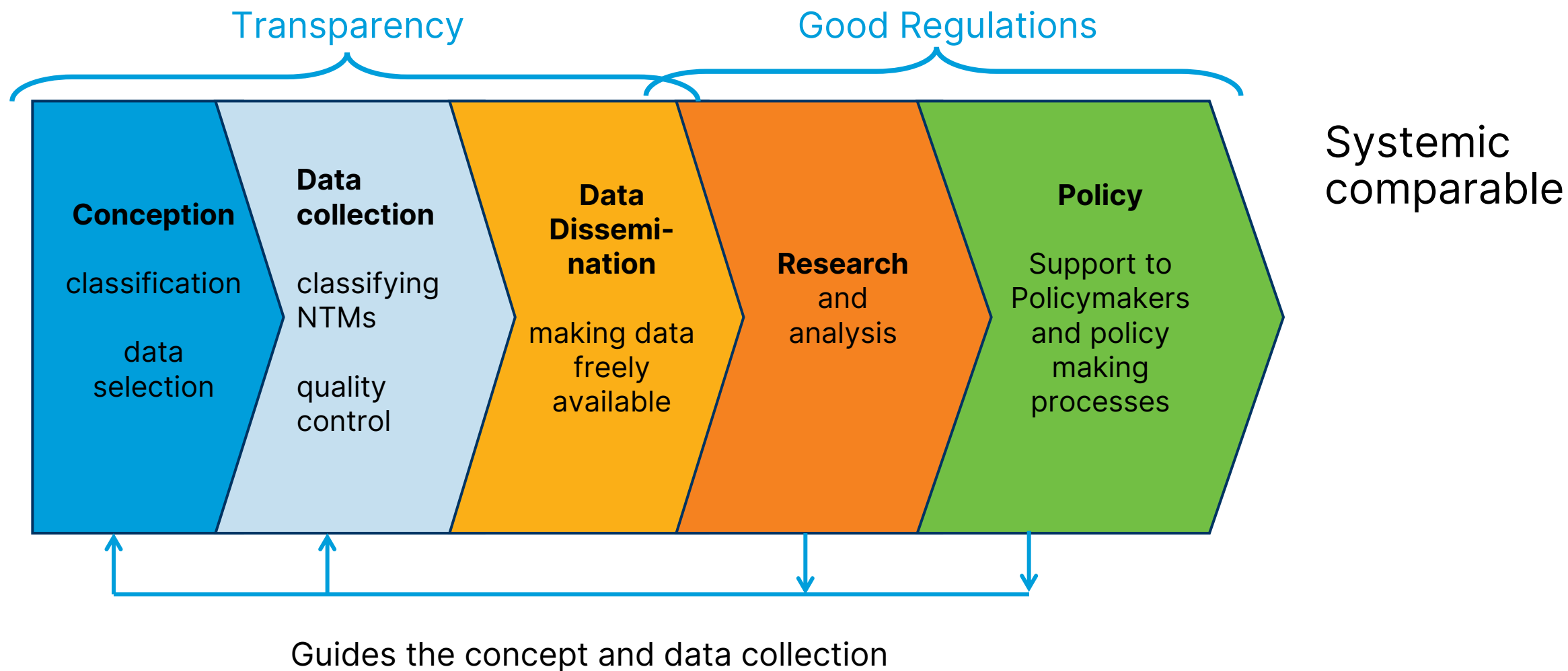
### Article 40

#### Transparency and exchange of information

1. The Parties confirm their commitments to implement the transparency provisions set out in the SPS Agreement and the TBT Agreement to facilitate access to relevant information on TBT or SPS measures.
2. The EC Party agrees to cooperate with initiatives of the Pacific States to establish a mechanism to permit efficient notifications of TBT and SPS measures at a regional level.
3. The Parties shall endeavour to inform each other at an early stage of proposals to modify or introduce TBT or SPS measures that may affect trade between the Parties, where appropriate making use of existing systems.

## **3. UNCTAD's programme on NTMs**

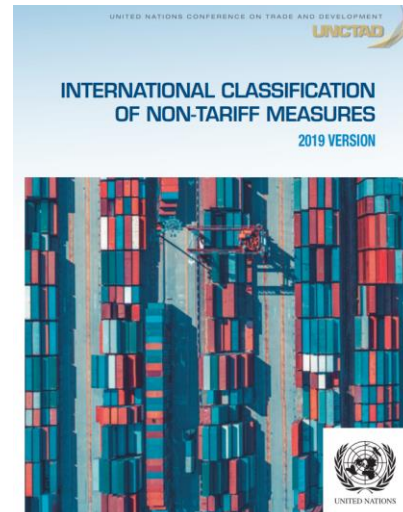
# UNCTAD Non-Tariff Measures programme



# ➤ International classification of NTMs

## A common language

- ▶ Established by a Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)
- ▶ Initiated by UNCTAD
- ▶ Including FAO, ITC, OECD, UNIDO, World Bank, WTO
- ▶ Regularly updated



Imports	Technical measures	A	Sanitary and phytosanitary measures
		B	Technical barriers to trade
		C	Pre-shipment inspection and other formalities
	Non-technical measures	D	Contingent trade-protective measures
		E	Non-automatic import licensing, quotas, prohibitions, quantity-control measures and other restrictions not including sanitary and phytosanitary measures or measures relating to technical barriers to trade
		F	Price-control measures, including additional taxes and charges
		G	Finance measures
		H	Measures affecting competition
		I	Trade-related investment measures
		J	Distribution restrictions
		K	Restrictions on post-sales services
		L	Subsidies and other forms of support
		M	Government procurement restrictions
		N	Intellectual property
		O	Rules of origin
	Exports	P	Export-related measures

# ➤ International classification of NTMs

## Tree structure example

### Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)

B1 Import authorisation / licensing related to TBT measures

...

B2 Tolerance limits for residues and restricted use of substances

...

B8 Conformity assessment related to TBT

B81 Product registration / approval requirements

B82 Testing requirements

...

B85 Traceability requirements

B851 Origin of materials and parts

B852 Processing history

B853 Distribution and location of products after delivery

B859 Traceability requirements not elsewhere specified

B89 Conformity assessment related to TBT not elsewhere specified

B9 TBT measures not elsewhere specified

About 500  
measures in the  
classification

- In the Food Safety Act 2022 (of country A), sanitary certificate (A83) on poultry meat (HS 0207) imported from (country B)



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NTMS AND SDGS

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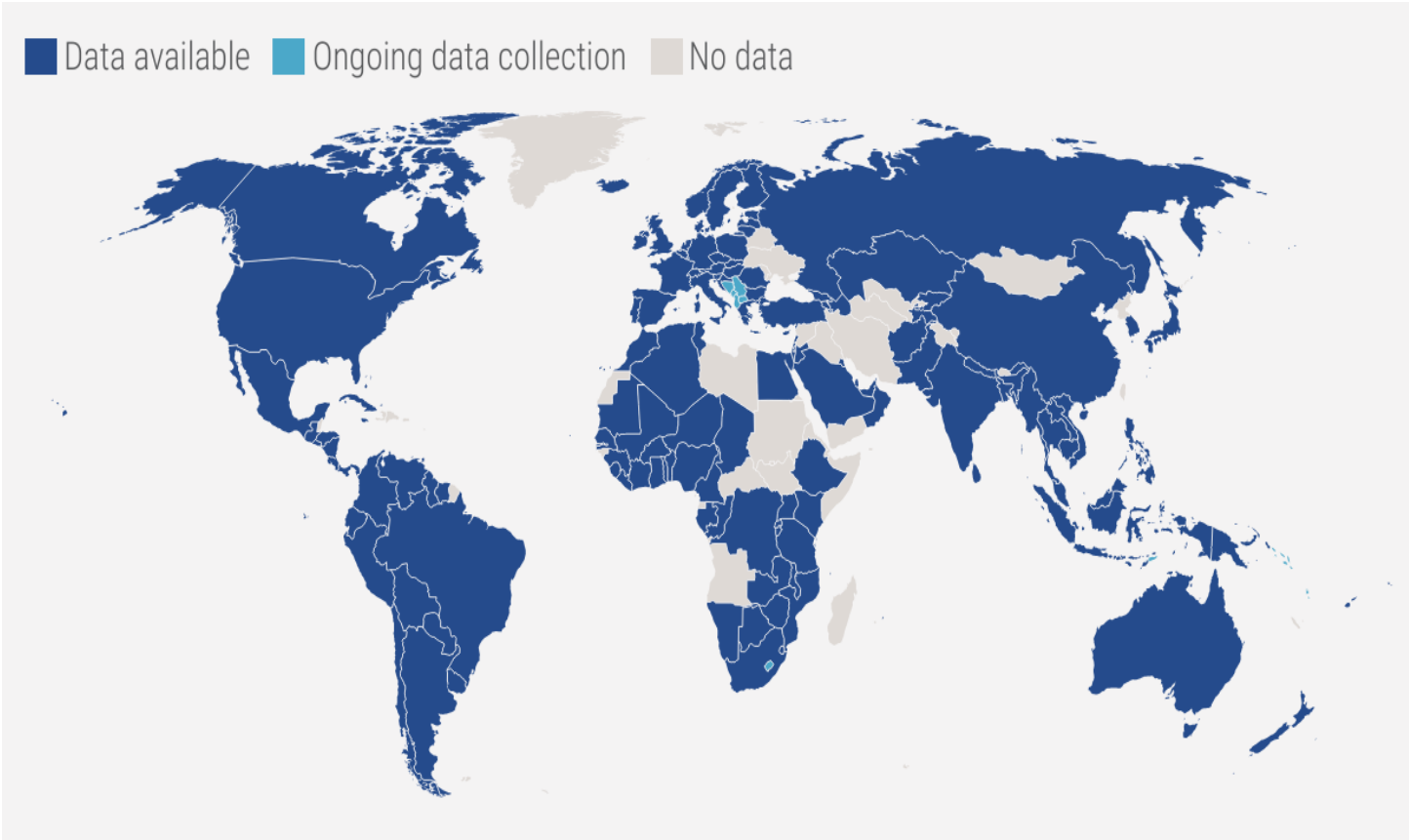
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NTM code	NTM code description	Measure description	Product description	Hs code(s)	Regulation title	Implementation date	Markets affected by NTM(s)	Official regula...	Measure objec
A21	Tolerance limits for re...	1.4 Maximum residue ...	All agricultural chemi...	130219(Pyrethrins), 281...	Food Notice: Maximu...	Sep 8, 2021	World [Valid From: 08 Sep 2021]	<a href="#">NZL_19550-FN-...</a>	A - Protection c
F72	Excise taxes	3. Excise and Excise-e...	All alcoholic beverage...	2105(Containing alcoh...	Excise and Excise-equ...	Jul 1, 2021	World [Valid From: 01 Jul 2021]	<a href="#">NZL_order-in-c...</a>	X - For purpose
B9	TBT measures, n.e.s.	2.1 Application of regu...	Specific tobacco or al...	220300(the total valu...	Customs (Deemed En...	Jul 1, 2021	World [Valid From: 01 Jul 2021]	<a href="#">NZL_customs-...</a>	X - For purpose
A89	Conformity assessme...	2.2.1.1 Types of Nursery...	Nursery Stock (Whole...	060110(Nursery stock),...	155.02.06: Importation...	Jun 21, 2021	World [Valid From: 21 Jun 2021]	<a href="#">NZL_NZL368_...</a>	C - Protection c
A86	Quarantine requirem...	2.2.1.14 Post-Entry Qu...	Nursery Stock (Whole...	060110(Nursery stock),...	155.02.06: Importation...	Jun 21, 2021	World [Valid From: 21 Jun 2021]	<a href="#">NZL_NZL368_...</a>	C - Protection c
A9	SPS measures, n.e.s.	Additional Declaratio...	Nursery Stock (Whole...	060110(Nursery stock),...	155.02.06: Importation...	Jun 21, 2021	World [Valid From: 21 Jun 2021]	<a href="#">NZL_NZL368_...</a>	C - Protection c
A82	Testing requirement	2.2.1.12 Measures for X...	Nursery Stock (Whole...	060110(Nursery stock),...	155.02.06: Importation...	Jun 21, 2021	World [Valid From: 21 Jun 2021]	<a href="#">NZL_NZL368_...</a>	C - Protection c

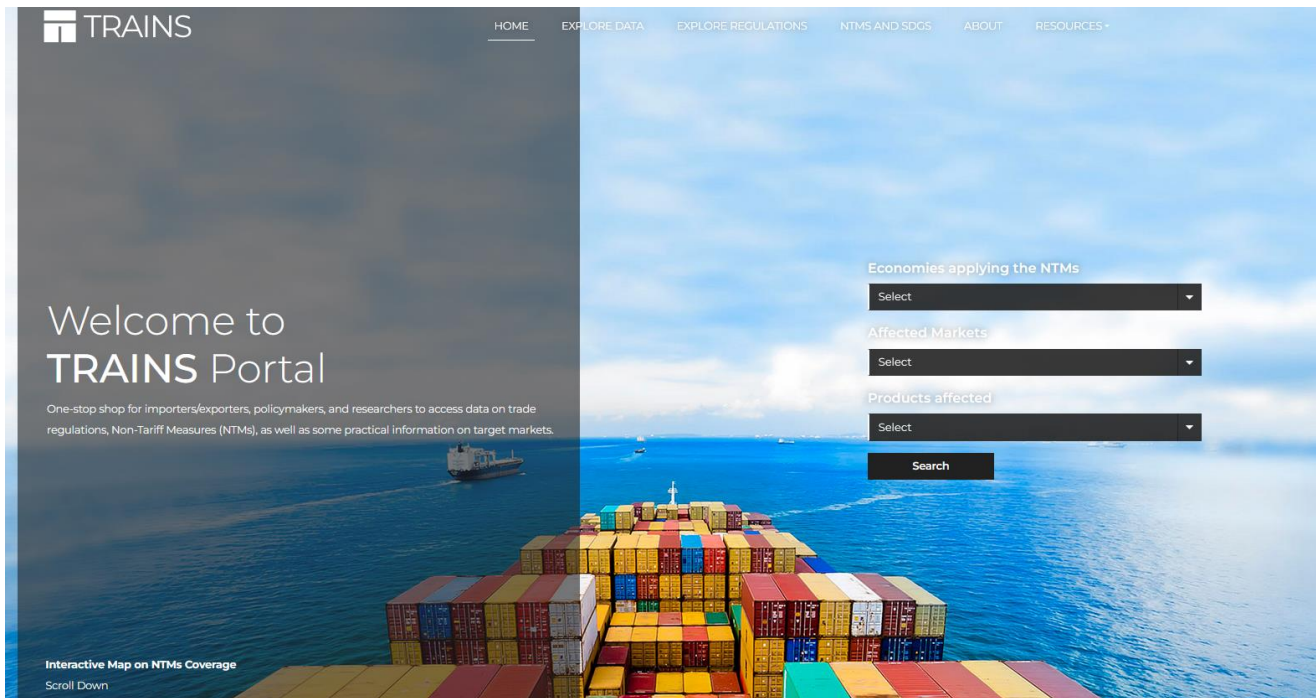
# ➤ Data dissemination

■ Data available ■ Ongoing data collection ■ No data



- ▶ **Comprehensive data available at:**
- ▶ [trainsonline.unctad.org](https://trainsonline.unctad.org)  
→ for policy makers
- ▶ [globaltradehelpdesk.org](https://globaltradehelpdesk.org)  
→ for traders
- ▶ [wits.worldbank.org](https://wits.worldbank.org)  
→ for researchers

# TRAINS online



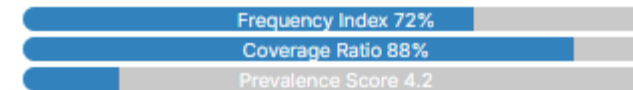
Source: UNCTAD, 2025. <https://unctad.org/publication/non-tariff-measures-border-gtap-level-analysis>

## ▶ NTM data easily accessible by:

- Product
- Country
- Trade partner

## ▶ Detailed information also showing different indicators<sup>(1)</sup> by:

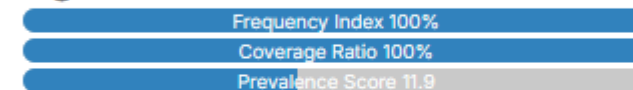
- Sector
- Measure



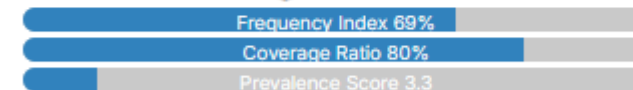
BY SECTOR

BY MEASURE

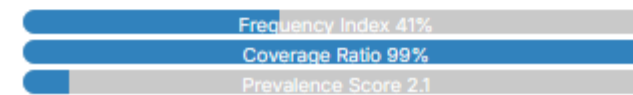
### Agriculture



### Manufacturing



### Natural Resources



(1) **Frequency index** captures the share of traded product lines subject to at least one NTM. **Coverage ratio** is the share of trade value subject to NTMs. **Prevalence score** shows the average number of distinct NTMs applied to regulated products.

## **4. NTMs and SIDS**

## ➤ **An overview of NTMs in SIDS**

The **TRAINS** database already include NTMs of **20** out of 39 SIDS.

Another **10** are currently being collected and will be available in early 2026.



# ➤ SIDS are open economies



- Trade plays a **larger role in SIDS** than in most other economies.
- SIDS rely more on **global markets**, making them exposed to external shocks.
- **Transparency in NTMs** is important for SIDS!

# ➤ Importance of NTMs for SIDS



## Protect a unique environment

- ▶ Many SIDS have a unique environment. NTMs can help protect it.
- ▶ Example: Requirements to **isolate animals or plants** on arrival in a port for a given period to prevent the spread of infectious or contagious disease or contamination.



## Ensure food safety and public health

- ▶ Ensure imported and exported goods meet international health standards.
- ▶ Example: SPS check on imported food → **Rice shall be free from heavy metals** in amounts which may represent a hazard to human health.




## Promoting sustainable trade

- ▶ Well-designed NTMs help manage risks and build more sustainable trade systems.
- ▶ Example: **Ban on single-use plastics** to protect marine ecosystems.

# ➤ UNCTAD work with SIDS

**Example: IMPACT project in the Pacific region.**

**Objectives:**

- 
- ▶ **1. To increase transparency in trade-related regulations and NTMs**
  - ▶ Reduce information and compliance cost
  - ▶ **2. To help countries in the Pacific region to make “good” NTMs that:**
  - ▶ Meet policy objectives, while not restricting trade too much
  - ▶ Support economic integration in the region and the world

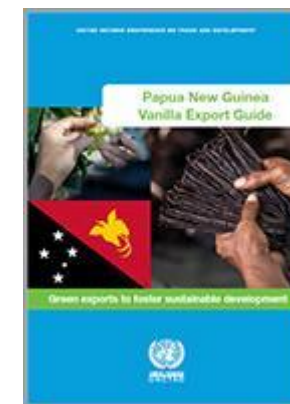


# ➤ Help SIDS exporting

## 2.2.1 Australia

### a. Hygienic and quality requirements

- Requirement to be clean and free of contaminant seed, soil, animal and plant debris and other biosecurity risk materials.
- Requirement to use permitted processing aids and food additives.
- Maximum residue limits for agvet chemicals in vanilla production is Acephate, Azoxystrobin, Chlorpyrifos, and Penconazole at 0.1 mg/kg, while Imidacloprid and Pyrimethanil have a limit of 0.05 mg/kg. Metaldehyde and Sulphur dioxide have limits of 1 mg/kg, and Bromide ion is set at 400 mg/kg. Notably, Azoxystrobin, carbendazim, Metalaxyl, and Propetamphos share a limit of \*0.1 mg/kg, while Methyl bromide and pirimicarb are constrained to \*0.05 mg/kg. Chlorpyrifos has a limit of 5 mg/kg.<sup>7</sup>



## 2.2.2 European Union<sup>10</sup>

### e. Labelling<sup>13</sup>

- Name of the food.
- List of ingredients.
- Net quantity of the food.
- Date of minimum durability or “use by” date.
- Special storage conditions and/or conditions of use.
- Name or business name and address of the food business operator.
- Country of origin or place of provenance.
- Instructions for use (when necessary for appropriate food usage).
- Lot-marking, denoted by the letter ‘L’ must be placed on pre-packaged foodstuffs for easy lot identification.
- Products conforming to organic rules can use organic labelling with an equivalence certificate and the certificate of inspection from European Union authorities.<sup>14</sup>

Source: UNCTAD (2023). Papua New Guinea Vanilla Export Guide. Available at: [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tcsditcinf2023d9\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tcsditcinf2023d9_en.pdf)

# Facilitate SIDS' compliance with Transparency Commitments

← → ↺ 🏠

https://trainsdataentry.unctad.org/regulations/edit/1104659

TRAINS

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Regulation for [A-I, P] - M4 (Data collection)

This Regulation amends

Source \*

Ministry of Finance

Language \*

English

Agencies \*

Ministry of Finance

Regulation Symbol

Official Title

English \* Original Language

Energy Efficiency (Approved Energy Using Products Standards) Regulations 2018

Documentation \* ?

WSM\_Energy-Regulation.pdf

This Regulation repeals

Publication Date

2018-03-05

Original Language \*

English

Implementation Date \* ?

2018-03-05

Country imposing \*

Samoa

Publication Symbol

Regulation Description


English \* Original Language

This Regulation prescribes standards and labelling requirements for energy using products such as refrigerators and freezers, air conditioners, incandescent lamps, linear fluorescent lamps, compact fluorescent lamps and fluorescent lamp ballasts.

Notes

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 WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

G/TBT/N/

9 October 2025

(00-0000)

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Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

Original:

NOTIFICATION

The following notification is being circulated in accordance with Article 10.6.

1. Notifying Member: (Country A)

If applicable, name of local government involved (Articles 3.2 and 7.2):

2. Agency responsible:

Ministry of Finance

Name and address (including telephone and fax numbers, email and website addresses, if available) of agency or authority designated to handle comments regarding the notification shall be indicated if different from above:

3. Notified under Article 2.9.2 [ ], 2.10.1 [ ], 5.6.2 [ ], 5.7.1 [ ], 3.2 [ ], 7.2 [ ], other:

4. Products covered (HS or CCCN where applicable, otherwise national tariff heading. ICS numbers may be provided in addition, where applicable):

Incandescent lamps, compact fluorescent lamps and air conditioners., Not provided., Refrigerators and freezers; air conditioners; incandescent lamps, linear fluorescent lamps, compact fluorescent lamps and fluorescent lamp ballasts.

(HS code(s): e.g., 841510, 841520, 841581, 841582, 841583, 8418, 850410, 853910, 853921, 853922, 853929, 853931, 853932, 853939, 940510, 940520, 940530, 940540, 940560)

5. Title, number of pages and language(s) of the notified document:

Energy Efficiency (Approved Energy Using Products Standards) Regulations 2018; ( Page(s), in English)

6. Description of content:

This Regulation prescribes standards and labelling requirements for energy using products such as refrigerators and freezers, air conditioners, incandescent lamps, linear fluorescent lamps, compact fluorescent lamps and fluorescent lamp ballasts.

# ➤ Support SIDS in assessing their NTMs



## Policy recommendations (Summary)

- **Advance trade facilitation** – implement the National Single Window and Trade Information Portal to improve efficiency and transparency.
- **Strengthen institutional capacity** – increase staff resources, training, and cross-agency collaboration.
- **Promote regional NTM harmonization** – support OECS/CARICOM data sharing, regulatory alignment, and regional food security goals.

## **5. Key takeaways**

# ➤ **Key takeaways**

- ▶ **NTMs are essential but costly**
  - They safeguard health, safety, and the environment, but compliance can be burdensome.
- ▶ **Transparency and cooperation reduce costs**
  - Clear information, data sharing, and regulatory convergence lower trade barriers without undermining policy goals.
- ▶ **For SIDS, NTMs are critical**
  - They protect biodiversity, ensure food safety, and support SMEs in accessing global markets.

# Thank you



# ➤ Additional resources

- ▶ **UNCTAD NTM webpage:** <https://unctad.org/topic/trade-analysis/non-tariff-measures>
- ▶ **TRAINS Online database:** <https://trainsonline.unctad.org/home>
- ▶ **Selected publications:**
  - *Promoting food security through non-tariff measures: From costs to benefits*  
→ [Link](#)
  - *Trade regulations for climate action: New insights from the global non-tariff measures database*  
→ [Link](#)
  - *Guidelines for the collection of data on official non-tariff measures*  
→ [Link](#)
  - *Non-tariff measures from A to Z*  
→ [Link](#)