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Volume 11, Issue 1: Customs

The Definition

The movement of people across a country’s borders is usually controlled by immigration authorities. The movement of all other things – for example, goods, hazardous items, vehicles, and animals – is controlled by a government department, agency, service or authority called customs. In general, a customs department decides what can or cannot enter or leave a country, how much should be paid in terms of duty (tax) for that to happen, and prevents the illegal import and export of banned or dangerous goods.

Every country has its own laws and regulations relating to the import and export of goods. However, for the purposes of business and international trade, some of these laws and regulations are governed by formal international agreements. This ensures security, and facilitates and expedites the clearance of goods in an efficient manner.

The Stage

Customs has the job of protecting the community from risks and facilitating the legitimate movement of items across a national border. These risks may come in the form of prohibited or restricted goods, illegal or illicit items (such as drugs), or even dangerous items (such as weapons).

While customs authorities in every country have their own process of inspecting and clearing items, some of these processes meet an international standard, agreed upon by participating countries. Customs unions and free-trade zones such as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the European Union (EU) or the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) enable actions to be harmonised. Customs duties (or tariffs or taxes) are imposed on certain goods being transported across borders; the rate of this duty depends on the type or quantity of item being brought in, and can differ considerably depending on the country’s regulations.

Clearing customs can be quite a daunting process in terms of the amount of documentation and transactions required, as well as the need for accuracy. In shipping, for example, a problem with clearance can lead to containers being warehoused. Storage fees add up very quickly, which has the potential to cost businesses significant time and money. For this reason, many companies choose to pay a professional customs broker to help them navigate the clearance process. Some governments also appoint private agencies to manage customs at certain borders. While this alleviates certain resource constraints, it can sometimes bring to the fore other issues, including corruption.

The international environment of trade is characterised by instability. Organisations such as the World Customs Organization (WCO) have become important in providing a platform to share best practices and discuss challenges. Customs agencies all around the world constantly face the challenge of improving their processes to make them more robust and transparent, balancing smooth international trade with the need to protecting the communities they serve.

In This Report…

1. What is “customs”?
2. Which organisations have received recognition for customs excellence?
3. How have organisations reached high levels of success in customs or customs-related services?
4. What research has been undertaken into customs?
5. What tools and methods are used to achieve high levels of success in customs?
6. How can customs services be measured?
7. What do business leaders say about customs?
8. Conclusion

Author: Dr Alan Samuel, BPIR.com Limited
Editor: Dr Robin Mann, Centre for Organisational Excellence Research
Editor: Michael Adams, Thingwall Communications (Canada)
1. What is “customs”?

1.1 What Is Customs?
Source: Lumi, United States (date of information: 2017)
Link (video): What Is Customs?
Application/Key learning points: If you have a spare 30 seconds, this simple, short video will provide you with the essence of what customs is all about: goods that come in and out of a country. Customs offices are usually found at airports or ports.

1.2 Why Do We Need a Customs Service?
Source: Maco Customs, Netherlands (date of information: 2014)
Link (video): How Does Customs Work?
Link (video): Why Do We Need Customs?
Application/Key learning points: These two short videos from Maco Customs Service in the Netherlands provide an excellent overview of what a customs service is – and why we need it. The first video is two minutes long, and shows goods being imported through a port in the Netherlands. It explains the difference between taxable and non-taxable goods, and briefly shows how these goods are handled until they have been thoroughly inspected, all requirements have been fulfilled, and they have been released back to their owner. The second video answers the big question: just why do we need customs? (The answer, according to the video, is for the safe import and export of goods, and to prevent hazardous or dangerous items from crossing our borders.)

1.3 Overview of the Role and Functions of Customs
Source: Customs and Excise Department, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (date of information: 2017)
Download (PDF): Role and Functions of Customs
Application/Key learning points: This is a short overview of the role and functions of the customs and excise department of a sovereign state in the Caribbean. The fundamental mission, vision, duties and taxes, and concessions and exemptions that are explained here apply to the customs department of almost every country.

1.4 A Day in the Life of an Airport Customs Department
Source: Washington Times, United States (date of information: 2012)
Link (Video): A Day at Customs
Application/Key learning points: There isn’t a dull day for customs and border protection agents at Dulles International Airport in Washington, D.C., as they uncover unusual and, sometimes, dangerous items in the luggage of visitors. This three-minute video shows you some of the weird and wonderful things that get taken into the United States by regular airline passengers, despite the many warnings they receive.

1.5 Customs Problems
Source: International Trade Administration, United States (date of information: 2016)
Link: Customs Problems
Application/Key learning points: This informative website deals with common customs issues and explains why goods may be rejected by the government of an importer’s country. The most common customs-related problems for companies include misclassification, higher-than-anticipated duties, non-clearance of shipments, and inadequate documentation. There is also a handy list of ways to either remedy or prevent the problems.

“Borders Divide, Customs Connects.”
—Kunio Mikuriya, secretary-general of the World Customs Organization
2. Which organisations have received recognition for customs excellence?

2.1 Examples of Customs or Customs-Related Awards

Sources & Links:
- **Australian Shipping & Maritime Industry Award (Customs Broker Category)**, Australia
- **World Customs Organisation Merit Awards**, Belgium
- **Global Montreal Protocol Award**, Canada
- **IP Award for Schools and Universities**, Dubai
- **Maritime and Logistics Awards**, India
- **IPANZ Public Sector Excellence Awards**, New Zealand
- **Women in International Trade Los Angeles Global Trade Awards**, United States

Application/Key learning points: These are examples of customs-related awards from around the world. You will be able to find some of the world’s best organisations in this space, and read about what makes them exceptional. Award winners are usually excellent organisations to contact and from which to learn.

2.2 APEC Customs Best Practices Handbook

Source: **Asian Legal Information Institute**, Australia (date of information: 2018)

Link: [APEC Customs Best Practices Handbook](#)

Application/Key learning points: This handbook presents a “one-stop shop” relating to customs department practices in APEC countries. In total, various best practices from 18 countries are presented here, including Singapore, Australia, Canada, Malaysia, New Zealand and Indonesia. The best practices are presented in categories such as counter services, training, publications, dialogue sessions, and mass media.

2.3 Customs Protecting the Environment with the Global Montreal Protocol Award

Source: **UN Environment**, Global (date of information: 2018)

Link: [Global Montreal Protocol Award](#)

Download (PDF): [Nomination Form for Global Montreal Protocol Award](#)

Application/Key learning points: In partnership with WCO and the Ozone Secretariat, UN Environment OzonAction has launched the global Montreal Protocol Award to recognise the vital role of customs and enforcement officers. The focus is on restricting and preventing the flow of ozone-depleting chemicals (HCFCs & HFCs) into and out of countries with the ultimate goal of reducing the effects of global warming. Details of the award can be found in the nomination form.

“Although more than 500 million maritime containers move around the world each year, accounting for 90 per cent of international trade, only 2 per cent are inspected. Strengthening customs and immigration systems are essential.”

—Ban Ki-moon, South Korean diplomat & eighth secretary-general of the United Nations
3. How have organisations reached high levels of success in customs or customs-related services?

3.1 Dubai Customs Wins Organisation-Wide Innovation Award 2018 (International Best Practice Competition)

Source: BPIR.com, New Zealand (date of information: 2019)
Link: Dubai Customs: Winner of Organisation-Wide Innovation Award

Application/Key learning points: At the Global Organisational Excellence Congress held in Abu Dhabi in December 2018, Dubai Customs emerged as the winner of the Organisation-Wide Innovation Award, beating out several other excellent global competitors. Dubai Customs’ innovation strategy incorporates internal innovation methodologies such as ideation management, as well as an attractive incentive programme to promote innovation among employees. Its best practices and standards for innovation processes include top-down and bottom-up innovation, open innovation, prototyping, and future-shaping techniques. Dubai Customs executes its innovation strategy according to three horizons: Horizon 1 involves incremental innovations to exploit current technologies; Horizon 2 involves enhancing and reinventing Horizon 1 innovations, while keeping an eye on future possibilities; and, Horizon 3 is for exploration, research, and forecasting the innovations of the future. Log in to your BPIR.com account to read more about how Dubai Customs won the 2018 Organisation-Wide Innovation Award.

3.2 Australian Trusted Trader

Source: Trusted Trader International, Australia (date of information: 2019)
Link: Programme for Industry Partners and Participation Requirements

Application/Key learning points: Australian Trusted Trader is a voluntary trade facilitation initiative. It recognises businesses with a secure supply chain and compliant trade practices, rewarding accredited businesses with a range of trade facilitation benefits. Australian Trusted Trader is an Authorised Economic Operator programme. Among the benefits to trusted traders are:
- a dedicated account manager
- priority trade services
- differentiated examinations
- use of the Australian Trusted Trader logo, and
- mutual recognition arrangements.

Trusted Trader International is an organisation that helps businesses to achieve trusted trader status. Their website gives details of countries in the world with Trusted Trader programmes. The link provides video illustrations of the Australia Trusted Trader programme and useful case studies.

3.3 New Zealand Customs Winner at Public Sector Excellence Awards

Source: Scoop, New Zealand (date of information: 2017)
Link: Customs wins at Public Sector Excellence Awards 2017

Application/Key learning points: The New Zealand Customs Service was the winner of the Excellence in Regulatory Systems category of the Deloitte IPANZ Public Sector Excellence Awards in 2017. The Service was recognised for its Joint Electronic Verification System, which verifies and validates the origin of exported shipments from New Zealand to China. New Zealand is only the second country in the world to introduce such a system with China. The time and effort saved allows for customs officials to focus on risk issues at the border. There is now the added benefit of accurately estimating clearance times for importers and exporters alike, through the 2008 New Zealand-China Free Trade Agreement. The system may be extended to other markets in due time.
3.4 Cotecna Receives WCO Award for Exceptional Service
Source: World Customs Organization (WCO), Senegal (date of information: 2016)
Link: Cotecna Awarded by World Customs Organization
Application/Key learning points: WCO awarded Cotecna, a Senegal-based provider of testing, inspection and certification services, a certificate of merit for rendering exceptional service to the international customs community. For 15 years, Cotecna has been providing trade facilitation services to the Senegalese Customs Department. It was awarded the certificate for its continued dedication to modernising processes and keeping them transparent, enabling a strong partnership in border control.

3.5 Singapore Customs: Singapore Quality Award Winner
Source: Enterprise Singapore, Singapore (date of information: 2012)
Link (PDF): Singapore Customs: Singapore Quality Award Winner
Application/Key learning points: This is a useful document to learn how and why Singapore Customs was awarded the top business excellence award in Singapore. Singapore Customs plays two significant roles in this tiny but extremely busy island/port. Firstly, it facilitates smooth and swift trading vital to the economy. Secondly, it ensures taxes and duties are collected, and acts on intelligence to disrupt and prevent the flow of dangerous items across Singapore’s borders. The extensive report covers business excellence in seven areas: leadership, strategy, people, processes, knowledge, customers, and results.

3.6 Webb Fontaine Côte d’Ivoire Receives WCO Award for Outstanding Services
Source: World Customs Organization (WCO), Nigeria (date of information: 2015)
Link: Webb Fontaine Côte d’Ivoire Awarded by WCO for Outstanding Service
Application/Key learning points: Webb Fontaine Côte d’Ivoire received the WCO award for Outstanding Services to the international customs community. In close co-operation with Ivorian customs, Webb Fontaine Côte d’Ivoire provides companies with the well-known “Single Window for Trade” portal, a one-stop shop for the capture, verification, and submission of customs declarations and manifests. The portal has simplified trading procedures, ensured compliance, and rendered a far more efficient system in trade facilitation.

3.7 Commercial Freight & Logistics: Customs Broker of the Year Award Winner
Source: Lloyd’s List Australian Shipping & Maritime Industry Awards, Australia (date of information: 2017)
Link: Commercial Freight and Logistics Wins Customs Broker Award
Application/Key learning points: Commercial Freight and Logistics won the Customs Broker of the Year Award in 2015, and was runner-up in 2017, from the Department of Immigration & Border Protection at the Australian Shipping & Maritime Industry Awards ceremony. The company was exemplary in regulatory compliance in customs, biosecurity, and transport security. It was also highly commended for excellence in customer service, which is an important criterion in trade facilitation, a factor which contributes to boosting the economy.

“FCA works to promote customs work based on best international standards for society, security, and trade facilitation.”
—Said Khalid Al Bustani, customs commissioner of the Federal Customs Authority, United Arab Emirates
4. What research has been undertaken into customs?

4.1 United States Customs and Border Protection

Application/Key learning points: The first document, a 52-page congressional report on the activities and processes of US Customs, details the import process of the United States (starting on p. 20). It also provides details of layered enforcement and the Trusted Trader programme which covers the requirements for international trade to be successful. The second document is a four-page draft for the United States Trusted Trader Framework Strategy, the overarching plan of how trade should work in the international arena of supply chain.

4.2 Breaking the Ice between Government and Business
Source: [Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam](https://www.vu.nl), Netherlands (date of information: 2010)
Download (PDF): [Breaking the Ice between Government and Business](https://www.vu.nl)

Application/Key learning points: This 244-page thesis by the Tinbergen Institute presents extensive details of various aspects of Trusted Trader programmes in Europe, including procedures and case studies. While slightly dated, the proposition of the thesis is in line with contemporary thinking of breaking down barriers to trade and making it more efficient. The information age has enabled more collaborative forms of government-business models to develop, moving away from previous control-centric models. The research is set in the context of interactions between customs administrations and trading companies.

4.3 Global Customs Risk Management: an Examination of Leading Practices
Source: [Ernst & Young](https://www.ey.com), United Kingdom (date of information: 2006)
Link: [Global Customs Risk Management: An Examination of Leading Practices](https://www.ey.com)

Application/Key learning points: This 40-page document by Ernst & Young is relatively dated but probably remains one of the best openly available documents on managing risk from a global perspective. As risk management continually tops the list in the global import function, the findings from the surveys conducted by this research are invaluable, even in the light of information and technological advances. It explores the views from more than 400 corporate leaders on how best to navigate the regulatory and corporate governance requirements, balancing it with the need to manage risk.

4.4 World Tariff Profiles
Source: [World Trade Organization (WTO)](https://www.wto.org), Switzerland (date of information: 2018)
Download (PDF): [World Tariff Profiles 2018](https://www.wto.org)

Application/Key learning points: This 236-page publication is a joint effort between the WTO, the International Trade Centre (ITC), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and is dedicated to market access for goods. It is the most comprehensive report on tariffs and non-tariff measures imposed by more than 170 customs administrations across the globe. The tariff profiles for each economy cover, first, domestic market access protection, and second, the protection faced in the major export markets. Should you require them for further analysis and comparison, statistical tables can be downloaded from the website.

4.5 NZ Customs Service’s Joint Border Management System (JBMS)
Source: [New Zealand Customs Service](https://www.customs.govt.nz), New Zealand (date of information: 2015)

Application/Key learning points: This is an important document for airfreight cargo carriers and administrators to regulate international and domestic transhipment requests. It details the process in a clear pictorial format that is easy to understand. The scenarios, examples, and tables show common types of lodgement and information required before the cargo is released or cleared by customs. This would be good to use as a benchmark for your joint-border customs assessment.
4.6 Best Practices in Customs Procedures
Source: STEPS Centre, United Kingdom (date of information: 2015)
Download (PDF): Best Practices in Customs Procedures
Application/Key learning points: This 13-page academic paper discusses some of the best practices of customs departments in the EU. It identifies several activities of EU customs departments that are designed to promote business-friendly practices in a modern community. Speed and ease of clearance of goods at borders can often be a big determinant in trade. Without compromising security and protection, foreign trade companies would do well to continually adapt their logistics strategies to meet customs requirements.

4.7 Export Best Practice Guide
Source: UK Government, United Kingdom (date of information: 2011)
Download (PDF): The Export Best Practice Guide
Application/Key learning points: Most customs documents focus on importing and the import procedure. This document from HM Customs in the United Kingdom focuses on export best practices. The level of detail with regards to all aspects of the export process is impressive. In particular, it discusses elements such as pre-lodgement; presentation, arrival, and acceptance; processing and clearance; and, departure.

4.8 Costs and Challenges of Trade Facilitation Measures
Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (date of information: 2012)
Link: The Costs and Challenges of Trade Facilitation Measures
Application/Key learning points: In collaboration with WCO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development undertook this project to collect data on the costs and challenges of implementing trade facilitating measures in six developing and least-developed countries. As part of the study on overcoming border bottlenecks, the project focuses on the costs to government of implementing proposed reforms.

5. What tools and methods are used to achieve high levels of success in customs?

5.1 Supplier Qualification Program (SQP)
Source: Intertek, United Kingdom (date of information: 2017)
Link: Supplier Qualification Program (SQP)
Application/Key learning points: Intertek has developed SQP, through which it acts as an independent certification authority on behalf of customers. SQP operates in different countries and Intertek has developed various tools and systems to enable it to deploy and manage the programme. Intertek’s SQP may provide useful insights into customs authorities or agencies, as it covers many countries and several product categories including toys, footwear, and general manufacturing. SQP also covers several areas including risk and quality management. In addition, Intertek manages an international benchmark of supplier performance. The company also runs a Conformity Assessment Program on behalf of several customs departments around the world; it can serve as a good “one-stop shop” to understand how different countries manage their own certification programmes.

5.2 Accreditation for Preferred Traders
Source: South African Customs, South Africa (date of information: 2012)
Link: Accreditation for Preferred Traders
Application/Key learning points: South Africa has an accreditation programme for preferred traders, and the advantages of participating in the programme are four-fold. They include the appointment of a customs relationship manager to facilitate the relationship between the client and customs. The programme reduces security, document, and inspection requirements, and prioritises requests for tariff and valuation determinations, and access to non-intrusive inspection techniques when goods are stopped or detained for inspection. This website provides details of the accreditation programme, as well as documentation that organisations seeking accreditation have to complete and provide.
5.3 Authorised Economic Operator (AEO)

Source: UK Government: Publications, United Kingdom (date of information: 2016)

Link: Authorised Economic Operator (AEO)

Application/Key learning points: This website is a rich resource on developing capacity in customs. It presents details of the United Kingdom’s AEO programme. This programme operates across the EU to enable trading companies to obtain a privileged and trusted status when they trade with governments across EU member states. The details on this website mirror other EU countries. The site contains detailed information, including how the AEO programme works; how to apply to it; who can apply; and, the criteria for acceptance.

5.4 WCO: Events and Newsletter

Source: World Customs Organization (WCO), Belgium (date of information: 2019)


Application/Key learning points: WCO is an independent intergovernmental agency set up to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of customs administration. The organisation includes 182 customer administration members representing 98 per cent of world trade. Every year, the WCO “International Customs Day” brings together these members and partners to discuss how to stimulate international trade and combat fraudulent activities. This link takes you to an example of the WCO quarterly newsletter, to which you can subscribe to learn about the latest trends, practices, and challenges relating to international trade.

5.5 JBMS Trade Single Window

Source: New Zealand Customs Service, Australia (date of information: 2017)

Link & Video: Joint Border Management System (JBMS): Trade Single Window

Application/Key learning points: Customs and the Ministry for Primary Industries, as part of a JBMS programme, has developed a Trade Single Window to enable smarter, swifter border processing for goods and craft going in and out of New Zealand. It supports one of the New Zealand government’s Better Public Services goals, which is to improve online services for businesses. In addition to information about the Trade Single Window, the link takes you to a short video about how the Trade Single Window e-commerce platform allows exporters, importers, and others in the cargo industry to meet border clearance requirements in one place. Benchmarking the Trade Single Window may be helpful, as it is primarily developed to facilitate trade and is therefore business friendly. JBMS is being managed efficiently; it has delivered benefits of NZ $78M since March 2017.

5.6 Singapore Customs Advisory on Best Practices for Imports

Source: Singapore Customs, Singapore (date of information: 2017)

Link: Singapore Customs Advisory on Best Practices for Imports

Application/Key learning points: This circular was issued by Singapore Customs to provide guidance to businesses and clearing agents. It identifies and lists best practices by which Singapore Customs would like businesses to abide when importing goods into the country. Singapore has one of the largest export operations in the world; best practices identified and deployed by the country are well worth examining.

“If you stand with the Customs and Border Protection officers who staff the passport booth at Dulles Airport near the nation’s capital, their task seems daunting.”
—David Shipler, author and Pulitzer Prize winner
6. How can customs services be measured?

6.1 Performance Measurement in Customs Administrations
Source: World Customs Organization (WCO), Belgium (date of information: 2011)
Link or Download (PDF): An Overview of Performance Measurement in Customs Administration
Application/Key learning points: This 2011 paper underscores broad approaches that are still relevant and in use today, including data mining, service charters, perception indexes, and monitoring mechanisms. Customs around the world have various reasons for using performance measurements. Whether it is to cut costs, develop greater transparency, reduce the possibility of corrupt practices or to improve the deployment of resources, the perspectives laid down here are not meant to be merely replicated, but adapted to suit the operating environment of each organisation.

6.2 Measuring the Performance of Customs Information Systems
Source: World Customs Journal, Belgium (date of information: 2010)
Download (PDF): Measuring the Performance of Customs Information Systems
Application/Key learning points: The information presented is relevant and useful for measuring the performance of any customs information system. The study encompasses the measurement of the progress of systems towards achieving the strategic goals and meeting the needs of the all customs stakeholders. The study uses a balanced scorecard approach (p. 91), and also lists tables of practical performance measures (p. 99) that can be deployed immediately.

6.3 Step-by-Step Approach to Measuring Trade Facilitation
Source: Doing Business, Europe (date of information: 2014)
Download (PDF): Measuring Trade Facilitation Step by Step
Application/Key learning points: This excellent piece of research uses time and cost to map out the steps required in trade facilitation. The research samples 10 economies: Bangladesh, Benin, China, the Czech Republic, Honduras, the Republic of Korea, Moldova, Qatar, St. Lucia, and Zambia. Findings indicate that Korea has the least number of procedures for importing and exporting, Organisations could use the study as a benchmark for better practices, and adapt them accordingly.

6.4 Organisational Performance Measurement
Source: WCO Publications, Belgium (date of information: 2012)
Download (PDF): Organisational Performance Measurement
Application/Key learning points: This is a clear, structured approach to performance measurement specifically for customs organisations developed by WCO. It lists the different key models and approaches to aligning and mapping out measures, including benchmarking. You will also find access to the service charters of 14 WCO member countries. The appendix is extremely useful; it comprises actual performance indicators used in many different areas, including strategic management, resources, communication, governance, and technology.

“Our challenge is to maximise compliance by making it easy to understand the rules and to work with us, and by making it difficult for people to miss the rules or get around them.”
—New Zealand Customs Service
7. What do business leaders say about customs?

“Although more than 500 million maritime containers move around the world each year, accounting for 90 per cent of international trade, only 2 per cent are inspected. Strengthening customs and immigration systems are essential.”
—Ban Ki-moon, South Korean diplomat & eighth secretary-general of the United Nations

“Upon my nomination as Secretary-General of the WCO, I encouraged members—180 customs administrations as of today—to embark on a journey to achieve a new vision: Borders Divide, Customs Connects. Enhancing connectivity would lead to a significant improvement in the customs service, in close partnership with trade, and thereby improve economic competitiveness.”
—Kunio Mikuriya, secretary-general of the World Customs Organization

“If you stand with the Customs and Border Protection officers who staff the passport booth at Dulles Airport near the nation’s capital, their task seems daunting.”
—David Shipler, author and Pulitzer Prize winner

“We make trade easy, fair and secure.”
—Singapore Customs

“FCA works to promote customs work based on best international standards for society, security, and trade facilitation. FCA always aims to achieve this through developing customs policies and legislation, supervising their application, and having effective participation overseas to enhance and to boost trade, and combat fraud and smuggling.”
—Said Khalid Al Bustani, customs commissioner of the Federal Customs Authority, United Arab Emirates

“We aim to facilitate the movement of people and goods across the border. We work closely with other agencies to share knowledge, expertise and intelligence in order to detect, deter and prosecute those who attempt to do us harm at the border.”
—Australian Border Force

8. Conclusion

Every country has its own set of regulations that govern the import and export of goods across its borders. These regulations are enforced by customs officials, who enable the safe import and export of goods, and prevent hazardous or dangerous items from crossing borders (see Section 1.2).

Whenever a company wants its goods to cross a border, there is the potential for bureaucracy; this can lead to long delays. This is why many organisations use a customs broker such as Commercial Freight and Logistics in Australia (3.7). It is also the reason many countries have a preferred trader programme (3.2), which minimises the paper trail and enables goods to move across borders more quickly. A good example of this is the Joint Electronic Verification System between New Zealand and China (3.3). WTO has put out a comprehensive report on tariffs in more than 170 countries (4.4); this provides a wealth of information for any organisation looking to trade internationally.

The best way of ensuring the smooth passage of goods through customs is to comply with all regulations. Singapore Customs also produced an advisory (5.6) to identify and list best practices by which businesses should abide when importing goods into the country. And, the APEC Handbook (2.2) gives excellent advice for trade requirements within the Asia-Pacific region. As always, we at BPIR.com are here to assist in any way we can.

Disclaimer: Recent information has been included in this report to ensure our readers are kept up to date with the latest research; where possible, permanent links have been provided. At the time of publishing, all links are live. We apologise in advance for any broken links that might occur after publication due to matters beyond our control.
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