

Existing challenges and opportunities: non-tariff barriers to trade in information technology products

WTO Committee of Participants on the Expansion of
Trade in Information Technology Products

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NTBs: The Impact on Trade in ICT

Trade of ICT products is especially affected by NTBs (esp. regulatory TBTs) because ICT products typically-

- Are designed for the global market
- Have a large number of components and rely on global supply chains
- Are constantly evolving in response to user demands and technological advances
- Are deployed in a wide and varied array of scenarios and sectors
- Are highly configurable. (One product family can have hundreds of different configurations.)

NTBs: The Global Market Challenge

- “[Non-tariff measures] are almost twice as restrictive as tariffs” (WTO World Trade Report 2012, p.136)
- TBTs include a global patchwork of technical requirements, including standards and conformity assessment requirements in over 80 countries
- Results in a lack of predictability and increasing costs for all involved (mfrs, importers, consumers, governments)

NTB Impact on the Domestic Economy

- Limited access to latest technologies
 - Stifled innovation and economic competitiveness
- Trade isolation and limited exports
 - Exclusion from international agreements both public and private. (MRAs, trade agreements, etc.)
 - Reduction in FDI
- Unintended consequences
 - Less safe, less secure
- Drain on government resources
 - Slower capacity building

NTBs Increase the Cost of Doing Business

- Disproportionate impact on SMEs
 - Limited access to regulatory information
 - Procedural obstacles
 - Conformity assessment – in country testing/certification

General Recommendations

- Determine need for voluntary or mandatory requirements
- Seek alignment of requirements worldwide
- Seek input from industry and other stakeholders
- Follow a risk-based conformity assessment model
- Leverage existing international resources and agreements

Specific Recommendations for Regulating ICT

- One-size-fits-all doesn't work.
 - Differences between sectors and within ICT
- Account for complex global supply chains.
 - Consider timelines for adoption, implementation, and transitions
- Generally, if their name's on it, they should be responsible for it.

What can the ITA do?

- Help identify and avoid NTBs in our sector
- Provide strong partnership between governments and industry
- Educate on Good Regulatory Practice
- Leverage existing tools and promote emerging tools to address NTBs
- Workshops / work groups – Opportunities in 2018

Member Companies



Thank You

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