

EPING STEP-BY-STEP MANUAL

LAO PDR¹

This ePing step-by-step manual consists of three parts. In the first part, the ePing SPS&TBT notification alert system is introduced. The second part is a practical guide explaining how you can register on ePing to receive ePing alerts and how you can search and discuss SPS&TBT notifications. The final part discusses the role of enquiry points in the ePing project and the implementation of ePing in Lao PDR in general. Part one and two are relevant for all (potential) users from the public and private sector. The third part is particularly relevant for trade officials and enquiry points.



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¹ Please note that all examples provided in this document are fictitious, except for the TBT notification example.

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I. INTRODUCING EPING

In this part, the ePing SPS&TBT notification alert system is introduced briefly. First, the rationale behind the ePing tool is discussed: which challenges does ePing address? Second, we explain how ePing tackles these challenges. Third, a summary of the major benefits is provided. Finally, a brief overview of parties involved is given.

1. WHY EPING?

Two important challenges can affect international trade opportunities; how to stay informed about changing product requirements in export markets and who to address potential trade problems related to the new product requirements in a timely manner. ePing helps addressing these challenges.

1.1 PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS



ePing deals with **product requirements in export markets**. For example, the Japanese government might decide that coffee beans sold on the Japanese market cannot be treated with pesticide “Q”, because it is a carcinogenic when used in large quantities. The Indian government can issue a law stating that petroleum products sold on the Indian market must be labelled indicating hazardous properties.



Flammable materials

Domestic products but also **imported products** need to comply with these requirements. This means that if you are exporting coffee beans to Japan, you will no longer be able to use pesticide “Q”. If you are exporting petroleum products to India, you will need to follow the new labelling requirements.

1.2 THE CHALLENGES

1. Tracking

First, for people working in international trade, be it as producer, exporter or trade official, it is **difficult to stay informed about product requirements in export markets**. It is, however, vital for the private sector to stay up-to-date, **to adjust** production or certification processes. For example, if Japan would change its regulation on coffee products no longer allowing coffee products treated with pesticide “Q” on its market, it is key that Lao coffee farmers and exporters are aware of the new requirements so they can export conform these requirements. But how does the Lao farmer or exporter know about the changed product requirements in its export market?

For trade officials and sector associations it is equally important to stay informed. They can follow up on regulatory changes and inform stakeholders when a change might affect export opportunities. Moreover, the proposed regulations can serve as an inspiration for updating national legislation.

2. Coordinating

Second, if the new regulation could invoke a trade problem, it is particularly challenging **to coordinate with other stakeholders to address the potential trade issue**. Addressing potential issues is necessary to avoid trade disruption which can be detrimental for business. If Lao producers, exporters or the government believe that the new Japanese regulation on coffee is too stringent because if used in small quantities pesticide “Q” has no effect on human health, how can they discuss and possibly address this issue?

1.3 WORKING ON A SOLUTION: WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION TRANSPARENCY PROVISIONS

The transparency provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO) help to tackle these challenges.

1. Tracking

1. **The tracking challenge:** To help you stay up-to-date, WTO transparency provisions stipulate that **WTO members**, including 164 countries/territories and all major trading powers, have to **notify the WTO** when they are planning on changing product requirements. They have to do so before the measure enters into force, unless it concerns an emergency (e.g. a ban on Canadian cattle due mad cow disease in Canada). WTO members notify the WTO through an **SPS or TBT**; a two page summary of the proposed regulation notification (see also box 'SPS and TBT notifications'). These notifications are stored in two online accessible databases. Coming back to the example, Japan would thus submit a notification on the proposed regulation on coffee beans to the WTO. These timely notifications allow producers to prepare to adapt to the new measure.

SPS and TBT notifications are two-page summaries of the proposed regulation including information on products covered by the new regulation, a brief description of the content of the regulation and the date of entry into force. Whether a notification is an SPS or TBT notification depends on the objective of the measure. If it is to protect human, animal or plant health or life from certain risks, specified in the SPS agreement, it concerns an SPS regulation. All other regulations on product requirements are TBT regulations.

2. Coordinating

2. **The coordinating challenge:** In addition, a commenting procedure is set up, providing other WTO member the opportunity **to comment** on the notified measure. The notifying member has to take these comments in account when drafting the final version of the measure. WTO member also have the opportunity to raise the issue at the multilateral level, during the SPS or TBT Committee meeting. During the SPS or TBT Committee meetings, WTO members can raise Specific Trade Concerns (STC) about notified regulations on product requirements, but also about regulations that **have not been notified**. If the Japanese coffee regulation could cause a trade problem for Lao famers or exporters, the Lao government can formulate a comment on the notified regulation, or decide to raise the issue at the SPS or TBT committee.

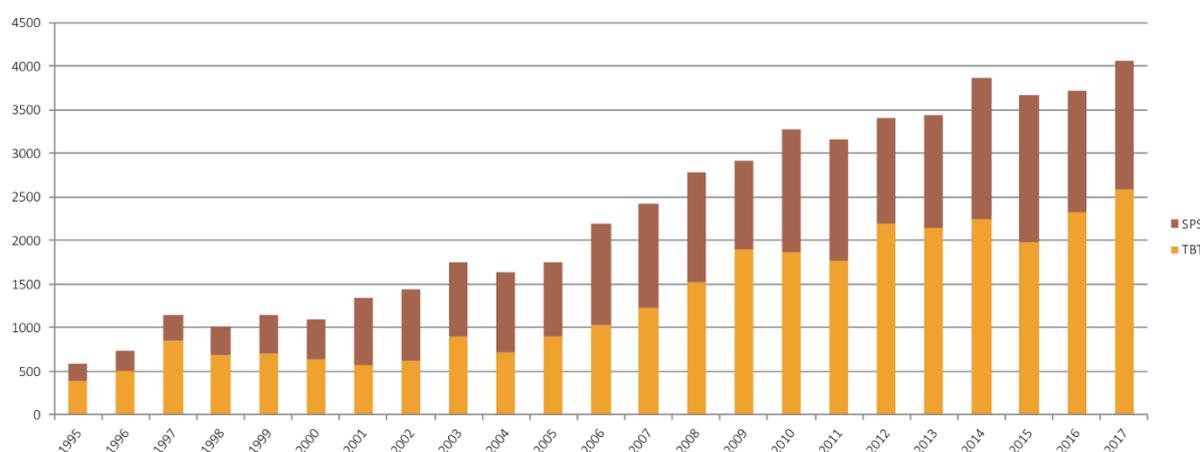
1.4 SOME PITFALLS REMAIN

However, while anyone can access the WTO online databases and browse submitted notifications, this does not imply that private sector stakeholders, government officials and other interested parties in Lao PDR are informed. If China would update its label requirements for wood products, the Chinese government would inform the WTO about this through a TBT notification. However that does not automatically imply that the Lao wood industry is informed about the new measure, nor that they can easily discuss this measure and coordinate with other stakeholders and the government.

The question thus is: **how can you stay informed** about notifications relevant for you/your country/territory? And how will you be **able to ask the government to formulate a comment about** potential trade problems? How will **the government know** whether or not it is necessary to formulate a comment on the notified measure?

These questions are particularly relevant given the high number of notifications that are submitted each year (see graph below). While a notification gives you a quick overview of the proposed regulation, making it easy to check whether it is relevant for you, there are about 4000 notification to check each year. These notification, issued by different governments around the world, deal with a wide variety of products such as cosmetics, food products, electronic devices, cars, chemicals, ICT, fruits and vegetables, toys and animals.

Graph 1: number of SPS and TBT notifications circulated by the WTO per year.



2. WHAT IS EPING?

ePing is an online platform that helps you to stay informed about relevant notifications, and also facilitates discussions on notified measures among national (and international) stakeholders. ePing thus helps to address the two challenges raised.

2.1 EPING: AN ONLINE SPS/TBT NOTIFICATION ALERT SYSTEM

ePing is an online SPS&TBT notification alert system. You can register on ePing to receive email alerts on notifications matching your interests in terms of markets and products. You can, for example, indicate when registering that you are interested in notifications from India and China dealing with gold and copper products.



1. Tracking

2. Coordinating

ePing also provides a communication platform to support discussions among the public and private sector. These discussions are managed and monitored by the national TBT or SPS enquiry points (see also box page 9 'SPS and TBT enquiry points'). On this platform, you can raise issues and discuss with other stakeholders how to adjust to the new measure or whether a comment should be made to address a potential trade issue that might arise when the notified measure enters into force. Here you can for example discuss whether an Indian measure on

gold products creates an unnecessary barrier to trade and whether the government should share a comment with India, raise the issue in the TBT Committee meeting or take any other appropriate action.

ePing thus helps to address the two challenges raised: it assists in tracking relevant notifications and it provides a platform to coordinate among national stakeholders.

2.2 A SAMPLE OF A TBT NOTIFICATION

Below you can find an example of a TBT notification. As you can see, it is a brief document (about two pages). In this document, important information about the new regulation is provided. Below we explain some key items included.

1. **The notifying member;** the WTO member that is planning on revising its product requirements. Here it is Brazil.
4. **The products covered;** a list of products that will be affected by the new regulation. This notification deals with textile and textile articles.
6. **The description of content;** a very brief summary of the new regulation. This measure discusses labelling of textile products.
7. **Objective and rationale;** the reason(s) for issuing the regulation. In this case, it is for consumer protection and safety and quality requirements. The new labelling requirements aim thus to inform the consumer.
10. **Final date for comments;** deadline for submitting comments to the notifying member. This is important when you want do raise an issue concerning the measure. This should be done before the deadline mentioned here.
11. **Text available from;** a link to the full text of the notified measure is provided if available. If not, the contact details of the agency that can provide the full text are displayed.

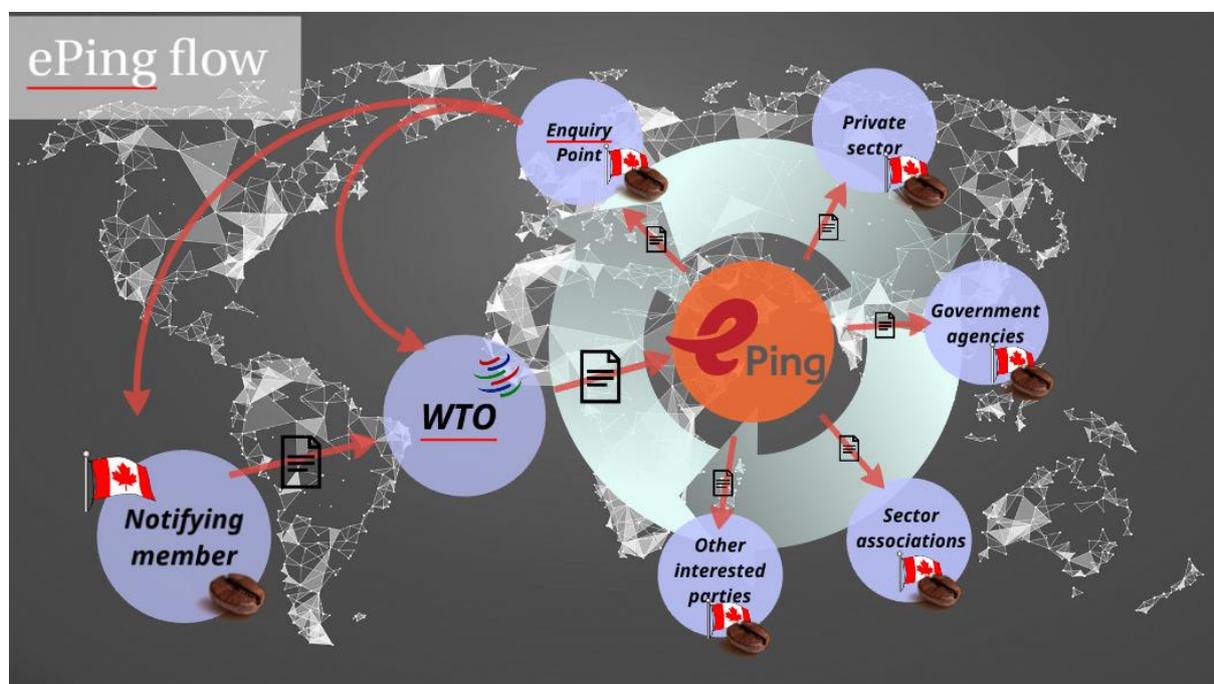
Figure 1: sample of a TBT notification

 WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION		G/TBT/N/BRA/740 30 August 2017 Page: 1/2 Original: English																
(17-4608) Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade																		
NOTIFICATION The following notification is being circulated in accordance with Article 10.6																		
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%;">1.</td> <td> Notifying Member: <u>BRAZIL</u> If applicable, name of local government involved (Article 3.2 and 7.2): </td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td> Agency responsible: National Institute of Metrology, Quality and Technology-INMETRO 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: Institute of Metrology, Quality and Technology-INMETRO Telephone: +(55) 21 2563.2765 Telefax: +(55) 21 2563.5637 Email: barreirastecnicas@inmetro.gov.br Website: http://www.inmetro.gov.br/barreirastecnicas </td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td> Notified under Article 2.9.2 [X], 2.10.1 [], 5.6.2 [], 5.7.1 [], other: </td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td> Products covered (HS or CCCN where applicable, otherwise national tariff heading. ICS numbers may be provided in addition, where applicable): Textiles & Textile Articles – HS: (Chapter 50 - Silk, including yarns and woven fabric; Chapter 51 - Wool & animal hair, including yarn & woven fabric; Chapter 52 - Cotton, including yarn and woven fabric; Chapter 53 - Other vegetable textile fibers). Silk (HS 50), Wool, fine or coarse animal hair; horsehair yarn and woven fabric (HS 51), Cotton (HS 52), Other vegetable textile fibres; paper yarn and woven fabrics of paper yarn (HS 53). </td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td> Title, number of pages and language(s) of the notified document: Ordinance Nº. 221, 23 August 2017 (Portaria nº 221, de 23 de agosto de 2017). (18 page(s), in Portuguese) </td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.</td> <td> Description of content: Draft Mercosur Technical Regulation laying down provisions to certain aspects of textile labelling and marking to textile products including fibre names, composition, etc. in order to revise Resolution GMC 33/07 and provide information to users and consumers. The requirements of this Technical Regulation do not apply to textile products intended for export to countries outside Mercosur. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>7.</td> <td> Objective and rationale, including the nature of urgent problems where applicable: Consumer protection and safety; Quality requirements. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>8.</td> <td> Relevant documents: (1) Brazilian Official Journal (Diário Oficial da União) Nº 166, 29 August 2017, section 1, page 27; (2) Mercosur Ordinance 33/07 (Resolução GMC Nº33/07); Conmetro Ordinance Nº 02/2008 (Resolução Conmetro Nº 02/2008); Inmetro Ordinance 166/2011 (Portaria 166/2011); (3) Brazilian Official Journal; (4) Not applicable. </td> </tr> </table>			1.	Notifying Member: <u>BRAZIL</u> If applicable, name of local government involved (Article 3.2 and 7.2):	2.	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<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%;">9.</td> <td> Proposed date of adoption: Upon publication in the Official Journal after received comments. Proposed date of entry into force: Upon publication in the Official Journal after received comments. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>10.</td> <td> Final date for comments: 29 September 2017 </td> </tr> <tr> <td>11.</td> <td> Texts available from: National enquiry point [X] or address, telephone and fax numbers and email and website addresses, if available, of other body: http://www.inmetro.gov.br/legislacao/rtac/pdf/RTAC002483.pdf </td> </tr> </table>			9.	Proposed date of adoption: Upon publication in the Official Journal after received comments. Proposed date of entry into force: Upon publication in the Official Journal after received comments.	10.	Final date for comments: 29 September 2017	11.	Texts available from: National enquiry point [X] or address, telephone and fax numbers and email and website addresses, if available, of other body: http://www.inmetro.gov.br/legislacao/rtac/pdf/RTAC002483.pdf										
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2.3 THE EPING INFORMATION FLOW

How does ePing work? Let us have a look at the information flow of a notification. For a visual presentation, an online Prezi presentation is available at https://prezi.com/dashboard/next/#/details/z5_dlfmvmag/

Figure 2: illustration of ePing flow



1. The process starts with a WTO member planning on changing its regulation. Conform the WTO transparency provisions, the WTO member submits a notification to the WTO. For example, if Japan would decide to change its regulation concerning fish products prohibiting the use of certain fishing technics as they are dolphin-unfriendly, the country would send a TBT notification to the WTO briefly summarizing the new regulation.
2. The notification arrives at the WTO. **The WTO** will review the notification and add it to one of its online databases: the TBT Information Management system (TBT IMS) or the SPS Information Management System (SPS IMS). Once the notification is added to the database, it is automatically sent to ePing.
3. **The ePing alert system** checks which users are interested in the notification, in terms of notifying member(s) and products covered. Coming back to the example, ePing will check who is interested in notifications dealing with fish products submitted by Japan and share the notification with these ePing users through a daily or weekly alert (depending on the users' preferences). ePing also stores the notification in the **ePing database** which is accessible on the ePing website.

4. Through the ePing communication platform, communication among the different national and international stakeholders on the notification is facilitated. The platform also provides updated contact details of SPS and TBT enquiry points, who users can contact when they have questions about the notification, or would like to receive more information. Users can contact the enquiry point of their country/territory or the enquiry point of the notifying country/territory (see also box 'SPS and TBT enquiry points'). If Lao coffee producers or exporters believe that this measure contains an unnecessary obstacle to trade, they can discuss this with other stakeholders and the government.
5. The **enquiry point** will monitor the discussion on the notification and it or the designated agency will, if deemed necessary, raise an issue on the notification either bilaterally, discussing it with the notifying member possibly through an official comment or multilaterally, at the WTO during an SPS or TBT committee. The enquiry point or designated government agency can share a comment with Japan, or raise the issue during the TBT Committee when Specific Trade Concerns are being discussed.

SPS and TBT enquiry points

Each WTO member has established an SPS and/or TBT enquiry point. This is an agency **connecting all national stakeholders** in relation to transparency matters. For example, they handle incoming comments on notified regulation and provide information and documents upon request. It is thus not surprising that this agency also plays a key role in the ePing project. More precisely, they manage national users and national features, and particularly important for the private sector, enquiry points moderate the national discussion fora. They are always alerted by email when a contribution to a forum is made and are thus able to follow up or to respond. Also beyond ePing, this is an important agency when dealing with product requirements in export markets. Contact details of all SPS/TBT enquiry points can be found the ePing website and are also listed below.

Lao SPS and TBT enquiry point contact details:

Name/Agency: Department of Planning, Division of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Address: P.O. Box 811, Vientiane

Phone: +(856) 21 415 363

Email: spsenquiries@laotradeportal.gov.la

Fax: +(856) 21 412 343

SPS

TBT

Name/Agency: Standards Division, Department of Standardization and Metrology, Ministry of Science and Technology

Address: P.O. Box 2279, Vientiane

Phone: 85621 732093

Email: tbtinquiries@laotradeportal.gov.la

Fax: +85621732093

3. MAIN BENEFITS



ePing helps you **to keep track of product requirements** in foreign markets. This is most useful for businesses, traders, exporters and government officials dealing with trade related issues. However, also other government agencies might be interested in this service, as it gives an insight in upcoming revisions of product requirements which might be relevant for your country/territory as well.



ePing **avoids an information overflow**. Indeed, you will only be alerted about those notifications that are relevant for you, not all 4000 notifications per year. ePing covers both SPS and TBT notifications, so you do not need to access or subscribe to two systems.



A **communication platform** is included in the ePing tool, facilitating dialogue among public and private sector stakeholders.



Notifications can also be **enriched** with additional information, as you can add documents to the notifications and information can be shared via fora attached to each of the notifications.



For enquiry points, ePing entails several **efficiently gains**, as it is no longer necessary to manually disseminate notifications to interested parties in the country/territory. Instead they can subscribe to ePing. In addition, ePing can also facilitate consultations with other private and public sector stakeholders and through this helps addressing possible trade issues in a timely manner.



ePing also contributes to **better compliance with transparency obligations** as it raises awareness on the importance of notifying upcoming regulatory revisions.



ePing is a **publically available system free of charge**, bringing together the expertise of three international organizations and avoiding duplication of effort, as governments no longer need to invest in developing a national system.

4. WHO IS INVOLVED?

4.1 THE PROJECT MANAGERS

Three parties are involved in the ePing project: the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UN/DESA), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Trade Centre (ITC).

Through the ePing project, the three parties work closely together to contribute to **sustainable development goal 8**: good jobs and economic growth, and in particular to increasing Aid for Trade and formalizing growth of SMEs. The ePing project also contributes to **goal 17**: partnerships for the goals and in particular to promoting the multilateral trading system and increase export of developing countries/territories.

4.2 EPING USERS

ePing is supported by many more than the international partners. Also users play a key role by registering and engaging in discussions, enriching the ePing website. The number of users has risen steadily since the launch of the system in November 2016. At the **end of January 2019** a bit **over 5500** registered on ePing. Looking at who these 5500 users are, we see that about **50% are government officials and about 33%** is working in the **private sector**. In addition, people working at international organizations, or in academia or research institutes constitute about 17 % of the users.

II. USING EPING

In this section, we discuss how you can use ePing to stay up to date on product requirements in markets of interest to you, and how to discuss notifications with other stakeholder to avoid potential trade problems invoked by a new regulation. For detailed technical instructions on how to navigate the ePing website, please consult the user manual which you can find on the [ePing site](#) (menu option: reference material).

1. CHALLENGE 1: STAYING INFORMED ABOUT PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS IN FOREIGN MARKETS

Tackling the first challenge, we explain how to register on ePing to receive alerts on relevant notifications and how to search notifications on the ePing website.

1. Tracking

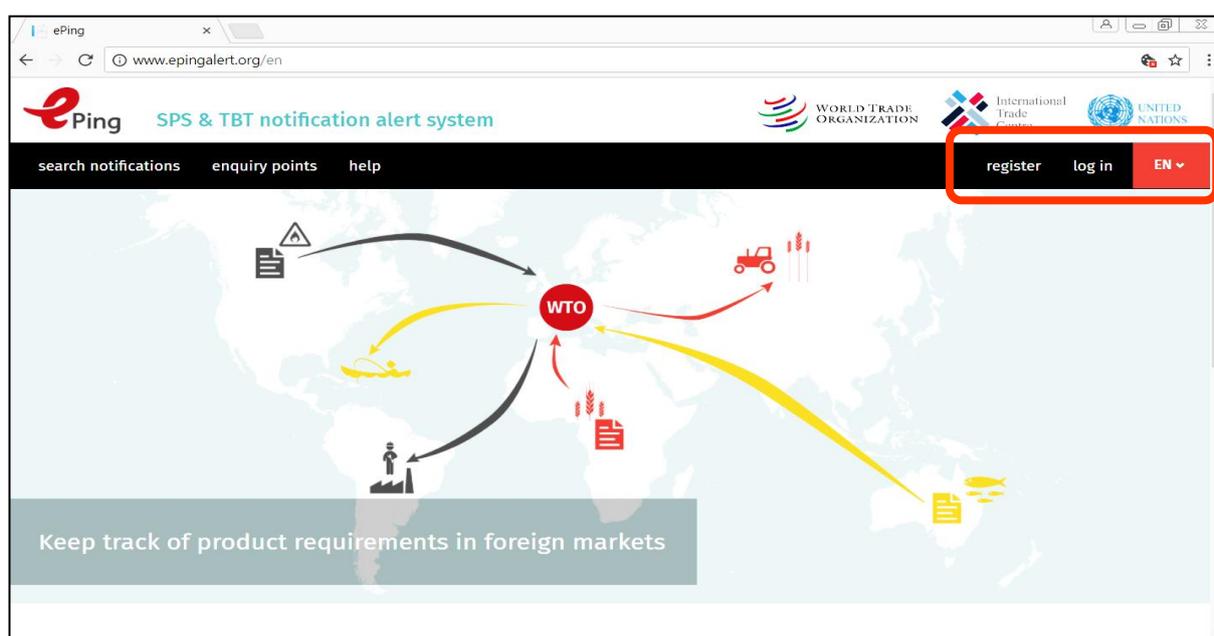
1.1 ACCESS EPING AND REGISTER

How can you access ePing and register? Go to www.epingalert.org to access the ePing website (see also video tutorial *1. How to register on ePing*). To navigate the ePing website properly, it is important that your browser is up-to-date. The browser is the programme used to access internet such as Firefox, Safari, Explorer and Chrome. Note, however, that ePing is not touchscreen compatible. While registering on a smartphone is possible, to use all features, you need a keyboard and wide enough screen (11 inches or more).



To receive email alerts and access other functions on the ePing platform, registration is necessary. To do so you go the website, www.epingalert.org, and select your preferred language. The website is available in English, Spanish and French. Click on 'register' and fill out the pop-up form.

Figure 3: screenshot of the ePing homepage



The registration form is quite straightforward. We will, however, briefly discuss it as it is vital that it is filled out accurately. In this form you define products and markets of interest. There are three parts: personal information, filter preferences and email alert preferences.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

In the first part, you provide personal information; your name, email, country/territory, etc. For what concerns country/territory, it is important that you select the country/territory you are working or living in, not your nationality or place of birth which might be different. For most of you that will be Lao People's Democratic Republic. Note that you also have to choose a password that can be used to log in later on.

FILTER PREFERENCES

In the second part, the filter preferences, you can indicate in which products and markets you are interested. You will receive notifications matching both the selected products and markets. For example, if you indicate to be interested in notifications dealing with rubber products and in export markets China and India, you will receive notifications on rubber products submitted by China or India. You will not receive notifications on other products submitted by China or India, or notifications on rubber products submitted by other WTO members. If one or more of the export markets you are interested in are a member of the European Union (EU), it is important to indicate that you are also interested in notifications submitted by the EU as measures notified by the EU apply to all EU member states. If you want to receive all notifications (about 4000 a year), leave all boxes under the heading 'filter preferences' blank. This does not mean that you will receive 4000 emails, rather you will receive a daily or weekly email listing all notifications of the previous day or week.

Figure 4: screenshot of the ePing registration form:

The screenshot displays the ePing registration form with the following sections:

- Personal information:** Includes fields for Title, Country/territory, First Name, Organization name, Last Name, Organization type(s), Email, Password, and Phone (Optional). A note states: "Officially designated SPS and TBT Enquiry Points/Notification Authorities can request administrative rights to access additional features. Please send an email to spbtbalerts@wto.org indicating whether you are from the SPS or TBT Enquiry Point, having first verified the relevant information available on the ePing website."
- Filter preferences*:**
 - Product selection:** A note says "Not all notifications provide full details on products covered. For optimal results, specify product name(s), corresponding HS Code(s) and ICS code(s). If a notification matches any one of these options, it will be included in the alert email. To receive all notifications, skip product selection fields." It includes a "Product name(s)" field with instructions to use "OR" for multiple names, and dropdown menus for "ICS codes" and "HS codes".
 - Notification type:** Radio buttons for "All", "SPS", and "TBT".
 - Notifying members:** A dropdown menu set to "All Members".
- Email alert preferences:**
 - Section 1: "Receive email alerts when new notifications match your registration or search filter(s)" with radio buttons for "Daily", "Weekly", and "No emails".
 - Section 2: "Receive email alerts when files or other contributions are added to a notification matching your filters/favorites lists" with radio buttons for "Yes" and "No".

A "Register" button is located at the bottom of the form.

First you can identify products of interest. If you want to identify products, you get the best filter results if you fill out all three boxes: “product names”, “ICS codes” and “HS codes”. For what concerns product names, you can enter multiple product names; synonyms but also other types of products. For example, if you are interested in rubber products you can type: rubber OR caoutchouc OR elastomers. If you don’t know the ICS or HS code of your product, just start typing the name of the product category and the corresponding code(s) will pop up. If the code does not appear, try a synonym or wider category. You will see that when typing rubber in the ICS codes and HS codes boxes, multiple options pop up. Scroll through the results and select all relevant codes.

It is also possible to only receive SPS or TBT notifications, by selecting either SPS or TBT under the heading ‘notification type’.

The last filter criterion is ‘notifying member’, here you can select all markets you are interested in. If you, for example, want to stay informed about upcoming changes in product requirements in China and India, you select both countries/territories. To select a country/territory, start typing the name of the country/territory and the name will pop up. Click on it to select the country/territory.

EMAIL ALERT PREFERENCES

In the last part of the registration form, you can indicate how often you would like to receive an ePing email alert; weekly, daily or not at all. You can also indicate that you want to receive an email when additional information is added to a notification that matches your filter preferences defined in the registration form.

To submit the form and register, click on ‘register’ at the bottom of the page. You can revise the form later on via ‘my account’, displayed on the homepage when logged in.

1.2 EMAIL ALERTS

Below an example of an email alert is displayed. The alert email includes a table with all new notifications matching your filter preferences. You can find some key information there such as notifying member, symbol, title and description of content, products, comment deadline, links and, important, possibly a link to the full text of the notified measure. This link is added if it is provided by the notifying member.

Sometimes, a notification will be tagged ‘**translated notification**’. These are notifications that have been shared before in their original language and are now shared again in your preferred language. Notifications can be submitted in three languages, French, English and Spanish. As soon as the notification is processed by the WTO it is included in the ePing alert, not to waste any time because the commenting period is rather short. Because the original notification is not always in your preferred language, a translation can included in the email later on. It takes about a week to translate a notification.

Figure 5: Sample of an ePing email alert:

ePing Alert - 18/02/2019

no-reply@epingalert.org <no-reply@epingalert.org>
To: lottedneghe@gmail.com

Mon, Feb 18, 2019 at 4:34 AM

Dear Lotte Drieghe,

The following new SPS and/or TBT notifications circulated by the WTO between 11/02/2019 and 17/02/2019 match your ePing filters. To modify or update your profile or your filter preferences, please go to <http://www.epingalert.org>.

Filter: Filtre d'inscription

Notifying Member(s)	Symbol, title and description of content	Products	Comment deadline	Links	Full text link
United States of America	G/TBT/USA/1432/Add.1 TITLE: Standards of Performance for New Residential Wood Heaters, New Residential Hydronic Heaters and Forced-Air Furnaces AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ACTION: Reopen comment period SUMMARY: On 30 November 2018, the Environmental...	Products (free text): Residential wood heaters, hydronic heaters and forced-air...	12/02/2019	EN	Full text
Canada	RMD-18.01: Pest Risk Management Document – Deregulation of <i>Anisogramma anomala</i> , causal agent of eastern filbert blight The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) intends to deregulate <i>Anisogramma anomala</i> (Peck) E. Müll, the causal agent of eastern filbert blight. Upon publication of the aforementioned document, the CFIA will no longer maintain phytosanitary import...	Products (free text): Plants and plant parts of <i>Corylus</i> spp. intended for...	15/03/2019	EN FR	Full text Full text
Canada	G/SPS/NI/CAN/1234 RMD-18.02: Pest Risk Management Document – Deregulation of <i>Cydia latiferreana</i> (filbertworm) The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) intends to deregulate <i>Cydia latiferreana</i> . Upon publication of the aforementioned document, the CFIA will no longer maintain phytosanitary import requirements related to <i>Cydia latiferreana</i> for the...	Products (free text): <i>Corylus</i> spp. nuts for consumption (HS codes: 080221408301,....	15/03/2019	EN FR	Full text Full text
Kenya	G/TBT/NI/KEN/796 DKS 28-2:2019 Cheese — Specification Part 2: Cheddar This Kenya Standard specifies the requirements, sampling and test methods for cheddar cheese intended for direct consumption and/ or for further processing.	ICS codes: 67.100.30	30/03/2019	EN	Full text

1.3 SEARCH NOTIFICATIONS

Besides for receiving ePing alerts, you can also use ePing to search recent notifications (see also video tutorials *2. How to search notifications* and *3. How to create a favourites list*). Related to search the function, the following actions are possible: you can search notifications up to three years old², save your search filter, export search results, download the actual notification, read quick summaries of the notification, access related notifications and you can also save favourite notifications.



Figure 6: Screenshot of the ePing search notifications page

² To browse notifications more than three years old, you can consult the SPS and TBT Information Management Systems (IMS).

The screenshot displays the ePing SPS & TBT notification alert system interface. At the top, there are logos for the World Trade Organization, International Trade Centre, and United Nations. Below the logos is a navigation bar with options like 'search notifications', 'favourites', 'enquiry points', 'admin', 'news & events', 'reference materials', 'my account', 'log out', and 'EN'. The main content area shows a search notification page with various filters and a table of notifications. The table includes columns for Notifying Member, Symbol, title and description of content, Distribution, Products, Objectives, Keywords, Regions or countries affected, and Comment. A notification from South Africa is visible, with a red 'EN' icon in the comment column.

- **the search notification page:** you can access the search notification page and browse recent notifications by clicking on 'search notifications' in the main menu.
 - o You can use several search criteria such as notifying member, symbol, description of content and products.
 - o The search criteria 'keywords' and 'regions or countries affected' only apply to SPS notifications.
 - o The search results appear immediately in the displayed table.
 - o Browse the results by clicking on the navigation buttons at the bottom of the page.
 - o It is necessary to click the clear button to undertake a new search.

For example, if you want to review all notifications from the EU/Germany dealing with textile products circulated in the last three years, you can select 'European Union' and 'Germany' in the notifying member box. In the products box you type textile and select all corresponding HS and ICS codes. The corresponding notifications will appear in the list under the search criteria.

- **Save a search filter:** you can **save a search filter** by clicking on the save button. A new tab will appear above the search table, give the query a name, e.g. 'EU/Germany textile' and click on enter.
 - o Next time visiting the ePing site it will be possible to consult this filter by clicking on the tab 'EU/Germany textile'. Notifications matching the filter, also new ones, will be displayed.
 - o The two other tabs already visible are 'all notifications' displaying all notifications in the ePing data base and 'registration filter' displaying the notifications that match your registration filter.
 - o New notifications matching your saved filters will be included in your ePing email alerts, in a separate table.
- **Export results:** search results can be exported by clicking on the button "Export to Excel" at the bottom right corner of the page. Click on export and open the excel file.
- **Download word format:** the actual notification can be downloaded by clicking on EN, FR or ES in the table.
 - o The letters refer to the language of the notification
 - o If a letter combination is missing, the notifications has not yet been translated.
- **Read quick summary and access related notifications:** you can access a notification summary by clicking on the symbol displayed in red in the column 'symbol, title and description of content'.

- *It is easy to access the link to the full text of the notified measure which is, if available, displayed at the end of the summary page.*
- *You can also consult related notifications via the notification summary. Sometimes addenda or corrigenda are submitted, adding to or correcting previous notifications. These notifications are called addenda or corrigenda. An addendum provides additional information, for example, a country/territory can decide to prolong the commenting period and submit a notification – an addendum to the original notification- to inform other members about the prolonged commenting period. Corrigenda are submitted to correct minor administrative or clerical errors in the original notification or the notified measure.*
- **Save favourites:** *you can save notifications in a 'favourites' list, by clicking on the star icon on the right side of the screen and filling out the pop-up screen that appears.*
 - *It is possible to get a reminder by selecting a date under the heading 'send me a reminder' in the pop-up. This is however not mandatory.*
 - *Selecting or creating a favourite category is necessary to add a notification. You can create a new one by typing the name under the heading 'favourite category'. To select an existing category, just start typing the name and the corresponding category will pop up.*

1.4 QUIZ (I)

Below a number of quiz questions are listed related to the notification search function. The answers can be found in the annex of this document.

1. Which country/territory submitted a notification dealing with textile that was distributed by the WTO on 1 February 2018?
2. How many notifications have been issued by Lao PDR over the past three years (up to 16 May 2019)?
3. What was the Lao PDR notification distributed on 2 October 2018 about?
4. What is special about the notification?
5. SPS notifications can affect a subset of countries or regions. Lao PDR has been affected by several SPS notifications over the past three years. Do you know by how many (up to 16 May 2019)?
6. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia issued an SPS notification affecting Lao PDR twice in the past three years (up to 16 May 2019)? Why?

2. CHALLENGE 2: COORDINATE WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO TACKLE POTENTIAL TRADE ISSUES.

Four functionalities facilitate connecting with other stakeholders to get information or discuss notifications. You can share notifications (see also video tutorial 4. *How to share a notification*), discuss notifications (see also video tutorial 5. *How to access the discussion fora*), share files and find contact details to get in touch with enquiry points (see also video tutorial 6. *How to contact an enquiry point*).

2. Coordinating



2.1 CONNECTING WITH STAKEHOLDERS



- **Share notifications:** you can easily share notifications with other stakeholders by clicking on the envelope in the notification row on the search notification page. A pop-up window will open, asking for email addresses and a guiding message. A subject can be added, but it is optional. To share the notification, click on 'send email'. The receiver will get an email including a link to the notification stored in the ePing database.



- **Discuss notifications:** users can discuss notifications, share questions and insights with other stakeholders including the TBT and SPS enquiry points.
 - o Each notification provides a space for discussion at national and international level. To access that space, click on the text balloons in the notification row.
 - o The window that opens when clicking on the balloon contains two tabs; one for the enquiry point discussion forum and one for the national discussion forum.
 - o **The enquiry point discussion fora** are reserved for enquiry points. Every user can read the fora, but only registered enquiry points can add messages. When registered, an enquiry point is alerted when a comment is made to a notification issued by its government.
 - o **The national discussion fora** are reserved for national ePing users. All national users, but only they, can add messages to these fora. The enquiry point of the country/territory is always alerted when someone adds a message to a national discussion forum. This way, the enquiry point can monitor the discussion and address questions asked. Important: the fora have to be activated by national enquiry points, for SPS and TBT separately. By default, these national fora are inactive.
 - o When you have indicated in the registration form that you would like to receive an alert email when additional information is added to a notification matching your filters, you will receive an email when there is activity on a forum linked to such a notification.



- **Share files:** users can share and consult documents linked to a notification by clicking on the paper-clip in the notification row in the search notification page.
 - o Files can be shared and accessed at the international and national level.
 - o At the **international level**, files can only be added by enquiry points, but all ePing users can access these files.
 - o At the **national level**, all national users can share files and all national users can access these. However, the enquiry point has to activate this function, by default it is inactive. The enquiry point also has to clear files shared at the national level before they become visible on the ePing website.
 - o When you indicated in the registration form that you would like to receive an alert email when additional information is added to a notification matching your filters, you will receive an email when a file is added to such a notification.



- **Contact enquiry points:** contact details of all enquiry points can be found on the ePing website. These are stored in a table you can access by clicking on 'enquiry points' in the main menu.

- *You can find contact details of the SPS enquiry points, the TBT enquiry points and the SPS notification authorities.*
- *When logged in, the enquiry point of your country/territory will be listed first.*
- *You can export each list to excel by clicking on the button 'Export to Excel'.*
- *In the list, you can also see whether or not your enquiry point is registered on ePing. It can be interesting to know this, as it is the enquiry point that activates and monitors the national discussion fora and file sharing options.*



2.2 QUIZ (II)

Below a number of quiz questions are listed, related to the enquiry point search function. The answers can be found in the Annex of this document.

1. How many TBT enquiry points does Rwanda have?
2. How many of these Rwandan enquiry points are registered on ePing?

Most countries/territories have one TBT enquiry point and one SPS enquiry point, and some have one enquiry point for both SPS and TBT, but as you can see in the example here, a country/territory can have multiple TBT and/or SPS enquiry points.

3. Are the TBT/SPS enquiry points of Lao PDR registered on ePing?
4. Do you know how you can contact these enquiry points, even if not registered on ePing?

3. USER GUIDE AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

If you want to know more about ePing and the services it provides, more information is available on the 'reference material' page of the ePing website.

You can access the reference material page by clicking on 'reference material' in the main menu. It includes an online version of the user guide, but you can also download a word version, by clicking on EN for the English version and JA for the Japanese version. If you have questions that are not covered in the user guide, you can also contact the WTO by clicking on 'contact us' and filling out the contact form.

It is also possible to download an ePing flyer for promotional purposes, for example if you would like to inform colleagues, associations, etc. about ePing. The flyer is available in seven languages.

Finally, several useful links are provided as well, for example the links to the [TBT](#) and [SPS](#) database, where you can browse all SPS and TBT notifications, and the links to the LDC portal for more information on LDC international support measures.

III. A KEY ROLE FOR SPS AND TBT ENQUIRY POINTS

This part is targeted at SPS and TBT enquiry points, as enquiry points can play a crucial role in the implementation of ePing at national level. We discuss the ePing admin tool as well as what needs to be done beyond strictly managing the tool to maximize the benefits ePing has to offer. In what follows, we elaborate on the role of the enquiry point. Subsequently, the admin tool included in the Ping system is explained. Finally, we look into the question on how to promote ePing in *Loa PDR*.

The enquiry points play a **key role in the implementation of ePing** at the national level because they are in many instances the connecting agencies between all stakeholders involved in TBT and SPS transparency matters; WTO members, the private sector, trade officials, standards officials, regulators and any other domestic and international stakeholders.

Enquiry points are or at least can be the **national ePing administrators**. ePing entails a lot of **efficiency gains** for enquiry points, especially in relation to information sharing and reaching out to the public and private sector. Because industry but also government agencies can **subscribe to ePing** to receive relevant notifications, enquiry points no longer have to manually select and share notifications. In addition, ePing helps **reaching out to national stakeholders** including the private sector to discuss notified regulations and to decide whether or not it is necessary to formulate a comment on a notified regulation or take any other action. Moreover ePing gives the enquiry point **insights into the priorities of its industry** in terms of markets and products.

To ensure that ePing is used by private sector stakeholders and becomes a communication hub, implementation and administration at national level by the enquiry points, in cooperation with other government agencies, is necessary. Public and private sector stakeholders should be informed about ePing and the services it renders, and the online system should also be actively managed and plugged into existing outreach and coordination structures.

Each government, however, has its **unique institutional setup**, and enquiry points do not work in isolation. On the contrary, they cater to many different stakeholders. Therefore, ePing implementation should be **tailored to the institutional set-up** of the country/territory. It is, for example, crucial that the enquiry point works in close collaboration with the agency that formulates comments on notified measures. It is also possible that a framework to consult with national public and private stakeholders is already in place. If this is the case, ePing can be plugged into this existing structure. In sum, it is important to **discuss** at the national level how ePing can be implemented and generate efficiency gains.



1. THE EPING ADMIN TOOL

ePing contains an admin tool for enquiry points to help administer the ePing system at national level. Via this tool it is possible to manage national users and applications. To access the admin tool, SPS and TBT enquiry point officials can send an email to 'spstbalert@wto.org'. Once verified that it is indeed the SPS or TBT enquiry point

Request
admin
rights!

requesting admin rights, the rights will be granted and an email confirming this will be sent to the requesting party.

For what concerns the management of users, registered enquiry points can access a list of all national users. In this list, contact details of all users are displayed, but also the markets and products selected by users when registering on ePing. Enquiry points will thus know in which products and markets private (and public) sector stakeholders are interested. This is valuable information for an enquiry point. The enquiry point also manages the two national applications: the national discussion fora and the national file-sharing option. These functions are disabled by default. The SPS enquiry point can activate the national fora and file sharing function tied to the SPS notifications and the TBT enquiry point fora and file sharing functions for TBT notifications. Once these applications are activated, the enquiry points will monitor both. In addition, there are also two extra features available for registered enquiry points. Below we discuss the admin tool and these additional features in more detail.

1.1 MANAGE EPING USERS

For what concerns managing ePing users, there are four main actions you can undertake: consult and search a list of national users including their filter preferences, disable login of national users, add external contacts and send groups of users and external contacts bulk messages (see also video tutorial 7. *How to access the national users list*).



- **Access the enquiry point admin tool:** You can access the enquiry point admin tool by clicking on 'admin' in the main menu .



- **Consult a list of national users:** the users list can be consulted by clicking on the 'national ePing users' tab in the admin tool.



- o To search the list, use the boxes under each column title.
- o You can select users and send messages to (groups of) users. To select one or more users, click on the checkbox on the left side of their name. To select all users, click on the checkbox next to the column heading 'title'. A message can be sent to all users selected by clicking on the button 'send email'. A pop-up window will open in which you can type a message and subject. This function might be useful if you, for example, want to inform users that the enquiry point has activated the national discussion fora or invite users to a training on ePing or another (for that group) relevant topic.
- o If you scroll to the right, you can view users' product and markets preferences as indicated in the registration form. This can help you to group users (see later) and it is also useful to know in which products and markets national users are interested.
- o On this right side you can also disable users' login. However, this is an extreme measure that most likely will not be used.





Add external contacts: it is possible to add external contacts, not registered on ePing. By doing so, they will not be registered on ePing, but contact details will be stored in the admin tool and you can add them to groups to send bulk messages.

- Adding external contacts can be done in the tab 'external contacts'.

Group contacts

and send bulk messages:

in the admin tool, you can group national ePing

users and external contacts to send bulk messages.

For example, you can group all users from a particular

industry, using the search options in the national users

list and also add those

stakeholders that are not yet registered on

ePing. This group

can be used to send bulk messages to if you want input from them to formulate an official comment on a notified regulation, or if you want to share information of particular importance to them:

- To manage the groups, go to the tab 'my groups'. You can create a group, add members (both ePing users and external contacts), delete members, delete groups and send bulk messages to groups by selecting a group in the group drop down list (on the right side of the page), clicking on the checkbox next to the 'first name' column and then clicking on 'send email'.

Sending (bulk) text messages

Besides using email, ePing also provides a **text message** service allowing enquiry points to send bulk texts to phones of ePing users and external contacts.

To activate this service, a set of messages can be bought on clickatell. Login detail will be provided by this company which can be added to ePing in the admin tool, in the tab 'national settings' under the title 'SMS settings'. To send a text message to one or more ePing users or external contact, select contacts in the tab 'National ePing users', 'External users' or 'My groups' and click on 'send SMS'. A pop-up will appear in which you can type the message.

Enquiry points can also grant '**group management rights**' to sector associations. These rights allow sector associations to add contacts to ePing and share bulk email or text messages with these contacts. Providing group management rights can be done under the tab 'National ePing users'. These rights, however, do not provide access to the national ePing users list or the external contacts added by enquiry points.

1.2 MANAGE NATIONAL EPING FEATURES

Enquiry points can also manage the national ePing features (see also video tutorial 8. *How to activate national features*). You can activate the features, namely the national file sharing option and national discussion fora. This is done separately for SPS and TBT. It is thus possible that the fora tied to TBT notifications are active, while those tied to SPS notifications are not. If activated, enquiry points monitor the national features. For the fora this means that they will be alerted whenever a contribution is made to a national forum and that they can delete



contributions deemed inappropriate. For the national file sharing options, enquiry points have to clear the files before they are visible for all national users. Enquiry points are invited via email to clear a file, whenever a file is added to a notification.



- **Activate national features:** You can access the page on which you can activate and deactivate national features by clicking on the tab 'national settings' in the admin menu.

- o National features are by default inactive. You can activate the SPS and/or TBT fora and SPS and/or TBT file sharing.
- o You can also see how many contributions have been made and files have been shared, for SPS and for TBT.



- **Clear files:** To access the file-clearing option, click on the 'files to clear' tab in the admin menu.

- o To consult the file, click on the title of the file. To clear it, meaning that it will become visible for all national users, click on the checkbox in the 'Clear' column.



- **Monitor fora:** an email alert will inform enquiry points about activity on a forum, including a link to the particular forum. Enquiry points can contribute to the fora and delete messages.

1.3 BEYOND THE TOOL

Besides accessing the enquiry point tool to manage users and features, receiving enquiry point admin rights also allows you to contribute to the enquiry point discussion fora and to easily share notifications with ePing users or predefined groups of ePing users.

- **Access the enquiry point forum:** it is possible to add a contribution to an enquiry point forum.
 - o These fora are active by default (cannot be deactivated).
 - o If a contribution is made to a forum tied to a notification issued by your government, the registered enquiry point will receive an email.
- **Share notifications with (groups) of ePing users:** you can share notifications easily with ePing users or predefined groups of users by clicking on the sharing icon on the search notifications page and start typing the name of the ePing user or name of the group. The name of users and/or the group name will pop up and you can select these to share the notification.

2. IMPLEMENTING EPING IN LAO PDR

To maximize the gains ePing has to offer, the system should be widely used in the country and be included in the government's coordination structures related to export promotion and international trade. We give some suggestions below on how to promote the system at national level and how to plug the ePing system into national trade coordination mechanisms.

2.1 IMPLEMENTING EPING: PROMOTION AND TRAINING

To achieve a high ePing coverage in Loa PDR, ePing can be promoted and ePing users trained. While **training sessions** are often targeted at a small groups of people, promotion activities can reach many potential users. Training activities can, in first instant, be targeted at key stakeholder,



who in their turn can become ePing ambassadors and spread the word among their contacts, clients or members. At government level, these key stakeholders are agencies involved in foreign trade, export promotion and standardization. At private sector level, sector associations as well as chambers of commerce can serve as ePing ambassadors. A training does not have to be an elaborate event, for example, during a brown a bag lunch meeting, the basics can be explained for colleagues. During export promotion conferences and activities, a side event on ePing can be organized or a 15 minute brief introduction included. Materials on ePing such as PowerPoint presentations, the ePing manual, etc. can be stored on a shared online drive that can be accessed by ePing ambassadors. Keeping the network of ambassadors informed about upcoming events and trainings will widen the potential reach of the audience and but also supports the shared purpose of disseminating ePing in the country.

Promotion activities can have a wide outreach, without having to invest a lot of time and means. A fairly easy action is to download the ePing flyer from the website and share it with contacts via email. It is also possible to make some hard copies which can be shared at the office, with costumers, etc. If your organization has a website, you can add a



link to ePing on that website. Another way to promote ePing is to share notifications with stakeholders via the ePing website. In these sharing-messages, a link to ePing is included. Shorts messages on organized trainings and events can be shared via social media, or printed press.

2.2 DISCUSSION: NATIONAL EPING IMPLEMENTATION.

Besides having a wide national coverage, ePing also needs to be plugged in the national coordination structures on export promotion and international trade. ePing facilitates coordination among national (and international) stakeholders to identify possible trade problems that might arise due to notified regulations. WTO members can alert notifying members about these issues by submitting a comment to notifying member, or by raising the issue at the WTO TBT or SPS Committee. This implies that the agencies responsible for submitting a comment or raising trade concerns at the WTO Committee, are informed. A connection between these agencies and ePing is thus crucial.

As mentioned earlier however, each government has its own institutional setup. How ePing will be implemented will be different in each country/territory. In many countries/territories, coordination mechanisms on international trade cooperation already exist, in which case it should be discussed how ePing can be included in these structures to ensure that information flows to the relevant agencies. If such a mechanism does not yet exist, ePing can be the trigger to start developing a coordination mechanism to address trade and export

challenges and draw on WTO transparency provisions to prevent trade distortions due to new regulation in export markets.

In both cases, a good way to start is by bringing together all relevant agencies and initiate the discussion on how ePing can be implemented in the country. The list of questions below can help. As the enquiry point is the national ePing administrator, they can serve as project owners, informing agencies, setting up the meeting (or add ePing as an agenda point during a coordination meeting), etc.

List of guiding questions to initiate discussion on ePing implementation:

1. How is your government organized to comply with and use the **WTO transparency obligations and rights**?
 - a. Are there gaps in the institutional setup?
 - b. Is there coordination mechanism in place? How do you reach out to private sector stakeholder?
 - c. Is there an agency in place to formulate **comments on** notified SPS or TBT regulations?
 - d. What needs to happen to address the gaps? Who can help?
2. How could **ePing help**?
 - a. Can ePing (help) fill information/coordination gaps? How?
 - b. Can ePing facilitate sharing info, reach out to private sector...
3. **Who** should be involved to implement ePing at national level?
 - a. Which agency is responsible for submitting comments, preparing an Specific Trade Concern?
Which agencies are in close contact with the private sector?
4. **Next steps**?
 - b. What is urgent/crucial?
 - c. Promote ePing? Activate forum? Set up working group?

The **action plan** below is a simple matrix that can help identify key actions, responsible agencies as well as a project owner who can follow up on planned activities, etc.

Action plan

	Now		Next month		Next semester	
	What?	Who	What	Who?	What?	Who?
Promotion actions						
Training activities						

Coordination activities						
Project owner(s):						

ANNEX 1: ANSWERS TO QUIZ QUESTIONS

As the ePing database applies a relative time-frame for storing notifications (circulated in the last three years), the content of the database changes every day. Therefore, it is possible that the answers are not up-to-date.

Quiz 1

1. Which country/territory submitted a notification dealing with textile that was distributed by the WTO on 1 February 2018?

[Answer: E. EU]

2. How many notifications have been issued by Loa PDR over the past three years (up to 16 May 2019)?

[Answer: 2]

3. What was the Lao PDR notification distributed on 2 October 2018 about?

[Answer: outbreak of African Swine Fever in Liaoning province, China. The provinces bordering with China, for instance, Luang Namtha, Oudomxay and Phongsaly shall stop temporary importing all kind of pork products from China for its domestic consumption.]

4. What is special about the notification?

[Answer: it is an notification of emergency measures. The measure enters into force immediately, there is no commenting period foreseen as it is an emergency.]

5. SPS notifications can affect a subset of countries or regions. Loa PDR has been affected by several SPS notifications over the past three years. Do you know by how many (up to 16 May 2019)?

[Answer: 3]

6. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia issued an SPS notification affecting Lao PDR twice in the past three years (up to 16 May 2019)? Why?

[Answer: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Virus (HPAI) outbreaks have occurred in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Therefore, the import of live birds, hatching eggs and one-day old chicks from the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Philippines to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is temporarily suspended.]

Quiz 2

1. How many TBT enquiry points does Rwanda have?

[Answer: 5] (On 15 May 2019)

2. How many of these Rwandan enquiry points are registered on ePing?

[Answer: 3] (On 15 May 2019)

3. Are the TBT/SPS enquiry points of Lao PDR registered on ePing?

[Answer: No] (On 15 May 2019)

4. Do you know how you can contact these enquiry points, even if not registered on ePing?

[Answer: contact details are available on ePing email and phone number can be found in the table]