

Streamlining Operational Certification Procedures (OCPs) in Asian FTAs: Lessons Learned and Best Practices

Background

In the diverse landscape of Asia and the Pacific, each Free Trade Agreement (FTA) comes with its unique set of product-specific rules of origin (PSROs) and Operational Certification Procedures (OCPs), presenting additional compliance costs for businesses. OCPs refer to the administrative steps and documentary evidence required to authenticate the origin of goods at customs, with the Certificate of Origin (CO) being the most prevalent example. However, the scope of OCPs extends beyond COs, encompassing various provisions related to shipping methods and associated documentation.

Over the years, the region has been developing numerous CO forms alongside their specific requirements. For instance, each ASEAN +1 free trade agreement (FTA) provides for a different CO form.

As awareness of these complexities has grown, there have been efforts to streamline OCPs through the introduction of IT and digital solutions, such as Electronic Certificates of Origin (E-COs), and most recently Electronic Origin Data Exchanges (EODES) like the E-Form D via ASEAN single window. Despite these advancements, the solutions appear to lack the necessary coordination ending up repeating as scenario as varied as the COs themselves, often leading to overlap.

This session is part of a concerted effort by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), with the participation of UNCTAD, to provide a way forward in converging and streamlining PSROs and OCPs in FTAs to Asian and Pacific Governments and regional secretariats such as ASEAN and the RCEP. It will delve into the debate over the best practices for origin certification and OCP management, highlighting the existence of different schools of thought. The goal is to foster a consensus among Asian and Pacific governments to converge on best practices to facilitate trade more effectively across the region.

Participants will hear from private sector voices on the realities of complying with diverse CO requirements, including E-CO initiatives and self-declaration processes. Experts will discuss the multifaceted costs and challenges of origin compliance under different FTAs, extending to direct shipments and third-party invoicing among other areas.

Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of the trade compliance landscape, innovative strategies to lessen administrative burdens, and insights into collaborative efforts aimed at creating a more streamlined trade environment in Asia and the Pacific.



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Wednesday, 03 April 2024

2:00 pm – 5:00 pm (Tashkent time)

Time	Activity
2:00 – 2:05	Registration
2:05 – 2:15	Introduction to ADB research on rules of origin and OCP Ms. Pramila CRIVELLI, <i>Economist, Asian Development Bank</i>
2:15 – 2:30	A Comparative Analysis of Operational Certification Procedures (OCPs) in ASEAN FTAs, CPTPP and RCEP and Selected FTAs: Lessons Learned and Best Practices Mr. Stefano INAMA, <i>Inter-regional Adviser, Regional Advisory Programme Division for ALDC, UNCTAD</i>
2:30 – 3:00	Developing Member Countries' challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philippines: Ms. Maria Esperanza F. ALCONEL, <i>International Trade Expert and Project Consultant, Advisory on Market Access and Engagement Strategy</i> • Lao PDR: Mr. Phoxai INTHABOUALY, <i>Deputy Director, Certificate of Origin Division, Department of Import and Export, Ministry of Import and Commerce</i> • Cambodia: H.E. Un CHANTHA, <i>Director, Import-Export Department, Ministry of Commerce</i>
3:00 – 3:10	Plenary Discussion and Q&A
3:10 – 3:15	Coffee break
3:15 – 3:35	Moving from traditional OCPs to EODES towards Self-certification: Experiences and best practices I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan: Mr. Atsushi TANAKA, <i>Deputy Director, Office of Rules of Origin, Customs and Tariff Bureau, Ministry of Finance</i> • Republic of Korea: Mr. Chulhun LEE, <i>Director, External Relations Division, Korea Customs Services</i>
3:35 – 3:40	Plenary discussion and Q&A
3:40 – 4:00	Moving from traditional OCPs to EODES towards Self-certification: Experiences and best practices II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Union: Ms. Jūratė ŠIDLAUSKAITĖ, <i>Chief Specialist, Tariff Department, Ministry of Finance, Republic of Lithuania</i> • New Zealand: Mr. Saba VALLIPURAM, <i>Senior Advisor, New Zealand Customs Service</i>
4:00 – 4:05	Plenary discussion and Q&A
4:05 – 4:45	OCP Trade facilitating practices - Private sector's views <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Pier Paolo GHETTI, <i>Partner, Deloitte</i> • Mr. Kit HICKEY, <i>Group Customs Manager, Fonterra Cooperative Group Ltd</i> • Mr. Massimo TRABUCCO, <i>Head of Group Customs, Nestlé</i> • Mr. Michel ANLIKER, <i>Attorney at Law, Schindler Group</i>
4:45 – 4:55	Plenary discussion and Q&A
4:55 – 5:00	Conclusion and way forward

