

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

G/LIC/N/3/SGP/3
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(00-5204)

Committee on Import Licensing

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REPLIES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ON IMPORT LICENSING PROCEDURES¹

Notification under Article 7.3 of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures

SINGAPORE

The following notification, dated 13 October 2000, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Singapore.

Outline of system

1. Singapore's policy is to keep import licensing to a minimum. Import licensing procedures are maintained to fulfil Singapore's obligations under international agreements or to ensure that health, safety, environment and national security objectives are met.

Purposes and coverage of licensing

2. Products subject to automatic and non-automatic import licensing are listed in Tables 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1: Products Subject to Automatic Import Licensing

Product	Laws and Regulations Authorizing Import Licensing	Controlling Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fresh fruits, vegetables, plants and plant productsLive animals, live birds, products of live animals/birds and veterinary biologics/vaccinesOrnamental fishMeat, fish and meat/fish products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Control of Plants ActAnimals and Birds ActFisheries ActWholesome Meat and Fish Act	Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority, Ministry of National Development

¹ See G/LIC/3, Annex, for the Questionnaire.

Product	Laws and Regulations Authorizing Import Licensing	Controlling Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal feed, milk powder – skimmed (coloured for animal feed) • Veterinary medicaments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals and Birds Act and Feeding Stuffs Act • Medicines Act (Part II) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Films, video tapes and video discs • Publications, gramophone records, paintings and prints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Films Act and its Regulations • Undesirable Publications Act 	Films and Publications Department, Ministry of Information and the Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cellulose nitrates • Machetes and axes • Handcuffs • Christmas crackers • Articles of clothing intended as protection against attack, including bullet-proof vests • Steel helmets • Toy guns, including pistols and revolvers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms and Explosives Act • Corrosive and Explosives Substances and Offensives Weapons Act • Regulation of Imports and Exports Regulations (for this list of products) 	Arms and Explosives Branch, Singapore Police Force, Ministry of Home Affairs Arms and Explosives Branch, Singapore Police Force, Ministry of Home Affairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amusement machines, coin- or disc-operated, including pin-tables, shooting galleries and cinematography machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation of Imports and Exports Regulations 	Licensing Division, Singapore Police Force, Ministry of Home Affairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mastering equipment and replication equipment for any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CD (compact disc); - CD-ROM (compact disc-read only memory); - VCD (video compact disc); - DVD (digital video disc); and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation of Imports and Exports Regulations 	Trade Development Board

Product	Laws and Regulations Authorizing Import Licensing	Controlling Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DVD-ROM (digital video disc-read only memory) 		Trade Development Board

Table 2: Products Subject to Non-Automatic Import Licensing

Product	Laws/Regulations	Controlling Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artificial sweetening agents, food containing artificial sweetening agent(s) and irradiated food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Regulations 	Food Control Department, Ministry of the Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific plants, plant products and other materials (insects, micro-organisms and soil) Endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES products) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control of Plants Act Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act 1989 	Agri-food and Veterinary Authority, Ministry of National Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit or jackpot machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Lotteries Act 	Commissioner of Estate Duties, Inland Revenue Authority, Ministry of Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hazardous substances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Pollution Control Act 1999 	Pollution Control Department, Ministry of the Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Radioactive materials and irradiating apparatus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Radiation Protection Act (Chapter 262) and its Regulations 	Radiation Protection Inspectorate, Institute of Science and Forensic Medicine, Ministry of Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medicines Chinese proprietary medicines Category 1 cosmetic products Poisons/drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medicines Act and related regulations and orders for medicines, Chinese proprietary medicines and Category 1 cosmetic products Poisons Act and the Misuse of Drugs Act for poisons/drugs 	National Pharmaceutical Administration, Ministry of Health

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controlled telecommunication equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telecommunication (Dealer's) Regulations 	Infocomm Development Authority, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduled chemicals under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemical Weapons (Prohibition) Act 	National Authority (CWC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Price Control (Rice) Order 	Trade Development Board, Ministry of Trade and Industry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poppy seeds (kaskas) Controlled equipment, materials or substances used for the manufacturing of controlled drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation of Imports and Exports Regulations Misuse of Drugs Regulations 	Central Narcotics Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arms and explosives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arms and Explosives Act 	Arms and Explosives Branch, Singapore Police Force, Ministry of Home Affairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merchandise/product containing a photograph, drawing or design resembling or used in/on Singapore currency notes and coins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currency Act (Cap 69) 	Board of Commissioners of Currency, Ministry of Finance
<p>Ozone depleting substances (may be imported only if they are to be re-exported)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halon 1211 and fire extinguishers using halon 1211 Halon 1301 and fire protection systems using Halon 1301 Halon 2402 Carbon Tetrachloride 1,1,1-trichloroethane (Methyl Chloroform) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation of Imports and Exports Regulations 	Trade Development Board, Ministry of Trade & Industry

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) 11, 12, 113, 114, 115 as a refrigerant in new air-conditioning and refrigeration equipment except for automotive air-conditioners in vehicles registered before 1 Jan 95 and domestic refrigerators• Other CFCs (e.g. CFCs 13, 111, 112, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217)		Trade Development Board, Ministry of Trade & Industry
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3. The system applies to products listed in Tables 1 and 2 above originating in and coming from all countries.

For ozone-depleting substances, import licences are granted only for products originating in countries which are signatories to the Montreal Protocol.

4. Singapore's import licensing procedures are not intended to restrict the quantity or value of imports. They are maintained for the purpose of discharging Singapore's obligations under international agreements or for health, safety, environmental and national security reasons.

5. The laws, regulations and/ or administrative orders under which the licensing procedures are maintained are listed in Tables 1 and 2 above. All import licensing procedures are statutorily required and published in government gazettes.

While the administration of the licensing system is undertaken by the various licensing authorities for different products, the designation of products to be subjected to licensing is not left to administrative discretion. The latter requires legislative approval. Similarly, legislative approval must be obtained before the government abolishes the licensing system.

Procedures

6. Under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), Singapore is required to limit the aggregate amount of Schedule 1 chemicals it produces, acquires, retains, transfers or uses to one tonne per annum.

To meet emergency requirements, Singapore maintains a stockpile scheme for rice, a staple food of which there is no domestic production. A special import licensing system applies to rice imported from all countries. This system divides rice imports into 2 categories, requiring (i) a stockpile licence; and (ii) an ordinary licence. The stockpile licence is aimed at ensuring that importers stockpile the stipulated types and minimum quantities of rice in proportion to their total imports to ensure a consistent and adequate supply for domestic consumption. Licences for non-stockpile grades of rice are issued automatically.

I. Information is published in notices issued by the Trade Development Board (TDB) of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Copies of the notices are available at the TDB's office premises and over the internet.

II. The aggregate amount of CWC Schedule 1 is applicable on an annual basis. There is no maximum quota for the importation of rice.

III. Please refer to paragraph 6 above.

- IV. Not applicable.
- V. The processing time for licences falls within the period stipulated in Article 3.5(f) of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures.
- VI. Not applicable.
- VII. Applications for licences to import CWC Schedule 1 chemicals are approved by the National Authority (CWC). Rice licence applications are processed by the TDB.
- VIII. Not applicable.
- IX. Not applicable.
- X. Not applicable.
- XI. Not applicable.

7(a). The range of time taken for processing the various licence applications fall within the periods stipulated in Article 2(a)(iii), for automatic licensing, and Article 3.5(f), for non-automatic licensing, of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures.

For artificial sweetening agents, food containing artificial sweetening agent(s) and irradiated foods, it is preferable that import licence applications be submitted 1-2 months in advance, so as to allow ample time for amendments/adjustments should the products not meet the stipulated labelling requirements.

(b) Generally import licences may be granted immediately upon request when applications are submitted in appropriate and complete forms. For arms and explosives, radioactive materials and irradiating apparatus, import licences can be immediately granted if the importer already has a dealer's licence. An importer of poisons who does not have a licence will have to store the hazardous substances in the port area temporarily, pending the approval for an import licence.

(c) There are no limitations as to the period of the year during which applications for licence and/or importation may be made.

(d) Consideration of a licence application is effected by a single administrative organ as specified in the respective legislation, cited in response to Question 5. The importer does not have to approach more than one administrative body.

8. An application for an import licence is usually granted if it meets the stipulated criteria. Licensing authorities will generally provide the reason(s) in the event of a refusal to issue a licence. Avenues for appeal exist in most cases.

Eligibility of importers to apply for licence

9(a) Not applicable.

(b) Generally, all persons, registered firms and institutions are eligible to apply for licences. Applicants for the importation of the following products must meet additional criteria:

- i. for a licence to import, make, distribute or exhibit films and videos, an applicant must be a private limited company of at least S\$100,000 paid-up capital;
- ii. for a licence to deal in or import arms and explosives, applicants must not have criminal records or adverse security attention;
- iii. for a licence to import large and wild animals, the applicant must demonstrate to the licensing authority i.e. the AVA that he/she is suitably equipped to house and care for the animals;
- iv. for a licence to import hazardous substances, it is preferable that an applicant be a professional or a senior management staff, who has the necessary knowledge of how to safely handle the hazardous substances, and has passed an oral test conducted by the licensing authority i.e. the Pollution Control Department of the Ministry of the Environment. The oral test covers technical knowledge on the safe handling of the hazardous substances and on the Environmental Pollution Control Act and its Regulations;
- v. for a licence to deal in controlled telecommunications equipment, applicants should have knowledge of their products and IDA-type approval requirements in order to advise and guide consumers;
- vi. applicants for licences to import product containing poisons or controlled drugs must be qualified persons, such as registered pharmacists;
- vii. an applicant for a licence to deal in fish or fish products must be a fisherman, fish farmer, fish dealer or be connected to fishing or the fishing industry;
- viii. only certain institutions or organisations such as zoos, museums and research institutions may apply for a licence to import certain CITES endangered species, mainly species listed in CITES Appendix I;
- ix. only licensed personnel with relevant qualification and experience may import veterinary biologics. Similarly, importers of hen eggs and livestock must be licensed by the AVA. A key criterion for the issuance of the dealer's licence for both veterinary biologics, and hen eggs and livestock is the suitability of the facilities/premises;
- x. applicants for licences to import Category 1 cosmetics products must be registered with the Registry of Companies and Businesses;
- xi. only companies registered in Singapore are eligible to apply for licences to import ozone-depleting substances.

Documentational and other requirements for application for licence

10. Information on import procedures and applications is available over the Internet. The following information is required in applications for import licences: particulars of importer, company registration certificate issued by the Singapore Registry of Companies, product description, product quantity, mode of transport, port of shipment/ transport, product brand/serial number/ model/ make and country of origin. Additional requirements in applications to import the following products include:

- i. for applications to import hazardous substances, documents to show that the applicant has approved storage and handling facilities to handle hazardous substances safely; a layout plan to show areas for storing hazardous substances; and an emergency action plan to indicate how a chemical release from the storage area will be contained, detoxified and cleaned up;
- ii. for applications to import artificial sweetening agents, a statement issued by the importer indicating the intended usage and the name and address of the users. If artificial sweetening agents are to be used in food products, low calorie food and sugar-free food are the only food products where artificial sweetening agents can be used;
- iii. for applications to import food containing artificial sweetening agent(s), product labels and documents to justify the use of the artificial sweetening agent(s) in the product. Low calorie food and sugar-free food are the only food products where artificial sweetening agents can be used. The product label must bear a label with the following words: 'This (here state the name of the food) contains the artificial sweetening agent, (here state the name of the artificial sweetening agent)';
- iv. for applications to import irradiated food, certification that the ionizing radiation has been conducted in accordance with the Codex Recommended International Code of Practice for the Operation of Radiation Facilities Used for Treatment of Foods, and that such irradiated food meets the Codex General Standards for Irradiated Foods. The irradiated food must also bear a label with the following words (of not less than 3mm height), 'TREATED WITH IONIZING IRRADIATION' or 'IRRADIATED (here insert the name of the food)';
- v. for applications to deal in rice, telecommunication equipment, arms and explosives, documents on the technical specifications of the products. In addition, applicants for licences to deal in arms and explosives must ensure the following:
 - Commercial and Industrial Security Cooperation (CISCO) Constable(s) are engaged to escort the transportation of goods;
 - all pyrotechnics are to be stored at wharves designated by the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA);
- vi. for applications to import CITES products, the CITES export or re-export licence issued by the CITES Management Authority of the exporting or re-exporting country;
- vii. for applications to import merchandise/product containing a photograph, drawing or design or part thereof used in or on any Singapore currency note or coin, visuals or samples of the merchandise/product;
- viii. for medicines, poisons and drugs, clinical data, manufacturing quality control procedures and Free Sale Certificates, to ascertain the safety, efficacy and quality of the products;
- ix. for Chinese proprietary medicines, test results of toxic heavy metals, microbial contamination and a declaration of the absence of poisons (as defined in the Poisons Act) for every consignment, within 2 months of import, in order to ascertain product safety and quality;
- x. for plant and plant products, import licences are valid for 3 months and for one consignment only; phytosanitary certificates or similar official statement issued not

more than 14 days prior to date of shipment of consignment by a competent government agency or agricultural authority. Imports of plant and plant produce are also subject to plant quarantine inspection requirements;

- xi. for ozone-depleting substances, bills of lading and invoices to verify the country of origin, and a Certificate of Analysis stating the types of ozone-depleting substances being imported.

11. Upon actual importation, importers are required to make an Inward Declaration showing the correct description and quantities of each consignment made electronically through the TradeNet system. Shipping documents such as the Bill of Lading/ Airway Bill and invoice are also required.

Additional requirements for the importation of certain products include:

- (i) for publications, the language of the publications has to be specified;
- (ii) for arms and explosives, imports must be produced for inspection at the Arms and Explosives Branch immediately after customs clearance;
- (iii) for meat and meat products, imports should be shipped directly and must be derived from sources approved by the licensing authority i.e. the AVA. They must be accompanied by a veterinary health certificate issued by the approved sources in the exporting country and inspected upon importation;
- (iv) for live animals/birds, products of live animals/birds and veterinary biologics, importers are required to show the import licences issued by the AVA together with the veterinary health certificate from sources in the exporting country approved by the AVA;
- (v) for fresh fruit and vegetables, each consignment must:
 - be subject to inspection and sampling upon importation;
 - meet the sanitary standards prescribed under Rule 9 of the Control of Plants (Import and Transshipment of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables) Rules 1999; and
 - be in containers which, at the time of importation, must bear the name and address of the producer.
- (vi) for selected fish or fish products, additional product quality and quarantine requirements apply. All ornamental fish imported must be healthy and free from any clinical signs of disease at the time of import;
- (vii) in addition to the requirements set out in (iii) to (vi) above, the date and time of arrival of each consignment must be indicated.

12. Licensing fees are required for the following classes of licences:

- (i) Product Licences
 - a licence fee of S\$18 per consignment of plants and plants products. Other fees for and incidental to any inspection or examination activities are also specified under the Control of Plants (Plant Importation) Rules;
 - a licence fee of S\$4.20 per 100 kilogrammes applies for chilled, frozen meat and processed meat, and S\$77 per consignment of meat packed in cans;

- a licence fee of S\$3 per consignment applies for fish and fish products as well as fresh fruits and vegetables;
- a licence fee of S\$170 per consignment of live animals imported for commercial purposes; S\$55 per consignment of live birds and eggs imported for commercial purposes; S\$50 per permit for pet animals/birds; and S\$18 per permit for veterinary biologics. The import licences for the above products are valid for 30 days; extension may be granted with valid reason given by the importers;
- a licence fee of S\$12 per scheduled CITES endangered species or parts/derivatives, subject to a minimum amount of S\$60 per consignment, depending on the species. For elephant tusks, the fees are S\$1 per kg or part thereof, subject to a minimum of S\$60 per consignment. Each licence is valid for 3 months and may be extended for another 3 months;
- a licence fee of S\$30 per consignment applies to radioactive materials and irradiating apparatus;
- a licence fee of S\$16 per consignment applies to arms and explosives;
- a licence fee of S\$60 per consignment of controlled drugs;
- a 3-year licence fee of \$100 for Western drugs;
- a licence fee of \$60 per consignment of Western drugs in the case of parallel imports;
- a licence fee of \$35 for Category 1 cosmetic products;
- an annual licence fee of \$800 for cosmetics.

(ii) Dealers' Licences

- an annual licence fee of S\$378 for fresh fruit and vegetables;
- a 2-year licence fee ranging from S\$300 - S\$3,700 for arms and explosives;
- an annual licence fee of S\$84 for meat and fish products;
- an annual licence fee of S\$350 for ornamental fish;
- an annual licence fee of S\$33 for veterinary biologics;
- an annual licence fee at S\$250 or a biennial licence at S\$500 for hazardous substances;
- an annual licence fee of S\$15 for rice;
- an annual licence fee of S\$150 for operations of fruit/jackpot machines, renewable at S\$30 per annum;
- a 5-year licence fee of S\$50 for dealing in IDA type approved and generally approved equipment, and an annual licence fee of S\$400 for dealing in other types of telecommunication equipment;

- a biennial licence fee of S\$1,500 and a banker's guarantee of S\$20,000 per licence to import, make, distribute or exhibit films and videos;
- a banker's guarantee of S\$200, 000 for publishers to circulate offshore newspapers in Singapore;
- fees for 5-year and 3-year licences for medicines are S\$540 and S\$360 respectively; the fee for a 3-year licence for Category 1 cosmetics is S\$2,400 and fees for a 3-year and 1-year licence for Chinese proprietary medicines are S\$1,000 and S\$365 respectively; fees for preparations containing medicinal poisons is \$360;
- an annual licence fee of S\$105 for licence to import artificial sweetening agent and food containing artificial sweetening agents, and annual fee of \$95 to import irradiated foods;
- an annual licence fee of S\$180 to manufacture, possess for sale or deal in irradiating apparatus or radioactive materials; an annual fee of S\$ 130 to keep or possess radioactive materials or irradiating apparatus other than for sale; an annual fee of S\$120 to use radioactive materials or irradiating apparatus; and an annual fee of S\$130 to handle and transport radioactive materials;
- an annual licence fee of S\$240 for the importation of ozone-depleting substances.

13. There are no deposit or advance payment requirements associated with the issue of licences.

Conditions of licensing

14. The period of the validity of a dealer's licence is as specified in response to Question 12 above. The approved product licences cease to be valid once the importation of the concerned products is effected.

The validity of these licences may be extended by renewal.

15. There is no penalty for the non-utilisation of licence or a portion of it.

16. Licences are not transferable between importers.

17(a) Not applicable.

(b) In addition to the requirements listed in response to Questions 10 and 11 above, the following conditions are applicable:

- i. applicants dealing in ornamental fish must have government approved premises with facilities for holding, quarantining, and packing of ornamental fish;
- ii. applicants dealing in fruit/ jackpot machines must ensure that these machines are to be used in licensed clubs;
- iii. applications to deal in radioactive materials and irradiating apparatus are subject to the following conditions:
 - the company must possess a licence to handle and transport radioactive materials if it undertakes its own transportation. In addition, the importer must ensure that the vehicle transporting radioactive materials displays a proper placard showing the radiation sign and that it is not left unattended;

- the importer, if he is an end-user, must possess a licence that specifies the type and quantity of radioactive materials that may be possessed, and another licence for the use, handling and transport of radioactive materials;
- if the importer is the end-user of irradiating apparatus, the company must have a licence for each machine it possesses.

Other procedural requirements

18. No.
19. Not applicable.
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