



**Committee on Import Licensing**

**DRAFT REPORT (2019) OF THE COMMITTEE ON IMPORT LICENSING  
TO THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS**

1. The Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures (hereinafter "the Agreement") which entered into force on 1 January 1995, establishes disciplines on users of import licensing systems with the principal objective of ensuring that the procedures applied for granting import licences do not in themselves restrict trade. It aims to simplify, clarify and minimize the administrative requirements necessary to obtain import licences.
2. The Committee on Import Licensing was established to afford Members the opportunity of consulting on any matter relating to the operation of the Agreement or the furtherance of its objectives. The Committee's Rules of Procedure, which were approved by the Council for Trade in Goods, are contained in document G/L/147.
3. All Members of the WTO are *ipso facto* members of the Committee. Observer governments in the General Council of the WTO have Observer status in the Committee. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and UNCTAD have regular observer status in the Committee.
4. The focus of this report is on the period since the Committee's last annual report (G/L/1269), namely 23 October 2018 - 4 October 2019 (hereinafter "the review period"). In 2019, the Committee held two formal meetings on 4 April and 4 October 2019 (G/LIC/M/49 and [G/LIC/M/50]) and two informal meetings on 8 March and 18 September 2019. On 6 June, the Committee elected by acclamation, Ms. Carol Tsang (Hong Kong, China) as Chairperson for the Committee of 2019. Pursuant to the Committee's Rules of Procedure, the officers shall hold office until the end of the first meeting of the following year.
5. Pursuant to Articles 1.4(a) and/or 8.2(b) of the Agreement and procedures agreed by the Committee, all Members are required, to notify their laws, regulations and administrative procedures relevant to import licensing and to submit copies of any relevant publications or laws and regulations upon becoming a WTO Member. Any subsequent changes to these laws, regulations and administrative procedures are also required to be published and notified. During the review period, the Committee reviewed 2 notifications (Annex I) from the following 2 Members: Myanmar; Tajikistan. These notifications can be found in the document series G/LIC/N/1/-. Copies of publications and legislation submitted with these notifications are available for consultation via the Secretariat.
6. The Committee also reviewed, pursuant to paragraphs 5.1-5.4 of Article 5, 18 notifications (Annex II) relating to the institution of new import licensing procedures or changes in these procedures from 9 Members: Angola; Costa Rica; Hong Kong, China; Morocco; Myanmar; the Russian Federation; Singapore; Switzerland and Ukraine. These notifications can be found in documents series G/LIC/N/2/-. Article 5.5 of the Agreement allows Members to submit reverse notifications, where a Member considers that another Member has not notified the institution of a licensing procedure or changes in the procedures. However, no such reverse notifications have been received under this provision since the entry into force of this Agreement.
7. Article 7.3 of the Agreement requires all Members to provide replies to the Questionnaire on Import Licensing Procedures<sup>1</sup> by 30 September each year. During the review period, the Committee reviewed 23 notifications (Annex III) from the following 19 Members: Argentina; Australia; Canada; Colombia; Costa Rica; El Salvador; the European Union; Georgia; India; Kazakhstan; Macao, China;

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<sup>1</sup> Annexed to document G/LIC/3.

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Mauritius; Mexico; Montenegro; Nicaragua; Panama; Singapore; South Africa; and Uruguay.<sup>2</sup> These notifications can be found in document series G/LIC/N/3/-.

8. During the review period, Myanmar submitted its first notification to this Committee. The Chair urged Members who had not yet notified and those who had not updated their notifications to do so as soon as possible.

9. The Committee has provided a regular forum for exchanging views on notifications submitted by Members. Written comments and questions concerning notifications submitted to the Committee and/or on import licensing procedures maintained by Members, and replies thereto, may be found in the document series G/LIC/Q/-. During the review period: the European Union posed follow-up questions or comments to Brazil (G/LIC/Q/BRA/23 and 24); China (G/LIC/Q/CHN/27); and Thailand (G/LIC/Q/THA/4). The United States posed questions to the Dominican Republic (G/LIC/Q/DOM/1); Ghana (G/LIC/Q/GHA/2 and 4); and Myanmar (G/LIC/Q/MMR/1). The following Members provided written responses to comments and questions: the Russian Federation to the European Union (G/LIC/Q/RUS/5); and Ghana to the United States (G/LIC/Q/GHA/3). At the Committee meetings, Members exchanged views on the issues raised.

10. In addition, the following Members requested to include in the agenda specific issues regarding other Members' import licensing regimes/measures. At the Committee meeting(s) held during the review period, the United States made statements on Indonesia's import licensing regime for cellphones, handheld computers and tablets; on India's import licensing requirements for boric acid; on Myanmar's import licensing requirements on agricultural products; on Viet Nam's import licensing for cyber security products; on Dominican Republic's import permits for agricultural products; on China's import licensing on certain recoverable materials and on Ghana's import licensing requirements for poultry products. Canada made a statement on India's quantitative restrictions on certain pulses. The European Union made a statement on Tunisia's import restrictive measures introduced on 28 November 2018. Members whose licensing measures had been questioned responded at the meetings and other interested Members made comments as well.

11. Improving transparency in notification procedures and templates has been a standing issue on the agenda of the Committee's meetings. At the informal meeting held on 8 March, with a view to clarify and streamline notification requirements under different provisions of the Agreement, the Secretariat made a presentation (circulated in document RD/LIC/13) on a new form for notifications under Articles 5.1-5.4, which can also be used for notification under Article 1.4(a) and Article 8.2(b). The template had been drafted based on views expressed and best practices of Members. At its formal meeting held on 4 April, some Members including Myanmar, Japan, Colombia, Chinese Taipei shared their experience in using the new form. The Committee agreed that the notification form, circulated in G/LIC/W/28, be used by Members on a voluntary basis for notifications under respective provisions.

12. On the new import licensing website (<https://importlicensing.wto.org>), at the formal meeting on 4 April, the Secretariat informed the Committee that all Member Profiles, which had been prepared for each Member based on its notifications, had been uploaded on the website for verification by Members. Members appreciated the work by the Secretariat and believed that the website would enhance transparency and facilitate trade after its official launch. So far, while a few Members have completed their verifications, the work is still ongoing for most other Members. The website will be launched when the verification work is completed.

13. Regarding future work of the Committee, the Chairperson tabled a number of issues for discussion with Members at the informal meeting held on 18 September, including how to improve the level of notification performance and the functioning of the Committee to facilitate Members' active participation in its work. In response, Members provided some preliminary feedback and floated some new ideas and the Chairperson proposed to organize further consultations to follow up on the discussions.

14. With a view to addressing developing Members' capacity constraints in fulfilling their notification obligations under the Agreement, in particular those of Least-Developed Countries, the third Workshop on Import Licensing was held from 30 September to 4 October 2019 in Geneva. Thirty-one

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<sup>2</sup> New notifications have been received from Cuba, Mauritius (2019), Turkey and Sri Lanka which are under preparation and will be circulated soon. They will be reviewed at the Committee's next meeting.

participants representing 31 WTO developing Members (including LDCs) participated in this workshop. In addition, during the review period, upon the request of individual Members, Member-specific technical assistance workshops on import licensing and notifications were held in Myanmar, Bahrain, Philippines, Lao PDR and Chinese Taipei. These technical assistance activities not only improved the overall understanding of the Agreement, but also effectively enhanced the capacities of government officials of relevant administrative bodies in these countries to prepare their import licensing notifications.

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**ANNEX I: NOTIFICATIONS REVIEWED DURING THE REVIEW PERIOD PURSUANT  
TO ARTICLES 1.4(A) AND/OR 8.2(B) OF THE AGREEMENT  
FROM 23 OCTOBER 2018 TO 4 OCTOBER 2019**

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>DOCUMENT</b>	<b>DATE OF ISSUANCE OF THE DOCUMENT</b>
MYANMAR	G/LIC/N/1/MMR/1	25.03.2019
TAJIKISTAN	G/LIC/N/1/TJK/2	19.12.2018

**ANNEX II: NOTIFICATIONS REVIEWED DURING THE REVIEW PERIOD  
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 5.1-5.4 OF THE AGREEMENT  
FROM 23 OCTOBER 2018 TO 4 OCTOBER 2019**

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>DOCUMENT</b>	<b>DATE OF ISSUANCE OF THE DOCUMENT</b>
ANGOLA	G/LIC/N/2/AGO/1	30.10.2018
	G/LIC/N/2/AGO/2	30.10.2018
COSTA RICA	G/LIC/N/2/CRI/3	12.12.2018
HONG KONG, CHINA	G/LIC/N/2/HKG/9	08.02.2019
	G/LIC/N/2/HKG/10	08.02.2019
	G/LIC/N/2/HKG/11	08.02.2019
	G/LIC/N/2/HKG/12	07.03.2019
	G/LIC/N/2/HKG/13	12.09.2019
MOROCCO	G/LIC/N/2/MAR/2	12.09.2019
	G/LIC/N/2/MAR/3	12.09.2019
	G/LIC/N/2/MAR/4	12.09.2019
MYANMAR	G/LIC/N/2/MMR/1	25.03.2019
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	G/LIC/N/2/RUS/3	09.08.2019
	G/LIC/N/2/RUS/4	09.08.2019
SINGAPORE	G/LIC/N/2/SGP/6	13.09.2019
SWITZERLAND	G/LIC/N/2/CHE/3	07.03.2019
UKRAINE	G/LIC/N/2/UKR/8	26.03.2019
	G/LIC/N/2/UKR/8/ADD.1	02.04.2019

**ANNEX III: NOTIFICATIONS REVIEWED DURING THE REVIEW PERIOD  
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 7.3 OF THE AGREEMENT  
FROM 23 OCTOBER 2018 TO 4 OCTOBER 2019**

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>DOCUMENT (YEAR NOTIFIED FOR)</b>		<b>DATE OF ISSUANCE OF THE DOCUMENT</b>
ARGENTINA	G/LIC/N/3/ARG/15	2019	19.09.2019
AUSTRALIA	G/LIC/N/3/AUS/11	2018	20.09.2019
	G/LIC/N/3/AUS/12	2019	23.09.2019
CANADA	G/LIC/N/3/CAN/18	2018	24.09.2019
COLOMBIA	G/LIC/N/3/COL/12	2018	22.03.2019
COSTA RICA	G/LIC/N/3/CRI/13	2016	12.12.2018
	G/LIC/N/3/CRI/14	2017	12.12.2018
	G/LIC/N/3/CRI/15	2018	12.12.2018
EL SALVADOR	G/LIC/N/3/SLV/3	2018	17.12.2018
EUROPEAN UNION	G/LIC/N/3/EU/8	2019	24.09.2019
GEORGIA	G/LIC/N/3/GEO/8	2018	19.11.2018
INDIA	G/LIC/N/3/IND/18	2018	17.01.2019
KAZAKHSTAN	G/LIC/N/3/KAZ/3	2018	26.02.2019
MACAO, CHINA	G/LIC/N/3/MAC/22	2019	27.05.2019
MAURITIUS	G/LIC/N/3/MUS/8	2018	12.10.2018
MEXICO	G/LIC/N/3/MEX/6	2019	24.09.2019
MONTENEGRO	G/LIC/N/3/MNE/3	2019	27.05.2019
NICARAGUA	G/LIC/N/3/NIC/10	2018	14.03.2019
PANAMA	G/LIC/N/3/PAN/9	2018	20.05.2019
	G/LIC/N/3/PAN/10	2019	20.05.2019
SINGAPORE	G/LIC/N/3/SGP/14	2018	26.11.2018
SOUTH AFRICA	G/LIC/N/3/ZAF/7	2018	19.12.2018
URUGUAY	G/LIC/N/3/URY/12	2018	25.01.2019