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| **Singapore’s Bogor Goals Progress Report (as at 30 September 2016)**[[1]](#footnote-1)\* | |
|  | **Highlights of Achievements and Areas for Improvement** |

* Almost all of Singapore’s imports are tariff-free.
* Some tobacco products have recently been subjected to import prohibitions for public health reasons.
* Reforms in telecommunications services to encourage competition through the entry of a new mobile operator.
* Foreign investments facilitated by multilateral agreements. Singapore remains the easiest place to do business for the tenth consecutive year, according to the World Bank’s Doing Business Report 2016.
* Domestic standards are aligned with international standards. Singapore continues to participate actively in both international and regional standards and conformance activities.
* Reforms in customs procedure to increase efficiency, as well as to maintain supply chain security.
* Singapore continues to uphold Intellectual Property Rights on an international level. Measures are being implemented to combat online piracy.
* Government procurement system remains transparent; new features added to GeBIZ system.
* Retail energy market liberalized. Companies Act amended to keep up with international developments. Reforms seeking to reduce compliance costs to business owners.
* List of economies whose citizens are eligible for automated clearance has been expanded.
* Comprehensive network of RTA/FTAs and BITs that continues its expansion.

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|  | **Summary of Topics** |

**Tariffs**

Most of Singapore’s imports are tariff free, except for six tariff lines: beer made from malt (two tariff lines) and samsu (four tariff lines).

**Non-Tariff Measures**

Singapore applies import restrictions for health, safety and environmental reasons, or in accordance with international obligations. Import of shisha tobacco was banned from 28 November 2014 onwards, with other emerging tobacco products to be progressively prohibited until 1 August 2016. This was done to protect the public against known and potential harms of those emerging tobacco products. Import prohibitions on non-medicinal chewing gum and motor vehicles over 3 years of age, or which fail to meet emission standards, remain. Singapore continues to not maintain any subsidy schemes that are dependent on export performance.

**Services**

Singapore maintains an open and transparent services regulatory regime. Some improvements were put in place in the telecommunications sector, by increasing competition through a spectrum allocation auction to encourage entry of new mobile operator(s). The intention is that any new mobile operator achieve nationwide rollout by September 2018.

From June 2013, online news websites that report an average of at least one article per week on Singapore's news and current affairs over a period of two months, and have at least 50,000 unique visitors from Singapore each month over a period of two months have to be individually licensed by the Media Development Authority (MDA). The websites are also required to put up a performance bond of S$50,000 like all licensed individual broadcasters, and take down content that breach MDA’s content standards within 24 hours of being notified.

In terms of legal services, foreign law firms established in Singapore can practice foreign law in all areas of legal practice that the firm is competent to offer. However, to practice Singapore law, foreign law firms can only do it in permitted areas of legal practice. For foreign firms to practice law in Singapore, they have to apply for a Qualifying Foreign Law Practice (QFLP) license. As of March 2016, the QFLP scheme was not open for new applications. The Ministry of Law also established the Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) in November 2015, which will streamline licensing matters relating to law practices in Singapore under a single authority. This new regulatory regime introduces the flexibility for law practices to apply for non-lawyers to become partners, directors or shareholders of their firms, subject to prescribed requirements and limits.

**Investment**

Singapore maintains an open and transparent investment regime. According to the World Bank’s Doing Business Report 2016, Singapore remains the easiest place to do business for the tenth consecutive year, maintaining first position in the areas of “Protecting Minority Investors” and “Enforcing Contracts”.

In addition, Singapore has 41 Bilateral Investment Treaties in force, eight of which are with APEC member economies.

**Standards and Conformance**

Domestic standards are aligned with international standards. Whenever possible, international standards are used or referred to facilitate trade and market access. They may be adopted or adapted as domestic standards if they are suitable to be used locally.

Singapore continues to participate actively in both international and regional standards and conformance activities. For instance, Singapore is involved in the ASEAN Consultative Committee for Standards and Quality (ACCSQ) and the APEC Sub-Committee for Standards and Conformance (SCSC), and has also has recently been elected into the ISO Council for a 3 year term (2015-2017), and the IEC Council Board for a 3 year term (2016-2018). Singapore also reported embarking on a five-year plan to create awareness of the value of standards and conformance.

Singapore has had one specific trade concern related to plain packaging for tobacco products raised against it at the WTO TBT Committee in 2015, with no reported resolution. Singapore clarified at the WTO TBT Committee in December 2015 that Singapore did not have a proposed regulation on plain packaging, but it had been monitoring international developments on tobacco control measures. A public consultation was conducted to gather public feedback on plain packaging.

**Customs Procedures**

Singapore continues to facilitate efficient customs procedures, while maintaining security within the global supply chain. The Strategic Trade Scheme (STS) was enhanced in April 2014 to make it easier for traders dealing with strategic goods to apply for export permits, and to encourage them to raise their compliance standards. Companies only need to make a single application for a Bulk Permit in order to make multiple shipments of strategic goods for up to three years.

As of 1 January 2015, Singapore Customs withdrew permit exemptions for the transhipment and transit of strategic goods such as military and sensitive dual-use items, as well as chemical agents and related equipment. The Brani Export Inspection station was also set up in March 2015, in addition to the existing Pasir Panjang Export Inspection Station. These stations perform x-ray scans for containers meant for export and outbound transhipment at Keppel Terminals.

Mutual recognition of Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) programs are maintained with Canada; Hong Kong, China; China; Korea; Japan; Chinese Taipei and the United States.

**Intellectual Property Rights**

Singapore has been active in upholding intellectual property rights on an international level. Singapore was appointed as an International Searching Authority (ISA) in April 2014, which helps facilitating patent protection in over 140 countries through a single application. The Singapore Parliament also passed an amendment to the Copyright Act in July 2014 to combat online piracy.

**Competition Policy**

The Competition Commission of Singapore (CCS) has completed over 300 cases since its inception in January 2005. CCS is currently reviewing the competition legislation and guidelines to ensure they remain relevant and are in line with international best practices. The proposed changes seek to simplify and speed up various processes, for example by introducing a new Fast Track procedure. CCS is aiming to implement the changes by 2016.

**Government Procurement**

Government procurement in Singapore continues to remain open, with the online procurement portal GeBIZ being further enhanced. A new search engine and user interface allows suppliers to search for opportunities as well as keep track of their transections more easily.

**Deregulation/Regulatory Reform**

In April 2014, the Energy Market Authority (EMA) liberalized the retail electricity market by allowing eligible consumers to opt to buy electricity from retailers offering different prices and services, instead of buying electricity from SP Services (SPS) at the regulated tariff. Previously only large commercial and industrial (C&I) consumers with an average monthly electricity consumption of at least 10 MWh were eligible. EMA also lowered the threshold for eligibility and increased flexibility for C&I consumers.

The amended Companies Act also took effect in July 2015 (first tranche) and January 2016 (second tranche) to keep up with international developments. Additionally, the Accounting Standards Council (ASC) announced that Singapore-incorporated companies listed on the Singapore Exchange will apply a new financial reporting framework that is identical to the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2018.

The Business Registration Act was repealed and replaced by the Business Names Registration Act, with effect from 3 January 2016. The amendments are simplifying the process for registration of persons who are involved in business and reduce the regulatory burden on business owners.

**Dispute Resolution**

The Singapore International Mediation Centre was launched in November 2014 and the Singapore International Commercial Court was launched in January 2015.

**Mobility of Business People**

Singapore’s automated immigration clearance service, the enhanced Immigration Automated Clearance System (eIACS), was extended to include eligible visitors from Australia and Hong Kong, China, based on reciprocal agreements. Singapore also extended its use to eligible visitors from China.

**RTA/FTAs**

Singapore has a comprehensive network of RTA/FTAs, with 20 RTAs/FTAs in force[[2]](#footnote-2). Since the previous 2014 Bogor Goals Assessment, Singapore has concluded negotiations for three more RTA/FTAs: the Agreement between Singapore and the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu on Economic Partnership (ASTEP), the European Union-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (EUSFTA) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Singapore is currently participating in the negotiations of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Framework.

1. \* This brief report was prepared with information from Singapore’s submission of 2016 APEC Individual Action Plan (IAP) template; the 2012 WTO Trade Policy Review – Report by the Secretariat – Singapore; the WTO SPS and TBT Information Systems; and Media Development Authority, Singapore Customs, Ministry of Law, Competition Commission of Singapore websites. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Singapore’s RTA/FTAs in force are the following ones: ASEAN (1992), Singapore-New Zealand (2001), Singapore-Japan (2002), Singapore-EFTA (2003), Singapore-Australia (2003), Singapore-United States (2004), Singapore-Jordan (2005), ASEAN-China (2005), Singapore-India (2005), Singapore-Korea (2006), Trans-Pacific SEP (2006), Singapore-Panama (2006), ASEAN-Korea (2007), Singapore-Peru (2009), Singapore-China (2009), Singapore-GCC (2013), ASEAN-Japan (2008), ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand (2010), ASEAN-India (2010), Singapore-Costa Rica (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)