

IMPLEMENTING THE WTO TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT 11 TO 15 SEPTEMBER 2017

Jointly sponsored by the
SINGAPORE COOPERATION PROGRAMME
and the
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
under the
**SINGAPORE – UNITED STATES
THIRD COUNTRY TRAINING PROGRAMME**
to be conducted by
MARGARET LIANG
and the
U.S. Government Inter-Agency Training Team

Singapore Cooperation Programme

Singapore has provided technical assistance to other developing countries since the 1960s. As a country whose only resource is its people, Singapore believes that human resource development is vital for economic and social progress. Singapore itself has benefited from training provided by other countries and international organisations. Through the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP), Singapore can contribute to the development of other developing countries.

In 1992, the SCP was established, bringing together under one framework the various technical assistance programmes offered by Singapore. Through the SCP, the range and number of training programmes have increased to meet the needs of developing countries.

Since 1992, Singapore has sponsored training courses and study visits for more than 110,000 officials from 170 countries. The SCP is managed by the Technical Cooperation Directorate of the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

United States Department of State

The United States has a long history of providing technical assistance in Southeast Asia. We believe our partnership with Singapore, through the Third Country Training Program, will enable us to further strengthen our cooperation for the benefit of the Asia-Pacific Region and build on our long-term engagement with ASEAN. Our goal is to help countries build capacity and develop sustainable systems.

In collaboration with Singapore and the recipient countries, we will work toward these common goals. By sharing best practices, we can strengthen local governmental institutions, especially the public administration and the civil service of countries.

The Third Country Training Program, while managed by the U.S. Department of State, is a whole-of-government effort working with relevant experts in the field to strengthen ASEAN integration.

Singapore-United States Third Country Training Programme

Established in February 2012, the Singapore-United States Third Country Training Programme (TCTP) is a partnership between the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the US Department of State to jointly conduct capacity building courses for Southeast Asian countries, in particular those in the Lower Mekong region. The TCTP supports ASEAN community-building efforts by enhancing connectivity, promoting sustainable development, and strengthening regional resilience. Singapore and the US draw on complementary expertise and experience to develop innovative capacity building programmes that meet the priority needs of ASEAN member countries.

MARGARET LIANG

Ms. Margaret Liang is Associate Trainer for the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA); Senior Adjunct Fellow of the Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University Singapore and Senior Fellow of the MFA Diplomatic Academy.

She served as Director (Trade Policy) of the Singapore Trade Development Board and subsequently as Director of the International Economics Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She has served in Singapore Missions in Bonn and in Geneva. She was Singapore's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN/WTO in Geneva from 1999-2002. She has been actively involved in GATT/WTO negotiations since the launch of the Uruguay Round.

From 1985-1992, she was Singapore's negotiator in the Uruguay Round, inter-alia, in the areas of Anti-Dumping, Subsidies and Countervailing Duty Measures, Safeguards, Dispute Settlement, GATT Articles and Government Procurement. Thereafter, she was involved in the negotiations in the run-up to the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth WTO Ministerial Conference in 1996, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005.

Ms Liang has considerable experience in international trade law cases before the GATT/WTO, both as advocate and panelist/Chairman. She was a member of the

Singapore team in the WTO dispute settlement case on "Singapore/Malaysia-Import measures on certain petrochemical products".

She has contributed to major academic/WTO seminars and conducted WTO Trade Policy courses at the International Development Law Organisation, Sydney, for Temasek Foundation Centre for Trade Negotiations for Asian developing countries, such as in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Mongolia, Abu Dhabi and Timor-Leste and under Singapore's Technical assistance programmes for Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. Ms Liang also conducts in-house training programmes on WTO and other trade-related issues for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Enterprise Singapore, the Monetary Authority of Singapore and the Singapore Civil Service College.

U.S. Government Inter-Agency Training Team

Coordinated by the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. training team consists of four experts from the U.S. government inter-agency with expertise in trade agreements, trade facilitation, customs issues and small-business facilitation. Our trainers are from the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Small Business Association (SBA), and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

Christina Kopitopoulos is USTR's Director of Customs Affairs where she serves as lead negotiator on bilateral Customs Administration and Trade Facilitation Agreements. She is responsible for creating draft negotiating text and for working with the inter-agency Trade Policy Sub-Committee for formulating U.S. trade policies. She is a member of the WTO Trade Facilitation Negotiation Group. Christina previously served as Senior Attorney-Advisor at the CBP, where she did extensive work on bilateral negotiations and implementation of international agreements. She is a licensed attorney with a Doctor of Law from University of South Carolina School of Law, and a Bachelor's degree from the State University of New York.

Paul Fekete is a Senior International Trade Advisor for USAID's Economic Growth, Education and Environment Bureau (E3), focusing on the development of trade-related technical assistance programs to assist USAID missions in building public and private sector trade capacity and promote developing countries' participation in the international trade system. Prior to joining USAID in 2010, he worked for over 25 years as a consultant providing trade advisory services, technical assistance, training, and institutional strengthening and capacity building for governments and organizations under the auspices of entities such as USAID, WTO, WCO, and the World Bank. He holds an MA in International Affairs from Johns Hopkins University's Nitze School of Advanced International Relations (SAIS) and a BA from Bates College.

Bryan O'Byrne serves as Chief of International Affairs and Trade Policy at the SBA. In this capacity, he directs a team of international trade specialists to help ensure U.S. small business interests are adequately represented in bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations. Previously, he served as Senior WTO and Multilateral Affairs Specialist at the U.S. Department of Commerce. He similarly served as International Agreements Advisor at NASA Headquarters and on the staff the House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee of the U.S. Congress. He earned an M.A. in International Economics from Ritsumeikan University (Kyoto, Japan).

Myles Harmon is the Director of the Commercial and Trade Facilitation Division, Regulations and Rulings (R&R) Office at CBP, where he is responsible for issuing the majority of CBP Headquarters Rulings. These include those governing tariff classification, country of origin marking, valuation, entry procedures, eligibility under the numerous free trade agreements to which the U.S. is a party, and the application of drawback and duty deferral programs. He and his staff provide advice to USTR on Customs matters in trade agreement negotiations. Previously Mr. Harmon has served as Chief, Special Classification and Marking Branch and Director, International Agreements Staff, and led U.S. delegations to the WCO and in developing the Uniform Regulations implementing NAFTA. Mr. Harmon is a member of the International Customs Law Academy, a magna cum laude graduate of

Rutgers College, and a graduate of Boston University School of Law.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This five-day course will explore the importance of fully implementing the TFA and demonstrate how adopting trade facilitation best practices can play a role in development by attracting investment and expanding intraregional trade. The course will enhance the participants' understanding of elements that affect trade and trade facilitation and provide a framework for assessing technical assistance needs and possible program options related to the implementation of the TFA. The program will also highlight the importance of contributions from non-customs agencies with responsibilities in customs and border operations to achieve a successful implementation of the Agreement.

COURSE OUTLINE

Course topics include the following:

- Improve understanding of the provisions in the TFA, including the schedule for reporting the implementation timeline;
- How to sequence the TFA commitments for effective and successful implementation;
- Discuss challenges and best practices in implementing priority commitments that have the most significant impact on reducing trade costs, especially for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs): Publication and internet, Reduction of formalities, and Advance rulings and;
- The role of the private sector in comprehensive implementation of the TFA

(See attached Annex for programme Agenda)

METHODOLOGY

Classes will be conducted in a lecture style by experienced trainers from relevant government agencies, the private sector and/or academia, with opportunities for group discussions, sharing sessions, case studies and/or evaluation sessions. Site visits to relevant agencies and facilities may be arranged.

COURSE DURATION / VENUE

The course will be held from **11 to 15 September 2017** in Singapore.

NUMBER OF TRAINING AWARDS

Up to **thirty (30)** training awards are available for this course.

INVITED COUNTRIES

Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Applicants should be:

- Nominated by their Government;
- Senior Government officials of ASEAN member States from various government ministries, agencies and other bodies involved in:
 - (i) Customs procedures and border clearance of goods;
 - (ii) Negotiations and implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement
- This should include, but not limited to Ministry of Commerce and Trade, Ministry of Finance, Justice and Agriculture, customs and other border authorities with equities in implementing the TFA;
- Proficient in English;
- Be prepared to participate actively in the programme; and
- In good health

TERMS OF AWARD

This course is sponsored by the Government of Singapore and the Government of the United States of America (U.S.) under the Singapore-United States Third Country Training Programme (TCTP). Under this TCTP, the Governments of Singapore and the U.S. will bear the following expenses for successful applicants, thereafter known as

“participants”, during the course in Singapore.

These expenses include:

- An Economy Class round-trip air ticket;
- A daily training allowance of One Hundred and Twenty Singapore Dollars (S\$120) from the first day to the last day of the course. A proportionate reduction in the daily training allowance will be made if you are unable to attend the full duration of the course. You may wish to bring additional funds to cover your expenses in Singapore;
- Transportation to the training venue and site visits;
- Training fees, including lecture fees, administrative fees, and teaching materials;
- Medical insurance for participants to cover accident and hospitalisation during their stay in Singapore in accordance with the policy of a local insurance company; and
- Accommodation for the entire duration of the course. Complimentary breakfast is provided in the hotel from the first day to one day after the course.

Note:

- (i) Participants are advised to have some money for miscellaneous expenses that might be incurred prior to receiving their training allowance;
- (ii) Out-patient medical/dental treatment expenses will not be covered under the medical insurance scheme.

REGULATIONS

Participants are required to comply with the following:

- a) To strictly observe course schedules and not to change training subjects;
- b) Not to bring any member of their family or personal aide for the duration of the course;
- c) To carry out such instructions and abide by such conditions as may be stipulated by the nominating Government or the Government of Singapore with respect to the course;

- d) To refrain from engaging in political activities, or any form of employment for profit or gain while in Singapore;
- e) To discontinue the course, in the event they fall seriously ill and are considered unable to continue the training, or have committed an improper act; and
- f) To return to their respective home countries upon completion of the course.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

(Closing date for nomination: **17 August 2017**)

The Governments of Singapore and the United States are pleased to invite the respective National Focal Points for Technical Assistance to nominate up to **five (5)** suitable candidates for consideration. At least one of the five candidates should be managers from the country's Customs and/or Border Authority. Remaining candidates should be authorities from other branches of government with responsibilities in implementing the TFA and/or other duties related to border management and regulation. These candidates should have experience in Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, Standards, or management of border taxes or fees.

Selection of candidates for the limited number of training awards will be based on merit and relevance of the course material to the applicants' duties. The Governments of Singapore and the US seek the understanding of the respective National Focal Points for Technical Assistance in the event that their nominee is not selected.

All nominations are to be carried out using the official application form. Application forms should be printed or typed, and in black ink.

Completed application forms are to be submitted and should reach the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore or respective US Embassy POC** no later than **17 August 2017**.

For the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs, please address the forms to:

**The Director-General
Technical Cooperation Directorate
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore**

**Tanglin
Singapore 248163**

Attn: Ms Jasmine Loy

DID: (65) 6379 8472

Fax: (65) 6479 3357

Email: Jasmine_Loy@mfa.gov.sg

- To expedite the process, a copy of the completed application forms can be scanned and sent via email or fax to the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore**. The original hardcopy can be mailed through diplomatic or normal channels.
- All application forms should be completed in full and **must** bear the endorsement of the respective Ministry of Foreign Affairs or National Focal Point for Technical Assistance.
- Incomplete application forms or forms which are not endorsed will not be accepted.
- Applicants should refrain from making telephone, fax and email inquiries on the status of their applications.
- The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore** will inform all applicants of the outcome of their applications. Their National Focal Point will also be informed directly or through Singapore's diplomatic representation in the nominating country.

INFORMATION ON SINGAPORE

For more information about Singapore, please visit the Singapore Tourism Board website at **<http://www.yoursingapore.com>**

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