



INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF NON-TARIFF MEASURES

2012 VERSION



UNITED NATIONS
New York and Geneva, 2015

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UNCTAD/DITC/TAB/2012/2/Rev.1

UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATION

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INTRODUCTION

Non-tariff measures are generally defined as policy measures other than ordinary customs tariffs that can potentially have an economic effect on international trade in goods, changing quantities traded, or prices or both (UNCTAD/DITC/TAB/2009/3). Since this definition is broad, a detailed classification is of critical importance so as to better identify and distinguish among the various forms of non-tariff measures.

The classification of non-tariff measures presented here is a taxonomy of all those measures considered relevant in today's situation in international trade. It is based on the UNCTAD Coding System and was developed by several international organizations forming what was called the MAST group (Multi-Agency Support Team) to support the Group of Eminent Persons on Non-tariff Barriers established by the Secretary General of UNCTAD in 2006. The final proposal by the MAST group was revised by UNCTAD and all relevant Divisions of the WTO Secretariat. The classification was tested in the field by UNCTAD and ITC for data collection. The work ranged from 2007 to 2012. This version is presented as the 2012 version, the outcome of that discussion and testing. The classification is seen as evolving and should adapt to the reality of international trade and data collection needs.

The MAST team discussed and proposed this classification, and is composed of:

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,
- International Monetary Fund,
- International Trade Centre,
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development,
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization,
- World Bank,
- World Trade Organization (WTO)

This classification comprises technical measures, such as sanitary or environmental protection measures, as well as others traditionally used as instruments of commercial policy, e.g. quotas, price control, exports restrictions, or contingent trade protective measures, and also other behind-the-border measures, such as competition, trade-related investment measures, government procurement or distribution restrictions.

This classification does not judge on legitimacy, adequacy, necessity or discrimination of any form of policy intervention used in international trade. It acknowledges existence and is designed to organize information in a database format. Transparent, reliable and comparable information can contribute to an understanding of the phenomenon and help exporters worldwide to access information, as it happens with tariffs. Transparent information is also needed for any negotiations that could lead to harmonization and mutual recognition and thus enhance trade.

The International Classification develops a tree/branch structure where measures are categorized into chapters, depending on their scope and/or design. Then each chapter is further differentiated into several subgroups to allow a finer classification of the regulations affecting trade. The classification of non-tariff measures encompasses 16 chapters (A to P), and each individual chapter is divided into groupings with depth up to three levels (one, two and three digits, following the same logic of the Harmonized System classification for products).¹ Although a few chapters reach the three-digit level of disaggregation, most of them stop at two digits. The chapters of the classification are illustrated in the table below. All chapters reflect the requirements of the importing country on its imports, with the exception of measures imposed on exports by the exporting country (chapter P).

¹ Also, measures are listed in each subgroup with numbers, while the digit 9 is always kept for all other cases not listed within that subgroup.

Non tariff measure classification by chapter

Imports	Technical measures	A SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES B TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE C PRE-SHIPMENT INSPECTION AND OTHER FORMALITIES
	Non technical measures	D CONTINGENT TRADE-PROTECTIVE MEASURES E NON-AUTOMATIC LICENSING, QUOTAS, PROHIBITIONS AND QUANTITY-CONTROL MEASURES OTHER THAN FOR SPS OR TBT REASONS F PRICE-CONTROL MEASURES, INCLUDING ADDITIONAL TAXES AND CHARGES G FINANCE MEASURES H MEASURES AFFECTING COMPETITION I TRADE-RELATED INVESTMENT MEASURES J DISTRIBUTION RESTRICTIONS K RESTRICTIONS ON POST-SALES SERVICES L SUBSIDIES (EXCLUDING EXPORT SUBSIDIES UNDER P7) M GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT RESTRICTIONS N INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY O RULES OF ORIGIN
	Exports	P EXPORT-RELATED MEASURES

Chapter A deals with sanitary and phytosanitary measures, which are generally referred to as SPS. It gathers measures such as restriction for substances and ensuring food safety, and those for preventing dissemination of disease or pests. Chapter A also includes all conformity-assessment measures related to food safety, such as certification, testing and inspection, and quarantine.

Chapter B collects technical measures, also called TBT. It refers to measures such as labelling, standards on technical specifications and quality requirements, and other measures protecting the environment. As in the case for SPS, chapter B also includes all conformity-assessment measures related to technical requirements, such as certification, testing and inspection. The last chapter in the technical measures section is chapter C, which classifies the measures related to pre-shipment inspections and other customs formalities.

Chapter D groups the contingent measures, i.e. those measures implemented to counteract particular adverse effects of imports in the market of the importing country, including measures aimed at unfair foreign trade practices. They include antidumping, countervailing, and safeguard measures.

Chapters E and F are the “hard” group of measures, traditionally used in trade policy. Chapter E includes licensing, quotas and other quantity control measures, including Tariff rate quotas. Chapter F lists price-control measures implemented to control or affect the prices of imported goods. Among the examples are those to support the domestic price of certain products when the import prices of these goods are lower; to establish the domestic price of certain products because of price fluctuation in domestic markets, or price instability in a foreign market; or to increase or preserve tax revenue. This category also includes measures other than tariffs measures that increase the cost of imports in a similar manner (nara-tariff

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