The Government of Tanzania has launched the Tanzania Trade Information Portal , a one-stop platform gathering all information relating to import, export and transit through the country. The portal will be inaugurated today at a ceremony in Dar es Salaam organised by TanTRADE, the Tanzania Trade Development Authority, that also manages the portal.

Trade Information Portals are information technology tools offering traders information on trade procedures for import, export and transit. Article 1.2.1 of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) makes the adoption of such mechanisms mandatory for WTO members, establishing that: “Each Member shall make available, and update to the extent possible and as appropriate, the following through the internet: (a) a description of its procedures for importation, exportation, and transit, including procedures for appeal or review, that informs governments, traders, and other interested parties of the practical steps needed for importation, exportation, and transit; (b) the forms and documents required for importation into, exportation from, or transit through the territory of that Member; (c) contact information on its enquiry point(s)”.

Even though article 1.2.1 TFA does not expressly mentions trade information portals, these tools represent today the prevalent modality with which WTO members implement Article 1.2.1 TFA. Moreover, the following article of the TFA (Art. 1.2.3.), encourages Members to make available further trade-related information through the internet, including relevant trade-related legislation and other items referred to: procedures for importation, exportation, and transit and required forms and documents; applied rates of duties and taxes of any kind imposed on or in connection with importation or exportation; fees and charges imposed by or for governmental agencies on or in connection with importation, exportation or transit; rules for the classification or valuation of products for customs purposes; laws, regulations, and administrative rulings of general application relating to rules of origin; import, export or transit restrictions or prohibitions; penalty provisions for breaches of import, export, or transit formalities; procedures for appeal or review; agreements or parts thereof with any country or countries relating to importation, exportation, or transit; and procedures relating to the administration of tariff quotas.

In the East African Community Trade Portals follow a common standard. For instance, trade portals in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have a similar architecture and are integrated in the Regional Trade Information Portal of the East African Community , to which the new Tanzania Trade Information Portal has been linked as well.