

Somalia has joined the list of African countries that have adopted a trade information portal to guide their businesses in cross-border trade, in an attempt to lower costs and simplify trade procedures for Somali importers and exporters. Trade Information Portals are information technology tools whose aim is to increase transparency in trade transactions by offering traders a one-stop-shop with comprehensive information on procedures for import, export and transit.

Trade Information Portals are among the trade facilitation measures regulated by the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), that at Article 1.2.1 requires WTO members to make available through the internet, and update to the extent possible and as appropriate, procedures on importation, exportation, and transit, including the main regulation applicable and forms and documents required.

Although Somalia is not yet a member of the WTO, the initiative aims at facilitating the country's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Somalia started its WTO accession path on 7 November 2016, while the Working Party charged with the task to guide its accession process was established on 7 December 2016. This includes the submission in May 2020 of the Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR), the document that outlines the country's trade and economic policies as well as trade agreements with other countries, whose access at the moment is still restricted, which means that currently is not available to the public until it will be "[derestricted](#)".

The Federal government of Somalia has proved to be particularly active in implementing trade facilitation reforms. In March 2020, a National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) was established, a national forum presided over by the Prime Minister that is charged with the task of overseeing reforms aimed at facilitating trade, streamlining controls and procedures related to the import, export and transit of goods.

The [Somalia Trade Information Portal](#) gathers more than 90 laws, regulations, procedures, and other trade-related measures from over a dozen government agencies. It also offers access to licences, permits, and applicable fees. At the moment information on transit procedures is still missing, but it will be integrated in the portal at a later stage.

