



WORLD TRADE  
ORGANIZATION

## DISCLAIMER

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The Handbook on Notification Requirements does not constitute a legal interpretation of the notification obligations under the respective Agreement(s) or relevant legal provision(s). It has been prepared by the Secretariat to assist Members in complying with their notification obligations.

# TECHNICAL COOPERATION HANDBOOK ON NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

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LEGAL PROVISIONS ON  
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS  
(GATT AND GATS)

REVISED 30 JUNE 2022

This section of the Handbook on Notification Requirements covers the notification obligations under the **LEGAL PROVISIONS ON BALANCE OF PAYMENTS (GATT AND GATS)**. It consists of the following five parts:

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TEXT OF  
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PROVISIONS

**For Members which acceded pursuant to Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement, their respective Protocols of Accession may contain notification obligations in addition to those set out in the WTO Agreements, and may govern the deadlines for the submission of their initial notifications.**

## PART 1

## OVERVIEW OF NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

## WHAT MUST BE NOTIFIED?

The legal provisions on balance of payments (GATT and GATS) provide for five main types of notifications- with only one of them applying to all Members:

- Notification of restrictive measures (import restriction) that a Member may take for Balance-of-Payments purposes (BOP measures);
- Notification of time-schedules for the removal of BOP measures;
- Notification of changes in the application of BOP measures, as they occur; and
- Consolidated notification, on a yearly basis, including all changes in laws, regulations, policy statements or public notices.
- Members which have reason to believe that a restrictive import measure applied by another Member was taken for balance-of-payments purposes may bring the matter to the attention of the Committee on Balance-of-Payments to enable Members to seek further information and clarification on the measure. This provision may amount to a granting a right to make a reverse notification.

These notifications are governed by:

- With respect to trade in goods, [Article II of the GATT 1947 and Article XVIII of the GATT 1947](#), as complemented initially by the [Declaration on Trade Measures Taken for Balance-of-Payments Purposes approved by the \(GATT\) CONTRACTING PARTIES on 28 November 1979](#), and then by the [Understanding on the Balance-of-Payments Provisions of the GATT 1994](#); and
- With respect to trade in services, [Article XII of the GATS](#). As a practical matter, the procedural requirements of the Understanding on the Balance-of-Payments Provisions of the GATT 1994 (including on notifications) apply equally to measures introduced or maintained under [Article XII of the GATS](#).

## WHICH MEMBERS MUST NOTIFY?

The notification obligations related to the introduction of BOP measures, the adoption of time-schedules for the removal of such measures, changes in the application of such measures and/or of time schedules, as well as the annual consolidated notification, apply to **all Members that chose to apply BOP measures**.

Reverse notification may be made by any other Member.

## WHEN TO NOTIFY?

The 1979 Declaration states that the Members shall "promptly" notify the introduction or intensification of BOP measures. The [Understanding on the Balance-of-Payments Provisions of the GATT 1994](#) clarifies that a member shall notify, "as soon as possible" the introduction of or any changes in the application of BOP measures, as well as any modifications in time-schedules for the removal of such measures. Moreover, according to the same Understanding, significant changes shall be notified "prior to or not later than 30 days after their announcement".

The "consolidated notification" shall be performed "on a yearly basis".

There is no clear timing specified in the case of reverse-notification.

## HOW TO NOTIFY?<sup>1</sup>

There is no adopted format of notification though some guidelines are given by the relevant legal texts as to the type of information that shall be provided. More details and references are contained in the next section below ([Part 2](#)).

<sup>1</sup> All notifications, regardless of their subject content or the requirement under which they are being submitted, must be directed to the administrator of the Central Registry of Notifications (CRN), as indicated in document [WT/INF/25/Rev.2](#). Notifications may be submitted through online submission systems, as electronic attachments to emails, or on paper. As it may be practice, a copy of the notification may be sent to the Secretariat unit substantively handling the notification.

## PART 2

## LISTING OF THE NOTIFICATION OBLIGATIONS

	WHAT MUST BE NOTIFIED?		WHICH MEMBERS MUST NOTIFY?	WHEN TO NOTIFY?		HOW TO NOTIFY?		
	Notification requirements	Type of measure	Members notifying	Periodicity	Comments on Periodicity	Format	To whom <sup>2</sup>	Notification Symbol
1.	Understanding on the Balance-of-Payments Provisions of the GATT 1994 <a href="#">paragraph 9</a> <sup>3</sup> (Notification and documentation).	Introduction of restrictive import measures taken for balance-of-payments purposes (BOP measure).	Member that takes a BOP measure	One time	To be notified "promptly", further clarified as "as soon as possible". Changes to be notified as they occur.	No	General Council	WT/BOP/N/*
2.	Understanding on the Balance-of-Payments Provisions of the GATT 1994 <a href="#">paragraph 9</a> <sup>3</sup> (Notification and documentation).	Any changes in BOP measure.	Member that takes a BOP measure	<i>Ad hoc</i>	Whenever practical, but Significant changes shall be notified prior to or not later than 30 days after their announcement.	No	General Council	WT/BOP/N/*
3.	Understanding on the Balance-of-Payments Provisions of the GATT 1994 <a href="#">paragraph 1</a> <sup>3</sup> (Application of Measures).	Time-schedules for the removal of BOP measure.	Member that takes a BOP measure	One time	Whenever practical. Changes to be notified as they occur.	No	General Council	WT/BOP/N/*

<sup>2</sup> All notifications, regardless of their subject content or the requirement under which they are being submitted, must be directed to the administrator of the Central Registry of Notifications (CRN), as indicated in document [WT/INF/25/Rev.2](#). Notifications may be submitted through online submission systems, as electronic attachments to emails, or on paper. As it may be practice, a copy of the notification may be sent to the Secretariat unit substantively handling the notification.

<sup>3</sup> As complemented by the Declaration on Trade Measures taken for Balance-of-Payments purposes (1979 Declaration, paragraph 3), which was complementing Articles XII and XVIII:B of the GATT 1994.

## PART 2

## LISTING OF THE NOTIFICATION OBLIGATIONS

	WHAT MUST BE NOTIFIED?		WHICH MEMBERS MUST NOTIFY?	WHEN TO NOTIFY?		HOW TO NOTIFY?		
	Notification requirements	Type of measure	Members notifying	Periodicity	Comments on Periodicity	Format	To whom <sup>2</sup>	Notification Symbol
4.	Understanding on the Balance-of-Payments Provisions of the GATT 1994 <a href="#">paragraph 1</a> <sup>3</sup> (Application of Measures).	Any modification in time-schedules of the removal of BOP measure.	Member that takes a BOP measure	<i>Ad hoc</i>	Whenever practical, but significant changes shall be notified prior to or not later than 30 days after their announcement.	No	General Council	WT/BOP/N/*
5.	Understanding on the Balance-of-Payments Provisions of the GATT 1994 <a href="#">paragraph 10</a> <sup>3</sup> (Notification and Documentation).	Any restrictive import measure applied by a Member that another Member believes to have been taken for Balance-of-Payments purposes (Reverse Notification).	Any Member	One time		No	Committee on Balance-of-Payments Restrictions	WT/BOP/N/*

<sup>2</sup> All notifications, regardless of their subject content or the requirement under which they are being submitted, must be directed to the administrator of the Central Registry of Notifications (CRN), as indicated in document [WT/INF/25/Rev.2](#). Notifications may be submitted through online submission systems, as electronic attachments to emails, or on paper. As it may be practice, a copy of the notification may be sent to the Secretariat unit substantively handling the notification.

<sup>3</sup> As complemented by the Declaration on Trade Measures taken for Balance-of-Payments purposes (1979 Declaration, paragraph 3), which was complementing Articles XII and XVIII:B of the GATT 1994.

## PART 2

## LISTING OF THE NOTIFICATION OBLIGATIONS

	WHAT MUST BE NOTIFIED?		WHICH MEMBERS MUST NOTIFY?	WHEN TO NOTIFY?		HOW TO NOTIFY?		
	Notification requirements	Type of measure	Members notifying	Periodicity	Comments on Periodicity	Format	To whom <sup>2</sup>	Notification Symbol
6.	Understanding on the Balance-of-Payments Provisions of the GATT 1994 <a href="#">paragraph 9</a> <sup>3</sup> (Notification and documentation).	Consolidated Notification.	Member that takes a BOP measure	Regular – Annual	On a yearly basis for as long as the measures concerned are in place.	No (No formal template, but indicative list of elements to include is identified <sup>4</sup> )	Made available to the WTO Secretariat	WT/BOP/N/*
7.	General Agreement on Trade in Services <a href="#">Article XII paragraph 4</a> (Restrictions to safeguard the Balance-of-Payments).	BOP measure introduced or maintained.	Member that takes a BOP measure	One time	To be notified "promptly", further clarified as "as soon as possible".	No	General Council	WT/BOP/N/*

<sup>2</sup> All notifications, regardless of their subject content or the requirement under which they are being submitted, must be directed to the administrator of the Central Registry of Notifications (CRN), as indicated in document [WT/INF/25/Rev.2](#). Notifications may be submitted through online submission systems, as electronic attachments to emails, or on paper. As it may be practice, a copy of the notification may be sent to the Secretariat unit substantively handling the notification.

<sup>3</sup> As complemented by the Declaration on Trade Measures taken for Balance-of-Payments purposes (1979 Declaration, paragraph 3), which was complementing Articles XII and XVIII:B of the GATT 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Notification should include, as appropriate, "all changes in laws, regulations, policy statements or public notices related to the restrictive import measures taken for balance-of-payments purposes. Notifications shall include full information, as far as possible, at the tariff-line level, on the type of measures applied, the criteria used for their administration, product coverage and trade flows affected".

## PART 2

## LISTING OF THE NOTIFICATION OBLIGATIONS

	WHAT MUST BE NOTIFIED?		WHICH MEMBERS MUST NOTIFY?	WHEN TO NOTIFY?		HOW TO NOTIFY?		
	Notification requirements	Type of measure	Members notifying	Periodicity	Comments on Periodicity	Format	To whom <sup>2</sup>	Notification Symbol
8.	General Agreement on Trade in Services <a href="#">Article XII paragraph 4</a> (Restrictions to safeguard the Balance-of-Payments).	Any changes to BOP measure.	Member that takes a BOP measure	<i>Ad hoc</i>	To be notified "promptly", further clarified as "as soon as possible", but significant changes shall be notified prior to or not later than 30 days after their announcement.	No	General Council	WT/BOP/N/*

<sup>2</sup> All notifications, regardless of their subject content or the requirement under which they are being submitted, must be directed to the administrator of the Central Registry of Notifications (CRN), as indicated in document [WT/INF/25/Rev.2](#). Notifications may be submitted through online submission systems, as electronic attachments to emails, or on paper. As it may be practice, a copy of the notification may be sent to the Secretariat unit substantively handling the notification.

## PART 3

## RELEVANT DOCUMENT(S) CONCERNING GUIDELINES AND FORMATS

While there is no adopted format of notification, some guidelines are given by the relevant legal texts as to the type of information that shall be provided. More details and references are contained in the above section ([Part 2](#)).



## PART 4

### LIST OF NOTIFICATIONS SINCE 1995

The [Balance-of-payments](#) WTO dedicated website has a section on "Search Documents Online" which features direct access to all BOP notifications made by Members and published under the series [WT/BOP/N/\\*](#) (where \* takes additional values).

With respect to trade in services, to date, no notification has ever been made.

## PART 5

## TEXT OF THE LEGAL PROVISIONS

## WITH RESPECT TO TRADE IN GOODS

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General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs 1947: [Article 2](#).

General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs 1947: [Article XVIII:B](#).

Understanding on the Balance-of-Payments Provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994 [LT/UR/A-1A/1/GATT/U/3](#).

Balance-of-Payments import restrictions – Consultation procedures; Note by the Chairman of the Committee on Balance-of-Payments Restrictions (L/3388) – BISD 18S/48-53; presented to the GATT Council on 28 April 1970.

Balance-of-Payments import restrictions – Procedures for regular consultations on Balance-of-Payments restrictions with developing countries (L73772/Rev.1), - BISD 20S/47-49; approved by the GATT council on 19 December 1972.

Declaration on Trade Measures Taken for Balance-of-Payments Purposes (L/4904) – BISD 26S/205-209; adopted by the (GATT) CONTRACTING PARTIES on 28 November 1979.

## WITH RESPECT TO TRADE IN SERVICES

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General Agreement on Trade in Services: [Article XII](#).

As a practical matter, the procedural requirements of the [Understanding on the Balance-of-Payments Provisions of the GATT 1994](#) (including on notifications) apply equally to measures introduced or maintained under Article XII of the GATS.