

-^{p.}05 -New Customs Operations Command officially opens



Customs Operations Command was officially opened by

Mr Lawrence Wong Minister for National Development and Second Minister for Finance on 15 November 2019

FEATURES Highlights of the Year



SPOTLIGHT

Features of Customs Operations Command Networked Trade Platform launches one-stop multi-bank portal

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EDITORS' NOTE

This year marks an important milestone in Singapore Customs' transformation journey, as we celebrate the opening of our new Customs Operations Command building at Bulim Drive.

The new building, which was officially opened by Minister for National Development and Second Minister for Finance, Mr Lawrence Wong, on 15 November 2019, combines enforcement and compliance functions under one roof. Details are on pages 6 to 7.

On the international front, an agreement on electronic data exchange was signed with Indonesia on 8 October 2019. The agreement, among the many we concluded this year, promotes a seamless, paperless and secure business environment for companies engaged in bilateral trade between both countries (page 3).

Besides our international efforts, we continued with our enforcement operations against contraband cigarettes and liquor on the local front. Such operations are part of Singapore Customs' regular enforcement to suppress the demand and supply of duty-unpaid cigarettes and liquor. Read more about our enforcement highlights on pages 4 and 5.

Finally, as the last issue for the year, we thought it would be fitting to include a round-up of the key highlights for the past year, before we conclude the year and start afresh in January (pages 1 and 2).

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of inSYNC.

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Design by Oxygen Studio Designs Pte Ltd

TAN XIAN LIN AND ISABEL CHIA Editors

Highlights of the Year

22 JANUARY 2019 🛉

The Info-communications Media Development Authority joined the threeparty Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, Singapore Customs, and the Singapore Shipping Association, to develop an interoperability framework for electronic trade documents across more digital solutions.

26 JANUARY 2019

Singapore Customs joined the international customs community in celebrating the **International Customs Day** and presented the World Customs Organisation (WCO) Certificate of Merit to nine officers who demonstrated commitment in their work towards the "SMART borders" theme.

JAN - MAR 2019

The joint efforts of Singapore Customs, National Parks Board (NParks), and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) resulted in the successful seizures of pangolin scales and elephant ivory in two separate shipments within five days. Worth over \$100 million in total, the shipments had originated from Nigeria and were bound for Vietnam.

APRIL 2019

Singapore Customs signed two MOUs with the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) on electronic data exchange and information sharing. The signing was witnessed by Singapore's Prime Minister (PM), Mr Lee Hsien Loong, and Chinese Premier, Mr Li Kegiang, as part of PM Lee's visit to Beijing, China to attend the 2nd Belt and Road Forum.

29 APRIL 2019

23 FEBRUARY 2019

Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Mr Chee Hong Tat, announced at a student conference at the National University of Singapore that microbreweries could pay a pro-rated licence fee in the first year, instead of committing to an annual fee upfront, with effect from 1 May 2019. The move benefited small businesses and start-ups in the microbrewery industry, as they do not need to bear the full licence cost upfront.

> APR - JUN 2019

Singapore Customs inked a Mutual Recognition Arrangement of Authorised **Economic Operator** programme with New Zealand Customs Service, making it the 10th such arrangement Singapore has signed with other customs administrations. The arrangement, in line with WCO's standards, enhances supply chain security by recognising certified companies as lower risk and granting them a higher level of facilitation.

27 JUNE 2019



21 JULY 2019

Another major haul of pangolin scales and elephant ivory was seized by Singapore Customs, NParks and ICA. 11.9 tonnes of pangolin scales and 8.8 tonnes of elephant ivory were found in a shipment that was said to contain timber. For its work in combating illegal wildlife trade, Singapore Customs was named as one of the recipients of the 2019 UN Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards in November 2019, together with NParks, ICA and the China authorities.

5 SEPTEMBER 2019 🔶

A new government e-service, **Trade Finance Compliance**, was launched on the Networked Trade Platform, to help solve banks' inability to validate the underlying trade and the lack of reliable data to conduct price checks for non-commodity goods. The new e-service is a result of a joint government-industry partnership between Singapore Customs, the Monetary Authority of Singapore and leading financial institutions.

18 – 19 SEPTEMBER 2019 🔹

Singapore Customs seized more than 26,000 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes in two consecutive days, which marked some of the largest seizures in 2019.

Minister for National

Development and

the new Customs

building which

and compliance

functions under one

Singapore Customs'

current and future

15 NOVEMBER 2019

roof, and is catered to

operational needs. See

pages 6 to 9 for details.

Second Minister for

Finance, Mr Lawrence

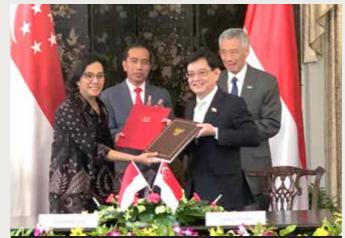
Wong, officially opened

Operations Command

combines enforcement

International efforts to bring about greater facilitation and collaboration

••• Working with foreign counterparts is an essential component of Singapore Customs' role in strengthening Singapore's position as a global trade hub. Singapore Customs also recognises the importance of knowledge exchange with our foreign counterparts to deepen collaboration and facilitate trade growth.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Mr Heng Swee Keat (right), and Indonesia's Minister for Finance, Sri Mulyani Indrawati, signed the Singapore-Indonesia Agreement on Electronic Data Exchange during the Singapore-Indonesia Leaders' Retreat.

SINGAPORE-INDONESIA AGREEMENT ON ELECTRONIC DATA EXCHANGE

An agreement was signed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Mr Heng Swee Keat, and Indonesia's Minister for Finance, Sri Mulyani Indrawati, on 8 October 2019 during the Singapore-Indonesia Leaders' Retreat held in Singapore. The agreement reaffirmed Singapore and Indonesia's commitment to promote a seamless, paperless and secure business environment for companies engaged in bilateral trade between both countries.

Singapore Customs, the Indonesia Directorate General of Customs and Excise, and the Indonesia National Single Window Agency will explore a proof-ofconcept to enable the exchange and reuse of data via a system link-up between both countries' National Single Windows to bring about greater trade facilitation. The exchange of trade data will allow both customs administrations to expedite clearance of legitimate trade and enhance supply chain security through better risk management.

OCT – DEC 2019

JUL – SEP 2019

> Singapore Customs and the GACC signed an MOU to facilitate customs clearance along the Chongging Connectivity Initiative New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor (ILSTC). The signing was witnessed by DPM Heng and Chinese Vice-Premier, Mr Han Zheng. With the inking of the MOU, Singapore Customs and the GACC would commit to strengthening our cooperation at the borders to enhance trade security and trade facilitation along the ILSTC.

> > • 15 OCTOBER 2019

A Singapore – Indonesia agreement on electronic data exchange was signed by Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Minister for Finance, Mr Heng Swee Keat, and Indonesia's Minister for Finance, Sri Mulyani Indrawati, during the Singapore-Indonesia Leaders' Retreat held in Singapore. This agreement promotes a seamless, paperless and secure business environment for companies engaged in bilateral trade between both countries. See page 3 for details.

8 OCTOBER 2019

Participating companies in Singapore and Indonesia can look forward to benefit from a seamless and more efficient declaration process, and enjoy greater ease and facilitation when trading between Singapore and Indonesia.

SHARING ON SINGAPORE'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION'S TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT

On 21 October 2019, Singapore Customs was invited to deliver a presentation on Singapore's implementation of the World Trade Organisation's Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA) during the Singapore – U.S. Third Country Training Program (TCTP) workshop on ASEAN's Implementation of the WTO TFA.

Head of International Relations, Ms Teo Angie, gave a presentation on Singapore Customs' trade facilitation approach, such as enhancing transparency, engaging industries and leveraging technology to enhance digital trade.

The WTO TFA, which entered into force on 22 February 2017, is an international agreement which sets out trade facilitation framework to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods.



Case files: Enforcement Highlights

 Learn what was uncovered during the Singapore Customs officers' operations



WOMAN FINED FOR INVOLVEMENT IN DUTY-UNPAID LIQUOR ACTIVITIES AND POSSESSION OF DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES

On 7 October 2019, Singapore Customs officers mounted an operation at Eunos Industrial Estate and apprehended a woman for involvement in duty-unpaid liquor activities.

The woman had received a consignment declared as soy sauce packed in a wooden crate. Singapore Customs officers conducted a check and uncovered 216 bottles of duty-unpaid liquor instead. In a follow-up search of the woman's residence, Singapore Customs officers also found six cartons and 10 packets of dutyunpaid cigarettes. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about \$23,810 and \$1,660 respectively.

The woman was charged and sentenced by the State Courts on 15 October 2019 to a fine of \$130,000, in default three months', one week's and 30 days' imprisonment, for dealing with duty-unpaid liquor and keeping duty-unpaid cigarettes.

DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES SEIZED FROM TRUCKS

On 19 September 2019, Singapore Customs officers raided a warehouse unit in Gambas Crescent that was suspected to be used for illicit cigarette activities.

Two Singapore-registered bonded trucks and 10,631 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the two trucks were seized. The total duty and GST evaded amounted to about \$918,230 and \$67,640 respectively.

Investigations revealed that the duty-unpaid cigarettes were smuggled from Malaysia using Malaysia-registered trucks and were transferred onto the two Singapore-registered trucks for subsequent delivery to other parts of Singapore.

Nine men were arrested for their involvement in the case. Two men were sentenced by the State Courts in October 2019 to between 30 and 33 months' imprisonment for importation of duty-unpaid cigarettes. Court proceedings against another man is ongoing while investigations are ongoing for the remaining six men.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes uncovered from the truck parked in the warehouse unit.



A total of 10,631 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized.

••• Duty-unpaid cigarettes in unsuspecting cover loads intercepted at the Checkpoints

DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES HIDDEN WITHIN TISSUE PAPER PRODUCTS

On 28 August 2019, Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officers inspected a Malaysia-registered lorry carrying a consignment of tissue paper products at Woodlands Checkpoint and detected a total of



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the tissue paper products.

RETRIEVAL OF DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES FROM 16 CONCRETE BLOCKS

On 27 July 2019, ICA officers inspected a Malaysiaregistered prime mover with a trailer at Tuas Checkpoint which was transporting a consignment of concrete blocks and detected duty-unpaid cigarettes encased in one of the concrete blocks.

Upon taking over the case, Singapore Customs engaged contractors to hack the concrete blocks to retrieve all the hidden cigarettes. A total of 12,479 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were retrieved. The total duty and GST evaded amounted to about \$1,240,430 and \$90,590 respectively.

Through follow-up investigation, Singapore Customs arrested the intended recipient of the concrete blocks. He was charged and sentenced by the State Courts on 3 September 2019 to 36 months' imprisonment for the importation of duty-unpaid cigarettes. 3,115 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden within the consignment.

The lorry and the duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized. The total duty and GST evaded amounted to about \$266,020 and \$19,610 respectively.

The case was referred to Singapore Customs for investigation. The driver was charged and sentenced by the State Courts on 4 September 2019 to 28 months' imprisonment for the importation of duty-unpaid cigarettes.



A total of 3,115 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized.



A mini excavator was used to hack the concrete blocks to retrieve the duty-unpaid cigarettes concealed within it.



New Singapore Customs operations building combines enforcement and compliance functions under one roof

••• The new Customs Operations Command (COC) building situated at Bulim Drive was officially opened by Minister for National Development and Second Minister for Finance, Mr Lawrence Wong, on 15 November 2019.

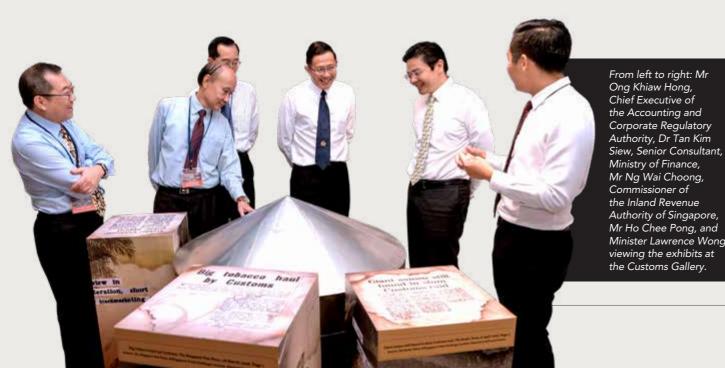
The purpose-built facility caters to Singapore Customs' current and future operational needs, and allows for the full spectrum of intelligence, investigation, and compliance related functions to be integrated under one roof.

In his speech at the opening ceremony, Minister Lawrence Wong said that against the backdrop of globalisation and free trade coming under increasing pressures from protectionism and nationalistic

tendencies, customs authorities across the world have to pursue trade facilitative measures to promote seamless flow of goods across borders.

To this end, Mr Wong urged that Singapore Customs should continue to enable legitimate trade. "Together with like-minded trading partners and jurisdictions, Singapore Customs should continue to promote and support free trade as well as a rules-based multilateral trade order." However, Mr Wong cautioned that "we need to remain a secure and trusted node in the international supply chain. Otherwise, Singapore's excellent connectivity could be exploited for illicit trade."

Recognising that leveraging technology is the way forward, Mr Wong shared that to overcome the increasing workload amidst ageing and shrinking workforce, Singapore Customs is actively looking at harnessing technology to digitalise, automate and innovate to redesign processes to improve productivity.







Mr Ho Chee Pong, Director-General of Customs (standing to the left of the plaque), Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister for National Development and Second Minister for Finance (standing to the right of the plaque), Mrs Tan Ching Yee, Permanent Secretary for Finance (to the right of Minister Wong), and Singapore Customs' senior management team at the official opening of the new COC building



Mr Ho Chee Pong showing Minister Lawrence Wong the different aspects of the Customs Transformation Gallery.

A new Plans and Technology Branch has also been set up to drive science and technology capability development in Singapore Customs. Singapore Customs will be collaborating with the new Home Team Science and Technology Agency, and the Defence Science and Technology Agency under the Ministry of Defence, to operationalise identified technology initiatives in the pipeline.

Agreeing that people is key as the nature of work of Singapore Customs transforms, Director-General

Customs staff showing Minister Lawrence Wong how contraband cigarettes could be hidden in various compartments of a bus.

of Customs, Mr Ho Chee Pong, said: "The new COC provides modern facilities to support our enforcement operations, and the training and development of our officers. These facilities enhance the operational capabilities of Singapore Customs and affirms our commitment to our mission of protecting revenue, and making trade easy, fair and secure. I am confident that the COC will be an important enabler in our Customs' transformation journey ahead."

Features of CUSTOMS OPERATIONS COMMAND

The new Customs Operations Command (COC) sits on a 1.5-hectare land and has a gross floor area of about 21,000 sqm. The new facility comprises a five-storey main block with two basements housing offices and operational facilities, and an auxiliary four-storey block housing a warehouse and a multipurpose hall.

With the new COC, Customs can quickly activate and deploy resources for major cross-divisional enforcement operations. There will also be better synergy in investigation and case development where the investigators and enforcement officers can have face-to-face discussions on cases and trigger follow-up analysis and case follow-up checks.

History of Keppel Road COC

Before moving to the Bulim Drive location, the COC was located at Keppel Road. The Keppel Road building was built in the 1940s and was originally designed to provide office space for Customs staff working at the sea ports and also served as staff quarters. The building was later re-purposed as a base for enforcement operations from the 1960s onwards. The need to find a replacement for the facility arose when Customs was informed in 2009 that the Keppel Road site had been earmarked for re-development.



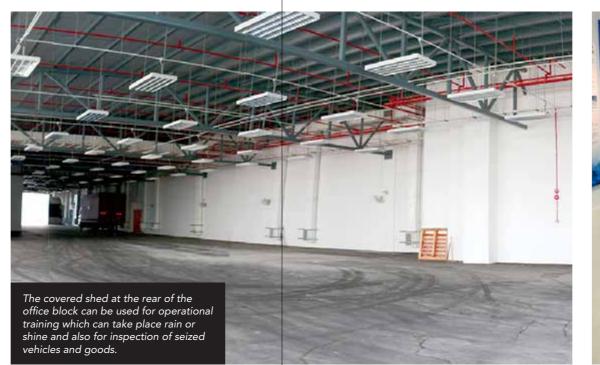


The new COC also houses a bigger warehouse to store seized goods.



Previously, whenever there was a seizure of large vehicles or large quantities of contraband goods like cigarettes, officers had to shift operational vehicles out to surrounding public carparks to make space for the officers to process the goods that were seized.







SPOTLIGHT



Some of the new facilities at the new COC include a padded training area for Customs officers to conduct defence tactics training

he Networked Trade Platform (NTP) Office is proud to support the launch of CamelONE™ Trade Finance at the Singapore FinTech ••• Festival 2019 on 11 November 2019. The multi-bank trade finance portal offers secure and simplified paperless trade finance applications via standardised forms in secure format from nine leading trade finance banks.

> NTP users can reuse their digital trade documents and data via the NTP for their applications, as well as receive real-time status updates on their applications, improving efficiency and productivity for both the banks and users.

CamelONE[™] Trade Finance is the result of a call for collaboration by Singapore Customs in partnership with GovTech Singapore in 2017. To find out more, visit www.go.gov.sg/ ntp-camelone.



Deputy Director-General of Singapore Customs (Corporate and Facilitation) Lim Teck Leong and Director NTPO Serene Ho viewing a live demonstration of CamelONE™ Trade Finance at the vCargo Cloud booth at the Singapore FinTech Festival 2019.

NTP: New Value-Added Services on Board

alue-Added Services (VAS) on the Networked Trade Platform (NTP) meet varied traderelated business needs. These include trade

••• finance, enterprise resource planning (ERP), supply chain management, and more. From August to October 2019, four new VASes were published on the NTP, bringing the total number of VASes to 46.

vCargo Cloud [CamelONE Trade Finance (TFAP)

CamelONE is a multi-bank portal that enables businesses to apply for up to 12 trade finance products via the NTP. The applications are done via secure standardised forms on CamelONE, through the reuse of businesses' digital trade documents and data. Businesses can get real-time updates on applications, request financing conversion, and more.

Get GO Global (GO Freight)

GO Freight provides businesses instant or customised online freight forwarding quotes across Asia for business freight shipments. It allows businesses to pay when booking, and manages business freight any time and on any device.

Enterpryze (ERP Solution)

Enterpryze is a simplified online and mobile business management software powered by Systems Applications and Products in Data Processing (SAP). The software also has integrated bank reconciliation with UOB.

Flywire (Global Business Payments Solution)

Flywire offers full-service billing, payment, and receivables solutions. It enables businesses to invoice international customers in their local currency and for customers to pay in their own currency using familiar payment methods.

The full VAS list is available at www.ntp.gov. sg/public/browse-vas-catalogue.

To find out more about the NTP and sign up for an account, go to www.ntp.gov.sg.

Sushi-making with **Bishan Home residents**

ngapore Customs officers spent a meaningful afternoon at the Bishan Home for the Intellectually Disabled for a fun sushi-••• making activity on 24 September 2019.

Working hand in hand with the residents, our officers assisted them in creating colourful sushi rolls.

As the event was part of the Ministry of Finance (MOF) Family Volunteer Experience Programme, Singapore Customs officers were joined by staff from MOF and the Accountant-General's Department.

The volunteers also pitched in for area cleaning around Bishan Home to help maintain a clean and conducive environment for the residents.

New STP company on board

he Secure Trade Partnership (STP) is a Singapore Customs certification programme that encourages companies to adopt robust

••• security measures and contribute towards improving the security of the global supply chain. It is consistent with the World Customs Organisation SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade. The following company was STP-certified in the third quarter of 2019.





COMPANIES WITH STP STATUS

Batamindo Shipping & Warehousing Pte Ltd Shipping and logistics specialist for Batam

"Being STP-certified is a recognition of our commitment to trade and security compliance. This heightens customers' confidence in us and will make us the preferred business partner for shipping and logistics," said Mr Vincent Tan Kim Swee, General Manager. 🔾

INSYNC (11

DO YOU **KNOW?**

ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION **OF CERTIFICATES** WITH CHINA NOW LIVE

Under the auspices of the upgraded China-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, Singapore Customs and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China had agreed to establish an Electronic Origin Data Exchange System to allow the electronic exchange of the Preferential Certificate of Origin (PCO) and Certificate of Non-Manipulation (CNM) between Singapore and China.



WHEN DID THIS COME INTO EFFECT?

The transmission of the electronic PCO and CNM to China came into effect on 1 November 2019.

⊘ HOW DOES THIS BENEFIT ME?

Before the electronic submission of PCO or CNM, the hardcopies of these certificates needed to be despatched overseas, which incurs cost and could take days. The electronic transmission eliminates this need, enabling companies to enjoy cost and time savings.

⊘ HOW DO I APPLY FOR AN ELECTRONIC PCO?

To apply for an electronic PCO under the China-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (CSFTA) or ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA), you will require a Networked Trade Platform (NTP) account.

- > Once you have an NTP account, submit a one-time declaration at go.gov.sg/eodesregform.
- > Subscribe to the International Connectivity Preferential Certificate of Origin (ICPCO) service in the Value-Added Services catalogue.
- > Apply for the PCO via TradeNet as per the current procedure.
- > Upon approval, the PCO can be retrieved via the ICPCO service in NTP.
- > The electronic PCO can now be submitted to China.

◎ WHAT IF I STILL REQUIRE A HARDCOPY PCO?

Singapore Customs will continue to issue the hardcopy PCO in parallel with the new procedure to ensure a smooth transition. You may choose not to collect the hardcopy PCO from the printing centres. Such uncollected hardcopies will be disposed one month from the date of approval. We will inform you one month in advance when we have firmed up the date to cease the issuance of hardcopy PCO.

⊘ HOW SOON WILL CHINA RECEIVE THE **APPROVED PCO?**

In general, you will be able to retrieve the approved PCO record in the ICPCO service on NTP within one hour from its approval in TradeNet. You can then submit the electronic PCO immediately via ICPCO and China will receive the PCO in real-time.

For more information, refer to **Notice 18/2019** and **Notice 15/2019** on the Customs website. The step-by-step guide to submit the electronic PCO to China can be found at www.go.gov.sg/eodesguidebook.

TRAINING CALENDAR

Please note that dates are subject to change. For full programme and registration details, please refer to www.customsacademy.gov.sg



BASICS OF EVERY DECLARANT

This course provides an overview of customs procedures pertaining to the import and export of goods, the basic requirements for preparing TradeNet declarations, classification of goods, and the rules of origin:

- SC101 Customs Procedures (2 days)
- SC102 Classification and the Harmonised System (half-day)
- SC103 Rules of Origin / Free Trade Agreements (half-day)

Participants may register for individual modules.

SC101

SC100

DATE: 4-5 DEC 2019



OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED MANUFACTURERS

This bimonthly programme is designed to equip newly-registered manufacturers with a better understanding of the rules of origin under Singapore's Free Trade Agreements, the application procedure for certificates of origin, and the compliance requirements.

For enquiries, please email customs_roo@customs.gov.sg •

12) INSYNC







DATE: 12 DEC 2019

STRATEGIC GOODS CONTROL PROGRAMME

This one-day seminar provides an overview of Singapore's strategic goods control system and its regulations, registration procedures and permit requirements for strategic goods transactions, as well as the essentials of an internal (export control) compliance programme.

The seminar comprises two modules:

- SC201 Basics of Strategic Goods Control (half-dav)
- SC202 Essentials of Internal (Export Control) Compliance Programme (half-day)

Participants may register for individual modules.

SC401 .

DATE: 6/13 DEC 2019 AM and PM sessions available

CUSTOMS COMPETENCY TEST FOR DECLARANTS

This module is designed to test an individual's knowledge of customs procedures and documentation requirements. Upon passing this test, the individual can then apply for registration with Singapore Customs as a declarant to submit TradeNet permit declarations.

This is an open-book test comprising 50 multiple-choice questions. The topics tested include: customs procedures, TradeNet declarations, valuation, classification, rules of origin, and specialised procedures. The onehour test can be taken during the morning or afternoon session.



Networked Trade Platform



EXPERIENCE A WHOLE NEW WAY OF DOING TRADE

Networked Trade Platform. A one-stop trade info-ecosystem.

Today's trade and logistics landscape is manual, silo-ed and complex. The NTP aims to change that by helping businesses digitalise, connect, and grow – all on a single platform.

Besides providing the foundation for businesses to go digital, the NTP is the key gateway for the digitised data to be shared and reused, as it allows businesses to connect with their business partners, trade service providers and the government – both locally and globally. Saving businesses time and money. Acting as a trade ecosystem, the NTP enables businesses to improve performance and the flexibility to choose from a wide range of trade related service providers without worrying about additional efforts and costs of maintaining multiple digital connections to various partners.



Find out more at **www.ntp.gov.sg** or email us at **Enquiry_NTP@customs.gov.sg**