

## Seminar

World Trade Organization (WTO)  
*Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)*

Establishing the TBT Enquiry Point for Lebanon

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Establishing the TBT Enquiry Point for Lebanon

– *Development of procedures and resources*

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# WTO TBT Enquiry Point



The formation of TBT **Enquiry Points** throughout the world is one of the **benefits of membership** in the WTO and a significant **resource** for exporters, importers, regulatory authorities, and other stakeholders

# TBT Enquiry Point in Lebanon

## - Development of procedures and resources

- ▶ Focus of this mission
  - TBT Enquiry Point **procedures**
  - **resources** for responding to enquiries
  - ongoing **training**

# Procedures

- ▶ Written operating procedures **describe the processes** used by an organization
- ▶ Helps to ensure **consistency** in the way that staff handles tasks
- ▶ Identify areas for **improvement**
- ▶ Having written procedures makes it easier to **train new staff**
- ▶ Essential for a **quality management system**



## Procedures – LIBNOR Information Center

- ▶ Because LIBNOR has implemented a quality management system and is certified to ISO 9001, some of the procedures required by the TBT Enquiry Point have already been developed for the Information Center
  - *Inquiries and Sales Expediting Process (S4P1)*
  - *Maintenance of Standards Databank (S2P1)*
  
- ▶ These procedures were reviewed and draft amendments were written to ensure that they are applicable to the TBT Enquiry Point operations

# New Procedures – LIBNOR Information Center

- ▶ New draft procedure
  - *Maintenance of Reference Materials (S2P2)*

“This procedure covers maintenance of the reference materials that are used to respond to enquiries (S4P1), which includes: standards, technical regulations, information about conformity assessment procedures, and Lebanon’s memberships and agreements.”

# Enquiry Point Resources

Clients should be provided with the information they require without concern whether or not the reference materials being used by the Enquiry Point are:

- ✓ accurate
- ✓ complete
- ✓ up-to-date

# Enquiry Point Resources

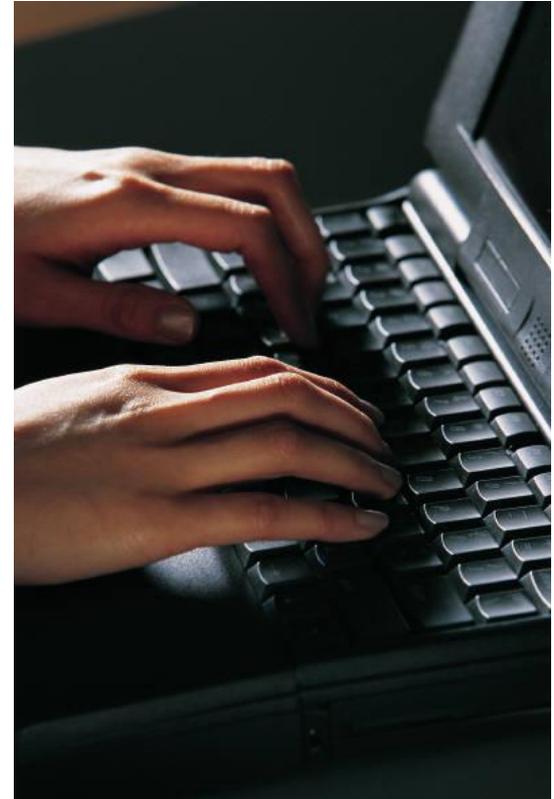
- ▶ Reference collection is the **basic resource** of the Enquiry Point
- ▶ Having adequate reference materials is essential to enable Enquiry Point staff to respond to requests both from within Lebanon and from other WTO members

## Resources include . . .

- ▶ Standards, catalogs, and databases
- ▶ Mandatory requirements of Lebanon
  - laws/decrees
  - regulations
  - decisions
  - etc.
- ▶ Government contacts
- ▶ Other organizations in Lebanon
- ▶ Staff expertise at LIBNOR
- ▶ Standards developing organizations
- ▶ Other Enquiry Points

## Resources - Databases

- ▶ Standards databases
  - LIBNOR
  - commercial
  - online at websites of standards bodies
  
- ▶ Mandatory requirements
  - Lebanese Customs database
  - commercial databases



# Lebanese Customs database

- ▶ On CD-ROM
- ▶ Reference information (not full text)
- ▶ Update frequency?
- ▶ Source of information – all Lebanese authorities
- ▶ Arranged by HS code
  - HS code index is a separate file
- ▶ MS Word document (not a searchable database)

## Commercial databases

- ▶ On CD-ROM
- ▶ Full text
- ▶ Monthly updates
- ▶ Use National Gazette as source of information
  - do not include internal decisions not published in the Gazette
- ▶ Searchable by
  - keyword
  - type (law, decree, decision, etc.)
  - number
  - authority
  - date

## Advantages of electronic tools

- ▶ Fast - usually saves time
- ▶ Up-to-date
- ▶ Traditional tools (catalogs) usually cover only one collection of standards
- ▶ Comprehensive data
- ▶ Sophisticated searching
- ▶ Have to consult many paper catalogs to find information contained in database
- ▶ Multiple access

# Information Flows and relationships

- ▶ The TBT Committee in Lebanon is an essential resource for the Enquiry Point
- ▶ [flow chart](#)

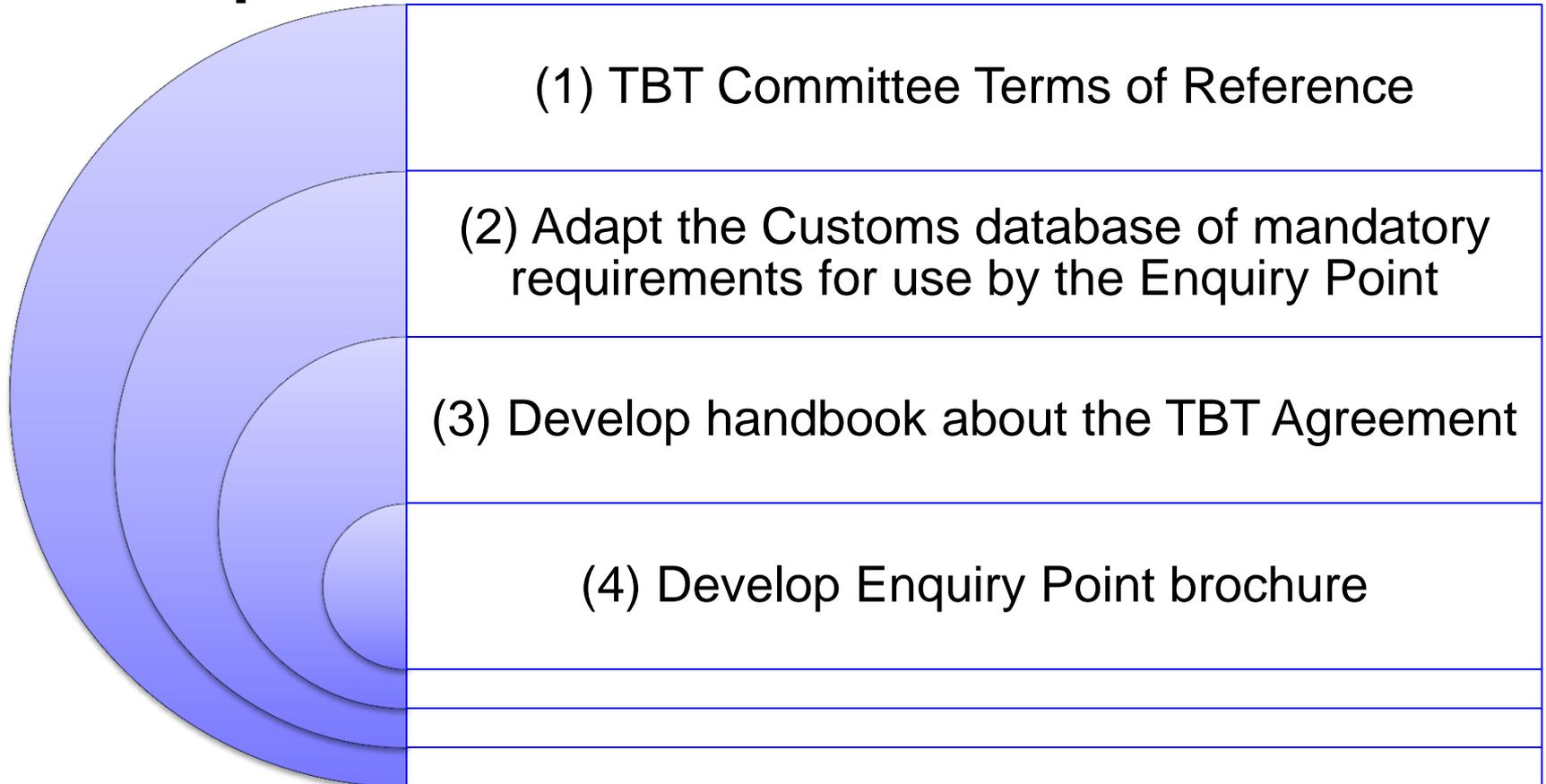
Break



# Establishing the TBT Enquiry Point for Lebanon

## – *Next steps*

# Next steps



# (1) TBT Committee Terms of Reference

- ▶ Terms of Reference should be developed for the TBT Committee which detail the objectives, functions, and membership of the Committee
  - Example

“The TBT Committee of Lebanon is established to advise LIBNOR and regulatory authorities and policy makers in Lebanon on issues related to the implementation and administration of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement).”

# ***DRAFT* Objectives and Functions**

- ▶ Review the operation and administration of the TBT Agreement in Lebanon with regard to Enquiry Point and Notification Authority obligations
- ▶ Review national developments in technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures with regard to the information and transparency obligations of the TBT Agreement
- ▶ Review notifications issued by WTO members and coordinate responses as required
- ▶ Review responses to Lebanon's notifications to the WTO
- ▶ Review issues discussed in the WTO TBT Committee
- ▶ Provide input for the Triennial Reviews of the WTO TBT Committee

# Recommended Membership of the Lebanese TBT Committee

- ▶ Representatives of technical **regulatory agencies**
- ▶ Officials responsible for **economic policy/trade**
- ▶ Representatives of major **trade associations**
- ▶ Representatives of the Lebanese **Chambers of Commerce**, Industry and Agriculture
- ▶ Representatives of **conformity assessment** organizations
- ▶ **LIBNOR**
  - acts as Secretariat and Chair

## (2) Adapt the Lebanese Customs database

- ▶ LIBNOR Information Center has access to this database to enable staff to identify the mandatory requirements for products sold in Lebanon
- ▶ IT resources will be used to adapt the functionality of the database to make it easier to search by product
  - link to full text?

## (3) TBT Handbook

- ▶ Basic introduction to the subject of technical barriers to trade
- ▶ Description of the WTO TBT Agreement
- ▶ Obligations of the government of Lebanon
- ▶ Benefits of the TBT Agreement to stakeholders in Lebanon
- ▶ Information about the institutions that are involved in application of the Agreement in Lebanon
- ▶ Services of the TBT Enquiry Point

## (4) Enquiry Point brochure

- ▶ Basic promotional tool used to communicate information about the services available from the Enquiry Point to potential users
- ▶ To be developed as part of this project

# Target - Launching the TBT Enquiry Point

October 2011							
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
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30	31	<b>Launch WTO TBT Enquiry Point for Lebanon!</b>					