

PRO-ENTERPRISE CHANGES

A boon for importers, exporters

TradeNet's new version makes processing of declarations on imports or exports of goods easier, reports **OH BOON PING**

PROCESSING of declarations on the imports or exports of goods has now become easier – thanks to recent enhancements made to TradeNet, a nation-wide electronic platform for such purposes. TradeNet, which processes an average of 30,000 applications daily, was first implemented in 1989, but underwent a major enhancement last year.

This was done in line with business process review, to simplify the permit structure, and implement new services which generated both cost reduction and time savings for traders and the government. Specifically, the revamp brought together all permit-related transactions such as amendments, cancellations and refunds. The forms were reviewed to reduce the number of declarations required for specific scenarios, for example a single

declaration was introduced to cover import for re-export cases, instead of having to declare the import and re-export movement separately.

To simplify the process, fewer items need to be declared now and involve fewer steps. Information exchange has been improved. A feature has been provided to alert traders of declarations made by another party using their name, while an interactive e-learning module guides users on how to file their declarations under the new structure.

The trading community is happy. Says James Goh, regional vice-president at UPS: "The inward summary report (for IRAS) can be emailed to customers directly from the TradeNet website.

"Previously, UPS had to print and mail out the hard copies. This has helped create better efficiency for both UPS and the general business community users of the TradeNet Version 4.0 and it has also reduced business cost as we now no longer need to mail out those hard-copy documents."

Also, "the number of types of declarations has been reduced from 15 to 4. This simplifies the process. Singapore Customs has leveraged on the technology in TradeNet Version 4.0 to improve the business transaction processes for UPS and the general business community. This is indeed commendable."

Bodynits International's shipping manager Annie Lim told BT:

"The new TradeNet system is more user-friendly compared to the old version. For example, data can now be duplicated freely for application of different types of permits.

"Supporting documents can also be attached and sent electronically to Singapore Customs instead of via fax. This actually saves us a lot of time. In addition, the new system allows us to submit permits for shipments to Mexico, whereas manual submission was required under the old version."

Singapore Customs assistant director-general (trade) Teo Siew Lan said that the revamped TradeNet was designed to make trade easy for businesses.

"By leveraging on technology,

we are able to expedite the transaction processes whilst reducing the cost to businesses. Apart from making it intuitively easier to submit trade declarations, the revamped system enables commercial documents to be attached to the trade declarations. DIY services are also provided in the expanded suite of permit services, which include the download of transaction records, request for copy of approved permit and e-learning modules on trade declarations."

Businesses that wish to make a suggestion to the Pro-enterprise Panel on how to cut red tape can do so at www.pep.gov.sg.

The Pro-Enterprise Panel (PEP) was set up in 2000 to solicit feedback from businesses on how government rules and regulations can be improved to create a more pro-enterprise environment. The PEP is chaired by Civil Service head Peter Ho and comprises mainly private sector business leaders.



ARTHUR LEE

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