

## TPP talks 'very, very advanced': Singapore official

Updated 04:56 PM Apr 26, 2012

SINGAPORE - Negotiations on the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal are "very, very advanced" and will be finished well before other regional efforts such as the proposed East Asia Free Trade Area, the Dow Jones news agency reported, citing a senior Singaporean official.

TPP talks between the nine economies now at the negotiating table are about three-quarters of the way to conclusion, said Dominic Goh, director-general of international economics at Singapore's Foreign Affairs Ministry.

But it remains uncertain if the TPP will expand to include additional countries beyond the nine, Dow Jones cited him as saying at a meeting of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, a business and government discussion group.

Brunei, Chile, New Zealand and Singapore are the four original members of the TPP. Australia, Malaysia, Peru, the United States and Vietnam are currently in negotiations to join. Japan, Canada and Mexico are seeking to join those talks.

Also Thursday, US Trade Representative Ron Kirk said at a briefing in Singapore that while the TPP is in consultation with Canada, Japan and Mexico on joining the bloc, the priority for existing members of the partnership is to conclude the agreement before admitting new members.

URL <http://www.todayonline.com/Business/EDC120426-0000136/TPP-talks-very,-very-advanced--Singapore-official>

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