



Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

**WORKSHOP ON TRANSPARENCY
MONDAY, 12 OCTOBER – TUESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2015**

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Note by the Secretariat¹

1. The Secretariat of the World Trade Organization is organizing a special workshop on the transparency provisions of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 12-13 October 2015. The workshop will be followed by informal and formal meetings of the SPS Committee, lasting until Friday, 16 October 2015. Representatives of Members, Observers and Observer Organizations are all invited to participate in the transparency workshop as well as the subsequent meetings of the Committee.
2. Document G/SPS/GEN/997/Rev.5 provides information on the workshop, the link to the application form, as well as the requirements and the deadline for submission of applications. The WTO, with the financial assistance of the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund (DDAGTF), will sponsor the participation of approximately 50 government officials from developing country Members and Observers. The Secretariat will select participants to be sponsored among applications from government officials in charge of the implementation of the transparency provisions of the SPS Agreement.
3. The workshop is intended to be a highly interactive, "hands-on" event including training on the use of the improved SPS Information Management System (SPS IMS) and on-line submission system of SPS notifications (SPS NSS), while also providing a forum for discussion and experience sharing on developments, challenges and practices in the area of SPS transparency.
4. The workshop will also be an occasion to continue the discussions on transparency started with the joint proposal by Chile, the European Union, Morocco and Norway for actions related to the fulfilment of transparency obligations², which was developed as part of the Fourth Review of the implementation of the SPS Agreement. The Analysis of the Replies to the Questionnaire on Transparency under the SPS Agreement (G/SPS/GEN/1402) provides background information on Members' implementation practices and challenges encountered.
5. Members will be invited to comment on the following draft proposed programme for the workshop at the SPS Committee meeting on 15-16 July 2015.

¹ This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights and obligations under the WTO.

² G/SPS/W/278, which built on two former proposals regarding transparency (G/SPS/W/274 and G/SPS/W/277).

MONDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2015**10:00–10:15****Opening remarks**

Overview of the workshop and its objectives.

10:15–10:45**Session 1: Introduction**

Overview of the transparency provisions in the SPS Agreement and of relevant Committee/Ministerial Decisions

10:45–11:45**Session 2: WTO sources of information**

- *I-TIP; WTO Documents online; light box;*
- *SPS gateway + Presentation of the new version of the SPS IMS*

12:00-13:00**Session 3: Practical session on the use of the SPS IMS**

Participants will break into three groups (i) English speakers, (ii) French speakers and (iii) Spanish speakers.

- *SPS IMS hands-on exercise*

13:00–15:00**Lunch break****15:00–18:00****Session 4: Sharing of national experiences**

Participants will present their experiences and share best practices (8 to 10 speakers, 10 minute presentations) in relation to the implementation of SPS transparency provisions. Presentations could cover the following thematic areas of interest:

- Making information available (public websites; journals or gazettes; translations; etc.);
- Tracking, sorting and distributing incoming notifications (systems and procedures in place; etc.);
- Coordination (*at national level, e.g. to comment on notifications from other Members*);
- Handling of comments (*legal frameworks for administrative procedures; agency procedures for evaluating and responding to comments*);
- Transparency-related Technical Assistance (*success stories; lessons learned*)...

TUESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2015

10:00–10:15	Opening Remarks
10:15–11:00	<p>Session 5: 20 years of Transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Presentation of Members' level of implementation of transparency provisions and decisions (G/SPS/GEN/804/Rev.8)</i>
11:00–11:45	<p>Session 6: Overview of the SPS NSS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>How does the on-line submission facility work?</i> ▪ <i>Presentation of the new SPS NSS platform: what has changed?</i>
12:00–13:00	<p>Session 7: Practical session on how to prepare notifications (SPS NSS)</p> <p><i>Participants will break into three groups (i) English speakers, (ii) French speakers and (iii) Spanish speakers.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Intro: How to use the new SPS NSS and how to fill in a notification form</i> ▪ <i>SPS NSS hands-on exercises</i>
13:00–14:30	Lunch break
14:30–16:15	<p>(14:30-15:00 plenary, 15:00-16:15 groups)</p> <p>Session 8: What actions could improve the implementation and benefits of SPS transparency provisions?</p> <p><i>Participants will break into groups to discuss the issues that emerged from the replies to the transparency questionnaire and how they could be addressed.</i></p> <p><i>Possible themes of discussion, stemming from the transparency questionnaire, include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Difficulties in filling in notifications;</i> – <i>Identifying trade facilitating measures;</i> – <i>Identifying and targeting interested stakeholders;</i> – <i>How to handle comments;</i> – <i>Notified documents that are not in one of the WTO languages: how to deal with them and how to obtain translations...</i> <p><i>Each participant will choose one topic, based on his/her interests and professional background. Group discussions will run in parallel and should focus on possible ways to address these issues.</i></p> <p><i>Approximately 1 hour time will be allocated for group discussions.</i></p>
16:30–17:30	<p>- Reporting to the plenary</p> <p><i>Rapporteurs of each group will report back to the plenary (5 minutes each). The floor will then be opened for questions and comments.</i></p>
17:30–18:00	<p>Session 9: Conclusion and recommendations</p>
