



24 October 2023

(23-7138)

Page: 1/1

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English

**OECD SIDE EVENT  
COSTS, BENEFITS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF REMOTE AUDITS  
FOR INTERNATIONAL FOOD SAFETY**

COMMUNICATION FROM THE OECD

The following communication, received on 18 October 2023, is being circulated at the request of the OECD.

1. Remote audits enabled international food trade to continue despite the severe COVID-19 pandemic disruptions, but what is their role in the future? Based on case studies and an OECD survey, this report examines the cost, benefits and effectiveness of remote audits. The analysis reveals that key benefits include lower travel expenses, reduced emissions footprints, more flexible use of time, and opportunities to train and involve more staff. There were nevertheless major drawbacks, including limitations to gather audit evidence, a heavy additional burden of preparation time, internet connectivity issues, and the lack of interpersonal engagement. In general, most stakeholders consider remote audits to be less effective than on-site audits, particularly for those of regulatory systems or for the physical auditing of establishments. This report highlights the need to harmonize the terminology in this area of work, and to develop practical guidelines on how and when to conduct remote audits.
2. This report will be presented during a Side Event to the SPS Committee Meeting on 16 November 2023, from 14:00-14:50 (CET). The meeting will be held under a hybrid format and can be accessed online by registering at [this link](#) or can be attended in-person in Room S2.
3. The event agenda is the following:
  - 14:00      **Introductory remarks**  
Rolando Alcalá (moderator), Economic Affairs Officer, WTO
  - 14:05      **Presentation of the report**  
Annelies Deuss, Senior Agricultural Policy Analyst, OECD
  - 14:35      **Questions and discussion**
  - 14:45      **Closing remarks**  
Rolando Alcalá, Economic Affairs Officer, WTO
4. This report has been published as an OECD Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Paper on 14 June 2023:

Deuss, A. and S. Honey (2023), "Costs, benefits and effectiveness of remote audits for international food safety", OECD Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Papers, No. 196, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/fe97106-en>.

Contact: Annelies Deuss ([annelies.deuss@oecd.org](mailto:annelies.deuss@oecd.org))