



Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

**SPS COMMITTEE THEMATIC WORKSHOP ON TRANSPARENCY
MONDAY, 18 MARCH AND TUESDAY, 19 MARCH 2024
WTO, CENTRE WILLIAM RAPPARD, GENEVA**

PROGRAMME

Note by the Secretariat¹

1. As decided by the SPS Committee at its November 2023 meeting, the Secretariat of the World Trade Organization will organize a workshop on the transparency provisions of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), on 18-19 March 2024. The workshop will be followed by informal and formal meetings of the SPS Committee, lasting until Friday, 22 March 2024. Representatives of Members, Observers and Observer Organizations are all invited to participate in the transparency workshop as well as the subsequent meetings of the SPS Committee. The workshop can be attended in-person or virtually via Zoom. Interpretation will be provided in English, French and Spanish.
2. The March 2024 workshop builds on the successful [June 2022 SPS Workshop on Transparency](#) which had provided the Committee with an introduction to the main functions of the [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#), launched in July 2022, which integrates SPS and TBT online transparency tools.
3. The workshop aims to enhance the implementation of SPS transparency provisions by bringing together officials from WTO Members and Observers to engage in a technical discussion on SPS transparency-related work, and to exchange experiences on the use of online transparency tools, including the [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#). The workshop, open to participation by all delegates from WTO Members and Observers attending the March 2024 SPS Committee meeting, will be of particular interest to government officials in charge of the implementation of the transparency provisions of the SPS Agreement, i.e. SPS national notification authorities and enquiry points.
4. The WTO Secretariat, with the financial assistance of the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund (DDAGTF), will sponsor the participation of 30 government officials in this workshop. The Governments of Members and Observers to the WTO, which are eligible to benefit from training and technical cooperation activities, are invited to present one or two officials for consideration in the selection process. In this regard, an invitation letter with the application form will be distributed to eligible technical assistance beneficiaries through their WTO representation.
5. Additionally, the WTO Secretariat will be in a position to provide funding for five government officials from eligible technical assistance beneficiaries, to participate as speakers in this workshop.² Participants or speakers wishing to extend their stay in Geneva for the informal and formal SPS Committee meetings from 20 to 22 March 2024, would be welcome to do so on a self-funded basis.
6. Members are invited to submit comments on this draft programme and suggest speakers as soon as possible and at the latest by **Friday, 19 January 2024**. The Secretariat will circulate a revised version of the programme after taking into consideration the comments received.

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 This includes a round trip airplane ticket, daily subsistence allowance, a terminal expenses allowance, and accommodation for the duration of the workshop.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

MONDAY, 18 MARCH 2024

<p>10:00 – 11:15</p> <p>Group work on implementation challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Group exercises for participants from SPS national notification authorities (NNAs) and national enquiry points (NEPs).</i> <p>Resource persons: WTO; Speakers/External experts</p>
<p>11:15 – 11:30 Coffee break</p>
<p>11:30 – 13:00</p> <p>Group work on operation of notification authorities and enquiry points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Group exercises for participants from SPS NNAs and NEPs.</i> <p>Resource persons: WTO; Speakers/External experts</p>
<p>13:00 – 15:00 Lunch break</p>
<p>15:00 – 15:15</p> <p>Session 1: Introductory remarks</p> <p>Chairperson of the SPS Committee: Mr Tayutic Mena Retana</p>
<p>15:15 – 16:15</p> <p>Session 2: Setting the scene: Transparency in the SPS Agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Overview of SPS transparency obligations and recommendations, as well as work undertaken since the 5th Review of the SPS Agreement.</i> <p>Speaker(s): WTO</p>
<p>16:15 – 16:30 Coffee break</p>
<p>16:30 – 17:15</p> <p>Session 3: Proposals on transparency in the SPS Committee and other bodies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Overview of past transparency-related proposals discussed in the SPS Committee and relevant work done in other bodies (e.g., the TBT Committee).</i> <p>Speaker(s): WTO</p>
<p>17:15 – 18:00</p> <p>Session 4: Overview of online transparency tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Brief presentation of online transparency tools and their main functions.</i> <p>Speaker(s): WTO</p>

TUESDAY, 19 MARCH 2024

10:00 – 11:15	
Session 5: Reaching out to national stakeholders on the ePing SPS&TBT Platform	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Sharing of experiences on how the ePing SPS&TBT Platform has facilitated coordination with various domestic stakeholders, including to share notifications from other Members and/or discuss comments on the notified regulations (for e.g. via the national forum).</i> 	
Speaker(s): Speakers/External experts	
11:15 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 13:00	
Session 6: Reaching out to other Members on the ePing SPS&TBT Platform	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Sharing of experiences on how the ePing SPS&TBT Platform has facilitated reaching out to other Members, including to provide comments on notifications (for e.g. via the international forum).</i> 	
Speaker(s): Speakers/External experts	
13:00 – 15:00	Lunch break
15:00 – 16:15	
Session 7: Preparation and submission of notifications: National perspectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Members will be invited to discuss the procedures to submit SPS notifications to the WTO including through the ePing SPS&TBT Platform.</i> 	
Speaker(s): Speakers/External experts	
16:15 – 16:30	Coffee break
16:30 – 17:30	
Session 8: Monitoring the implementation of international standards	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Discussion on the interface between transparency and monitoring the implementation of international standards, including the work of the ISSB observatories.</i> 	
Speaker(s): WTO; Speakers/External experts	
17:30 – 18:00	
Session 9: Next steps and closing remarks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Any thoughts on possible next steps in relation to transparency or the ePing SPS&TBT Platform. This will be followed by the closing remarks.</i> 	
Chairperson of the SPS Committee: Mr Tayutic Mena Retana	