



WTO SPS COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP ON APPROVAL PROCEDURES PROCESS

SUBMISSION FROM CANADA AND PARAGUAY

Addendum

The following communication, received on 14 December 2021, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Canada and Paraguay.

As co-stewards, Canada and Paraguay submit the following document outlining the details and process of the SPS Committee Working Group on Approval Procedures, which was extended for one year at the November 2021 SPS Committee.

1 WORKING GROUP TITLE

1.1. SPS Committee Working Group (WG) on Approval Procedures

2 LANGUAGE

2.1. The process and liaison with WG participants will be conducted in English. The Secretariat may assist with translation of comments and proposals, if requested.

3 FORMAT

3.1. The WG will primarily work electronically. Intersessionally, the WG may meet virtually as required. The WG will also meet on the margins of the SPS Committee meetings, in person, virtually, or through a hybrid approach depending on whether the SPS Committee is meeting in person, virtually, or taking place through a hybrid approach.

4 PARTICIPATION AND STEWARDS

4.1. The WG is open to all Members and Observers, those interested in participating submitted their contact email address to the Secretariat.

4.2. Canada and Paraguay will act as neutral stewards.

5 DESCRIPTION OF WORK

5.1. The WG will explore the following topics:

- (1) Key challenges of approval procedures that impact international trade and that the Committee should seek to address;
- (2) Principles of approval procedures that facilitate international trade while meeting the importing Member's appropriate level of sanitary or phytosanitary protection and the Committee's role in highlighting these principles;
- (3) Tools available and best practices to enhance the implementation of the obligations of the SPS Agreement as they apply to approval procedures;

(4) Other topics raised by WG participants over the course of the WG.

5.2. Following the examination of topics 1-4, the WG will give consideration to the following topic:

(5) Possible future work of the Committee on approval procedures.

6 DURATION OF THE WORKING GROUP

6.1. The WG was extended for one year and will conclude at the November 2022 SPS Committee meeting following three rounds of deliberations (over three SPS Committee meetings) unless the WG and Committee agree to extend the timeframe of the WG.

7 REPORTING TO COMMITTEE

7.1. The stewards of the WG will report on its work to the informal and/or formal SPS Committee meetings to keep the Committee informed of its deliberations.

7.2. Following the conclusion of its deliberations, the WG will submit a written report to the SPS Committee.

8 TIMELINES AND NEXT STEPS¹

8.1. The deadlines suggested for the proposed process are as follows. If the timeframe of the WG is extended, a revised set of timelines and next steps will be issued.

8.2. As appropriate, the stewards will identify key themes and concepts, develop questions for consideration by the WG, and identify information gaps.

8.1 Fourth round (period after the November 2021 SPS Committee until the March 2022 SPS Committee):²

- (1) **WG participant will submit written comments, through the Secretariat, no later than 20 December 2021;**
- (2) The stewards will develop a written document consolidating the input received, which will be circulated to all participants of the WG by 14 January 2022;
- (3) The WG will meet virtually intersessionally on 7 February 2022 to discuss:
 - a. Key challenges of approval procedures that impact international trade and that the Committee should seek to address;
 - b. Other agenda items, as required.
- (4) The stewards will prepare a revised document based on the input and comments received, which will be circulated to all participants of the WG no later than 25 February 2022;
- (5) **Meeting of the WG on the margins of the March 2022 SPS Committee meeting, where WG participants will discuss:**
 - a. **Key challenges of approval procedures that impact international trade and that the Committee should seek to address;**
 - b. **Other agenda items, as required.**
- (6) The stewards will report on the work of the WG at the informal March 2022 SPS Committee to provide the Membership the opportunity to discuss the work of the WG;
- (7) The stewards will report on the work of the WG and discussion at the informal SPS Committee at the formal March 2022 SPS Committee, as appropriate.

8.2 Fifth round (period after the March 2022 SPS Committee until the June 2022 SPS Committee):²

- (1) If necessary, the stewards will circulate a revised set of deadlines for the WG following the March 2022 SPS Committee meeting;
- (2) The stewards will incorporate the input received during the WG meeting on the margins of the SPS Committee meeting and during the informal and formal March 2022 SPS Committee

¹ Note that timelines and next steps could be revised by the WG as appropriate.

² The WG may meet virtually intersessionally, as required.

- meeting. The stewards will prepare a revised document, which will be circulated to all participants of the WG no later than 8 April 2022;
- (3) **WG participants will submit written proposals and comments to the stewards, through the Secretariat, no later than 22 April 2022;**
- (4) The stewards will prepare a revised document based on the input and comments received, which will be circulated to all participants of the WG no later than 6 May 2022;
- (5) **The WG will meet virtually intersessionally on 13 May 2022 to discuss:**
- a. **Principles of approval procedures that facilitate international trade while meeting the importing Member's appropriate level of sanitary or phytosanitary protection and the Committee's role in highlighting these principles;**
 - b. **Other agenda items, as required.**
- (6) The stewards will prepare a revised document based on the input and comments received, which will be circulated to all participants of the WG no later than 30 May 2022;
- (7) **Meeting of the WG on the margins of the June 2022 SPS Committee meeting, where WG participants will discuss:**
- a. **Principles of approval procedures that facilitate international trade while meeting the importing Member's appropriate level of sanitary or phytosanitary protection and the Committee's role in highlighting these principles;**
 - b. **Other agenda items, as required.**
- (8) The stewards will report on the work of the WG at the informal June 2022 SPS Committee to provide the Membership the opportunity to discuss the work of the WG;
- (9) The stewards will report on the work of the WG and discussion at the informal SPS Committee at the formal June 2022 SPS Committee, as appropriate.

8.3 Sixth round (period after the June 2022 SPS Committee until the November 2022 SPS Committee):²

- (1) If necessary, the stewards will circulate a revised set of deadlines for the WG following the June 2022 SPS Committee meeting;
- (2) The stewards will incorporate the input received during the WG meeting on the margins of the SPS Committee meeting and during the informal and formal June 2022 SPS Committee meeting. The stewards will prepare a revised document, which will be circulated to all participants of the WG no later than 8 July 2022;
- (3) **WG participants will submit written proposals and comments to the stewards, through the Secretariat, no later than 22 July 2022;**
- (4) The stewards will prepare a revised document based on the input and comments received, which will be circulated to all participants of the WG no later than 5 August 2022;
- (5) **The WG will meet virtually intersessionally on 16 September 2022 to discuss:**
- a. **Consider need for additional tools and best practices to enhance the implementation of the obligations of the SPS Agreement as they apply to approval procedures;**
 - b. **Other agenda items, as required.**
- (6) The stewards will prepare a revised document based on the input and comments received, which will be circulated to all participants of the WG no later than 3 October 2022;
- (7) **Meeting of the WG on the margins of the November 2022 SPS Committee meeting, where WG participants will discuss**
- a. **Possible future work of the Committee on approval procedures;**
 - b. **The status of the WG;**
 - c. **Other agenda items, as required.**
- (8) The stewards will report on the work of the WG at the informal November 2022 SPS Committee. The Membership will discuss the work of the WG, including whether the WG will conclude or be extended;
- (9) The stewards will report on the work of the WG and discussion at the informal SPS Committee and at the formal November 2022 SPS Committee, as appropriate. The Committee will decide whether the WG will conclude or be extended.