



**Council for Trade in Goods  
Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade**

**REPORT ON IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FUNCTIONING OF  
THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE (TBT)**

*REPORT TO THE CTG BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE TBT COMMITTEE<sup>1</sup>*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1. The following report is being submitted by the Chairperson of the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Committee), Ms Anna Vitie (Finland). It is submitted at the request of the Council for Trade in Goods (CTG)<sup>2</sup> and was prepared with the assistance of the Secretariat.

1.2. The TBT Committee's procedures have evolved continuously, reflecting Members' priorities. For a full report that describes the practices that the TBT Committee has adopted over the past years to improve its work, delegations are referred to document [G/L/1458](#).<sup>3</sup> Practices build on discussions among Members and are, therefore, bottom-up and incremental. All decisions and recommendations taken by the TBT Committee are documented in the G/TBT/1-series (the latest revision is contained in [G/TBT/1/Rev.15](#)). Generally, the TBT Triennial Reviews have guided this process. The thematic sessions have also allowed Members to exchange experiences on emerging regulatory issues in an informal setting, including with the engagement of outside stakeholders.

1.3. This present report covers improvements introduced in the Committee since the conclusion of MC12 (June 2022).

**2 PROCESS AND PROPOSALS**

2.1. Following a request from the CTG Chair, the TBT Chairperson submitted a report on the functioning of the TBT Committee ([G/L/1458](#)). A first round of discussions was held during the TBT Committee's informal meeting on 11 May 2023. A second round of discussions took place during the TBT Committee's formal meeting held on 21-23 June 2023. As a basis for this discussion, the Secretariat prepared a document for Members' consideration aimed at focusing the discussion on how the TBT Committee could do better and how best to contribute to a future report that would be submitted to the CTG ([JOB/TBT/510](#)). In this report, the Secretariat considered the items which had been put forth during various CTG exchanges and identified those practices that the TBT Committee had *not* used yet and could consider taking onboard. The Committee did *not* discuss practices that the TBT Committee had already been using (such as ePing or eAgenda). The idea was to shed light on some areas where the TBT Committee could focus its discussions and what could be done better, looking ahead.

<sup>1</sup> This draft report is prepared under the Chairperson's own responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> Other relevant documents include [JOB/CTG/19/Rev.2](#) as well as [G/C/W/824/Rev.1](#).

<sup>3</sup> Also circulated as [G/TBT/49](#), dated 1 December 2022. For a comprehensive compilation and comparison of the current functioning of the CTG, and its subsidiary bodies, including the TBT Committee, see [G/C/W/824/Rev.1](#), issued on 14 February 2023.

### 3 IMPROVEMENTS ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMITTEE

3.1. As a result of these discussions, the Committee agreed at the June 2023 meeting to implement the following improvements on a trial basis:

- **eAgenda.** The TBT Committee agreed to expand the use of eAgenda to cover all agenda items (not only Specific Trade Concerns (STCs)) following the practice of other committees.
- **Briefings by the Secretariat.** The TBT Committee agreed to request the Secretariat to provide briefings more regularly on the work of the Committee, especially to new delegations or on specific subjects (like ePing or eAgenda).
- **Annotated draft Agendas.** The TBT Committee agreed to use Annotated draft Agendas for informal meetings.

3.2. In addition, considering feedback from Members about the **organization of TBT thematic sessions**, the moderators of the 20 June 2023 thematic sessions issued guidance to Members for the organization and conduct of the sessions. This included guidance on timing of proposals, the number of speakers, and composition of panels. This practice was continued for the 7 November 2023 thematic sessions.<sup>4</sup>

General area	Improvements in the functioning of the TBT Committee
<b>A. Assistance to delegates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefings by the Secretariat. A general briefing was held on 19 September, accompanied by an Information Note for TBT delegates<sup>5</sup>; a second one focusing on the Triennial Review process will take place on 6 November.</li> </ul>
<b>B. Planning and organization of meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annotated draft agendas for informal meetings (trial basis). The first annotated draft agenda for an informal meeting was circulated for the 3 October Informal meeting of the Committee (<a href="#">JOB/TBT/513</a>).</li> <li>• Guidance from moderators for the organization of TBT thematic sessions.</li> </ul>
<b>C. Conduct of formal meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of eAgenda for all agenda items. In the TBT Committee, this was previously only done for the discussion of Specific Trade Concerns (STCs). The extended eAgenda is already operational for the formal meeting of the TBT Committee scheduled for 8-10 November.</li> </ul>
<b>D. Conduct of informal meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See point B. above.</li> </ul>
<b>E. Digital tools used by the Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See point C. Use of eAgenda ("Collaborative Agenda") for the full menu of Agenda items.</li> </ul>

### 4 NEXT STEPS

4.1. The discussion of improvements is a continuous process in the TBT Committee. These discussions normally (but not exclusively) take place as part of the triennial reviews. The work programme for the 10<sup>th</sup> Triennial Review was adopted at the June 2023 meeting ([G/TBT/W/775](#)) and is scheduled to be completed in 2024.

<sup>4</sup> [JOB/TBT/506](#) and [JOB/TBT/514](#).

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/tbt\\_e/xtbt\\_e/tbt\\_flyer\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tbt_e/xtbt_e/tbt_flyer_e.pdf).