



WTO SPS COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP ON APPROVAL PROCEDURES PROCESS

SUBMISSION FROM CANADA

Revision

The following communication, received on 7 October 2020, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Canada.

As steward, Canada submits the following document outlining the details and process of the SPS Committee Working Group on Approval Procedures.

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 will conclude at the November 2021 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 November 2021 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.

8.1 First round (period after the November 2020 SPS Committee until the March 2021 SPS Committee):²

- (1) WG participant will submit written proposals concerning topics 1-4 to the stewards, through the Secretariat, no later than 14 December 2020;
- (2) The stewards will develop a written document consolidating the input received, which will be circulated to all participants of the WG by 4 January 2021;
- (3) WG participants will submit written comments on the documents to the stewards, through the Secretariat, no later than 1 February 2021;
- (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 22 February 2021;
- (5) Meeting of the WG on the margins of the March 2021 SPS Committee meeting, where WG participants will discuss the revised document;
- (6) The stewards will report on the work of the WG at the informal March 2021 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 2021 SPS Committee, as appropriate.

8.2 Second round (period after the March 2021 SPS Committee until the July 2021 SPS Committee):²

- (1) If necessary, the stewards will circulate a revised set of deadlines for the second and third round of the WG following the March 2021 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 2021 SPS Committee meeting. As appropriate, the stewards will identify key themes and concepts, develop questions for consideration by the WG, and identify information gaps. The stewards will prepare a revised document, which will be circulated to all participants of the WG no later than 19 April 2021;
- (3) WG participants will submit written proposals and comments on the revised documents to the stewards, through the Secretariat, no later than 24 May 2021;
- (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 14 June 2021;
- (5) Meeting of the WG on the margins of the July 2021 SPS Committee meeting, where WG participants will discuss the revised document;

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

² The WG may meet virtually intersessionally, as required.

- (6) The stewards will report on the work of the WG at the informal July 2021 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 July 2021 SPS Committee, as appropriate.

8.3 Third round (period after the July 2021 SPS Committee until the November 2021 SPS Committee):²

- (1) If necessary, the stewards will circulate a revised set of deadlines for the third round of the WG following the July 2021 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 July 2021 SPS Committee meeting. As appropriate, the stewards will identify key themes, concepts, and possible future work of the Committee on approval procedures; develop questions for consideration by the WG; and identify information gaps. The stewards will prepare a revised document, which will be circulated to all participants of the WG no later than 9 August 2021;
 - (3) WG participants will submit written proposals and comments on the revised documents to the stewards, through the Secretariat, no later than 6 September 2021;
 - (4) The stewards will prepare a revised document based on the input and comments received and summarize the work of the WG, which will be circulated to all participants of the WG no later than 4 October 2021;
 - (5) Meeting of the WG on the margins of the November 2021 SPS Committee meeting, where WG participants will discuss the revised document and the status of the WG;
 - (6) The stewards will report on the work of the WG at the informal November 2021 SPS Committee. The Membership will discuss the work of the WG, including whether the WG will conclude or be extended;
 - (7) The stewards will report on the work of the WG and discussion at the informal SPS Committee and at the formal November 2021 SPS Committee, as appropriate. The Committee will decide whether the WG will conclude or be extended.
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