



**SIXTH REVIEW OF THE OPERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT  
ON THE APPLICATION OF SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

**AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGIES ADDRESSING MODERN SPS CHALLENGES**

PROPOSAL FROM CANADA

The following proposal, dated 22 January 2024, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Canada.

**1 CONCEPT**

1.1. The SPS Declaration work programme on Responding to Modern SPS Challenges identified the need for science and research to develop and disseminate new agriculture technologies to foster the shift to sustainable agricultural production. The SPS measures resulting from these new technologies should be consistent with standards, guidelines and recommendations of the international standard setting bodies and not inhibit trade.

1.2. A key cornerstone of agriculture has been innovation with thousands of developments from early cultivation, the enclosure of animals, mechanization, and the use of artificial fertilizer and chemicals to name a few. Technology, including applications relevant to agriculture, has rapidly evolved over the past few decades.

1.3. This concept is to propose a workshop to explore SPS challenges associated with the adoption/implementation and recognition of new agriculture technologies, including available infrastructure, technical literacy, implementation costs, and regulatory acceptance. Specific topics may include: mitigating the impact of climate change with tools and technologies in agriculture, how to sustainably increase production (e.g., vertical farming), emerging technologies (e.g., AI in agriculture), policy challenges when developing/implementing innovative agricultural tools, etc. Participants may include academia, research and development companies, government officials and producers.

**2 OBJECTIVE**

2.1. The objective of the workshop would be to explore how the SPS Committee can facilitate productive discussions between developed, developing and least developed Members around the development, assessment and implementation of new agricultural technologies by Members to address sustainability, while facilitating trade.

2.2. It is essential for Members to develop SPS measures that adhere to the obligations under the SPS Agreement, while facilitating agri-food trade and the safety/health of food plant and animals. The changes in global climate, including increasing temperatures and more extreme weather events are likely to shift agro-climatic zones and result in the wider distribution of vectors of disease. This is already being seen in the dramatic spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza across various regions of the globe. These increases in pest and disease pressures are expected to directly threaten human health as well as jeopardize agricultural productivity. This has the potential to lead to food security issues for Members who produce agricultural products, as well as Members who import agricultural products. The pace of innovation and the recognition of new technologies to address

these modern challenges must be commensurate with the pace of environmental changes to ensure Members the abilities to adapt effectively and remain sustainable. With this, the SPS Committee must remain agile and aid in the discussion of technologies, their benefits and risks, and allow for substantive discussions on the implementation of these innovations to meet the evolving needs of Members.

### **3 EXAMPLE OF AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- Article 6 - Adaptation to Regional Conditions, Including Pest- or Disease-Free Areas and Areas of Low Pest or Disease Prevalence. How does adaption facilitate the spread of pests not traditionally found in an area given the changing climate?
    - How does the SPS Agreement address increased uncertainty of food safety, animal and plant health issues in the context of climate change?
  - Article 7 - Reviewing the notification process to ensure Members have the opportunity to comment on potential barriers to the adoption of new technologies.
  - Article 9 - Sharing information on agricultural innovations, how they can promote sustainable development and ways to further engage LDCs in the SPS Committee in relation to the unique challenges faced by them. SPS capacity building at a regional level to further the development of sustainable agricultural practices and facilitating international trade.
    - Take account of the expected impact of climate change and the ways in which it is likely to exacerbate differences in the quality of SPS management across countries.
    - Considering the higher risk for emerging SPS risks linked to rising temperatures and extreme weather events. E.g., aflatoxin contamination: Rising temperatures are expected to increase aflatoxin contamination in countries with warmer climates.
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