



## PROPOSAL ON CROSS-CUTTING MEETINGS WITH OTHER WTO BODIES

### TENTH TRIENNIAL REVIEW

#### *Proposal from Australia*

The following submission, dated 22 February 2024, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Australia.

## 1 BACKGROUND

1.1. At the June 2023 meeting of the TBT Committee, the Secretariat presented a document with proposals the Committee could draw upon in fulfilment of the direction from the Council for Trade in Goods, to explore mechanisms for improving Committee functioning.<sup>1</sup> This proposal seeks to build on and formalise endorsement of one of the proposals deferred for later discussion in June 2023.<sup>2</sup>

1.2. WTO subsidiary bodies play a crucial role in the implementation of individual WTO agreements and in addressing other specific areas of trade; such as sanitary and phytosanitary measures, the environment, trade facilitation, development and WTO membership applications.

1.3. While there are obvious benefits to the specialised nature of the WTO Committee structure, there are also numerous trade issues that intersect across trade disciplines. Cross-cutting trade topics could be more effectively understood and addressed through leveraging the expertise of various WTO bodies.

1.4. It has been noted by Members that the TBT Committee rarely holds joint meetings with other WTO bodies.<sup>3</sup> Australia's proposal below could provide an innovative pathway to promote greater collaboration across the WTO and advance the objectives of the rules-based trading system.

## 2 PROPOSAL

2.1. Australia proposes that the TBT Committee arrange informal cross-cutting meetings, such as joint thematic or information sessions with other WTO bodies on topics of relevance to the TBT Agreement, with a view to:

- a. enhance Members' knowledge and understanding of the multifaceted nature of TBT principles, through leveraging the expertise of other WTO Committees; and
- b. understand the role and work of other WTO bodies to identify potential synergies and areas of collaboration to strengthen the implementation of the TBT Agreement.

<sup>1</sup> [JOB/TBT/510](#).

<sup>2</sup> [G/TBT/M/90](#), paragraph 3.556.

<sup>3</sup> [JOB/TBT/510](#), paragraph 1.4(c).

2.2. Engagement, topics and areas of focus could include:

- a. engagement with the Committee on Trade and Development to discuss TBT-related technical assistance, in particular for developing countries
- b. engagement with the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) to discuss mutual recognition and equivalence of food safety standards
- c. engagement with the Committee for Trade and Environment (CTE) on emerging environmental regulations and standards
- d. engagement with the Committee on Government Procurement (CGP) to exchange ideas and information topics such as technical specifications, sustainable / green procurement and good regulatory practice
- e. engagement with the Committee on Market Access (CMA) on identified topics of mutual interest.

2.3. Australia acknowledges that the implementation of such a proposal will require support from the other WTO subsidiary bodies. The Committee could begin by inviting participation by representatives from other subsidiary bodies to TBT Committee activities, such as thematic sessions when relevant topics arise. If this is successful, the Committee could aim to transition to more structured, co-arranged activities coordinated by the relevant Secretariats, with input and support from Members as appropriate.

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