

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

RESTRICTED
WT/ACC/OMN/12
22 September 1998

(98-3635)

**Working Party on the Accession
of the Sultanate of Oman**

Original: English

ACCESSION OF THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

Communication from the Sultanate of Oman

The following communication concerning the plan of action on implementation of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade had been received from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, with the request that it be circulated to members of the Working Party.

Action Plan for Implementing the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade

A. EXISTING POSITION AND ON-GOING PROGRAMME:

1. The Sultanate of Oman has already established a legal and institutional framework for standards. A Royal Decree No. 39/76 was issued in 1976 establishing within the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, a Directorate General for Specifications and Measurements (DGSM). Royal Decree No. 1/78 issued in 1978 spelt out the functions of the Directorate General and provided, *inter alia*, for a Technical Committee for Standards which includes representatives of different ministries, and representatives of the private sector.

2. A total number of 1,065 Omani standards have been issued so far. Most of the Omani standards are based on international standards.

3. The DGSM accepts third party certification system for products in accordance with the principles and guidelines of ISO/IEC Guides No. 16-1978 (E) and 28-1982 (E). The DGSM also accepts test results and conformity assessments by accredited laboratories according to ISO/IEC Guide 23, and rules of ISO/IEC Guide 38.

4. Oman provides MFN treatment and national treatment to imported products in respect of technical regulations and standards. Oman also follows most of the transparency requirements, as a customary practice. These are not provided in any law or administrative decrees.

5. The DGSM is presently studying the conformity of its laws and procedures with the provisions of the TBT Agreement. It has tentatively identified points of conformity and

non-conformity. This exercise will be finalized by December 1998 and will be the platform for action to bring the Omani system in line with the requirements of the TBT Agreement.

B. FUTURE PROGRAMME:

6. Analysis of the existing legal and institutional system with the requirements of the TBT Agreement will be completed by December 1998.
7. Work on preparing a draft Ministerial Decree to implement the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade will commence in January 1999.
8. Draft Ministerial Decree will be finalized by June 1999.
9. Ministerial Decree implementing the provisions of the TBT Agreement will be issued by the end of September 1999.
10. An Enquiry Point will be established within DGSM by March 1999.
11. A checklist of points to be included in the Ministerial Decree is attached. This checklist will be shown to WTO experts before commencing work on preparing a draft Ministerial Decree.

Points to be Included in a New Ministerial
Decree to Implement the TBT Agreement

1. DGSM is the only governmental agency responsible for issuing and enforcing technical regulations and mandatory standards.
2. Products imported from other WTO Member countries shall be accorded treatment no less favourable than that accorded to Omani domestic products, in respect of technical regulations and standards.
3. There will be no discriminatory treatment in respect of technical regulations and standards as between different WTO Member countries.
4. DGSM shall ensure that technical regulations and standards are prepared, adopted and applied in a manner that these are not more trade restrictive than necessary to fulfill their objective.
5. DGSM shall periodically examine technical regulations and standards to determine if their continued application is necessary.
6. Before issuing new technical regulations and standards, DGSM shall examine whether any existing international standard can be used. Only if it cannot be used or is not suitable for Omani conditions, will a decision be taken to prepare a new technical regulation.
7. DGSM shall publish a notice in the official gazette and other publications of a draft technical regulation or standard and supply a copy of the draft to the WTO Secretariat.
8. Upon request, copies of draft standards will be provided to other WTO Members.

9. DGSM will allow all interested parties a time of 90 days to submit comments on draft standards. The comments received will be duly considered and parties making comments will be informed if their comments are not accepted.
 10. The final technical regulation or standard will be published in the official gazette and copies will be submitted to the WTO Secretariat.
 11. The finally adopted technical regulation or standard will become applicable six months after its publication in the official gazette.
 12. DGSM will follow a similar procedure for conformity assessment procedures.
 13. An Enquiry Point is established in DGSM to answer all reasonable enquiries on standards and upon request to provide the relevant documents concerning standards and procedures.
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