

## ACTIVITIES OF THE SPS COMMITTEE AND OTHER RELEVANT WTO ACTIVITIES IN 2025

### REPORT BY THE WTO SECRETARIAT<sup>1</sup>

This report to the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) summarizes the activities held by the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee) in 2025. It highlights discussions of particular relevance to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), following the main agenda items of SPS Committee meetings, i.e. Specific trade concerns (STCs); Transparency; Equivalence; Regionalization; Monitoring the use of international standards; Technical assistance; and Thematic sessions and workshops. The report also provides an update on the follow-up to the Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement, namely on the ongoing work to implement the recommendations adopted in the Review Report. Finally, the present report includes relevant information on the WTO Dispute Settlement and the Trade Facilitation Agreement (2017).

### 1 WORK OF THE SPS COMMITTEE

1.1. The SPS Committee held three regular meetings in 2025 (on 19-21 March, 18-20 June and 5-7 November).<sup>2</sup> Following the adoption of the Report of the Sixth Review, in May 2025 the Committee held an informal meeting to discuss how to move forward with the implementation of the recommendations agreed upon in the Sixth Review.<sup>3</sup> For 2026, the Committee agreed on the following tentative calendar for regular meetings: 11-13 March, 24-26 June and 4-6 November.<sup>4</sup> The Committee also created a Transparency Working Group (TWG) which will meet both intersessionally and back-to-back with the meetings of the SPS Committee.

1.2. Ms Cecilia Risolo of Argentina served as Chairperson at the March 2025 meeting. In June 2025, Ms Maria Cosme of France was appointed Chairperson for the 2025-2026 period.

#### 1.1 Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement

1.3. In March 2025, the Committee adopted the Report of the Sixth Review of the SPS Agreement.<sup>5</sup> The Report contains two parts: Part A includes information on Sixth Review proposals, related discussions and thematic sessions, by the key topics proposed by Members, namely: Addressing modern challenges and emerging risks, Cooperation with international standard setting bodies (ISSBs), Regionalization, Technical assistance/S&DT treatment, Technology/IT tools, Transparency/Notification procedures, and other topics such as MRLs, Facility registration and Systems approaches.<sup>6</sup> Part A also includes recommendations for each of the topics, that will guide the Committee's work going ahead. Several of these recommendations refer to the work of the IPPC in relation to the SPS Committee. Part B of the Report contains a background document summarizing the Committee's main areas of work since the Fifth Review, covering the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2024.

1.4. The Committee agreed on the following recommendations under the topic "Cooperation with international standard setting bodies (ISSBs)":

- *Further to the MC12 SPS Declaration Work Programme, the Committee invites Codex, WOH, and the IPPC to continue to share information at Committee meetings on their observatory projects and on issues, challenges, and impediments identified by their*

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<sup>1</sup> This report has been prepared under the WTO Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of WTO Members or to their rights and obligations under the WTO.

<sup>2</sup> The reports of the March, June and November 2025 meetings are contained in documents [G/SPS/R/116](#), [G/SPS/R/117](#) and [G/SPS/R/118](#), respectively.

<sup>3</sup> The report of the informal session held in May 2025 is available in Annex A of the June 2025 summary report ([G/SPS/R/117](#)).

<sup>4</sup> The tentative dates of the SPS Committee meetings for 2026 are contained in [G/SPS/GEN/2300](#) and on the dedicated webpage <https://www.wto.org/spsccommittee>.

<sup>5</sup> [G/SPS/74](#) (Part A) and [G/SPS/74/Add.1](#) (Part B). A page dedicated to the reviews of the operation and implementation of the Agreement is available [https://www.wto.org/sps\\_review](https://www.wto.org/sps_review).

<sup>6</sup> See [G/SPS/GEN/2194/Rev.5](#).

*members, in particular developing and LDC members, in relation to the development and implementation of international standards.*

- *The Committee will act as a Member-driven hub for information exchange with the ISSBs on monitoring activities.*
- *The Committee will continue to monitor the use of Codex, WOA, and IPPC standards, guidelines, and recommendations addressing scientific uncertainty in risk analysis. The Committee recalls the recommendation that the approach and method taken by Members to address the uncertainty be clearly documented and communicated in a transparent manner.*

1.5. One recommendation under the topic of Regionalization also makes specific reference to the work of the IPPC, as listed below:

- *Further to the MC12 SPS Declaration Work Programme, the Committee reaffirms the importance of regionalization for safe trade in agricultural products. The Committee encourages Members to exchange information on adaptation of SPS measures to regional conditions, including through the recognition of pest- or disease-free areas or areas of low pest or disease prevalence, and on the different forms of regionalization recognized by WOA and IPPC, to facilitate safe trade.*

1.6. The Committee also agreed to create a Transparency Working Group<sup>7</sup>, open to the participation of all Members and Observers, and to explore a mentoring system to assist developing and LDC Members, including with respect to transparency and their timely engagement on SPS matters.<sup>8</sup> For a comprehensive view of other recommendations, which are also relevant to the work of the ISSBs, please see document [G/SPS/74](#). In the informal Committee meeting held in November 2025, Members discussed actions already taken towards the implementation of the other recommendations of the Report of the Sixth Review.<sup>9</sup>

## **1.2 Specific trade concerns (STCs)**

1.7. The SPS Committee dedicates a significant portion of each regular meeting to the consideration of specific trade concerns (STCs). Any WTO Member can raise concerns about the food safety, animal or plant health requirements imposed by another WTO Member. These issues may arise from the notification of a new or changed measure or from the experience of exporters. Often, other WTO Members share similar concerns. During SPS Committee meetings, WTO Members usually commit to exchanging information and holding bilateral consultations to resolve the identified concern. Detailed information on STCs discussed in the SPS Committee can be found in the WTO [Trade Concerns Database](#).

1.8. The WTO Secretariat compiles on an annual basis a summary of the STCs raised in SPS Committee meetings.<sup>10</sup> From the establishment of the WTO in 1995 until 31 December 2025, Members have raised a total of [619 STCs](#), of which 128 (21%) have been primarily related to [plant health](#).

1.9. One (5%) out of the 21 new STCs raised for the first time in 2025 related to plant health issues:

- Guatemala's concern regarding the uncertainty over coffee beans exports to the People's Republic of China ([ID 605](#)). The concern was discussed one more time since it was first raised in June 2025.

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<sup>7</sup> See paragraph 2.34 in document [G/SPS/74](#). A page dedicated to the Transparency Working Group is available at [www.wto.org/spstwg](http://www.wto.org/spstwg).

<sup>8</sup> See paragraph 2.24 in document [G/SPS/74](#). A page dedicated to the SPS mentoring system is available at [www.wto.org/spsmentoring](http://www.wto.org/spsmentoring).

<sup>9</sup> See Section 2 in Annex A of the November 2025 summary report ([G/SPS/R/118](#)).

<sup>10</sup> Detailed information is available in the latest revision of the document series [G/SPS/GEN/204/\\*](#). These summaries are publicly available from <https://docs.wto.org/>. Information on SPS documents and STCs can also be searched through the [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#).

1.10. In addition to STC [ID 605](#), the following previously raised concerns were again discussed in 2025:

- The Russian Federation's concerns regarding the EU quarantine measures on certain pine trees and other products ([ID 348](#)). The concern has been discussed twice since it was first raised in March 2013;
- The EU's concern regarding US import restrictions on apples and pears ([ID 439](#)). The concern has been discussed 22 times since it was first raised in March 2018;
- Chinese Taipei's concern on China's import suspension of fresh fruits ([ID 532](#)). The concern has been discussed twelve times since it was first raised in November 2021;
- Brazil's concern regarding the US undue delays in opening its citrus market ([ID 542](#)). The concern has been discussed eight times since it was first raised in March 2022;
- The EU's concern regarding Morocco's import ban on ornamental plants ([ID 548](#)). The concern has been discussed nine times since it was first raised in June 2022; and
- The EU's concern regarding the US lengthy approval procedures for plant products ([ID 596](#)). The concern has been discussed three times since it was first raised in November 2024.

1.11. In addition to the above, Members discussed several [pesticide MRL-related STCs](#) in all Committee meetings in 2025, indicating growing attention to the topic. Some of the STCs related to other concerns may also refer to issues related to [control, inspection and approval procedures](#) relevant to plant health.<sup>11</sup> The Report of the Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement also includes recommendations on the topic of MRLs. A Thematic sessions and workshops on [Innovative Regulatory Approaches to Facilitate Safe Trade](#), including discussions on science-based approaches to pesticide MRLs and veterinary drug residues in food, was held in March 2025.<sup>12</sup>

1.12. In March 2025, South Africa reported on the partial resolution of STC [ID 326](#) on Thailand's restrictions on table grapes, apples and pears. Market access had been granted for grapes in 2015 and for apples in 2024, and South Africa looked forward to finalizing the PRA for pears. As of 31 December 2025, about 56% of the STCs discussed in the Committee are considered as [resolved or partially resolved](#). Overall, 87 (68%) out of the 128 plant-related STCs are considered to be resolved or partially resolved.

### 1.3 Other information

1.13. In 2025, WTO Members also provided to the Committee the following general information, related either in part or entirely to plant protection:

- Paraguay's new phytosanitary certificate format ([G/SPS/GEN/2291](#));
- Nicaragua's phytosanitary certificate for export, phytosanitary certificate for re-export and attachments ([G/SPS/GEN/2302](#)); and
- Freedom from *Xylella fastidiosa* ([G/SPS/GEN/2107](#))<sup>13</sup>: Chile (June 2025).

1.14. In 2025, the IPPC presented reports on relevant activities contained in documents [G/SPS/GEN/2297](#) and [G/SPS/GEN/2356](#). In March 2025, the IPPC referred to the CPM-19, which included the consideration of two new international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs), the launch of the IPPC Plant Health Campus, and updates on several activities, such as on One Health and the IPPC ePhyto Solution. The IPPC also informed about the International Day of Plant Health 2025, which would focus on the importance of plant health in One Health. In November 2025, the IPPC highlighted the focus on the strategic framework of the agenda of the upcoming CPM-20. The Standards Committee (SC) would recommend for adoption at CPM-20 a draft revision of ISPM 26 and a draft annex field inspection to ISPM 23, and had also adopted two new diagnostic protocols.

<sup>11</sup> See [G/SPS/R/116](#) (March 2025), [G/SPS/R/117](#) (June 2025) and [G/SPS/R/118](#) (November 2025).

<sup>12</sup> Members proposals on MRLs are available in documents [G/SPS/W/361](#) (Australia) and [G/SPS/W/358](#) (India). The programme, presentations and recordings of the thematic session are available at [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/sps\\_e/sps\\_1703202510\\_e/sps\\_1703202510\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_1703202510_e/sps_1703202510_e.htm).

<sup>13</sup> See section 6.2.1.4 in [G/SPS/R/117](#) (June 2025).

The IPPC secretariat continued to strengthen national phytosanitary capacity through the development of IPPC guides and eLearning material, accessible through the IPPC eLearning Campus. At the November meeting, the IPPC also informed that 97 countries were exchanging ePhyto certificates, which was estimated to generate USD 80 million in annual global savings. Regarding the Africa Phytosanitary Programme (APP), the IPPC secretariat explained that phase 2 was expanding the programme to other African nations and that sustained resource mobilization was essential to generate long-term returns. Emphasis was also put on the regional workshops held across FAO regions. The secretariat also informed the Committee about the work of the Focus Groups on Climate Change and Phytosanitary Issues, on Sea Containers and on the Safe Provisions of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid. Finally, it also referred to the successful celebration of International Day of Plant Health in El Salvador, and to the IPPC's participation in FAO's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition.

## 1.4 Transparency

1.15. WTO Members have a legal obligation to notify new or modified draft SPS measures when these deviate from the relevant international standards, including ISPMs. The recommendations adopted by the SPS Committee, however, encourage the notification of all new or modified measures even when these conform to international standards.<sup>14</sup> Although this recommendation does not change the legal obligations of WTO Members, it enhances transparency regarding the application of ISPMs.

1.16. In 2025, a total of [2,497 SPS notifications](#) were submitted to the WTO, the highest number ever submitted by WTO Members. Of these, [1,370](#) were regular (plus [21 revisions](#)) notifications, and [172](#) were emergency notifications; [1 translation supplement](#); the remainder consisted of [addenda and corrigenda](#). A total of [285](#) (21%) of the 1,370 regular notifications and [eight](#) (5%) of the 172 emergency ones identified plant protection as their main objective. A majority of these ([175](#) of the 285 regular plant protection notifications and the [seven](#) of the eight emergency ones) indicated conformity with a relevant ISPM. The [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#), released in 2022, allows easy access to and management of all WTO SPS-related documentation, including notified SPS measures, contact lists of national notification authorities (NNAs) and enquiry points (NEPs), STCs (see section 1.2 above), as well as other SPS-related documents circulated at the WTO. In March 2025, the Secretariat announced a new feature of the [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#) that allowed registered users to request unofficial translations of draft regulations into English, French, or Spanish, and encouraged Members to provide feedback to further enhance the tool.

1.17. Since June 2024, the Secretariat has been regularly reporting on the approval of an STDF project ([STDF/PG/1000](#)) to enhance the [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#). The project seeks to support market access for developing and LDC Members by improving transparency of SPS and TBT measures. It will focus on enhancing clarity, predictability, and regulatory coordination on SPS and TBT regulations in Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda, as pilot countries. Project outputs will include a needs assessment, stakeholder mapping, and the development of training materials and workshops. [The project was launched in December 2025](#).

### 1.4.1 Transparency Working Group (TWG)

1.18. The Report of the Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement includes two recommendations on transparency.<sup>15</sup> Through the second recommendation, the Committee agreed to create a working group on transparency (TWG), open to the participation of all Members and Observers, with a two-year duration that may be extended by the Committee. The recommendation further lists some of the possible working lines of the working group.

1.19. In the informal meeting held on 15 May 2025, New Zealand presented its proposed guidelines for the TWG. At that meeting, New Zealand and Chile expressed interest in co-leading the work of the Group.<sup>16</sup> At the June 2025 meeting, the Committee approved holding the first meeting of the TWG in November 2025, with New Zealand and Chile acting as co-stewards, and the group's work guided by the proposed operational guidelines.<sup>17</sup> The co-stewards, in coordination with the

<sup>14</sup> See paragraph 2.3 in [G/SPS/7/Rev.5](#).

<sup>15</sup> See paragraph 2.34 in [G/SPS/74](#).

<sup>16</sup> See section 1.1 in Annex A in [G/SPS/R/117](#). New Zealand's guidelines are available in [JOB/SPS/41](#).

<sup>17</sup> See paragraph 6.23 in [G/SPS/R/117](#).

Secretariat, prepared an online questionnaire based on the four core workstreams outlined in the SPS TWG recommendations, to support consultations with Members. The survey was launched in July 2025 and questions served as input for the development of a draft agenda for the first meeting and subsequent work of the TWG.

1.20. The TWG held its first meeting on 3 November 2025, facilitated by New Zealand and Chile. The Secretariat first presented an overview of the results of the transparency survey. The stewards then presented a proposal for a two-year draft work plan, and provided Members with an opportunity to provide oral comments during the meeting and written comments until an established deadline. Peru then presented recent work related to the APEC project "Follow-up Initiative on Promoting Transparency through the Improvement of Information Submitted in SPS Notifications". This was followed by a presentation on the experience of the TBT TWG. The meeting concluded with a discussion of next steps for the SPS TWG.<sup>18</sup> All the relevant information, including the proposed work plan and the results of the survey, is available in the dedicated webpage [www.wto.org/spstwg](http://www.wto.org/spstwg).

## 1.5 Equivalence

1.21. The guidelines on the implementation of Article 4 of the SPS Agreement on equivalence note, *inter alia*, the work undertaken on the subject in the Codex, WOH and the IPPC, and encourage the further elaboration of specific guidance by these bodies. No contributions were made by any of the standard-setting bodies in 2024 under this agenda item. In 2025, no Member submitted any notification on the [recognition of equivalence](#) of another Member's SPS measures. A total of 11 notifications have been submitted since 1995.

1.22. The Report of the Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement also includes recommendations on the topic of equivalence. The Thematic sessions and workshops on [Innovative Regulatory Approaches to Facilitate Safe Trade](#), held in March 2025, also included discussions on addressing the challenges of a systems approach to minimize phytosanitary risks.<sup>19</sup>

## 1.6 Regionalization

1.23. Article 6 of the SPS Agreement requires that measures take into account pest- or disease-free areas or areas of low pest or disease prevalence. In the context of the SPS Committee, this concept is frequently referred to as "regionalization". Guidelines on regionalization<sup>20</sup> adopted by the SPS Committee identify the type of information normally needed for the recognition of pest- or disease-free areas or areas of low pest or disease prevalence, as well as typical administrative steps in the recognition process. The Committee agreed to monitor the implementation of Article 6 based on information provided by WTO Members.

1.24. The WTO Secretariat prepares an annual report on the implementation of Article 6, summarizing (i) requests for recognition of pest- or disease-free areas or areas of low pest or disease prevalence; (ii) determinations on recognition of regionalization; and (iii) Members' experiences in the implementation of Article 6 and the provision of relevant background information on their decisions to other interested Members. The Secretariat's annual report covering the period from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025, based on information provided by WTO Members through notification and at SPS Committee meetings, was circulated to Members in May 2025.<sup>21</sup>

1.25. The Report of the Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement also includes recommendations on the topic of regionalization. The Thematic sessions and workshops on [Innovative Regulatory Approaches to Facilitate Safe Trade](#), held in March 2025, also included discussions on adaptation to regional conditions.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See section 5.3.1 of the November 2025 summary report ([G/SPS/R/118](#)).

<sup>19</sup> See paragraph 2.44 in [G/SPS/74](#). The programme, presentations and recordings of the thematic session are available at [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/spis\\_e/spis\\_1703202510\\_e/spis\\_1703202510\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/spis_e/spis_1703202510_e/spis_1703202510_e.htm).

<sup>20</sup> See [G/SPS/48](#).

<sup>21</sup> See [G/SPS/GEN/2316](#).

<sup>22</sup> See paragraph 2.17 in [G/SPS/74](#). The programme, presentations and recordings of the thematic session are available at [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/spis\\_e/spis\\_1703202510\\_e/spis\\_1703202510\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/spis_e/spis_1703202510_e/spis_1703202510_e.htm).

## 1.7 Monitoring the use of international standards

1.26. The procedure adopted by the SPS Committee to monitor the use of international standards invites WTO Members to identify specific trade problems they have experienced due to the use or non-use of relevant international standards, guidelines or recommendations.<sup>23</sup> These problems, once considered by the SPS Committee, are drawn to the attention of the relevant ISSBs. No new nor previously raised issues related to plant protection were raised since the issuance of the previous report.

1.27. The WTO Secretariat prepares annual reports on the monitoring procedure summarizing the standards-related issues that the Committee has considered, and the responses received from the relevant ISSBs. The Secretariat's annual report covering the period from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025 was circulated to Members in May 2025.<sup>24</sup>

1.28. The Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement of the SPS Agreement resulted in a number of recommendations of the SPS Committee's and the International Standard-Setting Bodies' activities to monitor the use of international standards, including the Observatory Projects (see paragraph. 1.4. above).

## 1.8 Technical assistance

1.29. At each of its meetings, the SPS Committee solicits information from WTO Members regarding their technical assistance needs and activities. The IPPC's reports to the Committee summarized some of the activities of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee.

1.30. Several Members, including Canada<sup>25</sup> and Japan<sup>26</sup>, shared information about SPS technical assistance activities provided. Côte d'Ivoire<sup>27</sup> also shared general information about technical assistance and capacity building to support developing and least-developed countries. In addition, several observer organizations outlined their technical assistance activities to the Committee.<sup>28</sup>

1.31. Document [G/SPS/GEN/997/Rev.15](#) and its addenda, issued in 2025, provide information on all WTO technical assistance activities in the SPS area planned for the calendar year. National seminars were provided upon request by WTO Members. Further information on SPS activities is available through <http://www.wto.org/sp/ta>.

1.32. Before the March SPS Committee meeting, the WTO Secretariat circulates its report entitled "SPS Technical Assistance and Training Activities", containing detailed information on all SPS-specific technical assistance activities undertaken by the WTO Secretariat from 1994 to the end of the previous year.<sup>29</sup>

1.33. The IPPC participated virtually in a regional SPS course for government officials of the Central and Eastern European, Central Asian and Caucasus (CEEAC) region, organized by the WTO in cooperation with the Joint Vienna Institute (JVI).

1.34. The Report of the Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement contains recommendations on the topic of Technical assistance/S&DT, including the exploration of a mentoring system to assist developing and LDC Members, including with respect to transparency and their timely engagement on SPS matters.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See [G/SPS/11/Rev.1](#).

<sup>24</sup> See [G/SPS/GEN/2317](#).

<sup>25</sup> See section 6.2.1 in [G/SPS/R/118](#) (November 2025).

<sup>26</sup> See sections 6.2.1 in [G/SPS/R/116](#) (March 2025) and 6.2.2 in [G/SPS/R/118](#) (November 2025).

<sup>27</sup> See section 7.2.1 in [G/SPS/R/117](#) (June 2025).

<sup>28</sup> See [G/SPS/R/116](#) (March 2025), [G/SPS/R/117](#) (June 2025) and [G/SPS/R/118](#) (November 2025).

<sup>29</sup> Document [G/SPS/GEN/521/Rev.20](#) contains information on the technical assistance activities undertaken by the WTO Secretariat from 1994 to the end of 2024. The most updated information is available in the latest revision of document [G/SPS/GEN/521](#).

<sup>30</sup> See paragraph 2.24 in [G/SPS/74](#). A page dedicated to the SPS mentoring system is available at [www.wto.org/sp/mentoring](http://www.wto.org/sp/mentoring).



## 1.9 Thematic sessions and workshops

1.35. The SPS Committee regularly organizes several thematic sessions on the topics proposed by Members.<sup>31</sup> The IPPC contributed to some of these events through presentations.

1.36. In March 2025, the Committee held a thematic session on [Innovative Regulatory Approaches to Facilitate Safe Trade](#). At that meeting, a Southwest Pacific member of the IPPC Standards Committee presented an [Overview of the IPPC systems approaches and ISPMs](#).<sup>32</sup> In June 2025 meeting, the Committee held a thematic session on [Addressing Antimicrobial Resistance through SPS Measures in International Trade](#). At that meeting, the IPPC secretariat presented the [IPPC analysis of the antimicrobial use \(AMU\) in plant protection](#).<sup>33</sup> Based on a proposal by Côte d'Ivoire, the Committee also held a [Thematic Session on Special and Differential Treatment \(S&DT\)](#) in September 2025.<sup>34</sup> In November 2025, the Committee held a [Thematic Session on Science-Based SPS Import Controls to Facilitate Safe Trade](#).<sup>35</sup> At that meeting, the IPPC secretariat presented on the [Implementation of risk-based inspection for imported consignments](#). In November 2025, the Committee decided not to hold a thematic session in March 2026.

## 1.10 Dispute Settlement

### 1.10.1 The WTO Dispute Settlement Procedure

1.37. Any WTO Member may invoke the formal dispute resolution procedures of the WTO if they consider that a measure imposed by another WTO Member violates any of the WTO Agreements, including the SPS Agreement. If formal consultations on the problem are unsuccessful, a WTO Member may request that a panel be established to consider the complaint.<sup>36</sup> A panel of three individuals considers written and oral arguments submitted by the parties to the dispute and issues a written report of its legal findings and recommendations. Until December 2019, the parties to the dispute could appeal a panel's decision to the WTO's Appellate Body. However, the Appellate Body has not been operative since the end of 2019 due to a lack of quorum. The Appellate Body examined the legal findings of the panel and could uphold, modify or reverse them.

1.38. According to the SPS Agreement, when a dispute involves scientific or technical issues, the panel should seek advice from appropriate scientific and technical experts. Scientific experts have been consulted in all but one SPS-related dispute. The experts are usually selected from lists provided by the relevant international organizations, including the ISSBs referenced in the SPS Agreement. The parties to the dispute are consulted in the selection of experts and regarding the information solicited from the experts.

### 1.10.2 SPS Disputes

1.39. As of 31 December 2025, 644 complaints have formally been raised under the WTO's dispute settlement procedures. Of these, 54 have concerned SPS issues, and panel (and as the case may be, Appellate Body) reports have been issued in 15 SPS-related disputes.

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<sup>31</sup> The events, workshops and training held and planned by the Committee are available at <https://www.wto.org/sps/ta>.

<sup>32</sup> The programme, presentations and recordings of the thematic session are available at [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/sps\\_e/sps\\_1703202510\\_e/sps\\_1703202510\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_1703202510_e/sps_1703202510_e.htm).

<sup>33</sup> The thematic session was based on a proposal by the European Union ([G/SPS/GEN/2293](#)). The programme, presentations and recordings of the thematic session are available at [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/sps\\_e/sps\\_1606202510\\_e/sps\\_1606202510\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_1606202510_e/sps_1606202510_e.htm).

<sup>34</sup> See Côte d'Ivoire's proposal in section 6.7.3.1 of the June 2025 summary report ([G/SPS/R/117](#)). The programme and recordings of the thematic session are available at [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/sps\\_e/sps\\_3009202515\\_e/sps\\_3009202515\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_3009202515_e/sps_3009202515_e.htm). The moderator's report on the thematic session is available in document [G/SPS/GEN/2366](#).

<sup>35</sup> The thematic session was based on a proposal by the European Union ([G/SPS/GEN/2292](#)), and was co-organized by the European Union, Canada, Norway and the United States. The programme, presentations and recordings are available at [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/sps\\_e/sps\\_03112025\\_e/sps\\_03112025\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_03112025_e/sps_03112025_e.htm). The moderator's report on the thematic session is available in document [G/SPS/GEN/2373](#).

<sup>36</sup> A flow chart of the dispute resolution process can be consulted at [http://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/whatis\\_e/tif\\_e/disp2\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/disp2_e.htm).

1.40. In 2024, South Africa requested consultations with the European Union on the EU additional measures concerning the importation of citrus fruits from South Africa ([EU-Citrus Fruit II](#)). No substantive action took place in 2025 and, as of January 2026, the panel has been established but not yet composed.

1.41. Five panel reports have concerned plant pests and quarantine requirements: (i) the United States' complaint about Japan's requirement for testing each variety of fruit for efficacy of treatment against codling moth ([Japan-Agricultural Products](#))<sup>37</sup>; (ii) the United States' complaint about Japan's set of requirements on apples imported from the United States relating to fire blight ([Japan-Apples](#))<sup>38</sup>; (iii) New Zealand's complaint against Australia's restrictions on apples ([Australia-Apples](#))<sup>39</sup>; (iv) Mexico's complaint against Costa Rica's restrictions on fresh avocados ([Costa Rica-Avocados](#))<sup>40</sup> and (v) Costa Rica's complaint on Panama's measures concerning the importation of certain products ([Panama – Import Measures](#)).<sup>41</sup>

1.42. The developments of these and other disputes can be followed at <http://www.wto.org/disputes>.

### 1.11 Trade Facilitation

1.43. The WTO's multilateral Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which entered into force in 2017, aims to enhance the movement, release and clearance of goods across borders. The TFAs 36 provisions set out requirements for border agencies to streamline border formalities, improve transparency and enhance intra-agency and cross-border cooperation. It requires each WTO Member to establish a national committee to oversee its implementation.

1.44. As of 31 December 2025, 161 out of the 166 Members, representing 97% of the WTO's Membership, have deposited their [ratification of the Agreement](#).

1.45. Under the TFA, developing and LDC Members can self-designate which provisions they will implement either immediately, after a transition period, or upon receiving assistance and support for capacity building. By the end of 2025, developing and LDC Members had notified an 87.4% rate of [implementation commitments](#).<sup>42</sup>

1.46. In order to meet the national implementation deadlines and reap the full benefits from implementation of this Agreement, the successful integration of plant protection authorities into national discussions on trade facilitation is essential. Indeed, the objectives of trade facilitation and plant protection are mutually reinforcing. Trade facilitation supports trade in safe plant products by promoting more efficient and effective controls, such as through a greater focus on inspections on high-risk products, while also promoting checks before or after the border to avoid the creation of bottlenecks. In the [Thematic Session on Science-Based SPS Import Controls to Facilitate Safe Trade](#) held in November 2025, the WTO Secretariat delivered a presentation on [Facilitation of SPS import controls: Linkages with the TFA implementation](#).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> The panel report is contained in [WT/DS76/R](#). The Appellate Body report is contained in [WT/DS76/AB/R](#).

<sup>38</sup> The panel report the panel is contained in [WT/DS245/R](#). The Appellate Body report is contained in [WT/DS245/AB/R](#).

<sup>39</sup> The panel report is contained in [WT/DS367/R](#). The Appellate Body report is contained in [WT/DS367/AB/R](#).

<sup>40</sup> The panel report is contained in [WT/DS524/R](#).

<sup>41</sup> The panel report is contained in [WT/DS599/R](#). The panel report was appealed "to the void" on 24 January 2025.

<sup>42</sup> Developed Members were required to implement all provisions of the TFA from its entry into force on 22 February 2017.

<sup>43</sup> See paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 in document [G/SPS/GEN/2373](#).