

Facilitating trade through regulatory cooperation: WTO & OECD

The **WTO Agreements on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)**, and their related Committees, provide a unique framework for international regulatory co-operation contributing to ease trade frictions, according to a joint publication issued by the WTO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The publication "Facilitating Trade through Regulatory Co-operation: The Case of the WTO's TBT/SPS Agreements and Committees" highlights how specific disciplines of the Agreements and practices of the related Committees promote international regulatory co-operation. These include the notification of draft measures, harmonization with international standards, and discussion of specific trade concerns.

The study, also makes recommendations on how to better leverage the transparency and cooperation opportunities provided by the TBT and SPS Agreements, which facilitate the setting of notification requirements for proposed regulatory measures with potentially significant trade effects. The TBT and SPS Agreements strongly encourage WTO members to use relevant international standards as the basis for their measures, including disciplines on equivalence and recognition of foreign conformity assessment which help to ensure that traders do not face duplicative requirements or procedures when regulations differ across markets.

Executive Summary

The study explores how the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and their related Committees promote opportunities for international regulatory cooperation (IRC) between WTO members.

In this regard, policy makers can draw from a variety of approaches to achieve their policy objectives and address the trade costs of regulatory divergence, including unilaterally, bilaterally and multilaterally. Therefore, international organizations serve as institutional fora within which Governments can engage in IRC.

This is particularly the case for the SPS and TBT Agreements, which establish obligations on WTO members for the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations, conformity assessment procedures and standards, as well as SPS measures, in order to facilitate the conduct of international trade in goods. The Agreements provide a unique multilateral transparency framework that contributes to cooperation, by setting notification requirements for proposed regulatory measures with potentially significant trade effects. The Agreements strongly encourage WTO members to use relevant international standards as the basis for their measures.

Please find enclosed the full report on Facilitating trade through regulatory cooperation: The case of the WTO's TBT/SPS Agreements and Committees released by WTO for your kind reference.

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Warm Regards,
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