 

**Virtual regional SPS workshop for Arab countries**

**Draft Programme**

**Dates:**  22-25 November 2021 (12:00-14:15 CET)

**Objective:** Through presentations, poll questions, Q&As, and practical exercises, to enhance participants' understanding of the WTO SPS Agreement, including types of SPS measures and key SPS disciplines; to discuss the work of the SPS Committee as well as topical SPS issues and their importance to trade; and to allow participants to familiarise themselves with the WTO SPS transparency tools as well as with the work of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF). The workshop will also provide an opportunity for government officials working on SPS matters to establish contact with their counterparts in other countries of the region, facilitating the exchange of information and the sharing of best practices related to the implementation of the SPS Agreement.

**Target audience:** Government officials with responsibility / a substantive interest in SPS matters; and an intermediate level of understanding of WTO principles and the SPS Agreement.

**Background material:**

* SPS gateway on the WTO website: <https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_e.htm>
* The WTO Agreements Series, SPS Measures: <https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/agrmntseries4_sps_e.pdf>
* Overview of SPS transparency tools: <https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_practical_manual_for_sps_national_notification_flyer_bat.pdf>
* Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF): <https://standardsfacility.org/>

**Programme:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday 22 November 2021 – Overview of the SPS Agreement.** This session will discuss the importance of non-tariff measures, provide an overview of the types of SPS measures, and discuss key SPS disciplines. | | |
| 12:00-12:15 CET | Opening remarks | Rolando Alcala and Camille Fléchet, SPS Section, WTO |
| 12:15-13:00 CET | What are SPS measures and why do they matter? |
| 13:00-13:15 CET | Break |
| 13:15-14:15 CET | Overview of key SPS disciplines |
| **Tuesday 23 November 2021 – Transparency.** This session will focus on the SPS transparency obligations and include practical exercises for participants to familiarise themselves with existing transparency tools: SPS Notification Submission System (SPS NSS), SPS Information Management System (SPS IMS), and ePing platform. | | |
| 12:00-13:00 CET | SPS transparency framework and overview of the transparency tools | Rolando Alcala and Marion Doléans, SPS Section, WTO |
| 13:00-13:15 CET | Break |
| 13:15-14:15 CET | Practical exercise: using SPS transparency tools |
| **Wednesday 24 November 2021 – SPS Committee.** This session will look at the work of the SPS Committee, with a focus on specific trade concerns and current SPS issues (approval procedures, GM products and gene editing, COVID-19 related challenges, or digital opportunities). | | |
| 12:00-13:00 CET | Overview of the work of the SPS Committee | Rolando Alcala and Camille Fléchet, SPS Section, WTO |
| 13:00-13:15 CET | Break |
| 13:15-14:15 CET | Practical exercise: trade concerns |
| **Thursday 25 November 2021 – STDF and wrap-up.** This session will look at relevant work of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), including on Good Regulatory Practices to develop and/or review SPS measures. | | |
| 12:00-13:00 CET | STDF | STDF Secretariat  Rolando Alcala, Marion Doléans, and Camille Fléchet, SPS Section, WTO |
| 13:00-13:15 CET | Break |
| 13:15-14:15 CET | Debrief on the practical exercise, wrap-up, and closing remarks |