



Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

**SPS COMMITTEE THEMATIC SESSION ON SCIENCE-BASED SPS IMPORT CONTROLS
TO FACILITATE SAFE TRADE**

MONDAY 3 (AFTERNOON) AND TUESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2025

**WTO, CENTRE WILLIAM RAPPARD, GENEVA
AND ZOOM**

PROGRAMME¹

Revision

1. The SPS Committee has decided to hold a thematic session on science-based SPS import controls to facilitate safe trade, following an initial proposal by the European Union to hold a thematic session on how to facilitate safe trade via efficient import controls using modern IT tools (IT risk analysis, AI, e-commerce, etc.).² This thematic session follows up on a recommendation in the [Report of the Sixth Review of the SPS Agreement](#) for the Committee to continue to engage and encourage Members to share experiences with new technologies and digital tools to facilitate safe trade, and to continue discussions on how to promote the adoption of novel approaches and related technologies, including digital tools to facilitate safe trade.³ This session also builds on the Committee's [Thematic Session on Approval Procedures](#) held in November 2019⁴ and [Thematic Session on Digital Tools](#) held in June 2024.⁵

2. According to the WTO SPS Agreement, Members have the right to determine their appropriate level of sanitary and phytosanitary protection and adopt SPS measures and controls based on scientific risk assessment. The chosen level of protection is applicable both for domestically produced and imported goods. Import controls are crucial in verifying compliance with the relevant SPS requirements of the importing Member in order to protect human, animal and plant life and health. They can be complex, time and resource-intensive procedures, and there is an opportunity to determine whether some of these controls can be streamlined and modernized, including by using IT tools.

3. The thematic session could support the implementation of the SPS Agreement by addressing the following questions:

- a. how to better understand import controls, including new tools and developments, as well as opportunities for trade and the economy;
- b. how Members may improve import controls in their own jurisdiction;
- c. how the SPS Committee could continue its work on import controls.

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

² [G/SPS/GEN/2292](#); [G/SPS/R/116](#), para. 5.19.

³ [G/SPS/74](#), para. 2.29.

⁴ The programme, presentations and recordings of the Thematic Session on Approval Procedures are available at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/workshop05112019_e.htm.

⁵ The programme, presentations and recordings of the Thematic Session on Digital Tools are available at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_2506202410_e/sps_2506202410_e.htm.

4. The thematic session will be moderated by **Mr Knut Berdal (Norway)**, Specialist Director at the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food.
5. The thematic session is scheduled to be held in Geneva on Monday 3 November from 15:00 to 18:00 (CET), and on Tuesday 4 November 2025, from 10:00 to 13:00 (CET), continuing in the afternoon from 15:00 to 18:00 (CET). The thematic session can be attended in person or via Zoom with WTO credentials using this [link](#). The event will also be livestreamed.⁶ Interpretation will be provided in English, French, and Spanish.
6. Information on the thematic session and presentations is available on the [event's webpage](#).⁷

⁶ Monday, 3 November: <https://youtube.com/live/IAjqXdGX5qg?feature=share>; Tuesday, 4 November: <https://youtube.com/live/F5XBB-i-meA?feature=share>.

⁷ https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_03112025_e/sps_03112025_e.htm.

MONDAY, 3 NOVEMBER (15:00-18:00 CET)**Opening remarks**

Moderator of the thematic session: Mr Knut Berdal (Norway)

Session 1 – Setting the scene: The role of international organizations in providing objective, science-based information about import controls to support safe trade in food and agricultural products

This session will provide an opportunity for international organizations to share information regarding their work in seeking and collecting science-based data to conduct objective analysis about SPS-related risks.

- **WTO Secretariat**

- **Ms Isabel Calderón**, Economic Affairs Officer, SPS Team, Agriculture and Commodities Division. *SPS Committee work on Annex C.*
- **Ms Helen Chang**, Trade Policy Analyst, and **Ms Birgit Viohl**, Senior Trade Facilitation Expert and Head of Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility, Market Access Division. *Facilitation of SPS import controls: Linkages with the TFA implementation.*

- **International standard-setting bodies**

- **Mr Patrick Sekitoleko**, Food Standards Officer, [Codex Alimentarius](#).
- **Ms Charmaine Chng**, Deputy Head of the Standards Department, [World Organisation for Animal Health \(WOAH\)](#). *WOAH international standards: how import measures are developed and support safe trade.*
- **Ms Parmar Preet**, International Phytosanitary Specialist, [International Plant Protection Convention \(IPPC\) secretariat](#). *Implementation of risk-based inspection for imported consignments.*

Followed by Q&A

- **Other international bodies**

- **Ms Silvia Sorescu**, Project lead trade facilitation, [Trade and Agriculture Directorate](#), OECD. *Trends and impacts of evolving border procedures: Insights from the OECD Trade Facilitation Indicators.*
- **Ms Seul Lee**, Economic Affairs Officer, [UN Trade and Development](#). *Non-tariff measures data to assess economic effects of import controls.*

Followed by Q&A

Session 2 – Identifying and assessing SPS risks to determine import controls

Members and other stakeholders will discuss steps and factors taken into account when establishing import controls. These may include approaches to collect and analyse relevant data, risk assessment techniques and the examination of other science-based information to mitigate SPS risks related to imports and develop other SPS measures.

- **Government perspectives**

- **Dr Barney Caton**, Quantitative Risk Analyst. [APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine, US Department of Agriculture](#). *Systemic approaches for improving border controls.*
- **Ms Mary An Trinidad Tito Tadeo**, Director of Health and Safety, [National Authority of Fishery and Aquaculture Health and Safety \(SANIPES\)](#), Peru. *Strengthening sanitary and phytosanitary controls on imports in fisheries and aquaculture based on risk management.*

- **Industry perspectives**

- **Mr Chris Nash**, Executive Director, [Pet Food Association of Canada](#). *Challenges in Global Pet Food Trade.*

Followed by Q&A

TUESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER

MORNING SESSION (10:00-13:00 CET) AND AFTERNOON SESSION (15:00-18:00 CET)

Opening remarks

Moderator of the thematic session: Mr Knut Berdal (Norway)

Session 2 (Cont'd) – Identifying and assessing SPS risks to determine import controls

Members and other stakeholders will continue to discuss steps and factors taken into account when establishing import controls. These may include approaches to collect and analyse relevant data, risk assessment techniques and the examination of other science-based information to mitigate SPS risks related to imports and develop other SPS measures.

- **Government perspectives**

- **Ms Hui-Wen Wang**, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu to the WTO. *Risk-based control measures for imported plants and plant products.*

- **Industry perspectives**

- **Ms Courtney Dorsett**, Vice President for Food Safety and Sustainability, [Premium Peanut/American Peanut Council](#), United States. *Exporter approaches to address import controls.*

Followed by Q&A

Session 3 – Best practices for efficient, science-based import controls

Members and other stakeholders will discuss SPS measures, procedures and tools (including AI, digital tools and e-commerce) they use to carry out efficient science-based import controls protecting human, animal and plant life and health while facilitating safe trade. The session will also highlight best practices and success stories.

- **Procedures and tools used to facilitate safe and efficient risk-based import controls**

- **Mr Ning Gong**, Director of Tianjin Customs of China. *An overview of cooperation on electronic inspection and quarantine certificates of China Customs.*
- **Mr Borja Iglesias Méndez**, Policy Officer, European Commission. *EU harmonized SPS import control system: protecting food, animals and plants.*
- **Mr Julian Rodríguez**, French Ministry of Agriculture, [Veterinary and Phytosanitary Inspection Service](#) (SIVEP-DGAL); **Ms Sanne Thorn Jensen**, Veterinary Officer, Special Adviser, International Trade, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, [The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration](#); and **Mr Bram de Hoop**, [National Plant Protection Organization of the Netherlands](#). *Hands on implementation of the EU import control rules.*

Followed by Q&A

- **Facility registration: challenges and opportunities for streamlining processes**

- **Ms Shawna Morris**, Executive Vice President, Trade Policy and Global Affairs, [US Dairy Export Council](#) and [National Milk Producers Federation](#). *US dairy industry perspectives on facility registrations.*
- **Ms Shannon McMurtrey**, Senior Director of International Affairs, [National Pork Producers Council](#), United States. *US pork industry perspectives on facility registrations.*
- **Ms Hilde Ognedal**, Senior Adviser, Norwegian Food Safety Authority; Chairperson of the [Codex E-Working Group on "Establishment listing guidance" \(CCFICS 27\)](#). *Ongoing work in Codex to develop principles and guidelines to harmonize the use, development and implementation of establishment listings/ facility registration.*
- **Mr Patrick Roberts**, Policy Analyst, Trade Agreements Division, International Affairs Branch, [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#). *Canada's food import requirements: Establishment licensing and systems approvals.*

Followed by Q&A

Session 4 – Ongoing projects, research to further streamline risk-based import controls

This session will showcase projects, research, and innovation undertaken by Members, international organizations and other stakeholders to deepen their understanding of new developments and explore innovative approaches and regulatory cooperation, as well as high-impact and cost-effective preventive measures, to improve the efficiency of science-based import controls.

- **Ms Mary Grace Mandigma**, [Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards](#), Department of Agriculture, The Philippines.
- **Ms Gisela Quaglia**, Research programme officer, European Commission. *EU-funded research and innovation on SPS import controls.*
- **Dr Andrea Ficke**, Cereal Plant Pathologist/Research Professor, Department of Fungal Diseases, [Division of Biotechnology and Plant Health](#), Norwegian Institute for Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO). *Detect and protect: How science-based technology can facilitate global trade with plant-based goods.*

Followed by Q&A

- **Ms Giovanna Sartori**, Food Safety and Quality Consultant, Agrifood Systems and Food Safety Division (ESF), [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#). *Risk-based import controls for safer trade: FAO's support to member States.*
- **Dr Rosineide Souza Richards**, Phytosanitary Affairs Manager, [International Seed Federation \(ISF\)](#). *Strengthening science-based import controls through risk-based approaches in the seed sector.*
- **Dr Fernando Sampedro Parra**, Researcher and International Risk Analysis Consultant, [University of Minnesota](#). *Risk-based food inspection and surveillance models in Latin America: Roadmap from design to implementation.*
- **Mr Horrys Friaca**, Agricultural Health and Food Safety Specialist, [Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture \(IICA\)](#). *Strengthening science-based SPS import controls in Latin-American countries to facilitate safe trade.*

Followed by Q&A

Session 5 - Panel discussion - paving the way forward

This session will further explore some of the key themes discussed throughout the thematic session and possible next steps for the Committee. Guiding questions will cover steps Members and other stakeholders can take to determine the necessity for and streamline science-based import controls while facilitating safe trade in food and agricultural products.

- **Discussants**

- **Ms Courtney Dorsett**, Vice President for Food Safety and Sustainability, [Premium Peanut/American Peanut Council](#), United States.
- **Mr Borja Iglesias Méndez**, Policy Officer, European Commission.
- **Mr Horrys Friaca**, Agricultural Health and Food Safety Specialist, [Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture \(IICA\)](#).

- **Closing remarks**
