



**Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement**

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# 10 key results from 2023

## **Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement**

The Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement aims to ensure that regulations, standards, testing and certification procedures followed by WTO members do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade.

## **Annual Review of TBT Agreement**

The WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade collects data on an annual basis on the implementation of the TBT Agreement. The information in this brochure is based on the 2023 review.

## **About the WTO**

The World Trade Organization is the international body dealing with the global rules of trade between nations. Its main function is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible, with a level playing field for all its members.

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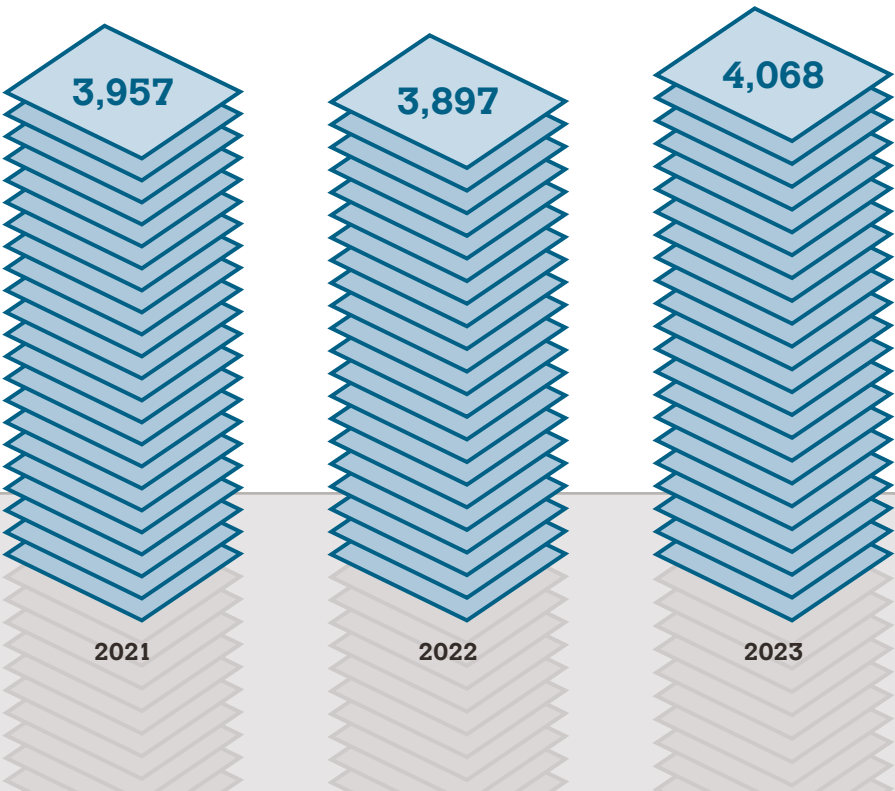
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1

**WTO members submitted more than 4,000 notifications** on product requirements to the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee in 2023, the highest annual total since 1995. Notifications are a form of advance notice. They provide an opportunity for the WTO membership to comment on draft measures affecting trade in goods (both industrial and agricultural) before they enter into force. They also support regulatory cooperation. Typically, they concern health or safety requirements or protection of the environment. The rise in the number of notifications illustrates WTO members' commitment to increasing transparency.

Number of TBT notifications per year

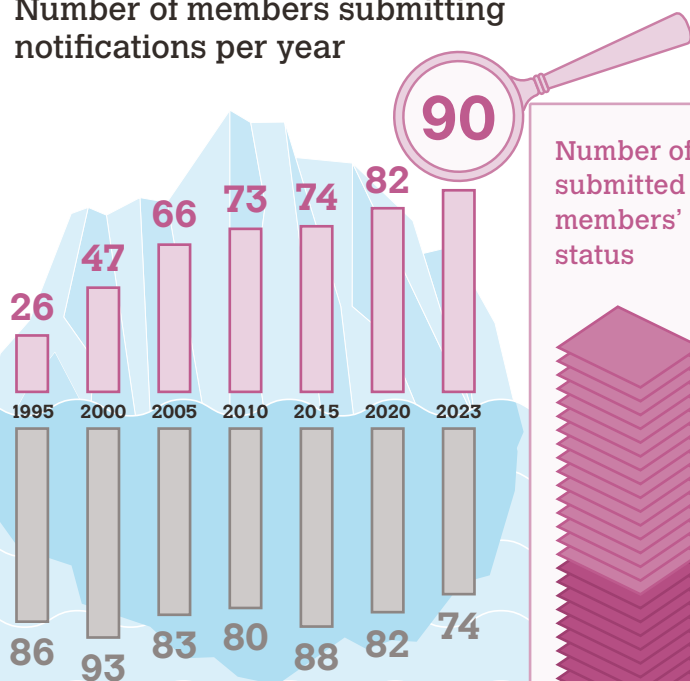


## 2

**Ninety members (over half of the WTO membership) submitted at least one notification during the year.**

Most new notifications (83%) were submitted by developing and least developed country members.

Number of members submitting notifications per year



Number of notifications submitted in 2023, by members' development status



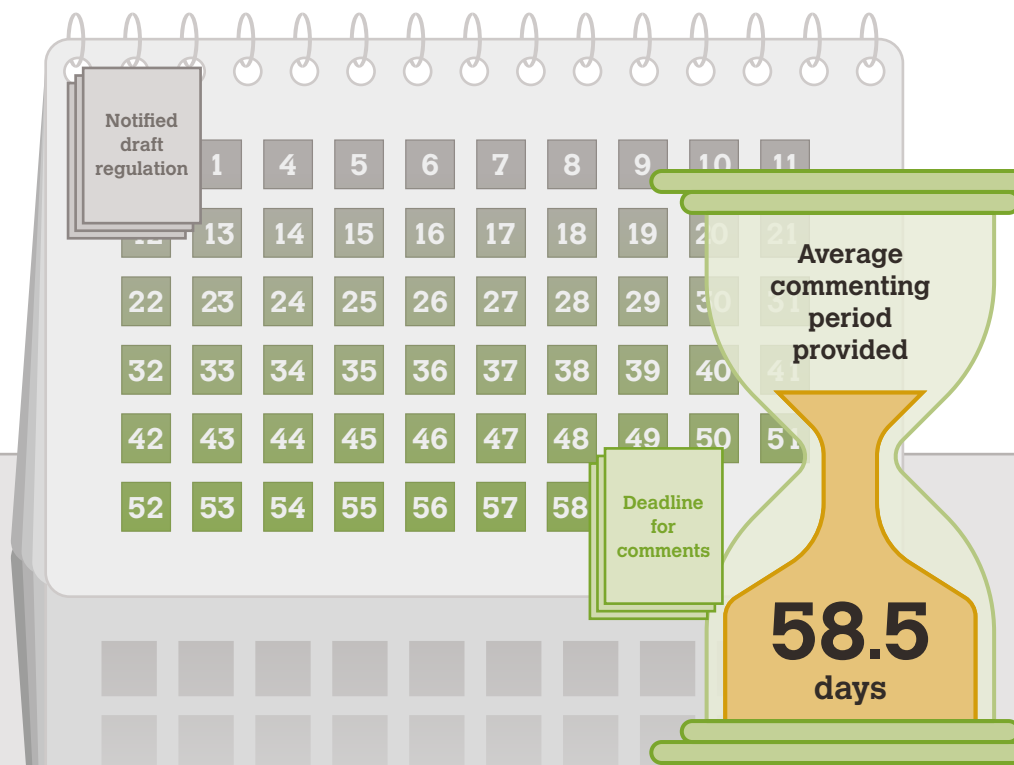
Number of members notifying

Number of members not notifying

3

**Notifications submitted to the WTO in 2023 provided, on average, 58.5 days for members to comment**, half a day more than in 2022. This is almost at the 60-day comment period recommended by the Committee. This period is an important opportunity for stakeholders to react to regulations in the pipeline, allowing them time to seek clarification and express concerns.

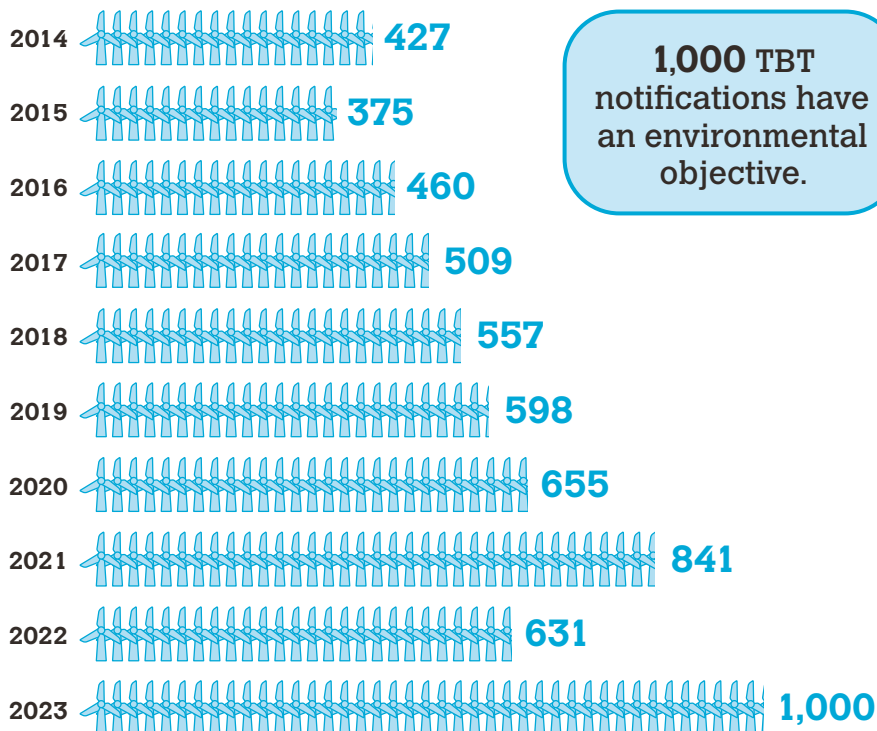
## Time-period for members to comment on notifications



4

In 2023, 1,000 notifications listed protection of the environment as their objective, a marked increase from 631 in 2022. Nearly 20% of these covered renewable energy.

## “Protection of environment” notifications





5

In 2023, there was an almost threefold increase in use of the international forum in ePing – up to 216 from 80 in 2022. The international forum allows users of ePing, the WTO's main tool for TBT and SPS notifications and trade concerns, to discuss and share information on specific notifications.

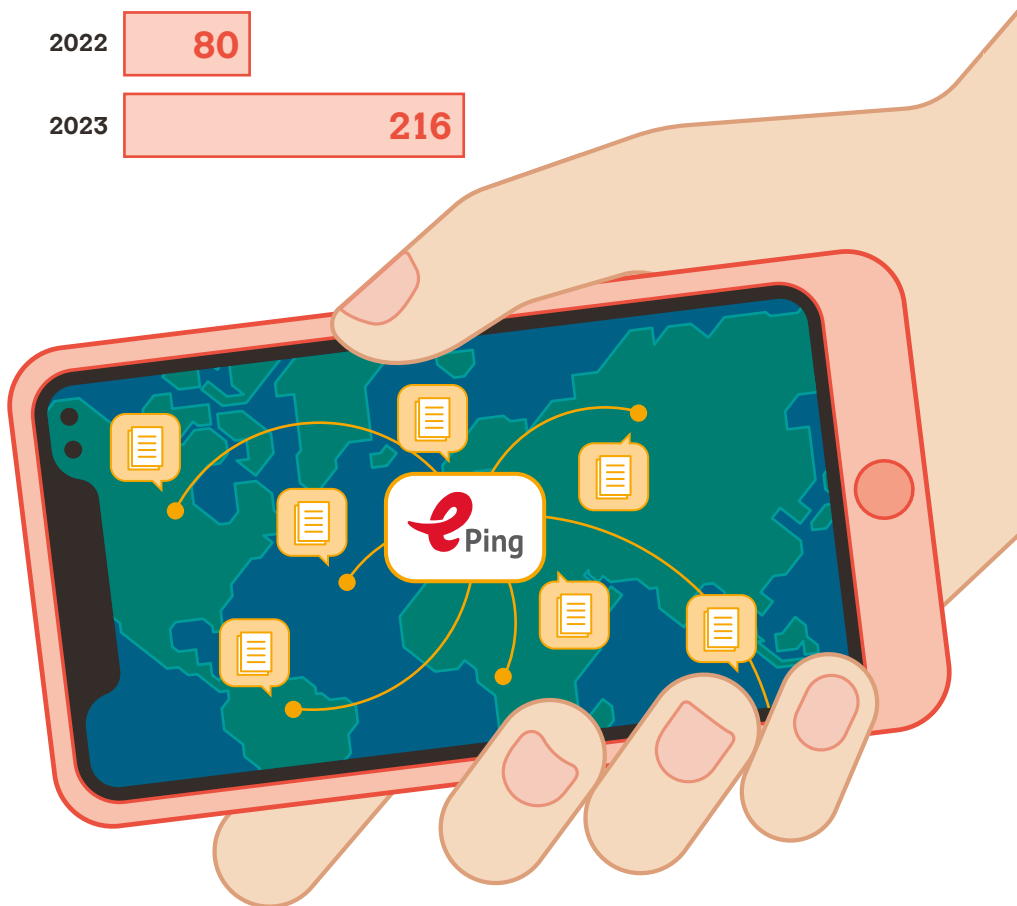
### Users of the international forum in ePing

2022

80

2023

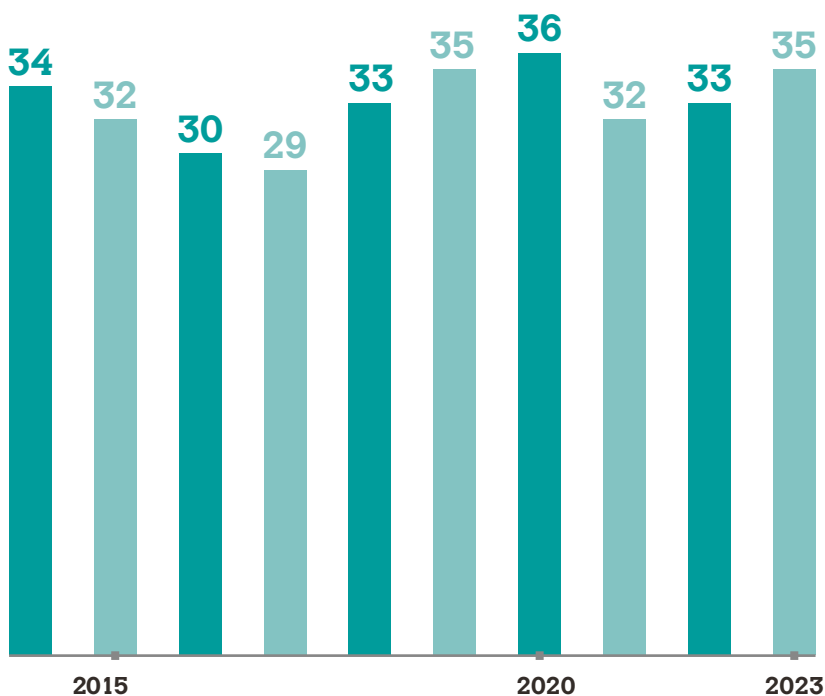
216



## 6

A total of 35 members raised at least one new or previously raised specific trade concern in the TBT Committee in 2023. Developing members raised the majority of new trade concerns (76%).

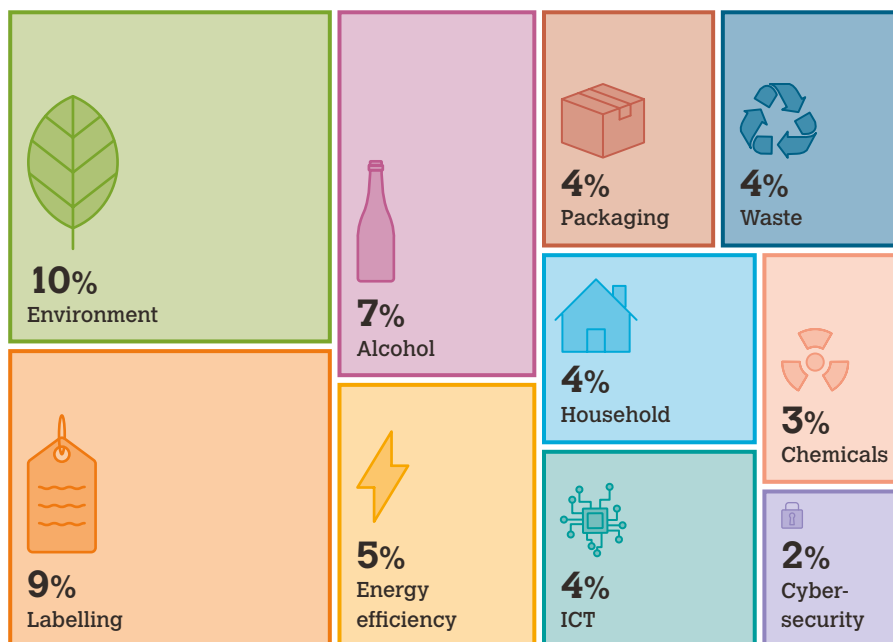
Number of members raising at least one specific trade concern



## 7

**Trade concerns raised in 2023 were related to a wide range of sectors** including: beverages, machinery and mechanical appliances, plastics, pharmaceutical products and inorganic chemicals. Overall, environmental concerns followed by labelling were the topics most commonly addressed in new trade concerns raised in 2023.

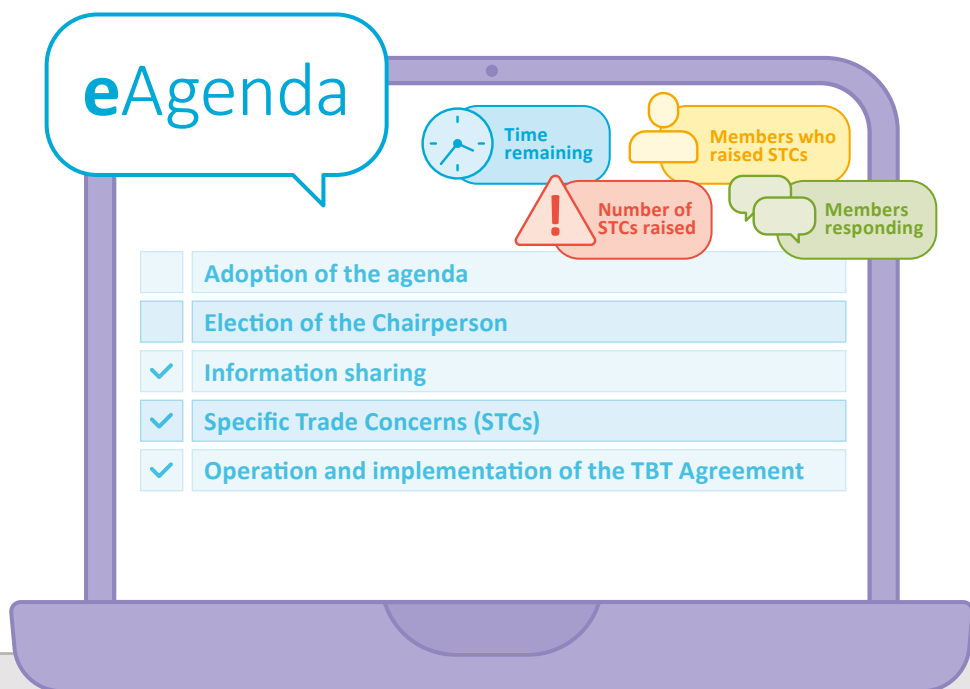
### Most commonly addressed new trade concerns in 2023



## 8

**Almost 100 members actively use eAgenda,** an electronic platform that facilitates members' participation at Committee meetings by allowing them to see agenda items raised by other members and to share statements and documents ahead of Committee meetings. By the end of 2023, 98 members were actively using eAgenda, up from 85 in 2022. In June 2023, the use of eAgenda was extended to cover all agenda items, not only trade concerns.

### Members actively using eAgenda



## 9

**The TBT Committee undertook its 10<sup>th</sup> year of thematic discussions**, covering topics ranging from good regulatory practice, regulatory cooperation, and transparency to standards, technical assistance and conformity assessment procedures. In 2023, the discussions focused on digital technologies (including artificial intelligence) and the environment.

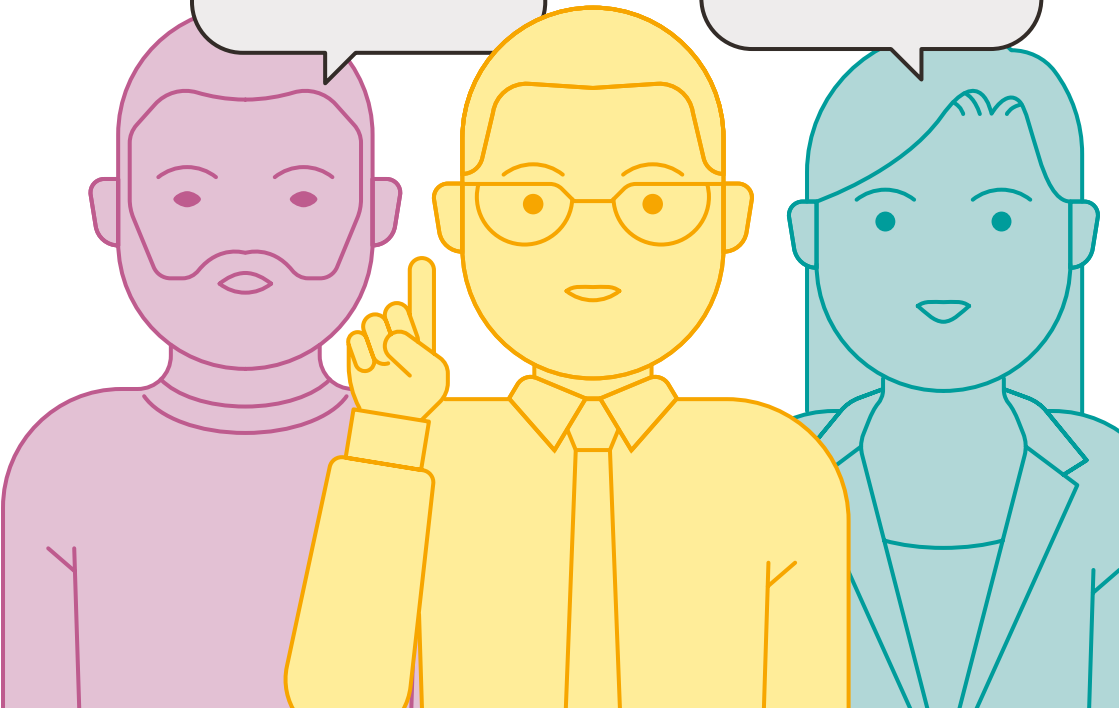


**Regulatory  
cooperation**

**Digital  
technologies**

**Transparency**

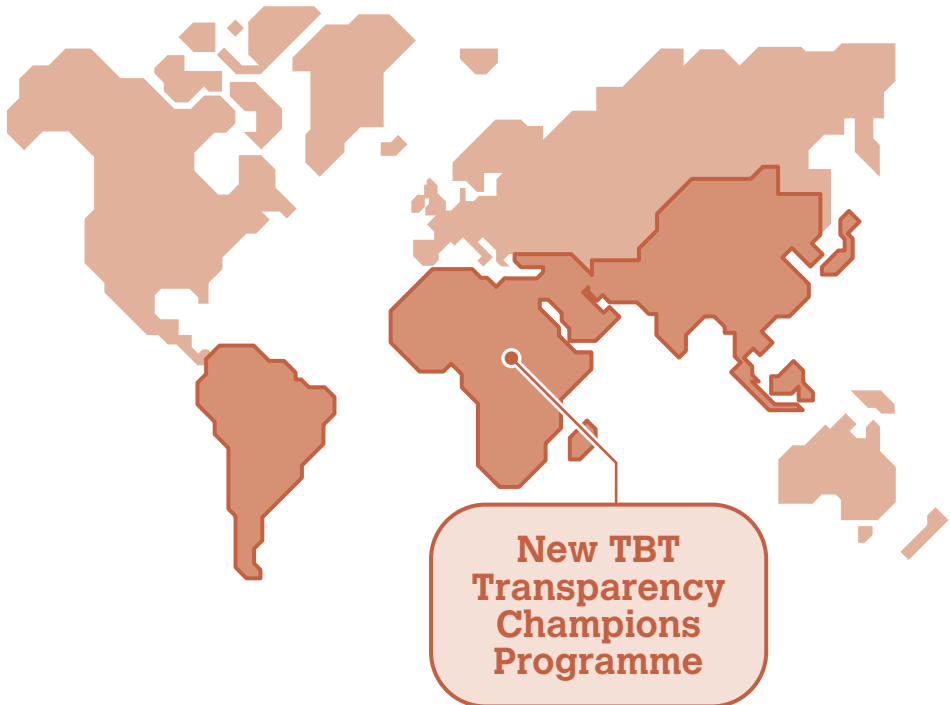
**Environment**



# 10

**Technical assistance on TBT matters has been one of the most requested training topics in recent years.** Twelve activities were delivered globally, in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Middle-East and Latin America (see map). For example, the pilot TBT Transparency Champions Programme for Africa, a **six-month** capacity-building initiative aimed at improving the transparency of WTO members' TBT measures, concluded in April 2023. Twenty-eight participants from 21 African countries took part.

## TBT-related technical assistance in 2023





## Further information

Further information about the implementation of the TBT Agreement is available in the 2023 Annual Review (G/TBT/53).



“Technical Barriers to Trade” – a publication in the WTO Agreements Series – provides an overview of the purpose and scope of the TBT Agreement, the types of measures it covers, and the key principles of the Agreement. It can be downloaded from the WTO website.

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