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1 ANNEX B OF THE AGREEMENT ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

1.1 Text of Annex B

ANNEX B

TRANSPARENCY OF SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY REGULATIONS

Publication of regulations

1. Members shall ensure that all sanitary and phytosanitary regulations which have been adopted are published promptly in such a manner as to enable interested Members to become acquainted with them.

(footnote original) ⁵ Sanitary and phytosanitary measures such as laws, decrees or ordinances which are applicable generally.

2. Except in urgent circumstances, Members shall allow a reasonable interval between the publication of a sanitary or phytosanitary regulation and its entry into force in order to allow time for producers in exporting Members, and particularly in developing country Members, to adapt their products and methods of production to the requirements of the importing Member.

Enquiry points

3. Each Member shall ensure that one enquiry point exists which is responsible for the provision of answers to all reasonable questions from interested Members as well as for the provision of relevant documents regarding:

- (a) any sanitary or phytosanitary regulations adopted or proposed within its territory;
- (b) any control and inspection procedures, production and quarantine treatment, pesticide tolerance and food additive approval procedures, which are operated within its territory;
- (c) risk assessment procedures, factors taken into consideration, as well as the determination of the appropriate level of sanitary or phytosanitary protection;
- (d) the membership and participation of the Member, or of relevant bodies within its territory, in international and regional sanitary and phytosanitary organizations and systems, as well as in bilateral and multilateral agreements and arrangements within the scope of this Agreement, and the texts of such agreements and arrangements.

4. Members shall ensure that where copies of documents are requested by interested Members, they are supplied at the same price (if any), apart from the cost of delivery, as to the nationals⁶ of the Member concerned.

(footnote original) ⁶ When "nationals" are referred to in this Agreement, the term shall be deemed, in the case of a separate customs territory Member of the WTO, to mean persons, natural or legal, who are domiciled or who have a real and effective industrial or commercial establishment in that customs territory.

Notification procedures

5. Whenever an international standard, guideline or recommendation does not exist or the content of a proposed sanitary or phytosanitary regulation is not substantially the same as the content of an international standard, guideline or recommendation, and if the regulation may have a significant effect on trade of other Members, Members shall:

- (a) publish a notice at an early stage in such a manner as to enable interested Members to become acquainted with the proposal to introduce a particular regulation;
- (b) notify other Members, through the Secretariat, of the products to be covered by the regulation together with a brief indication of the objective and rationale of the proposed regulation. Such notifications shall take place at an early stage, when amendments can still be introduced and comments taken into account;
- (c) provide upon request to other Members copies of the proposed regulation and, whenever possible, identify the parts which in substance deviate from international standards, guidelines or recommendations;
- (d) without discrimination, allow reasonable time for other Members to make comments in writing, discuss these comments upon request, and take the comments and the results of the discussions into account.

6. However, where urgent problems of health protection arise or threaten to arise for a Member, that Member may omit such of the steps enumerated in paragraph 5 of this Annex as it finds necessary, provided that the Member:

- (a) immediately notifies other Members, through the Secretariat, of the particular regulation and the products covered, with a brief indication of the objective and the rationale of the regulation, including the nature of the urgent problem(s);
- (b) provides, upon request, copies of the regulation to other Members;
- (c) allows other Members to make comments in writing, discusses these comments upon request, and takes the comments and the results of the discussions into account.

7. Notifications to the Secretariat shall be in English, French or Spanish.

8. Developed country Members shall, if requested by other Members, provide copies of the documents or, in case of voluminous documents, summaries of the documents covered by a specific notification in English, French or Spanish.

9. The Secretariat shall promptly circulate copies of the notification to all Members and interested international organizations and draw the attention of developing country Members to any notifications relating to products of particular interest to them.

10. Members shall designate a single central government authority as responsible for the implementation, on the national level, of the provisions concerning notification procedures according to paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 8 of this Annex.

General reservations

11. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as requiring:

- (a) the provision of particulars or copies of drafts or the publication of texts other than in the language of the Member except as stated in paragraph 8 of this Annex; or

- (b) Members to disclose confidential information which would impede enforcement of sanitary or phytosanitary legislation or which would prejudice the legitimate commercial interests of particular enterprises.

1.2 Annex B(2): "reasonable interval"

1. At the Doha Ministerial Conference, Members decided that the "reasonable interval" in respect of paragraph 2 should normally be understood as a period of not less than six months:

"Subject to the conditions specified in paragraph 2 of Annex B to the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, the phrase 'reasonable interval' shall be understood to mean normally a period of not less than 6 months. It is understood that timeframes for specific measures have to be considered in the context of the particular circumstances of the measure and actions necessary to implement it. The entry into force of measures which contribute to the liberalization of trade should not be unnecessarily delayed."¹

1.3 Recommended procedures for implementing the transparency obligations of the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (Article 7)

2. At its meeting of 2-3 April 2008, the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures adopted the revised Recommended Procedures for Implementing the Transparency Obligations of the SPS Agreement (Article 7). The procedures, updated in 2023², were developed to assist Members to fulfil their transparency obligations under Article 7 and Annex B of the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). For a discussion of these procedures, see the relevant sections of Article 7 of the SPS Agreement (Practice).

Current as of: July 2024

¹ [WT/MIN\(01\)/17](#), para. 3.2.

² [G/SPS/7/Rev.5](#).