



Background

The FAO Regional Initiative on Improving Agrifood Trade and Market Integration focuses on the strengthening of export potential of European and Central Asian countries and facilitation to their integration in global trade relations.

The initiative promotes the integration of countries in the region into the global trade system, enhancing their understanding of WTO trade rules. Transparency is central in effectively applying all WTO agreements. A lack of transparency weakens the WTO system, causes a deterioration of trust between trade partners, and, in the end, undermines market opportunities. WTO Members therefore pay particular attention to the development of transparency rules, including with a view to reforming the WTO system.

National practices in the implementation of WTO rules vary across countries, reflecting differences in trade policy, institutional capacity, and length of WTO membership. These differences notwithstanding, a general lack of transparency in applying WTO obligations in agricultural trade has become a common feature in the region.

In view of these challenges, WTO Members have agreed to a systemic effort to build and enhance existing expertise and capacities. To this end, FAO's Regional Initiative can help create an expert network and promote peer-learning processes with specialists from the WTO and the FAO Secretariats as well as experts from countries.

The immediate focus of this workshop will be placed on transparency in the application of domestic support, which is the single most challenging for countries in the region. In addition to domestic support for agriculture, transparency in the area of fisheries is of paramount importance for the region. The arsenal trade rules for fish and fish products encompasses rules and regulations from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the WTO and FAO. Also relevant are instruments enshrined in SDG 14.

Transparency in understanding and applying the various rules is a crucial contributor to sustainable fish trade. Only with transparency, shared responsibilities with solutions on how to address overcapacity, overfishing and IUU fishing rules can be properly addressed and effectively implemented.

Against this backdrop, a workshop on WTO Transparency in Agriculture and Fisheries will be organised under the overall auspices of the FAO Regional Initiative. It is scheduled to take place in Tbilisi, Georgia, 21-22 November 2019. Participants come from the WTO national notification authorities and/or ministries preparing notifications for trade in agriculture, agrifood, and regulation of fisheries. Among participants are also representatives of scientific institutions. Participating countries include the WTO members Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Ukraine. Also invited are Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Uzbekistan, who are currently a WTO accession process. The working languages are English and Russian, interpretation will be provided.





Main objectives of the workshop are to:

- Discuss the latest trends in reforming of the transparency system;
- Provide an overview of the challenges in the application of transparency rules for agri-food trade;
- Provide guidance in improving compliance with transparency requirements under the Agreement on Agriculture; familiarize participants with advanced features of the information management system Ag-IMS;
- Present efforts of the FAO and WTO in promoting best policies and practices for sustainable fisheries, and enhancing transparency in fisheries subsidies;
- Afford participants an opportunity to network and establish a professional support net with experts of the Secretariats of WTO and FAO, as well as colleagues from countries.

The expected outcomes include the strengthening of the national capacities in applying agrifood trade rules in a transparent manner. Specifically,

- Participants will improve their understanding of trade rules, learn to use tools and approaches to ensure transparency in agricultural trade as well as fishery subsidies;
- Participants will get hands-on instructions on transparency requirements under the Agreement on Agriculture, discuss related concerns and challenges in preparing notifications to the WTO. Experts from countries supported by staff from the WTO Secretariat will engage in a peer-learning process;
- Participants will be informed about international activities in achieving SDGs in fisheries and improve their understanding of related complexities at the national level;
- Participants will expand their professional network and establish contacts with experts from the WTO Secretariat, the FAO Department of fisheries and aquaculture, and colleagues from other countries.





21 November 2019 (1st day)

Venue: Tbilisi, Georgia, Hotel “Holiday Inn”, located at 1, 26 May Square,
Conference hall “**Green room**” on 1st floor

TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKERS / PARTICIPANTS
8:30 – 9:00	REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS	
9:00 – 9:20	OPENING AND WELCOME ADDRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khatia Tsilosani, Deputy Minister, The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia • Iryna Kobuta, Trade and Markets Division, FAO • Shalva Pipia, Director, Rural and Agricultural Policy and Development Institute (RAPDI)
9:20 – 9:30	INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS	All participants
SESSION 1. CURRENT AND FUTURE TRANSPARENCY OBLIGATIONS		
Moderator: Shalva Pipia, Director RAPDI		
9:30 – 9:50	Compliance with existing transparency requirements in agriculture trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iryna Kobuta, Trade and Markets Division, FAO
9:50 – 10:10	Enhancing transparency under WTO agreements: discussions and trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmad Mukhtar, Economist, FAO Liaison Office in Geneva
10:10 – 10:30	Discussion	All participants
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break	
SESSION 2: TRANSPARENCY UNDER AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE		
Moderator: Diwakar DIXIT, World Trade Organization		
11:00 – 13:30	Domestic support – Tables DS:1, DS:2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reminder of “the boxes” • Practical exercises and case studies • Group assignments • Group work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diwakar DIXIT, Counsellor Agriculture and Commodities Division World Trade Organization (WTO) Geneva, Switzerland • All participants
13:30 – 15:00	Lunch Break	
15:00 – 17:00	Domestic support – Tables DS:1, DS:2 - continuation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work • Group reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diwakar DIXIT, Counsellor Agriculture and Commodities Division World Trade Organization (WTO) Geneva, Switzerland • All participants
17:00 – 17:30	Discussion	All participants
19:00 – 20:00	Dinner	





22 November 2019 (2nd day)
Venue: Tbilisi, Georgia, Hotel “Holiday Inn”, located at 1, 26 May Square,
Conference hall “**Green room**” on 1st floor

TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKERS / PARTICIPANTS
CONTINUATION OF SESSION 2		
Moderator: Diwakar DIXIT, World Trade Organization		
9:00 – 10:15	Advanced functions of AG-IMS, online submission of notifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diwakar DIXIT, Counsellor Agriculture and Commodities Division, World Trade Organization (WTO)
10:15 – 10:30	Q&A	All participants
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break	
SESSION 3: SUSTAINABLE FISH TRADE		
Moderator: Representative RAPDI		
11:00 – 12:00	International Applicable Framework in the Trade of Fish and Fish Products Overview of International Trade and Markets for Fish and Fish Products Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marcio Castro de Souza, Senior Fishery Officer Secretary of FAO Subcommittee on Fish Trade and GLOBEFISH Coordinator
12:00 – 12:30	Q&A and discussion	All participants
12:30-14:30	Lunch/ Networking	
Session 4: Country Experience		
Moderator: Alla Saranina, FAO consultant		
14:30 – 15:30	National experience presentations Choice of topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges in preparation of notifications • Coordination of work of different authorities in ensuring transparency • Participation on transparency issues in the work of WTO Agriculture Committee • Benefits of enhancing transparency for trade and national exporters 	All participants 5–7 minutes for each country
15:30 – 16:00	Workshop evaluation and closing	Representatives of FAO, WTO Secretariat, all participants

