



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Concept note

Workshop on Resolving agricultural trade issues through the WTO

**7 June 2017
Kyiv, Ukraine**

*Venue:
Radisson Blu Hotel Kyiv, Yaroslaviv Val Str. 22*

Background and objectives

Accession of countries to the World Trade Organization (WTO) facilitates their more active engagement in international trade including agri-food trade. The WTO membership assumes that the participants comply with unified trade rules and apply transparent instruments to regulate trade flows thereby ensuring stability and transparency of trade.

While import duties keep decreasing within the WTO framework, non-tariff barriers often cause a stronger impact as a trade hindering factor. The WTO provides a set of universally accepted principles and rules that help ensure that domestic regulations of the countries, including sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, are not used as hidden barriers to trade. In case of trade issues, the WTO member countries have several mechanisms and tools at their disposal to settle them. In addition, the organizations setting international SPS standards provide norms and procedures that ensure food safety, plant protection and veterinary control. Using the standards and recommendations designed by these bodies, countries mitigate risks of trade issues that can become formal trade disputes addressed in courts.

Countries, however, are often having different opinions concerning specific rules applied by one or another party, and seeking a way to settle their disputes. When issues in the application of trade rules arise, governments have at their disposal several instrument for resolving these issues, for example bilateral negotiations and consultations with the trade partners. Using these mechanisms demands harmonious work of various state institutions, preparation and analysis of relevant information for drafting an action plan to resolve trade issues, as well as an open dialogue between the trading partners.

Understanding the rules and procedures of mediation and dispute settlement available under the various trade agreements enhances stability and predictability of international trade. However, many countries recently acceded to the WTO are lacking professional expertise to effectively settle agriculture-related trade issues, what limits abilities of the private sector of these countries to benefit from the trade agreement. The goal of the workshop is to provide information about various tools of trade issues settlement in agri-food trade. The workshops aims to raise awareness of its participants on various mechanisms, rules and procedures for mediation and settlement of trade disputes and to provide practical recommendations on identifying particular measures that would ensure proper implementation of trade rules in food import and export. The workshop will include presentations of experts and group works during which the following topics will be discussed:

- Consultations and other out-of-court options of settling trade issues, including procedures related to sanitary and phytosanitary measures;
- WTO trade issues settlement mechanism and its practical aspects;
- Case studies on trade issues settlement.

Expected outcomes

During the workshop, participants will learn mechanisms, rules and procedures for trade issues settlement within the WTO framework using various approaches including consultations, mediation, and formal dispute settlement mechanisms.

Participants

The workshop is intended for representatives of ministries of agriculture, trade and other public authorities responsible for regulation of agricultural trade in the WTO member countries along with representatives of producer associations and agribusiness, academia and specialists working on agricultural trade.