

SPS & TBT notification alert system



Summary

WHAT

Governments establish product requirements for domestic and imported goods to achieve policy objectives such as protecting human health and the environment. World Trade Organization (WTO) members must notify other members before adopting a new measure if these requirements are likely to affect international trade. They do this through SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary) and TBT (Technical Barriers to Trade) "notifications".

ePing is a publically available online tool that enables private and public stakeholders to quickly access and discuss new SPS and TBT notifications. The tool can be customized at the domestic level so that registered enquiry point officials can facilitate discussions and better engage national stakeholders.

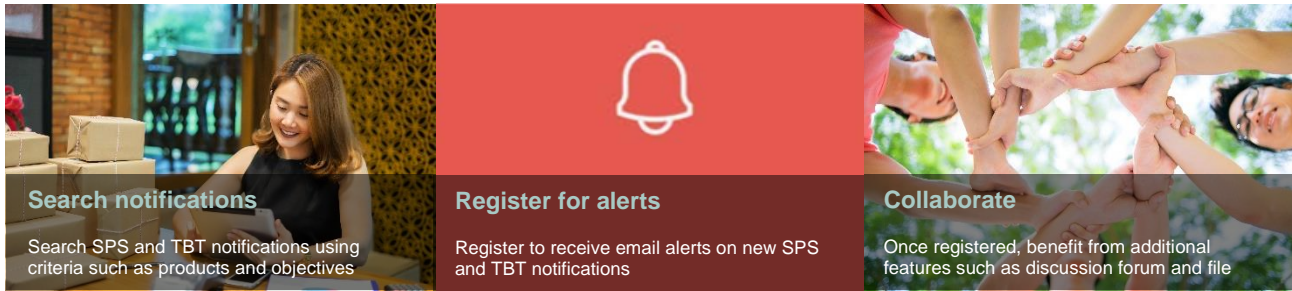
WHY

Keeping up with product requirements in export markets is important for producers, exporters and government agencies – but it is difficult. How can producers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), keep track of the more than 5,000 SPS and TBT notifications submitted to the WTO each year?

With ePing, stakeholders can track and respond to notifications on products relevant to their export markets, furthering opportunities and avoiding trade disruption.

WHO

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the WTO and the International Trade Centre (ITC) established the ePing initiative in 2016, pooling expertise and experience. UNDESA built the pilot version of ePing as part of a trade capacity building project for least developed countries. The WTO manages the depository of the SPS and TBT notifications and works together with members' SPS and TBT enquiry points¹. ITC brings significant experience in developing and maintaining online trade-related tools, targeted mainly at SMEs, and hosts the IT infrastructure and development.



ePing in Vietnamese language

While ePing has been up and running since 8 November 2016, work is not finished. Having the platform translated into Vietnamese will improve information transparency for Vietnamese traders by helping businesses stay informed on upcoming changes in product requirements in foreign markets, facilitate compliance, and address potential trade issues at an early stage.

- **Keep track of changing product requirements:** For small and medium-sized companies in Viet Nam, the language barrier is an important obstacle when trying to access info on product requirements in export markets. This Vietnamese version of ePing will ease the process for companies lacking English-speaking staff.
- **Facilitate compliance:** Quite often, firms face difficulties to understand the myriad of health and safety requirements, product regulations, testing and certification procedures and other measures necessary to access international markets. ePing provides timely information on the changes and updates in foreign regulations.
- **Help business process key information:** In collaboration with the Enquiry Points, students from the Foreign Trade University in Hanoi will translate some notifications for selected sectors of Seafood and Footwear concerning Vietnamese exporters. This will help businesses to better understand upcoming changes on SPS and TBT regulations in foreign markets.

Follow the discussions on social media with: #ePingVN

¹ Each WTO member must put in place an SPS/TBT enquiry point, an office or body that is mandated to handle comments on notified measures, respond to enquiries and provide relevant information and documents (WTO Agreement Series, Technical Barriers to trade, p. 27)

ePing and the Sustainable Development Goals

ePing contributes to SDG 8 and SDG 17. SDG 8 focuses on sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Related targets include increasing Aid for Trade and encouraging the formalization and growth of SMEs. ePing contributes by facilitating access to relevant trade information, enhancing trade opportunities and avoiding trade disruption.

The trade segment of SDG 17 includes the promotion of a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system and increasing the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020. Providing information to enhance market access for export opportunities and fostering public-private dialogue are at the heart of the ePing initiative.

How to get started?

To receive daily or weekly email alerts about product requirements in your export markets the users need to register on: www.epingalert.org.



Contact person: Lotte Drieghe, Economic Affairs Officer
E-mail: eping@wto.org
Telephone: +41-22 739 6009
Address: WTO, Rue de Lausanne 154, CH-1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland
Internet: www.epingalert.org