

WTO Import Licensing Committee Reviews Notification Gaps and Raises Trade Concerns, Including India's Import Measures

At its 15 October meeting, the WTO Committee on Import Licensing examined challenges for WTO members in preparing notifications, including findings from a recent WTO workshop for government officials. It also reviewed the latest information on members' notification practices. In addition, the Committee considered a range of trade concerns and reflected on lessons from recent experience-sharing sessions aimed at strengthening communication, public-private engagement and access to information on import licensing procedures.

- The WTO Committee on Import Licensing, at its meeting on 15 October 2026, reviewed members' notification practices, trade concerns and measures to improve transparency and access to import licensing information.*
- A WTO Secretariat survey found that 68% of workshop respondents faced difficulties obtaining information from responsible authorities, while 72% struggled to obtain updated information for the annual questionnaire and 48% had difficulty identifying all relevant licensing procedures.*
- Respondents recommended clearer responsibilities among government authorities, designated national focal points, better inter-agency coordination, regular updates and additional technical assistance.*
- Since the previous meeting in June 2026, the WTO Secretariat had received 49 notifications under various provisions of the Agreement on Import Licensing. Of the 33 reviewed at the October meeting, 23 were submitted under Article 7.3 concerning the annual questionnaire.*
- The Chair noted that 21 WTO members had never submitted a response to the annual questionnaire, while 11 had never submitted notifications under the Agreement, and encouraged them to seek technical assistance.*
- The Committee followed up on trade concerns raised by Brazil regarding due diligence statements under the EU Deforestation Regulation and by Japan concerning Indonesia's import restrictions.*
- India faced trade concerns regarding quality control orders for plywood, wooden flush door shutters and furniture; import licensing for pneumatic tyres, personal computers, tablets and other electronics; and restrictions on refurbished medical devices.*

- *Other concerns covered import licensing and restrictions in Angola, Egypt, Indonesia, Thailand, the European Union and Türkiye, involving agricultural goods, textiles, steel, air conditioners and two-wheelers.*
- *The Committee reviewed transparency initiatives, including experience-sharing sessions held in April 2025 and June 2026, which highlighted the importance of improved notifications, accessible information, public-private collaboration and digitalisation of import licensing procedures.*
- *The Chair said the Secretariat would compile members' suggestions and further discussions would explore ways to improve transparency and communication.*
- *The next Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for 22 April 2027.*

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Notifications

At the meeting, the WTO Secretariat presented the findings of a survey conducted among participants in the Workshop on Import Licensing and Notifications, held in September 2026, highlighting the practical challenges faced by participants in preparing notifications. Some 68% of respondents reported difficulties obtaining information from the responsible authorities. For the annual questionnaire, 72% cited difficulties obtaining up-to-date information, while 48% reported challenges identifying all relevant licensing and similar administrative procedures.



Regarding possible improvements, respondents highlighted clearer responsibilities among authorities (52%) and the designation of a national focal point (44%), alongside stronger inter-agency coordination, regular reporting of changes to licensing procedures, practical guidance and examples, and further technical assistance. The findings suggest that the main

challenges arise before drafting, particularly in identifying relevant procedures and gathering current information. The survey permitted multiple responses, and its findings reflect participants' experiences rather than those of the WTO membership as a whole.

The Chair, Ms Mi Jin Ryu (Republic of Korea), informed members that since the last Committee meeting in June, a total of 49 notifications have been received under various provisions of the Agreement on Import Licensing. Of these, 16 were received after the close of the meeting agenda and will be reviewed at the next Committee meeting.

Of the 33 notifications reviewed at the 15 October meeting, 23 notifications were submitted under Article 7.3 of the Agreement. Article 7.3 requires members to complete the annual questionnaire on import licensing procedures promptly and in full.

Regarding the annual questionnaire, the Chair noted that 21 members have never submitted any reply to the questionnaire since joining the WTO. In addition, 11 members have never submitted any notifications under the Agreement on Import Licensing. She encouraged these members to take the first step or contact the WTO Secretariat for technical assistance.

Trade concerns

The Committee addressed follow-up questions regarding two previously raised trade concerns at the 15 October meeting. These comprised one from Brazil concerning the submission of due diligence statements under the European Union Deforestation Regulation and the other from Japan regarding import restrictions in Indonesia on various products, including electric products, steel products and fabrics.

The Committee then addressed 14 trade concerns regarding import licensing regimes of various products. Two of these concerns were raised for the first time, while the others were raised at the Committee's previous meeting in June 2026 or at earlier meetings. The trade concerns cover:

- Angola's import licensing procedures for agricultural products, raised by the United States;
- Egypt's import licensing requirements for certain agricultural and processed products, raised by the European Union;
- the European Union's due diligence requirements under the EU Deforestation Regulation, raised by Australia;
- India's Quality Control Order on plywood and wooden flush door shutters, raised by Indonesia;

- India's importation of pneumatic tyres, raised by the European Union, Indonesia, Chinese Taipei and Thailand;
- India's import licensing measures on personal computers, tablets and other electronic products, raised by Japan;
- India's import licensing suspension for refurbished medical devices, raised by the United States;
- India's furniture quality control order, raised by Indonesia;
- Indonesia's commodity balancing mechanism, raised by Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom;
- Indonesia's import licensing regime for certain textile products, raised by Japan;
- Indonesia's compulsory registration by importers of steel products, raised by Japan;
- Indonesia's import restriction on air conditioners, raised by Japan;
- Thailand's import procedures for wheat feed, raised by the European Union;
- Türkiye's import restrictions on two wheelers, raised by India.

Transparency and experience-sharing

The Chair noted that the Committee has undertaken a number of initiatives to further improve transparency, with the active involvement of members and the assistance of the Secretariat. These initiatives include the organization of two experience-sharing sessions bringing together representatives from the public and private sectors.

The first experience-sharing session took place in April 2025 and focused on "Overcoming Roadblocks to Notifications". Building on the sustained interest and engagement of members, a second experience-sharing session was organized on 4 June 2026, this time with the participation of private-sector representatives.

Entitled "Enhancing Transparency and Trade Predictability through Effective Notification Practices, Public-Private Collaboration, and Digitalization of Import Licensing Procedures," the second session provided an opportunity for participants to exchange practical experiences and perspectives on the challenges associated with import licensing procedures and their impact on traders and businesses.

The Chair said the presentations and subsequent exchanges highlighted three closely related areas for further consideration: first, improving notification practices; second, strengthening the communication and accessibility of information; and third, enhancing interaction among members and with the private sector.

Seven members took the floor to comment. The Chair said the interventions showed members valued this kind of experience sharing. She added that the Secretariat would compile all the suggestions made and that she would hold an informal meeting to see how to move forward.

Next meeting

The Chair said the next Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for 22 April 2027.