



Council for Trade in Goods

**REPORT ON IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FUNCTIONING OF
THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES¹**

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Council for Trade in Goods (CTG or Council) began its discussions on WTO Reform in September 2022, following the mandate set out in the MC12 Outcome Document², which instructed the General Council and its subsidiary bodies to "conduct the work, review progress, and consider decisions, as appropriate, to be submitted to the next Ministerial Conference". This report provides information on the discussions to improve the functioning of the CTG and its 14 subsidiary bodies, which collectively implement all the agreements for trade in goods included in Annex 1A of the WTO Agreement, and represent the majority of the WTO's regular bodies. It reflects all the improvements realized since the conclusion of MC12, and is based on the individual reports prepared by each of these bodies or their Chairpersons, as applicable (see Annex 1).

1.2. The CTG is pleased to report that a total of 127 improvements have been introduced in the functioning of the CTG and its subsidiary bodies, including 67 changes which have been formally adopted by these bodies and 60 changes where either the Chairperson or the Secretariat has taken action following discussions with Members. A summary of the number of improvements by body is provided in Table 1 in Section 3 of this document (see below). This work is significant insofar as the effective functioning of the regular bodies is a necessary condition for a successful implementation of the existing WTO Agreements, including the mandate and terms of reference of these bodies, in addition to any other substantive change adopted in the context of the broader WTO reform discussions. Improving the functioning of regular bodies is an incremental process, and Members may wish to continue relevant discussions in the future, if necessary, based on inputs from Members.

1.3. Section 2 of this report describes the process followed by the CTG in implementing this mandate, and the proposals adopted or recommended by the Council, as well as the role it has played *vis-à-vis* its 14 subsidiary bodies. Section 3 then reproduces, by area or category, the main outcomes of these discussions.

2 PROCESS AND PROPOSALS

2.1. At the Council's formal meeting of 7-8 July 2022, the Chairperson of the CTG recalled a document³ that had been prepared by the Secretariat listing the outcomes of MC12, and noted that there were three elements that seemed to relate to the work of the Goods Council, namely: (i) the "Work Programme on Electronic Commerce" ([WT/MIN\(22\)/32](#)); (ii) paragraph 24 of the "Ministerial Declaration on the WTO Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Preparedness for Future Pandemics" ([WT/MIN\(22\)/31](#)); and (iii) paragraph 3 of the MC12 Outcome Document ([WT/MIN\(22\)/24](#)), on WTO Reform, which concluded by stating: "While reaffirming the foundational principles of the WTO, we envision reforms to improve all its functions." On this basis, the Chairperson announced that he would hold bilateral consultations to hear Members' views and plans in respect of these issues, and stressed that, to this end, his door remained open.

2.2. On 14 October 2022⁴, the Council met informally to allow the Chairperson to report on the outcome of his consultations.⁵ On WTO reform, the Chairperson reported that all Members he had

¹ Report adopted at the formal meeting of the Council for Trade in Goods of 30 November 2023.

² [WT/MIN\(22\)/24](#).

³ See [G/C/M/143](#), subsection 49.2, and [RD/WTO/13](#).

⁴ See Convening Notice in [ICN/CTG/5](#) and the Chairperson's closing remarks in [ICN/CTG/5/Add.1](#).

⁵ See [JOB/CTG/16](#).

met had insisted on the need to have a process that was open, inclusive, transparent, and Member-driven. They further considered that, since the Council oversees most Committees, it could have an important role to play when discussing how to improve the deliberative function of the WTO. However, the Chair also noted that Members seemed to disagree on whether these discussions should be undertaken as a top-down, or a bottom-up process, a difference of views which had also been expressed at this meeting.⁶ At the meeting, and with a view to better understanding the current status of work in the different bodies, the Chairperson was also requested to write to the Chairpersons of the 14 subsidiary bodies to ask them to prepare a report, under their own responsibility and with the Secretariat's assistance, describing the current functioning of their committees, including actions previously taken to improve their work.⁷ Finally, Members asked the Secretariat to organize an information session for delegations to better understand the digital tools used by the CTG and its subsidiary bodies. The session was held in December 2022.⁸

2.3. The reports by the Chairpersons of the CTG and its 14 subsidiary bodies describing the current functioning of their respective bodies were circulated by the end of 2022. At the CTG's formal meeting of 24-25 November 2022, Members requested the Secretariat to prepare a document or summary to assist them in comparing the information that had been provided in these reports.⁹

2.4. At the informal meeting of 31 January 2023¹⁰, the Chairpersons of the 14 subsidiary bodies presented their respective reports on the current functioning of their Committees¹¹, and the Secretariat introduced a "comparative matrix"¹², which provided a general overview of these reports. At this meeting, Members continued to disagree on the role to be played by the CTG with respect to the work of its subsidiary bodies. The Chairperson concluded by noting that, while the CTG would continue reflecting on the improvements that it would like to introduce in its own functioning, it remained subject to the decision of each subsidiary body to discuss if, when, and how they would like to improve their own work, taking into account the comparative matrix.¹³ On a separate issue, and following a proposal by Members, the Chairperson noted there appeared to be convergence to follow written procedures to adopt a decision for the introduction of the eAgenda for the CTG on a trial basis.¹⁴

2.5. At the informal meeting of 27 February 2023¹⁵, Members discussed the areas of CTG work that required improvement and the process to be followed. Based on these discussions, the Chairperson of the CTG prepared a communication which included a preliminary list of issues that had been proposed for discussion, and invited Members to provide additional inputs.¹⁶ On the role of the CTG *vis-à-vis* the subsidiary bodies, the Chairperson was asked to send a communication to the Chairpersons of these bodies asking them to organize discussions concerning the functioning of their bodies and noting that, at a later stage, they would be requested to report back to the CTG on their discussions and describe the improvements that they had introduced, if any. This communication was sent on 9 March 2023.¹⁷

2.6. At its informal meeting of 31 March 2023¹⁸, Members were asked to react to the "Preliminary List of Issues Proposed for Discussion" contained in the Annex to the Convening Notice in [ICN/CTG/9](#). Under the responsibility of the Chairperson, a document containing a table indicating the status of the discussions on each of the proposals was circulated after the meeting.¹⁹ In this document,

⁶ See [JOB/CTG/17](#).

⁷ See [JOB/CTG/18](#).

⁸ The Information Session on WTO's Digital Tools was held in hybrid format on 9 and 12 December 2022. Its programme is included in [ICN/CTG/6](#).

⁹ See [G/C/M/144](#) subsection 53.2.

¹⁰ See Convening Notice in [ICN/CTG/7](#) and the Chairperson's closing remarks in [ICN/CTG/7/Add.1](#) and [JOB/CTG/20](#).

¹¹ A full list of these reports can be found in [JOB/CTG/19/Rev.2](#).

¹² [G/C/W/824](#), which was subsequently reviewed in [G/C/W/824/Rev.1](#) to take account of additional requests by Members.

¹³ See [JOB/CTG/20](#).

¹⁴ The Decision was adopted on 10 February 2023. See [G/L/1481](#). The steps to implement this trial were described in [JOB/CTG/30](#).

¹⁵ See Convening Notice in [ICN/CTG/8](#).

¹⁶ See [JOB/CTG/23](#).

¹⁷ See [JOB/CTG/24](#).

¹⁸ See [ICN/CTG/9/Add.1](#) and [Suppl.1](#), and [JOB/CTG/27](#).

¹⁹ See [JOB/CTG/27](#).

Members were also asked to consider the adoption at the Council's following formal meeting of three improvements, which were subsequently agreed on at the formal meeting of 3-4 April 2023.²⁰

2.7. At the CTG's informal meeting of 31 May 2023²¹, Members were invited to focus on those issues that had been highlighted as requiring further discussion. Following this meeting, the table on the current status of work was updated to reflect the key developments.²² In addition, the Chairperson reported on the status of discussions at the formal meeting of 6-7 July 2023.²³

2.8. At the CTG's informal meeting of 19 September 2023²⁴, the Chairperson urged Members to try to advance as much as possible in their discussions on MC12 implementation matters in order to report back at the last formal meeting of the CTG²⁵ before the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13).²⁶ Following this informal meeting, an updated version of the table with the status of the proposals was circulated in [JOB/CTG/37](#), and a written procedure was launched with a view to formally adopting five additional improvements.²⁷ Since no objection was raised, the five proposals were adopted on 2 October 2023 (see [G/L/1490](#)).

2.9. In the context of these discussions, the Council has considered more than 30 specific proposals, including the following written proposals:

- a. Functioning of the CTG and its Subsidiary Bodies, Communication from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay ([JOB/CTG/21/Rev.3](#));
- b. Compilation of Input on the Functioning of the Goods Committees, Communication from the United Kingdom ([JOB/CTG/26/Rev.1](#)); and
- c. "List of Issues where there Appears to be a Consensus that they should be Addressed in all CTG Subsidiary Bodies", Communication from Argentina ([RD/CTG/19](#)).

2.10. At the CTG's formal meeting of 30 November 2023, the Council adopted on a trial basis four additional improvements (see [G/L/1522](#)), and recalled the importance of complying with paragraphs 4 and 7 of the "Guidelines on the Arrangements for Scheduling of Meetings of WTO Bodies" (document [WT/L/106](#)) concerning the desirability of fixing the dates of formal meetings in advance of the following calendar year, and submitting a written notice explaining to Delegations the reasons behind cancellations or postponements of meetings.

2.11. The process followed by each of the CTG's subsidiary bodies, including links to the written proposals submitted by Members, is described in their reports, as listed in Annex 1 below.

3 IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FUNCTIONING OF THE CTG AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES

3.1 Overview

3.1. As a result of the above-mentioned process, the CTG agreed to implement 22 changes with a view to improving its functioning, including 9 adopted through formal decisions and 13 where the Secretariat introduced changes to the way in which it supports the work of the Council following discussions with Members. In addition, the CTG's 14 subsidiary bodies have agreed to 99 additional improvements, adding up to a total of 127 changes overall by the 15 bodies covered by this report. The specific number of improvements by each of these bodies is summarized in Table 1 below.

²⁰ See [JOB/CTG/27](#) and [G/C/M/145](#), para. 7.92.

²¹ Convened through [ICN/CTG/10](#).

²² See [JOB/CTG/32](#).

²³ See [G/C/M/146](#) Section 4.

²⁴ Convened through [ICN/CTG/12](#).

²⁵ Scheduled for 30 November-1 December 2023.

²⁶ Scheduled for 26-29 February 2024.

²⁷ See [JOB/CTG/38](#).

Table 1. Total number of changes implemented by the CTG and its subsidiary bodies

WTO Body	Improvements agreed through formal decisions	Other improvements	Total number of improvements
1. Council for Trade in Goods (CTG), including horizontal improvements	13	14	27
2. Committee on Agriculture (COA)	2	8	10
3. Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices (ADP)	5	-	5
4. Committee on Customs Valuation (CV)	6	-	6
5. Committee on Import Licensing (IL)	6	7	13
6. Committee on Market Access (CMA)	3	9	12
7. Committee on Rules of Origin (ROO)	7	-	7
8. Committee on Safeguards (SG)	5	-	5
9. Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)	-	6	6
10. Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM)	5	-	5
11. Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	3	1	4
12. Committee on Trade Facilitation (TF)	2	6	8
13. Committee on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs)	3	-	3
14. Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products (ITA)	2	9	11
15. Working Party on State Trading Enterprises (STEs)	5	-	5
Overall number of improvements	67	60	127

3.2 Types of improvements introduced

3.2. The improvements on the functioning of the CTG and its subsidiary bodies can be categorized into six areas or categories that were used by most of these bodies in discussing the proposals. This section provides an overview of the improvements in these areas by each of the 15 bodies covered by this report. The tables should not be interpreted as an inventory of the practices currently applied by all these bodies, but rather as a list of the changes that have been agreed or implemented since the conclusion of MC12 (i.e. some bodies were already implementing these measures). Because some of the changes described in the reports submitted referred to more than one of these categories, they were repeated under the relevant sections with a view to having a comprehensive overview of each area. Finally, it should be noted that the implementation of some of the measures that were approved or requested in these bodies are subject to budgetary constraints.

3.2.1 Assistance to delegates

3.3. The following improvements were introduced by the CTG and its subsidiary bodies with a view to assisting delegates to better participate in the work of these bodies.

Table 2. Improvements to assist delegates

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
1. Council for Trade in Goods (CTG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat developed and circulated a draft presentation on the functioning of the CTG, which will be presented to CTG delegates after MC13 and before the first formal meeting of the year. Taking into account comments received from Members, the Secretariat developed new sections of the WTO website that serve as a manual to explain the work of the CTG, as well as for all its subsidiary bodies.²⁸ Some of the contents are restricted to Members.
2. Committee on Agriculture (COA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular introductory sessions on the functioning of the CoA: starting November 2023, the Secretariat will organize an annual introductory session on the functioning of the Committee for the new Geneva- and capital-based agriculture delegates in a hybrid setting. Development of a delegate manual on how to prepare and follow CoA meetings: the Secretariat has updated the Committee webpage to provide in one place all necessary information and explanation as well as links to CoA documents to facilitate delegates' participation in CoA meetings. The Secretariat, in collaboration with the Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Cooperation (IICA), is developing a delegate manual on CoA participation. Updated guidance to support the effective use of the AG-IMS system: some user manuals have been made available under the "Help" tab of the AG-IMS. The Secretariat is working to develop additional training materials on AG-IMS.
3. Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices (ADP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training sessions on the functioning of the Committees will be held twice a year, the first of which took place in September 2023. The presentations made and the audio recording of those sessions will be made available on the relevant WTO webpages for Members to consult.
4. Committee on Customs Valuation (CV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat will organize, at least once a year, hybrid-format introductory sessions on the Committee's work. The training materials used in these sessions will then be made available on the website that the WTO is currently updating. The Secretariat will prepare a draft manual describing the main procedural and substantive aspects of the Committee's work for consideration by the Committee. The final manual will be made available on the WTO website that the Secretariat is currently updating.
5. Committee on Import Licensing (IL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat will continue to hold in-person annual Workshops on Import Licensing Procedures and Notifications for capital-based participants from WTO Members entitled to technical assistance. The Secretariat will hold an annual presentation for new delegates on the functioning of the CIL and on the Import Licensing Agreement to be held back-to-back with one of its meetings. The Secretariat developed a new section of the WTO website that serves as a manual to explain the work of the CIL and consolidates all the digital tools used by the Committee in one page. The Secretariat developed an e-learning training module on Import Licensing, which was made available for the public at large.

²⁸ [WTO Webpage / About WTO / List of WTO bodies](#).

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
6. Committee on Market Access (CMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will schedule its presentation on the functioning of the CMA for delegates at its first informal meeting of the year. • The Secretariat started to send reminders for outstanding notifications of quantitative restrictions (QRs) and notifications to the Integrated Database (IDB) to the email addresses of delegates that have registered on E-Registration, as following the CMA in addition to the mission's general email address. • The Secretariat developed a new section of the WTO website that serves as a manual to explain the work of the CMA and also consolidates in one page all the digital tools used by the Committee. • The Secretariat will create a factsheet on QRs to be posted online. • Following the creation of the new CMA webpage, the Secretariat will develop a short description of the CMA digital tools to be posted online.
7. Committee on Rules of Origin (ROO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize periodic introductory sessions about the use of rules of origin in international trade, the related WTO instruments, and update on the different pillars of work of the CRO. • Prepare a manual describing the main procedural and substantive aspects of the work of the CRO. This manual has already been created and is available in a dedicated section of the Rules of Origin Portal of the WTO website describing the functioning of the CRO (available to authorized users only).
8. Committee on Safeguards (SG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training sessions on the functioning of the Committees will be held twice a year, the first of which took place in October 2023. The presentations made and the audio recording of those sessions will be made available on the relevant WTO webpages for Members to consult.
9. Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling of periodic introductory sessions on the SPS Committee for new delegates. Since June 2022, an introductory session for delegates was held on 13 March 2023, and another held on 18 September 2023. • Leaflet produced with relevant information for new SPS delegates.
10. Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training sessions on the functioning of the Committees will be held twice a year, the first of which took place in October 2023. The presentations made and the audio recording of those sessions will be made available on the relevant WTO webpages for Members to consult.
11. Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings by the Secretariat. A general briefing was held on 19 September, accompanied by an Information Note for TBT delegates; a second one focusing on the Triennial Review process will take place on 6 November.
12. Committee on Trade Facilitation (TF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing periodic introductory sessions twice a year about the TFA, the TFA database, and update on the work of the CTF. • Drafting a manual describing the main procedural and substantive aspects of the work of the CTF. An outline will be shared with Members in advance. • Organizing capacity building sessions on TFA notification submissions on an annual basis, in the context of informal meetings. Additional sessions to be held on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis as requested by Members. Participation of capital-based officials in the sessions will be considered.
13. Committee on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WTO Secretariat will organize introductory sessions on the TRIMs Agreement and the functioning of the Committee for Geneva-based and capital-based delegates. The first training session will be held in the second semester of 2023.

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
14. Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products (ITA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the Secretariat to organize regular introductory sessions on past work done in the Committee and updates on current work. Support for the Secretariat to prepare a manual describing the main procedural and substantive aspects of the work of the Committee. Proposal adopted by the Committee for extending the minimum time-frame for circulation of the Airgram (convening notice) and proposed list of agenda items to 15 days in advance of each formal meeting, instead of the previous practice of 10 days.
15. Working Party on State Trading Enterprises (STEs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat will organize relevant hybrid training in the autumn/winter 2023, with a focus on how to comply with the notification requirements under Article XVII:4(a) of the GATT 1994 and paragraph 1 of the Understanding on the Interpretation of Article XVII of the GATT 1994.

3.2.2 Planning and organization of meetings

3.4. The following improvements were introduced by the CTG and its subsidiary bodies with a view to improving the planning and organization of meetings.

Table 3. Improvements in the planning and organization of meetings

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
Horizontally at the WTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat developed and implemented a new calendar of meetings, which is available through a new section in the WTO website.²⁹ An alert mechanism for the key dates of the meetings is currently being developed and will be introduced in the coming months.
1. Council for Trade in Goods (CTG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 3-4 April 2023, the CTG agreed to extend the closing of the agenda to at least 15 calendar days prior to the date of the meeting, to allow delegations more time to prepare for each meeting. At the request of Members, the former CTG Chair sent a communication to the Chairperson of the General Council informing her of concerns raised and problems faced by delegations when meeting dates were changed after their announcement. He also conveyed Members' suggestions: (i) to fix the dates of all meetings on an annual basis, including those of the GC; and (ii) to require each body that changes a meeting date to explain in writing to Members the reasons for such change. On 30 November 2023, the CTG recalled the importance of complying with paragraphs 4 and 7 of the "Guidelines on the Arrangements for Scheduling of Meetings of WTO Bodies" (document WT/L/106) concerning the desirability of fixing the dates of formal meetings in advance of the following calendar year, and submitting a written notice explaining to Delegations the reasons behind cancellations or postponements of meetings. On 30 November 2023, the CTG agreed to request the Secretariat to introduce a series of changes to the Airgram, including its format and font, information on the logistical arrangements, the conduct of the meeting, and the proposed agenda. See G/L/1522.
2. Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices (ADP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting weeks of the regular and special formal spring and autumn meetings of the Committees for the following year shall be proposed in the annotated draft agendas of the October meetings. The use of the following features of the eAgenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) uploading Members' statements; and (ii) facilitating access to relevant documents for meetings.

²⁹ [WTO | WTO calendar of meetings and events - Calendar view.](#)

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
	<p>The use of such features is to be made available on a trial-basis starting in the Spring Rules Committees of 2024 until Spring Rules Committees of 2025. This will be reviewed at the Rules Committees' meetings of Spring 2025 to decide whether to extend the trial period or to continue using, on a permanent basis, these features or any other features of the eAgenda agreed upon.</p>
3. Committee on Agriculture (COA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee agreed to advance the timelines for the release of the reminder Airgram and the closure of agenda respectively to 35 and 15 calendar days prior to the date of the meeting, allowing additional preparatory time for delegations. See G/AG/1/Add.1.
4. Committee on Customs Valuation (CV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat will circulate a draft agenda one month before formal meetings, and the final agenda will close 15 days before such meetings. The Secretariat will circulate, to the extent possible, all documents and presentation materials relating to the agenda in advance of the meetings. The Secretariat will circulate an annotated agenda ahead of formal Committee meetings.
5. Committee on Import Licensing (IL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whenever possible, meetings of the Committee will continue to be scheduled to avoid overlaps with other meetings and in particular those that are attended by the same delegates who also attend the CIL. The Secretariat will circulate a written explanation for the cancellation or postponement of a meeting, as required. The Secretariat will prepare an annotated agenda for formal meetings with links to electronic documents for the meeting. ICN (Informal Convening Notice) documents have been used to convene informal meetings of the Committee starting in 2023. It had been the practice of the Committee for some time to have written summaries of informal meetings circulated under the responsibility of the Chairperson. Starting in 2023 these summaries have been circulated as ICN documents.
6. Committee on Market Access (CMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat will circulate a written explanation for the cancellation or postponement of a meeting, as required. The Committee adopted a decision to extend the closing of the agenda to at least 15 calendar days prior to the date of the formal meeting, to allow delegations more time to prepare for each meeting. See G/MA/411.
7. Committee on Rules of Origin (ROO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematically hyperlink the documents cited in Airgrams, reports and any other documents circulated to Members. Introduction of an eAgenda in the context of the CRO. Maintain the hybrid format of meetings (in person and remote) unless there is a WTO-wide decision to the contrary. Circulate any oral reports by the Chairperson or the Secretariat, particularly during informal meetings, and which may provide useful information for delegations.
8. Committee on Safeguards (SG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting weeks of the regular and special formal spring and autumn meetings of the Committees for the following year shall be proposed in the annotated draft agendas of the October meetings. The use of the following features of the eAgenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) uploading Members' statements; and (ii) facilitating access to relevant documents for meetings. <p>The use of such features is to be made available on a trial-basis starting in the Spring Rules Committees of 2024 until Spring Rules Committees of 2025. This will be reviewed at the Rules Committees' meetings of Spring 2025 to decide whether to extend the trial period or to continue using, on a permanent basis, these features or any other features of the eAgenda agreed upon.</p>

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
9. Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting weeks of the regular and special formal spring and autumn meetings of the Committees for the following year shall be proposed in the annotated draft agendas of the October meetings. The use of the following features of the eAgenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) uploading Members' statements; and (ii) facilitating access to relevant documents for meetings. <p>The use of such features is to be made available on a trial-basis starting in the Spring Rules Committees of 2024 until Spring Rules Committees of 2025. This will be reviewed at the Rules Committees' meetings of Spring 2025 to decide whether to extend the trial period or to continue using, on a permanent basis, these features or any other features of the eAgenda agreed upon.</p>
10. Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annotated draft agendas for informal meetings (trial basis). The first annotated draft agenda for an informal meeting was circulated for the 3 October Informal meeting of the Committee (JOB/TBT/513). Guidance from moderators for the organization of TBT thematic sessions.
11. Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products (ITA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for holding dedicated/joint sessions on cross-cutting issues on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis, as needed.
12. Working Party on State Trading Enterprises (STEs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Working Party will agree on the dates of both formal meetings of each year at the autumn meeting of the previous year. For each formal meeting of the Working Party, the final Airgram will be issued 15 days before the meeting or, if that is a WTO non-working day, the previous WTO working day.

3.2.3 Conduct of formal meetings

3.5. The following improvements were introduced by the CTG and its subsidiary bodies with a view to improving the conduct of formal meetings.

Table 4. Improvements in the conduct of formal meetings

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
Horizontally at the WTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the coming months, the Secretariat will be implementing, a horizontal solution to ensure that all references to documents (document symbols) include a hyperlink to Documents Online. In addition, Documents Online will be modified to facilitate searching for documents by their respective WTO body.
1. Council for Trade in Goods (CTG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 3-4 April 2023, the CTG agreed to include a new subsection in the agenda to separate new trade concerns and place them before previously raised trade concerns. It was noted that the introduction of the eAgenda, which allows Members to share their statements, had solved the concerns expressed by Members with respect to the production of the minutes of meetings. It was noted that the introduction of the eAgenda, which allows the Chairperson and the Secretariat to make available their statements after the meeting, had also solved the concerns expressed by Members with respect to the expedient availability of this information. On 2 October 2023, the CTG agreed, through written procedures, to introduce the use of an annotated agenda for its formal meeting of 30 November 2023 on a trial basis. See G/L/1490. On 30 November 2023, the CTG agreed to request the Chairperson to produce a "follow-up" document, concisely collating agreed next steps, deadlines, and actions to be taken by delegations in preparation for the next formal meeting. See G/L/1522.

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 2 October 2023, the CTG agreed, through written procedures that, with a view to allowing delegations adequate time to prepare for the Council's meetings, documents with a document symbol should be submitted and circulated sufficiently in advance of the date of an upcoming meeting so that they can be translated and made available through Documents Online. See G/L/1490. On 2 October 2023, the CTG agreed, through written procedures that, with a view to allowing delegations adequate time to prepare for the Council's meetings, Members and the Secretariat are encouraged to ensure that all presentations are circulated and made available online (i.e. under the RD/CTG/- document series) in advance. See G/L/1490.
2. Committee on Agriculture (COA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of an annotated agenda: at the formal meeting of the CoA on 27-28 June 2023, the Committee approved the use of an annotated agenda for its meetings along the lines of the draft circulated by the Secretariat in RD/AG/112. Inclusion of hyperlinks to download referenced documents in documentation: this practice has been implemented in all CoA documents to the extent possible.
3. Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices (ADP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes should be provided, in the current reported style, as soon as feasible after the meetings without compromising on the quality of the minutes produced. The Minutes, once finalized, will be circulated to the Membership even before the deadlines for written answers to written questions have passed. If these answers to questions are submitted within the deadlines, after the circulation of the Minutes, an addendum to the Minutes will be issued. In order to facilitate this process, Members are encouraged to provide their written statements to the Secretariat after the meetings without delay. The Secretariat may continue to explore artificial intelligence tools to produce minutes as better ones become available. The current summary of the formal meetings, produced in the form of a news item as approved by the Chairs of the Committees, would continue to be produced by the Secretariat.
4. Committee on Import Licensing (IL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat will prepare an annotated agenda for formal meetings with links to electronic documents for the meeting.
5. Committee on Market Access (CMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee adopted a decision to extend the closing of the agenda to at least 15 calendar days prior to the date of the formal meeting, to allow delegations more time to prepare for each meeting (see G/MA/411). The Committee adopted a decision to instruct the Secretariat to include a new subsection in the agenda of formal meetings of the CMA to separate "new" trade concerns and place them before "previously raised" trade concerns (see G/MA/411).
6. Committee on Rules of Origin (ROO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate an annotated agenda ahead of formal meetings of the CRO describing each agenda item and providing relevant background to help the preparation by delegations.
7. Committee on Safeguards (SG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes should be provided, in the current reported style, as soon as feasible after the meetings without compromising on the quality of the minutes produced. The Minutes, once finalized, will be circulated to the Membership even before the deadlines for written answers to written questions have passed. If these answers to questions are submitted within the deadlines, after the circulation of the Minutes, an addendum to the Minutes will be issued. In order to facilitate this process, Members are encouraged to provide their written statements to the Secretariat after the meetings without delay. The Secretariat may continue to explore artificial intelligence tools to produce minutes as better ones become available. The current summary of the formal meetings, produced in the form of a news item as approved by the Chairs of the Committees, would continue to be produced by the Secretariat.

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
8. Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes should be provided, in the current reported style, as soon as feasible after the meetings without compromising on the quality of the minutes produced. The Minutes, once finalized, will be circulated to the Membership even before the deadlines for written answers to written questions have passed. If these answers to questions are submitted within the deadlines, after the circulation of the Minutes, an addendum to the Minutes will be issued. In order to facilitate this process, Members are encouraged to provide their written statements to the Secretariat after the meetings without delay. The Secretariat may continue to explore artificial intelligence tools to produce minutes as better ones become available. The current summary of the formal meetings, produced in the form of a news item as approved by the Chairs of the Committees, would continue to be produced by the Secretariat.
9. Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of eAgenda for all agenda items. In the TBT Committee, this was previously only done for the discussion of Specific Trade Concerns (STCs). The extended eAgenda is already operational for the formal meeting of the TBT Committee scheduled for 8-10 November.
10. Committee on Trade Facilitation (TF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat to circulate an annotated agenda ahead of formal meetings of the CTF, ten days in advance of the meeting. The document could describe each agenda item and provide relevant background to help the preparation by delegations. The Secretariat to circulate documents with a document symbol sufficiently in advance of meetings so that they could be translated and made available through Documents Online (Reference: JOB/CTG/32 item f.1.1). Both Members and the Secretariat will make their best efforts to ensure that all presentations are circulated and made available online (i.e. under the RD document series) prior to the meetings (Reference: JOB/CTG/32 item f.1.2). The Secretariat to circulate the Chairperson's written reports or statements when this can be useful or when it is requested by delegations.
11. Committee on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members decided that, starting with the Fall 2023 regular meeting of the Committee, the minutes will be prepared in verbatim style, on a trial basis. The Chair will circulate a factual summary of Committee meetings, on a trial basis, starting with the Fall 2023 regular meeting of the Committee.
12. Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products (ITA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal adopted by the Committee for extending the minimum time-frame for circulation of the Airgram (convening notice) and proposed list of agenda items to 15 days in advance of each formal meeting, instead of the previous practice of 10 days. Support for the Secretariat to circulate any presentations and accompanying remarks after informal and formal meetings. Support for the Secretariat to circulate documents, including research and analysis, as early as possible before meetings. Support for the Secretariat to include hyperlinks to documents and references cited in documents.
13. Working Party on State Trading Enterprises (STEs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The time taken to produce minutes will be shortened.

3.2.4 Conduct of informal meetings

3.6. The following improvements were introduced by the CTG and its subsidiary bodies with a view to improving the conduct of informal meetings.

Table 5. Improvements in the conduct of informal meetings

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
1. Council for Trade in Goods (CTG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 30 November 2023, and with a view to improving transparency and fostering greater inclusion for Delegations that cannot attend the informal meetings, the CTG agreed to request the Chairperson to routinely circulate an overview report after a CTG informal meeting, under their own authority, on the basis of certain principles. See G/L/1522.
2. Committee on Agriculture (COA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of ICN document symbols to convene informal meetings: the Secretariat has commenced using the ICN/AG/- document series for releasing the convening notices of informal meetings. Circulation of Chair's reports on informal CoA meetings in advance of the formal meeting: Chair reports on Informal CoA meetings have started to be shared with Members in advance. When Informal CoA meetings were held almost in continuum with a formal meeting, an attempt is being made, as practicable, to ensure that Members receive a copy of the Chair's report on the Informal at the moment it is presented at the formal meeting.
3. Committee on Import Licensing (IL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICN (Informal Convening Notice) documents have been used to convene informal meetings of the Committee starting in 2023. It had been the practice of the Committee for some time to have written summaries of informal meetings circulated under the responsibility of the Chairperson. Starting in 2023 these summaries have been circulated as ICN documents.
4. Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of the ICN document symbol for communications from the Chairperson to convene informal meetings. Since March 2023, the ICN document symbol has been used to convene informal meetings.
5. Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annotated draft agendas for informal meetings (trial basis). See Table 3 above.
6. Committee on Trade Facilitation (TF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat to circulate the Chairperson's written reports or statements when this can be useful or when it is requested by delegations.
7. Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products (ITA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the Secretariat to circulate any oral reports by the Chair and Secretariat after informal meetings. Support for the Secretariat to circulate any presentations and accompanying remarks after informal and formal meetings. Support for the Secretariat to circulate documents, including research and analysis, as early as possible before meetings. Support for the Secretariat to circulate factual summary reports of informal meetings by the Chairperson.

3.2.5 Digital tools

3.7. The following improvements were introduced by the CTG and its subsidiary bodies with a view to improving the digital tools they use in their work.

Table 6. Improvements in the digital tools

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
Horizontally at the WTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is broad support for maintaining virtual participation in meetings. However, it was noted that this is a horizontal issue, beyond the CTG, which depends on the overall budget constraints of the Organization. • The Secretariat will be introducing a new functionality to the Notifications Portal, which will allow Members to submit their notifications. Where dedicated online systems already exist for a body, the platform will redirect delegates to such systems. The system will also provide more information to Members in terms of the status of processing of their notifications (i.e. from receipt and until they are circulated officially). • The Secretariat is currently exploring the newest technologies to improve the search function in the different domains (e.g. documents online, WTO webpage, etc.) in a way that would satisfy Members' needs. It also noted that this would have budgetary implications. • The Secretariat will implement a new e-Delegate platform as part of eRegistration, which will centralize the management of user options across most WTO systems. • The Secretariat implemented a request by Members to improve the consistency of the sections of the WTO webpage relating to the CTG and its subsidiary bodies, by creating new dedicated sections (see Table 2 above). • To the extent possible, all new systems will be developed by the Secretariat in "mobile friendly" platforms.
1. Council for Trade in Goods (CTG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 10 February 2023, the CTG agreed, through written procedures, to a Decision on the "Introduction of the eAgenda in the work of the CTG on a Trial Basis". See G/L/1481. • On 3-4 April 2023, the CTG agreed to integrate the CTG data on trade concerns into the Trade Concerns Database, subject to budgetary constraints. • On 2 October 2023, the CTG agreed, through written procedures, that it shall periodically hold an informal session with a view to allowing the Secretariat to provide an overview of the WTO Digital Tools that are relevant to the work of the CTG and its subsidiary bodies, as well as affording Members an additional opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions for the possible improvement of such tools. These informal sessions shall take place annually and, to the extent possible, be organized back-to-back with the first formal CTG meeting of the year. See G/L/1490. • On 2 October 2023, the CTG agreed, through written procedures, to change the default option for statements in the eAgenda. Unless the Member opts out, statements that Members upload to the CTG eAgenda will be automatically made available to all Members after the meeting (i.e. when the submission period for statements closes). See G/L/1490. • On 30 November 2023, the CTG agreed to request the Secretariat to include additional information concerning the previous and forthcoming meetings, including hyperlinks to the relevant documents. See G/L/1522.

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
2. Committee on Agriculture (COA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AG-IMS enhancements: the Secretariat introduced two enhancements to the AG-IMS in 2023, namely, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Export Competition Questionnaire (ECQ) online tool enabling online submission of Members' responses to the ECQ and online data extraction and reporting functions; and (ii) first tranche of the Domestic support database allowing extraction of reports on the three "exempt" domestic support categories, namely the Green Box, Article 6.2 development programmes, and the Blue Box, both in the notified currency and in USD.
3. Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices (ADP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of the following features of the eAgenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) uploading Members' statements; and (ii) facilitating access to relevant documents for meetings. <p>The use of such features is to be made available on a trial-basis starting in the Spring Rules Committees of 2024 until Spring Rules Committees of 2025. This will be reviewed at the Rules Committees' meetings of Spring 2025 to decide whether to extend the trial period or to continue using, on a permanent basis, these features or any other features of the eAgenda agreed upon.</p>
4. Committee on Customs Valuation (CV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The eAgenda platform has been adopted for use in formal Committee meetings.
5. Committee on Market Access (CMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To facilitate the work of delegates and improve access to information after a meeting, the Committee adopted a decision to change the default option for statements in the CMA eAgenda to automatically make statements available to all Members after the meeting (see G/MA/411). To facilitate the preparation and follow-up of meetings for delegates, the Secretariat has added a number of new features to the CMA eAgenda (i.e. addition of opening/closing remarks by the Chairperson under each agenda item; the inclusion of all reports by the Secretariat, the Chairperson, and observers as statements; list of all the delegations that take the floor at a meeting). Based on information available on eAgenda, the system can generate a document compiling all the information available under each agenda item that can be downloaded by delegates at the end of the meeting. This document could be used by delegates as a preliminary report of formal meetings and will contribute to facilitate the production of the minutes by the Secretariat. The online notification system for QRs, which the Committee considers to be an important improvement that could help Members submitting notifications, will be developed subject to budgetary constraints.
6. Committee on Rules of Origin (ROO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce an eAgenda in the context of the CRO.
7. Committee on Safeguards (SG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of the following features of the eAgenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) uploading Members' statements; and (ii) facilitating access to relevant documents for meetings. <p>The use of such features is to be made available on a trial-basis starting in the Spring Rules Committees of 2024 until Spring Rules Committees of 2025. This will be reviewed at the Rules Committees' meetings of Spring 2025 to decide whether to extend the trial period or to continue using, on a permanent basis, these features or any other features of the eAgenda agreed upon.</p>
8. Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking of related trade concerns across committees currently using the Trade Concerns Database (including the SPS Committee). Ongoing development of user manual for SPS eAgenda. Ongoing efforts to coordinate among WTO Committees using eAgenda.
9. Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of the following features of the eAgenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) uploading Members' statements; and (ii) facilitating access to relevant documents for meetings.

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
	The use of such features is to be made available on a trial-basis starting in the Spring Rules Committees of 2024 until Spring Rules Committees of 2025. This will be reviewed at the Rules Committees' meetings of Spring 2025 to decide whether to extend the trial period or to continue using, on a permanent basis, these features or any other features of the eAgenda agreed upon.
10. Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of eAgenda ("Collaborative Agenda") for the full menu of Agenda items. See Table 4 above.
11. Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products (ITA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal adopted by the Committee for introducing the eAgenda on a trial basis. • Support for maintaining the hybrid format of meetings unless there is a WTO-wide decision to the contrary. • Support for the Secretariat to include hyperlinks to documents and references cited in documents.

3.2.6 Substantive work

3.8. The following improvements were introduced by the CTG and its subsidiary bodies with a view to improving their substantive work.

Table 7. Improvements in the substantive work

WTO Body	Improvement(s)
1. Committee on Customs Valuation (CV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In principle, and subject to the wishes of Members, the Committee will prepare thematic sessions in an informal setting to share experiences.
2. Committee on Market Access (CMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the positive experience with the CMA experience-sharing sessions on trade in COVID-19 related goods, the Committee will continue its practice of organizing thematic sessions based on proposals by Members.
3. Working Party on State Trading Enterprises (STEs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "Status of Notifications Submitted by WTO Members under Article XVII:4(A) of the GATT 1994 and Paragraph 1 of the Understanding on the Interpretation of Article XVII of the GATT 1994" will be circulated twice a year, before each formal meeting of the Working Party, after the closing of the Airgram for the meeting.

ANNEX
LIST OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY THE CTG'S SUBSIDIARY BODIES

WTO Body	Report (Document Symbol)
1. Committee on Agriculture (COA)	G/L/1509
2. Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices (ADP)	G/L/1500
3. Committee on Customs Valuation (CV)	G/L/1513
4. Committee on Import Licensing (IL)	G/L/1511
5. Committee on Market Access (CMA)	G/L/1494
6. Committee on Rules of Origin (ROO)	G/L/1493
7. Committee on Safeguards (SG)	G/L/1502
8. Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)	G/L/1508
9. Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM)	G/L/1505
10. Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	G/L/1504
11. Committee on Trade Facilitation (TF)	G/L/1515
12. Committee on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs)	G/L/1491
13. Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products (ITA)	G/L/1498
14. Working Party on State Trading Enterprises (STEs)	G/L/1495