

*information contributes to more efficient procedures and reduced  
predictable in terms of time and costs.*

*Making Regional Integration Work: Company Perspectives on Non-Tariff*

WT/L/1129). In the declaration, participants committed to take the necessary steps to give legal effect to the negotiated outcome by the end of 2022. All WTO members are invited to join the declaration.

A total of 70 governments, including one least-developed economy, are part of the outcome on services domestic regulation<sup>1</sup>. They represent 92.5% of global services trade.

The outcome on services domestic regulation brings long standing work on good regulatory practice for services within the ambit of the WTO. Since services represent the fastest growing sector of today's global economy, a set of disciplines that facilitates services trade and economic development through more transparent and predictable regulatory frameworks can be beneficial to all WTO members and can particularly benefit small businesses and women entrepreneurs.

<sup>1</sup> Albania, Argentina, Australia, Kingdom of Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, European Union, Georgia, Hong Kong China, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay.

# THE JOINT INITIATIVE ON SERVICES DOMESTIC REGULATION: KEY QUESTIONS

## WHAT?

The disciplines contained in the Reference Paper on Services Domestic Regulation apply to measures relating to licensing requirements and procedures, qualification requirements and procedures, and technical standards affecting trade in services.

The focus of the disciplines lies on measures that are closely linked to the process of authorization to supply a service. They seek to ensure that existing market access and national treatment commitments are not nullified by opaque and complex authorization procedures. They aim to facilitate trade in services.

The disciplines provide built-in flexibilities for their implementation, in order to preserve space for differences in WTO members' regulatory capacity and approaches. For example, they allow participants to implement certain obligations "to the extent practicable", or simply "encourage" their competent authorities to take certain actions.

The disciplines apply to sectors where participants have undertaken commitments in their GATS schedules of specific commitments. A possibility is foreseen for members to voluntarily expand the application of the disciplines to additional sectors.

Developing economies that adopt the disciplines can delay the application of specific provisions in sectors in which they face implementation difficulties for up to 7 years. The use of transitional periods would allow them to make any necessary adjustments to their domestic regulatory frameworks.

Least-developed countries participating in the Initiative are not required to apply the disciplines until their graduation from LDC status and can designate the necessary transitional periods at that time.

## HOW?

Participating members have agreed to incorporate the disciplines on domestic regulation into their respective GATS schedules as "additional commitments" pursuant to GATS Article XVIII. This provision allows WTO members to negotiate commitments regarding measures on qualifications, standards, or licensing matters.

The disciplines will complement existing specific commitments



