

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) launched on 22 February the 3rd edition of a [publication](#) dedicated to the [WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade](#) (TBT Agreement), the WTO Agreement that establishes rules and procedures regarding the development, adoption, and application of voluntary product standards, mandatory technical regulations (on safety, quality, health, etc.) , and procedures (such as testing , inspection, or certification) used to determine whether a particular product is eligible to access a certain market.

The basic principles enshrined in the TBT Agreement are that all the above standards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment procedures have to be developed and applied by WTO members on a non - discriminatory basis , in a transparent way and in a manner that they do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade . Moreover, t he Agreement encourages the use of international standards as a basis for harmonizing regulations across WTO members , by establishing that when appropriate , the above s tandards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment procedures should be based on relevant international standards and guidelines. Conversely, S anitary and P hytosanitary (SPS) measures are

outside the scope of the
TBT Agreement
as they are
covered
by a
separate agreement

(
[Agreement on the Application of SPS Measures](#)
)

. The aim of the TBT Agreement is to prevent the use of technical requirements as unnecessary barriers to trade.

Its
rules
are fundamental for
distinguish
ing
legitimate standards and technical regulations from protectionist measures.

The WTO handbook sets out the key principles of the TBT Agreement and discusses how these have been addressed in recent disputes brought under this Agreement. The publication also describes the mandate, role and work of the TBT Committee established by art. 13 of the Agreement and considers how TBT

□
related matters have been tackled in negotiations at the WTO.

Lastly, the handbook contains the full text of the TBT Agreement, as well as a compilation of all decisions and recommendations adopted by the TBT Committee since its creation in 1995.