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NTM FOCUS

A MONTHLY UPDATE ON
NON-TARIFF MEASURES
(SPS-TBT MEASURES)



Federation of Indian Export Organisations

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A Word From Our CEO

My Dear Fellow Exporters,

It is our pleasure to present the January 2026 issue of NTM Focus from the Indian Trade Portal – www.indiantradeportal.in

NTM focus has major focus on SPS & TBT agreements aim to ensure that sanitary, phytosanitary & technical regulations, and conformity assessment procedures are non-discriminatory and do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade.

During December 2025, approximately 1415 SPS - TBT measures were announced by the WTO member countries with most of the regions primarily focusing on protection of human health or safety, animal & food safety, consumer information, labeling, prevention of deceptive practices and consumer protection.

These measures are becoming a major challenge for the Indian exporters in accessing international markets. The numbers are quite substantial. We need to remain alert and raise our difficulties appropriately to face the challenges.



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From food safety and pesticide controls to chemicals, eco-design, and product standards, December 2025 SPS-TBT notifications underscore the rapid evolution of global regulations. Staying aligned with these changes is key for exporters to ensure compliance and sustain market access.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Sahai'.

Dr. Ajay Sahai
Director General & CEO

Please send us your views or representations on the SPS-TBT measures, at pratiknavale@fio.org.

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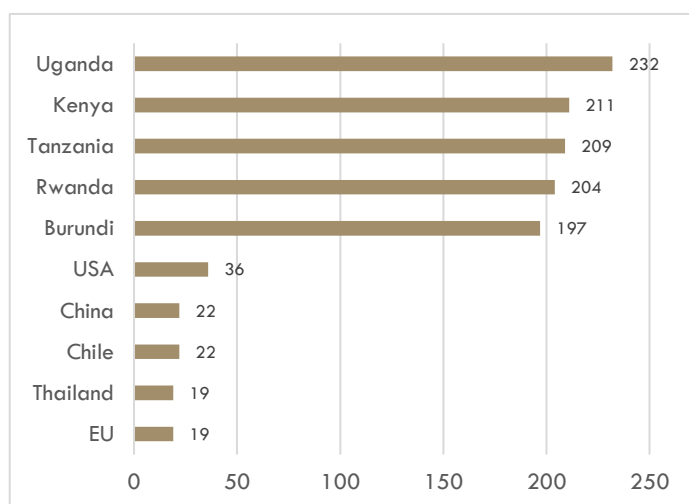
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OVERVIEW OF WTO SPS-TBT NOTIFICATIONS ISSUED DURING DECEMBER 2025

In the month of December 2025, total 1415 SPS-TBT notifications issued by the WTO member countries, out of which 343 were regular, 1072 were addendum, corrigendum and revision notification.

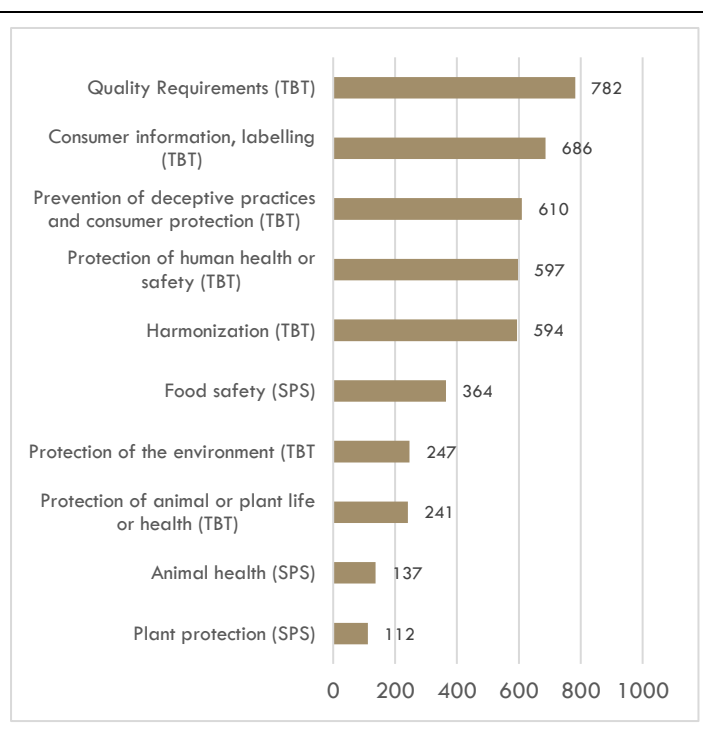
Top 10 Countries Notifying SPS-TBT Measures

1	Uganda	232
2	Kenya	211
3	Tanzania	209
4	Rwanda	204
5	Burundi	197
6	USA	36
7	Chile	22
8	China	22
9	EU	19
10	Thailand	19
	Other Countries	244
	Total	1415



Top 10 Specific Concerns of SPS-TBT Measures Notified by Countries

1	Quality Requirements (TBT)	782
2	Consumer information, labelling (TBT)	686
3	Prevention of deceptive practices and consumer protection (TBT)	610
4	Protection of human health or safety (TBT)	597
5	Harmonization (TBT)	594
6	Food safety (SPS)	364
7	Protection of the environment (TBT)	247
8	Protection of animal or plant life or health (TBT)	241
9	Animal health (SPS)	137
10	Plant protection (SPS)	112



AGRI & FOOD PRODUCTS

1. China - Outlines permissible pesticide levels, methodology for testing, and enforcement procedures

China has released an updated version of its national standard on Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for pesticides in food, revising and expanding permissible residue levels across a wide range of agricultural and animal-derived products. The standard establishes legally binding MRLs for more than 120 pesticides, covering cereals, fruits, vegetables, oilseeds, medicinal plants, livestock products, poultry, eggs, milk, and fats. The update aims to strengthen food safety controls, reflect current agricultural practices, and align residue management with evolving risk-assessment data.

The revised standard introduces new MRLs, amended limits, and expanded crop-pesticide combinations, including residues in fresh and processed commodities as well as animal products such as meat, offal, milk, eggs, and fats. It covers commonly traded commodities including rice, wheat, maize, soybeans, citrus fruits, apples, grapes, vegetables, spices, edible flowers, and traditional medicinal plants. Several limits are specified separately for fresh and dried products to account for concentration effects during processing.

By updating residue thresholds for widely used insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, and growth regulators, the regulation enhances consumer health protection while providing greater regulatory clarity for producers, exporters, and importers. Compliance with the revised MRLs will be mandatory for all food placed on the Chinese market, reinforcing China's pesticide control framework and its oversight of both domestic and imported food products.

2. EAC - Outlines the requirements, sampling, and testing methods for agave spirits

The East African Community (EAC) has published Draft East African Standard establishing harmonised specifications for agave spirits across Partner States. The draft standard applies to distilled alcoholic beverages produced through the fermentation and distillation of sugars derived from the agave plant, including products such as tequila, mezcal, bacanora, raicilla, and sotol. The objective is to harmonise quality and safety requirements, facilitate regional trade, and align product standards with international best practices.

The draft defines essential ingredients and permitted processing aids, allowing only food-grade materials suitable for human consumption. While agave spirits must be derived primarily from agave sugars, the standard allows limited optional ingredients—such as oak or encino oak extracts and other fermentable sugars—except in products marketed as “100% agave spirits.” General quality requirements mandate that products exhibit the characteristic colour, aroma, and flavour of agave spirits and be free from foreign matter and off-odours.

Specific compositional requirements are prescribed, including a minimum alcohol content of 35% v/v, limits on methanol, higher alcohols, aldehydes, esters, furfural, and dry extract, with compliance verified using recognised ISO and EAS test methods. The draft also requires conformity with Codex standards on food additives and contaminants, ensuring consumer safety.

Additional provisions cover hygienic production practices, packaging in food-grade containers, mandatory labelling in accordance with EAC food labelling standards, and standardised sampling procedures. Once adopted the regulation will provide a unified regulatory framework for agave spirits in the EAC region, supporting product consistency, consumer protection, and smoother cross-border trade in alcoholic beverages.

3. EU – Publishes denial of renewal of authorization for Patent Blue V

The European Commission has adopted Implementing Regulation formally denying the renewal of authorisation of Patent Blue V as a feed additive for non-food producing animals. Patent Blue V had previously been authorised for ten years as a sensory additive used as a colourant in animal feed. The decision follows a scientific assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which concluded that the applicant failed to demonstrate continued compliance with the authorised purity specifications and did not provide sufficient data to confirm the additive's safety under current conditions of use.

EFSA's evaluation highlighted concerns regarding the additive's non-compliance with purity criteria and the absence of data necessary to assess potential aneugenic effects, preventing a definitive conclusion on safety for target animal species. Despite being given the opportunity to submit additional supporting data, the applicant declined to provide further information. As a result, the Commission determined that Patent Blue V no longer meets the conditions for authorisation set out under EU feed additive legislation.

Consequently, the existing authorisation granted under Implementing Regulation, has been repealed. The regulation establishes clear withdrawal timelines, requiring existing stocks of the additive and related premixtures to be removed from the market by 1 April 2026, and feed materials or compound feed containing the additive to be withdrawn by 1 July 2026. The measure aims to ensure a controlled phase-out while maintaining high standards of animal safety and regulatory compliance across the EU.

4. GCC - Publishes Technical Regulation for Hard, Jelly, and Soft Candy

The Gulf Standardization Organization (GSO) has issued a final draft Gulf Standard covering hard candy, soft candy, and jelly candy intended for direct human consumption. The draft updates and consolidates regional requirements for sugar-based confectionery products that are not regulated under separate specific

standards, with the objective of strengthening food safety, product quality, and consumer protection across GCC member states.

The draft standard establishes a detailed classification system for candies based on texture and composition, including plain and filled hard candies, jelly candies, and various soft candy types such as toffee, caramel, marshmallow, fondant, fudge, Turkish delight, and fruit pastes. It sets comprehensive general and product-specific requirements, covering raw materials, permitted ingredients, moisture limits, filling proportions, ash content, and compositional benchmarks to ensure consistent quality and safety characteristics.

Strict provisions are included on food additives, flavourings, contaminants, microbiological limits, and hygiene, requiring compliance with relevant Gulf and Codex standards. The draft explicitly prohibits the use of certain additives in specific products—particularly in small jelly cups—due to choking and safety risks, and places emphasis on preventing hazards related to product shape, size, and method of consumption, especially for children.

Additional requirements address sampling and testing methods, packaging integrity, transportation and storage conditions, and mandatory labelling, including product classification, age-related consumption warnings where applicable, origin of gelatin and starch, and prohibitions on misleading or culturally inappropriate imagery. Once adopted, it will modernise confectionery regulations in the GCC, promote harmonised market practices, and enhance consumer safety for candy products across the region.

5. Turkey - Publishes Specific Hygiene Rules for Food of Animal Origin

The Republic of Türkiye has established a new Approved Establishment System, known as TROIS, to regulate the importation of certain foods of animal origin intended for human consumption. This system has been introduced under Türkiye's existing hygiene and official control regulations for foods of animal origin and will apply to dairy products, fishery and aquaculture products, gelatin, and collagen. From 1

January 2026, exports of these products to Türkiye will be permitted only from countries and establishments listed in the TROIS system.

TROIS functions as a centralized digital platform, managed by Türkiye's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, to compile and maintain an official list of approved exporting countries and establishments. The system is accessible online and integrates information from the EU's TRACES NT system, while also providing a pathway for establishments not registered in TRACES NT to seek approval. Exporting countries' competent authorities are required to submit specific documentation—such as establishment details, checklists, and contact information—through both diplomatic channels and designated email communication.

Establishments already registered in TRACES NT may be added to the TROIS list following document verification, while non-registered establishments will be subject to additional review and on-site inspections before approval. Exporting authorities must promptly notify Türkiye of any changes related to establishment names, addresses, suspensions, removals, or cancellations to ensure the TROIS database remains up to date.

Once the system becomes operational, veterinary health certificates will not be issued for covered products exported from establishments not listed in TROIS, including those previously registered in TRACES NT but not approved under the new system. Overall, the introduction of TROIS strengthens Türkiye's veterinary control framework, enhances traceability, and ensures higher food safety standards for imported animal-origin products.

6. Viet Nam – Proposes Technical Regulation for food cassava starch

Viet Nam has issued a draft National Technical Regulation establishing comprehensive quality, safety, and management requirements for food-grade cassava starch. The regulation applies to dry cassava starch derived from cassava roots, dried cassava slices, or cassava flour of *Manihot esculenta* Crantz, and covers products manufactured, traded, or imported within Viet Nam. Modified cassava starch and cassava flour are explicitly excluded from the scope.

The draft regulation sets detailed physical and chemical quality parameters, including minimum starch content ($\geq 85\%$), maximum moisture content ($\leq 13\%$), limits on ash and crude fibre, particle size, whiteness, and pH range. It also establishes a strict safety threshold for total hydrocyanic acid (HCN) to mitigate toxicity risks. In addition, maximum limits are specified for heavy metals, particularly lead, and for microbiological contamination, including yeast and mould counts.

Clear provisions are included for the use of food additives, allowing sulphur dioxide (SO_2) within defined limits while requiring compliance with Viet Nam's existing food additive regulations and Codex standards for any other permitted additives. The draft further references internationally recognised AOAC, ISO, EN, ISI, and Vietnamese standards for sampling and testing methods, ensuring harmonised and reliable conformity assessment.

From a regulatory management perspective, the draft mandates product labelling, self-declaration of conformity prior to market placement, and traceability requirements, including the use of physical or electronic labels and digital traceability tools. Manufacturers, importers, and traders are held fully responsible for ensuring compliance with the regulation, while the Ministry of Industry and Trade will oversee implementation, monitoring, and future updates.

Overall, the proposed regulation aims to strengthen food safety oversight, standardise product quality, enhance consumer protection, and improve market transparency for food cassava starch in Viet Nam.

CHEMICAL & MEDICAL SUPPLIES

7. Australia - Outlines the requirements for emergency eyewash and shower equipment and facilities

Australia has released Draft Australian Standard for public consultation, proposing an updated and comprehensive framework for emergency eyewash and shower equipment and facilities. The draft standard establishes uniform minimum requirements covering the design, materials, installation, performance, accessibility, testing, operation, and maintenance of emergency decontamination equipment used in workplaces where hazardous substances are present.

The proposed standard applies to a wide range of equipment, including emergency showers, eyewash units, eye/face wash units, combination units, drench hoses, and self-contained (portable) systems, with specific provisions to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities. It has been adapted to suit Australian conditions and to align with other relevant Australian Standards.

The draft sets detailed performance benchmarks, such as minimum flow rates, spray patterns, activation times, and delivery of tepid flushing fluid to prevent further injury during emergency use. It also introduces clearer requirements for equipment placement, mandating rapid accessibility (generally within 10 seconds), unobstructed access zones, appropriate signage, lighting, and protections when equipment is installed near electrical systems or outdoors.

In addition, the standard strengthens provisions on inspection, testing, and training, requiring regular activation, annual inspections, proper record-keeping, and employee training to ensure equipment remains functional and effective. By modernising technical specifications and reinforcing safety and accessibility considerations, the draft standard aims to enhance workplace safety outcomes and reduce the risk of injury from hazardous material exposure once it is finalised and adopted as an Australian Standard.

8. European Union - Publishes new and amended entries for the harmonized categorization and labelling of 48 chemicals

The European Commission has published a draft Delegated Regulation amending CLP Regulation to introduce new and updated harmonised classifications and labelling (CLH) for a large number of chemical substances. The proposal is based on recent scientific opinions issued by the Committee for Risk Assessment (RAC) of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), following public consultations and expert discussions with Member States and stakeholders.

The draft CLP Regulation to reflect updated hazard classifications for a wide range of substances, including industrial chemicals, pesticides, dyes, essential oils, bromide salts, borates, lithium compounds, methacrylates, and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). A notable addition is new “Note 13”, which introduces the principle of additivity for mixtures containing multiple substances whose toxicity arises from a common molecular entity—particularly relevant for certain bromide compounds—to ensure more accurate hazard identification.

While stakeholder comments were reviewed, the Commission concluded that the additional information provided was insufficient to overturn RAC’s scientific assessments for most substances. However, the classification of fosthiazate as a reproductive toxicant has been temporarily excluded pending further scientific evaluation, and rapeseed oil has been excluded entirely after RAC determined harmonised classification was not warranted.

To allow industry adequate time to adapt, the regulation provides for an 18-month transition period after entry into force, during which suppliers must update classification, labelling, and packaging. Voluntary early compliance will be permitted. Overall, the amendment strengthens the EU’s chemicals hazard framework, enhances protection of human health and the environment, and ensures that chemical classifications remain aligned with the latest scientific evidence.

9. Japan - Publishes Amendment of the Act on the Regulation of the Manufacturing and Evaluation of Chemical Substances

Japan has proposed revisions to the Order for Enforcement of the Act on the Regulation of Manufacture and Evaluation of Chemical Substances (CSCL), introducing stricter controls on certain hazardous chemicals to strengthen human health and environmental protection. Under the revised enforcement order, chlorpyrifos, chlorinated paraffins with carbon chain lengths C14-17 and chlorine content of 45% or more, and long-chain perfluorocarboxylic acids (C9-21), including their salts and related compounds, will be designated as Class I Specified Chemical Substances. As a result, the manufacture or import of these substances will require prior authorization.

In addition to substance-level controls, the revision introduces import prohibitions on specific products containing these chemicals. Products affected include wood insecticides containing chlorpyrifos; a range of industrial and consumer products containing certain chlorinated paraffins—such as plasticizers, flame-retardant additives, lubricating and hydraulic oils, paints, adhesives, sealants, and fabric protection agents; and products containing long-chain perfluorocarboxylic acids, including lubricating oils, paints, water- and oil-repellent treatments, adhesives, fire extinguishing agents, waxes, and treated textiles, clothing, and floor coverings.

The proposed measures aim to prevent environmental persistence, bioaccumulation, and potential toxic effects associated with these substances, while aligning Japan's chemical management framework with international chemical control initiatives. Once adopted, the revision will significantly impact manufacturers, importers, and downstream users by tightening authorization requirements and restricting the market entry of affected chemical-containing products.

10. Japan - Publishes Act on Safeguarding the Quality, Efficacy, and Safety of Products, Including Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices

Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has proposed to designate Cannabinol (CBN)—chemically identified as 6,6,9-Trimethyl-3-pentyl-6H-dibenzo[b,d]pyran-1-ol—as a “Shitei Yakubutsu” (designated substance) under the Act on Securing Quality, Efficacy and Safety of Products Including Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices. This proposal is intended to prevent the abuse of substances that may affect the central nervous system and to clarify regulatory controls over emerging cannabinoid-related compounds.

Once designated, the manufacture, import, sale, possession, and use of CBN would be prohibited, except for clearly defined “proper uses” permitted under the Act. These permitted uses include research and testing conducted by government bodies, local authorities, educational and research institutions, independent administrative agencies, and forensic laboratories. Use may also be allowed for statutory testing purposes or for applications explicitly deemed safe by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare.

The proposal further expands permitted activities to include non-human research and testing, as well as the processing of cannabis plants, provided these activities do not pose a risk to human health. Overall, the proposed designation reflects Japan's continued efforts to strengthen oversight of psychoactive substances, address potential misuse, and ensure public health protection while allowing controlled scientific and industrial applications.

ELECTRICALS

11. European Union – Publishes eco-design requirements for space heaters, combination heaters, temperature controls, solar devices, and shower water heat recovery devices

The European Commission has released a draft Ecodesign Regulation proposing updated and more stringent energy efficiency and environmental performance requirements for space heaters, combination heaters, temperature controls, solar devices, and shower water heat-recovery devices, as well as packages combining these products.

The proposal significantly expands the scope of ecodesign requirements to cover heaters with a standard rated heat output of up to 1 MW, including large commercial and industrial systems previously not fully regulated. It introduces stricter minimum energy-efficiency thresholds, updated testing and calculation methods reflecting real-life operating conditions, and new requirements for noise emissions, nitrogen oxides (NO_x) emissions, and turndown ratios. Special provisions are included for heat pumps, hybrid heat pumps, cogeneration heaters, and electric boilers, recognising their growing role in the energy transition.

The draft also strengthens resource-efficiency and repairability obligations, requiring manufacturers to ensure the availability of spare parts, access to repair information, and product designs that facilitate dismantling and recycling. Enhanced data transparency and self-monitoring requirements are introduced to help consumers and installers better understand real-world energy performance. In addition, manufacturers may voluntarily align with the EU Energy Smart Appliances Code of Conduct, supporting interoperability and demand-response functionality.

Clear conformity assessment procedures, including phased introduction of EU-type examination and third-party certification, are set out alongside extended transitional periods to allow industry adaptation. Once adopted, the regulation is expected to

deliver substantial reductions in energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and air pollutants, while accelerating the shift toward high-efficiency heating technologies across the EU market.

12. Korea - Proposes amendments to the technical regulations for radio equipment

The Republic of Korea has issued a draft amendment to the Technical Standards for Simple Radio Stations, Space Stations, Earth Stations, Radio Detection Equipment, and Other Business-Use Radio Equipment, with the aim of enhancing disaster response capabilities, strengthening protection of critical infrastructure, and reducing regulatory burdens on operators. The amendment is issued under the Radio Waves Act and related enforcement rules.

A key feature of the revision is the introduction of technical standards for Internet of Things (IoT) terminals used within Korea's integrated public safety communication network, enabling IoT-based applications for rapid disaster monitoring and prevention in emergencies such as fires and earthquakes. The amendment specifies detailed transmission and reception requirements, including limits on antenna power, occupied bandwidth, frequency tolerance, and spurious emissions for IoT terminal equipment.

The draft also establishes new technical criteria for drone detection radar systems, reflecting increased demand to protect national critical facilities. It defines "drone detection radar" and introduces detailed requirements on operating frequency bands, transmission power, modulation methods, occupied bandwidth, and interference suppression. To ease compliance, certain radar stations previously operated as experimental stations subject to annual inspections will be reclassified as general radio stations, extending inspection intervals to five years.

In addition, the amendment introduces a limited exception permitting the use of analogue radios in specific safety-critical environments—such as shipyard crane operations—where digital radios may cause communication delays that increase accident risks. This exception is narrowly scoped to enhance occupational safety and prevent industrial accidents.

Finally, the revision includes terminology simplification, replacing complex technical terms with clearer language to improve regulatory clarity and accessibility. Once adopted, the amended standards will take effect immediately upon promulgation and will contribute to improved public safety communications, reduced interference risks, and more practical regulatory oversight.

13. Philippines – Proposes Guidelines for Electric Irons for Household or Similar Use

The Philippines Department of Energy (DOE) has issued draft Implementing Guidelines under the Philippine Energy Labelling Program (PELP) for electric irons intended for household or similar use. The draft sets out mandatory requirements for energy efficiency measurement, performance verification, product registration, and energy labelling, with the objective of improving consumer awareness and promoting energy-efficient appliances in the domestic market.

The guidelines apply to a wide range of household electric irons, including dry irons, steam irons, spray irons, vented steam irons with motor pumps, and steam irons with separate water reservoirs (up to 5 litres). Industrial and commercial ironing equipment is excluded. The regulation defines key technical parameters such as energy consumption, energy efficiency factor (EEF), smoothing performance, and specifies test conditions.

Detailed methodologies are provided for calculating hourly and monthly electricity consumption, estimated electricity cost, and associated greenhouse gas emissions, all of which must be reflected on the DOE Energy Label. The draft also establishes minimum energy performance and smoothing requirements for different iron types, ensuring consistent product performance and comparability across models.

The regulation further outlines product verification testing procedures, including sampling methods, conformity assessment rules, rounding principles, and handling of non-conforming units. Manufacturers and importers are required to register products through the PELP online system, supported by accredited laboratory test reports. Clear specifications are provided for energy label design, size, placement, and content, ensuring labels are easily visible to consumers at the point of sale.

Once adopted, these guidelines will strengthen the Philippines' appliance energy-efficiency framework, enhance transparency for consumers, and support national energy conservation and emissions-reduction goals.

14. United Kingdom – Proposes Energy Smart Appliances (ESA) Regulations 2026

The United Kingdom has published the Draft Energy Smart Appliances Regulations 2026, introducing a comprehensive regulatory framework for the placing of energy smart appliances on the market in Great Britain. The regulations are issued under the Energy Act 2023 and the Consumer Rights Act 2015, with the objective of supporting electricity system flexibility, improving energy efficiency, and strengthening consumer and cyber security protections.

The draft regulations apply to three key categories of products:

- Smart electric vehicle charge points
- Smart electrical heating appliances
- Smart battery energy storage systems

Covered appliances must be capable of communicating via electronic networks, operating safely even when disconnected from networks, and supporting off-peak electricity usage by default. The rules also ensure that end-users retain control, including the ability to override automated flexibility services and change operational settings.

Manufacturers and importers will be required to comply with cybersecurity standards and implement safeguards against physical tampering and unauthorised access. Additional obligations include maintaining technical documentation, providing clear consumer information on security and flexibility features, registering compliant products, and taking corrective actions such as recalls or withdrawals in cases of non-compliance.

The regulations establish a structured enforcement and civil sanctions regime, empowering authorities to issue compliance notices, impose financial penalties, and accept enforcement undertakings. Overall, the proposed regulations represent a

significant step toward integrating smart appliances into the UK's evolving energy system while enhancing consumer protection and market transparency.

MISCELLANEOUS

15. Australia - Proposes Vehicle Standard to convert type-approval CO₂ emission levels of light vehicles

The Australian Government has released an Exposure Draft for a new Vehicle Standard to support the implementation of the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard Act 2024. The proposed standard introduces mandatory carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions testing requirements for certain vehicles with a gross vehicle mass (GVM) above 3,500 kg and below 3,855 kg, marking an important step toward expanding Australia's vehicle emissions regulatory framework.

The proposal is intended to align Australia's testing regime with equivalent U.S. light-duty vehicle standards, which apply to vehicles up to 8,500 pounds gross vehicle weight. From 1 January 2027, vehicles within the specified GVM range will be required to obtain certified CO₂ emissions values. A subsequent amendment is planned to formally bring these vehicles under the NVES compliance framework from 1 July 2027, with further consultation proposed for heavier vehicles between 3,855 kg and 4,500 kg to enable their inclusion from 2030.

Under the NVES Act, manufacturers' compliance is assessed using sales-weighted average CO₂ emissions, based on values recorded in the Australian Government's Register of Approved Vehicles (RAV). This methodology was developed with technical support from the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) and industry stakeholders.

Overall, the proposed Act strengthens Australia's vehicle emissions framework, expands the scope of vehicles covered by the NVES, and provides a clear transition

pathway for higher-mass consumer vehicles such as large SUVs and pick-ups to be regulated under national efficiency targets.

16. EAC – Outlines the requirements, sampling, and testing methods for corrugated fibreboard boxes

The East African Community (EAC) has published Draft East African Standard revising and updating regional requirements for corrugated fibreboard boxes used in general packaging. This second edition seeks to harmonize quality, safety, and performance requirements across Partner States, thereby facilitating intra-regional trade and ensuring consistent packaging standards for manufacturers and users.

The draft standard specifies comprehensive material, construction, and workmanship requirements, covering different types of corrugated boards, including single-wall, double-wall, and triple-wall constructions, as well as various flute types (A, B, C, E, and H). It introduces updated physical performance benchmarks, such as minimum grammage, bursting strength, puncture resistance, and edge crush strength, aligned with internationally recognized ISO and ASTM test methods. New provisions have also been added for specially treated corrugated boxes, including those designed to be weather-resistant, fire-retardant, or moisture-resistant.

In addition, the standard strengthens requirements on dimensional accuracy, water absorption of liners, adhesive quality, and joint construction, ensuring improved durability and load-bearing performance. Clear rules are provided for sampling, testing, packaging, and labelling, requiring manufacturers to declare key information such as dimensions, grammage, batch identification, treatment type (where applicable), and country of origin.

Overall, it modernizes the regulatory framework for corrugated fibreboard packaging in the EAC region, enhances product quality and reliability, and supports harmonized market access while accommodating expanded use cases such as packaging for horticultural products.

17. Kuwait - Publishes technical regulations for biodegradable plastic bags

Kuwait has issued a comprehensive Technical Regulation for Biodegradable Plastic Bags aimed at reducing environmental impact while ensuring consumer safety and product quality. The regulation applies to single-use plastic bags made from polyethylene and polypropylene that are marketed as biodegradable, while excluding bags used for medical, food-contact, agricultural, postal, and certain industrial applications.

The regulation establishes strict environmental and technical requirements for both bio-based biodegradable plastics and oxo-biodegradable plastics. Products must meet defined biodegradation performance thresholds within specified timeframes and comply with recognised international standards, including ISO, ASTM, BS, and SASO test methods. Limits are also set for heavy metals and hazardous substances, ensuring that degradation does not pose risks to soil, plants, or public health.

A key feature of the regulation is the introduction of a mandatory conformity assessment and registration system for the use of Kuwait's official biodegradable logo. Manufacturers and importers must obtain certification through accredited conformity assessment bodies, submit laboratory test reports, maintain technical documentation, and operate an effective environmental management system. The logo must be clearly displayed on each bag and may only be used for approved products.

Overall, the new technical regulation modernises Kuwait's framework for biodegradable plastic bags, promotes environmentally responsible materials, enhances traceability and consumer confidence, and supports national sustainability and waste-reduction objectives.

18. Mongolia – Publishes Technical regulation on the safety of construction materials and products

Mongolia has issued a draft Technical Regulation on the Safety of Construction Materials and Products (2025) establishing a comprehensive national framework to ensure the safety, quality, and environmental compliance of construction materials and products placed on the Mongolian market. The regulation applies to all construction materials and products used or incorporated into construction works within Mongolia, regardless of country of origin, with limited exemptions for personal-use items, samples, research materials, and exports.

The regulation sets out essential safety, health, hygiene, and environmental protection requirements, mandating that construction materials must not pose risks to human life, property, or the environment. Products must comply with fire safety, structural safety, energy efficiency, and thermal insulation standards, and must not contain hazardous substances exceeding permissible limits. Manufacturers are required to conduct annual internal risk assessments and ensure that products maintain safety and performance characteristics throughout their shelf life.

A key feature of the regulation is the introduction of mandatory conformity assessment procedures, requiring construction materials and products to be accompanied by either a Certificate of Conformity or a Supplier's Declaration of Conformity before being placed on the market. Where national standards do not exist or foreign standards are applied, a technical assessment issued by the competent construction authority is required. Detailed technical documentation, testing records, and factory production control evidence must be retained by manufacturers and importers for specified periods.

The regulation also strengthens labelling, packaging, and traceability requirements, including mandatory safety information, country of origin, manufacturer details, and the use of barcodes or QR codes for selected products. Clear rules are established for product recalls, liability, and prohibitions on the supply of unsafe or mislabelled materials. Enforcement will be carried out through nationwide inspections, border

controls, and laboratory testing, with transitional provisions allowing previously issued certificates to remain valid until expiry.

Overall, the draft regulation significantly enhances Mongolia's construction product safety regime, improves market surveillance and traceability, and aligns national practices with international safety and conformity assessment principles.

19. Philippines - Publishes new technical regulations for the mandatory product certification of structural steel products

The Philippines Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has issued new Technical Regulations mandating product certification for structural steel sections, with the objective of strengthening safety, quality, and traceability of steel products used in construction. The regulation applies to both locally manufactured and imported structural steel products, including carbon steel shapes (such as W, S, M, HP, C, MC and L shapes), steel plates, and flat bars, recognising their critical role in ensuring structural integrity and public safety.

Under the regulation, only structural steel products sourced from manufacturers holding a valid Philippine Standard (PS) Quality and/or Safety Certification Mark License may be distributed, sold, or used in the country. Manufacturers—local and foreign—must undergo factory audits, product testing, and ongoing surveillance to demonstrate compliance with relevant Philippine National Standards (PNS) and quality management system requirements. Imported products are subject to per-shipment verification, including inspection, sampling, laboratory testing, and issuance of a Statement of Confirmation (SOC) prior to market release.

The regulation establishes detailed procedures for sampling, mechanical and chemical testing, marking and labelling, and traceability through batch and lot identification. It also introduces strict enforcement measures, including product recalls, cease-and-desist orders, forfeiture of surety bonds, suspension or cancellation of licenses, and administrative penalties for non-compliance. Transitional provisions are provided to allow manufacturers and importers to adjust to the new requirements.

Overall, the new technical regulations significantly enhance the Philippines' framework for construction product regulation, aiming to prevent the circulation of substandard steel materials, protect consumers and infrastructure, and align domestic practices with international conformity assessment principles.
