

DISCLAIMER

The Handbook on Notification Requirements does not constitute a legal interpretation of the notification obligations under the respective Agreement(s) or relevant legal provision(s). It has been prepared by the Secretariat to assist Members in complying with their notification obligations.

TECHNICAL COOPERATION HANDBOOK ON NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

QUANTITATIVE RESTRICTIONS

This section of the Handbook on Notification Requirements covers the notification obligations relating to **QUANTITATIVE RESTRICTIONS**. It includes information on three notifications in the Committee on Market Access and consists of the following five parts:

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For Members which acceded pursuant to Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement, their respective Protocols of Accession may contain notification obligations in addition to those set out in the WTO Agreements, and may govern the deadlines for the submission of their initial notifications.

PART 1

OVERVIEW OF NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

WHAT MUST BE NOTIFIED?

On 22 June 2012, the Council for Trade in Goods adopted the Decision on notification procedures for quantitative restrictions ([G/L/59/Rev.1](#))¹. The objective of this Decision is to enhance transparency on the prohibitions and other restrictions introduced or maintained by Members on their trade in goods, including their legal justification of such measures under WTO rules. The notification must be submitted using the relevant format.

Under the QR Decision, *all* quantitative restrictions affecting both imports and exports shall be notified. The scope of the measures to be notified is largely defined by Article XI of the GATT 1994², which states that:

"No prohibitions or restrictions other than duties, taxes or other charges, whether made effective through quotas, import or export licenses or other measures, shall be instituted or maintained by any contracting party on the importation of any product of the territory of any other contracting party or on the exportation or sale for export of any product destined for the territory of any other contracting party."

Therefore, the concept refers to all "prohibitions or restrictions other than duties, taxes or other charges" that are applied on imports or exports of goods, which can be "made effective through quotas, import or export licenses or other measures". For purposes of preparing a notification, it should not be difficult to identify the prohibitions (i.e. bans) on imports or exports imposed by the Member, as customs and other authorities usually maintain lists of goods that cannot be traded. However, it may prove more challenging to identify the measures that qualify as "restrictions other than duties, taxes or other charges". The text of Article XI:1 is helpful in this context; it indicates that restrictions can be "made effective through quotas, import or export licenses", and makes reference to "other measures".

¹ Paragraph 8 of the QR Decision states that it fully replaces the previous notification procedures contained in the CTG Decision of 1 December 1995 (document [G/L/59](#)) and the notification format in document [G/MA/NTM/QR/2](#).

² The full text of Article XI is reproduced in Annex 1.

Annex 2 of the QR Decision provides an indicative list of ten measures that are covered by the notification requirements, including a list of symbols to be used in the notification.³ They include prohibitions, global quotas, non-automatic licensing, restrictions made effective through state trading operations, mixing regulations, voluntary export restraints, and others (see Table 1). The QR Decision further requires the notifying Member to specify whether the measure notified affects imports and/or exports, and if the measure is "seasonal". In such cases, the suffixes "S" for seasonal restrictions and "X" for export restrictions should be added to the relevant symbol, as appropriate. For example, if a Member applies a temporary import ban, this should be reflected in the notification with the symbol "P-S"; if the notified measure is a non-automatic export license, the symbol NALX should be used.

³ The list with the symbols in Annex 2 was originally contained in the Annex to the Group on Quantitative Restrictions (1985) Report and the recommendation was that they should be used for future. Notifications to the Group and other relevant GATT bodies. See, for example, GATT document GATT document [L/5713](#), p. 2. In the QR Decision, Members agreed to use these symbols in their notification to indicate the type of restriction being notified.

PART 1

OVERVIEW OF NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Table 1: Measures listed in Annex 2 of the QR Decision, with symbols

MEASURE	SYMBOL	SUFFIX (AS REQUIRED)
Prohibition	P	X: Export S: Seasonal
Prohibition except under defined conditions	CP	
Global quota	GQ	
Global quota allocated by country	GQC	
Bilateral quota (i.e. anything less than a global quota)	BQ	
Non-automatic licensing	NAL	
Quantitative restriction made effective through state-trading operations	STR	
Mixing regulation	MXR	
Minimum price, triggering a quantitative restriction	MPR	
"Voluntary" export restraint	VER	

Source: Document [G/L/59/Rev.1](#).

Although Article XI:1 of the GATT 1994 provides for the *general elimination* of quantitative restrictions, Members are allowed to introduce or maintain them in a limited number of circumstances, as exceptions. These include, for example, the carveouts in GATT Article XI:2, as well as the general exceptions of GATT Article XX, national security exceptions of GATT Article XXI, and other exceptions contained other agreements, such as the Agreement on Agriculture and the Agreement on Safeguards and other WTO Agreements. The specific WTO justification has to be indicated for every notified measure.

The QR Decision also recognizes that certain measures that qualify as quantitative restrictions may have been introduced pursuant to other international commitments, such as multilateral environmental agreements which, for the sake of transparency, should also be notified and justified under the relevant WTO provisions. Finally, the QR Decision acknowledges that some measures may already have been notified by Members to other WTO Committees or bodies and, for this reason, it allows for a cross-reference to be made to existing notifications.

WHICH MEMBERS MUST NOTIFY?

All Members should notify all the quantitative restrictions in force, both affecting imports and exports.

WHEN TO NOTIFY?

The QR Notification decision ([G/L/59/Rev.1](#)) provides that each Member shall notify all its quantitative restrictions in force beginning on 30 September 2012 and in two-yearly intervals thereafter.

PART 1

OVERVIEW OF NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

HOW TO NOTIFY?⁴

All notifications shall be made in accordance with the format in Annex 1 of [G/L/59/Rev.1](#) and based on the information required in paragraph 2 of the QR Decision. The format of QR notifications consists of three elements:

- A cover page with key information on the notification (e.g. notifying Member, type of notification, biennial period, and others);
- Section 1, which provides a list of all quantitative restrictions in force and the information required for each of these measures; and
- Section 2, where it is possible to cross-reference the QR notification with other WTO notifications that also contain information on, or relevant to, the quantitative restriction in question.

Notifications shall be submitted to the Secretariat in electronic form (footnote 2 of the QR Decision) and are circulated under document symbol G/MA/QR/N/Member code. QR notifications can be submitted in any of the three WTO official languages (English, French, or Spanish), and only the cover page is translated. This means that the information contained in Sections 1 and 2 of the QR notification will only ever be available in the language in which it was submitted.

For a detailed explanation of this notification requirement, including possible sources of information, please refer to the Practical Guide by the Secretariat in document [JOB/MA/101/Rev.2](#).

Additional information can be found online at the: [Quantitative Restriction Website](#) which provides an overview of quantitative restrictions that have been notified to the Committee on Market Access. It includes measures such as prohibitions, non-automatic import licences, quotas, among others, notified by WTO Members as part of their notification commitment pursuant to the procedures in the Quantitative Restriction Decision (QR Decision) adopted by the Council for Trade in Goods in 22 June 2012.

⁴ All notifications, regardless of their subject content or the requirement under which they are being submitted, must be directed to the administrator of the Central Registry of Notifications (CRN), as indicated in document [WT/INF/25/Rev.2](#). Notifications may be submitted through online submission systems, as electronic attachments to emails, or on paper. As it may be practice, a copy of the notification may be sent to the Secretariat unit substantively handling the notification.

PART 2

LISTING OF THE NOTIFICATION OBLIGATIONS

	WHAT MUST BE NOTIFIED?		WHICH MEMBERS MUST NOTIFY?	WHEN TO NOTIFY?		HOW TO NOTIFY?		
	Notification requirements	Type of measure	Members notifying	Periodicity	Comments on Periodicity	Format	To whom ⁵	Notification Symbol
1.	Decision on Notification Procedures for Quantitative Restrictions G/L/59/Rev.1 .	Quantitative restrictions (all restrictions in place, even if notified previously).	All WTO Members	Regular – Biennial	30 September 2012 and 2-yearly intervals thereafter.	Yes (Annex I of G/L/59/Rev.1 and Guidelines JOB/MA/101/Rev.2)	Committee on Market Access	G/MA/QR/N/*
2.	Decision on Notification Procedures for Quantitative Restrictions G/L/59/Rev.1 .	Changes to quantitative restrictions maintained.	All WTO Members	<i>Ad hoc</i>	As soon as possible, but not later than six months from their entry into force.	Yes (Annex I of G/L/59/Rev.1 and Guidelines JOB/MA/101/Rev.2)	Committee on Market Access	G/MA/QR/N/*
3.	Decision on Notification Procedures for Quantitative Restrictions G/L/59/Rev.1 .	Quantitative restrictions maintained by other Members (reverse notification).	All WTO Members	<i>Ad hoc</i>		Yes (Annex I of G/L/59/Rev.1 and Guidelines JOB/MA/101/Rev.2)	Committee on Market Access	G/MA/QR/N/*

⁵ All notifications, regardless of their subject content or the requirement under which they are being submitted, must be directed to the administrator of the Central Registry of Notifications (CRN), as indicated in document [WT/INF/25/Rev.2](#). Notifications may be submitted through online submission systems, as electronic attachments to emails, or on paper. As it may be practice, a copy of the notification may be sent to the Secretariat unit substantively handling the notification.

PART 3

RELEVANT DOCUMENT(S) CONCERNING GUIDELINES AND FORMATS

Notification on Quantitative Restrictions (QRS): A practical guide [JOB/MA/101/Rev.2](#).

PART 4

LIST OF NOTIFICATIONS SINCE 1995

To access the list of notifications under the Quantitative Restrictions Decision (G/L/59/Rev.1) since its entry into force in 2012, search for documents with the symbol [G/MA/QR/N/*](#).

PART 5

TEXT OF THE DECISION

Decision on notification procedures for quantitative restrictions [G/L/59/Rev.1](#).