Topic 2

Other Relevant Documents (Item 9) and Attaching PDF Files vs Providing Links

Presentation of the volunteers' proposal

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Why focus on Item 9 and document access?

Transparency in practice

SPS notifications help Members learn about new or amended measures that may affect trade.

The practical challenge

Information must be easy to identify, access and relate to the notified measure.

Objective

Identify voluntary good practices that improve the clarity and reviewability of notified measures.

Two connected questions

1. What documents are referenced?

Identification and description under Item 9.

2. How can they be accessed?

Attachments, links and complementary formats.

Make supplementary documents easier to identify

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Identification

Documents should be clearly identifiable and linked to the notified measure.

Finding the right document

External links may change or break, or make a specific document difficult to locate.

Language and format

Some documents are difficult to search, consult or understand preliminarily.

VOLUNTARY GOOD PRACTICES

Follow existing guidance

Identify Item 9 documents in line with the Practical Manual and G/SPS/7/Rev.5.

Provide basic metadata

Title, issuing authority, reference/date, languages, short summary and mode of access.

No new mandatory field

Metadata is voluntary and intended to improve identification and facilitate review.

PDF attachments and links serve complementary purposes

PDF attachments

- Improve direct access and traceability
- Support downloading, preservation and text search
- Enable ePing courtesy machine-translation tools

Direct links

- Should point to the specific relevant document
- Need to remain functional and up to date
- Useful for long or frequently updated documents and stable repositories

“Both where possible”: attach key documents + provide a stable direct link when useful

PDF

Useful for preserving a copy and searching text.

HTML

Useful for navigation, text selection and browser translation.

Improve access without overstating machine translation

Searchable PDFs

Prefer native-text or OCR PDFs over scanned images where possible. This supports indexing, searching and accessibility tools.

Short summaries

When a full translation is unavailable, a short summary in English, French or Spanish may complement a national-language document.

Machine translation

ePing and browser tools can support preliminary understanding, but are not official translations and may not accurately convey technical or legal terms.

Goal: facilitate preliminary understanding while preserving the original text as authoritative.

Nine proposals for practical, voluntary improvements

1. Identify documents clearly

Apply existing Item 9 guidance.

2. Attach key PDFs

Improve availability, traceability and access where feasible.

3. Use links as a complement

Keep them stable, functional and direct.

4. Exchange good practices

Share approaches to preparing and submitting supplementary documents.

5. Use ePing tools

Make effective use of accessibility and courtesy translation features.

6. Add voluntary metadata

Title, authority, reference/date, language, summary and access mode.

7. Improve accessibility

Searchable PDFs and short summaries in EN/FR/ES where needed.

8. Offer complementary formats

Link to PDF and HTML where appropriate.

9. Explore preservation

Secretariat to explore snapshots of linked documents, subject to feasibility and resources.

All proposals are voluntary; no new mandatory requirements are proposed.

Practical improvements, without new obligations

01	**Identify**	Make Item 9 documents easy to identify and relate to the notified measure.
02	**Provide access**	Use attachments and reliable links in complementary ways.
03	**Support understanding**	Improve searchability and formats; treat machine translation as preliminary.

Discussion: Which practices are most feasible to implement across Members?

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