

CHAPTER 18

TRANSPARENCY

ARTICLE 18.1: PUBLICATION

1. Each Party shall ensure that its laws, regulations, procedures, and administrative rulings of general application respecting any matter covered by this Agreement are promptly published, including on the electronic means, or otherwise made available in such a manner as to enable interested persons and the other Party to become acquainted with them.
2. To the extent possible, each Party shall:
 - (a) publish in advance any such measures that it proposes to adopt; and
 - (b) provide interested persons and the other Party a reasonable opportunity to comment on such proposed measures.

ARTICLE 18.2: NOTIFICATION AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION

1. To the maximum extent possible, each Party shall notify the other Party of any proposed or actual measure that the Party considers might materially affect the operation of this Agreement or otherwise substantially affect that other Party's interests under this Agreement.
2. Upon request of the other Party, a Party shall promptly provide information and respond to questions pertaining to any actual or proposed measure, whether or not that other Party has been previously notified of that measure.
3. Any notification or information provided under this Article shall be without prejudice as to whether the measure is consistent with this Agreement.
4. Any notification, request, or information under this Article shall be provided to the other Party through the relevant contact points, unless otherwise agreed by the Parties.

ARTICLE 18.3: ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS

With a view to administering in a consistent, impartial and reasonable manner all measures of general application respecting to any matter covered by this Agreement, each Party shall ensure, in its administrative proceedings applying measures referred to in Article 18.1 to particular persons, goods, or services of the other Party in specific cases, that:

- (a) wherever possible, persons of the other Party that are directly affected by a proceeding are provided reasonable notice, in accordance with the Party's procedures, when a proceeding is initiated, including a

description of the nature of the proceeding, a statement of the legal authority under which the proceeding is initiated, and a general description of any issues in controversy;

- (b) such persons are afforded a reasonable opportunity to present facts and arguments in support of their positions prior to any final administrative action, when time, the nature of the proceeding, and the public interest permit; and
- (c) its procedures are in accordance with its law.

ARTICLE 18.4: REVIEW AND APPEAL

1. Each Party shall establish or maintain judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative tribunals or procedures for the purpose of the prompt review and, where warranted, correction of final administrative actions regarding matters covered by this Agreement. Such tribunals shall be impartial and independent of the office or authority entrusted with administrative enforcement and shall not have any substantial interest in the outcome of the matter.

2. Each Party shall ensure that, in any such tribunals or procedures, the parties to the proceeding are provided with the right to:

- (a) a reasonable opportunity to support or defend their respective positions; and
- (b) a decision based on the evidence and submissions of record or, where required by the Party's law, the record compiled by the administrative authority.

3. Each Party shall ensure, subject to appeal or further review as provided in its law, that such decision shall be implemented by, and shall govern the practice of, the office or authority with respect to the administrative action at issue.

ARTICLE 18.5: DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Chapter:

administrative ruling of general application means an administrative ruling or interpretation that applies to all persons and fact situations that fall generally within its ambit and that establishes a norm of conduct but does not include:

- (a) a determination or ruling made in an administrative or quasi-judicial proceeding that applies to a particular person, good, or service of the other Party in a specific case; or
- (b) a ruling that adjudicates with respect to a particular act or practice.