

# The National TBT Enquiry Point for Germany: Providing information on technical rules and regulations



- Which regulations apply for placing hand-held tools onto the Japanese market?
- Which legal and technical requirements do biofuels have to meet?
- Is an English translation of the German regulation on generating electricity from biomass available?
- Do I need a CE-mark for my product, and if yes, where on my product do I have to place it?
- Which assessment bodies in Germany are qualified to certify the conformity of my facing sheets or membranes to the EU Construction Products Regulation (CPR)?
- Who can I contact regarding the conditions for importing foodstuffs to South American countries?
- Which European Standards are presently listed as being harmonized with the EU Low Voltage Directive (LVD)?



## What does TBT mean and why is there an agreement on this subject?

**TBT stands for »Technical Barriers to Trade«.** These are non-tariff barriers to trade created by technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures. Such barriers are also created when certificates of conformity are not mutually recognized by different countries, thus making imports and exports more expensive or more difficult

According to the TBT Agreement a technical regulation is a »document which lays down product characteristics or their related processes and production methods, including the applicable administrative provisions, with which compliance is **mandatory**«.

Different technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures can generate extra costs for enterprises, because in order to export their products they must adapt to the regulatory requirements of the country of destination. **Additional costs** are also incurred when a product must be subjected to several conformity assessment procedures and for obtaining the necessary information.

The Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade is the most important international instrument adopted to date in the field of technical regulation. The Agreement applies to all members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and stipulates that all drafts of national technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures for products must be notified to the WTO Secretariat.



## The TBT Agreement ensures open markets for all

There are strict rules for the notification procedure, including requirements regarding the information to be supplied and set deadlines. The intention is to give every WTO member the opportunity to review a planned technical regulation and to raise objections as needed should the proposed regulation be found to contain a technical barrier to trade. The notification procedures are organized by each member country's government – in Germany this is the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi).

All notifications submitted by the WTO members are publicly accessible on the WTO's website. Furthermore, all enterprises within the EU can use the European Commission's free »automatic alert system« at [ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/tbt/en/](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/tbt/en/) to regularly receive information on new notifications submitted.

### What can I do if I identify a possible technical barrier to trade?

If a WTO member or an enterprise sees a potential disadvantage to its business activities or even a technical barrier to trade in the announced technical regulation, it can communicate its objections by the given deadline to the EU Commission via Germany's national notification authority within the BMWi ([wto-notif@bmwi.bund.de](mailto:wto-notif@bmwi.bund.de)), which will then review the objections and submit them to the WTO Secretariat in an EU common position.

### What is DIN's role in this?

In addition to the formal obligation to announce draft national technical regulations, each WTO member is obliged to set up a **TBT Enquiry Point** which supplies information on national technical regulations which have been announced by the country in question, including the relationship with other technical regulations and collections of technical rules in that country. Standards and other technical rules are referred to in technical regulations.

The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) has entrusted DIN with setting up and running the German TBT Enquiry Point within the framework of the TBT Agreement.

DIN has in turn entrusted this task to its subsidiary DIN Software GmbH and Germany's national accreditation body DAkkS (Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle GmbH).

DIN Software runs the DITR Database which contains comprehensive and up-to-date information on standards, technical regulations and technical rules at national, European and international level.

DAkkS is the sole provider of accreditations to conformity assessment bodies in Germany. These include laboratories, inspection and certification bodies. As part of approximately 4,000 accreditation cases DAkkS, in its role as an independent institution authorized by the Federal Government, assesses, attests and monitors the technical competence of these bodies, whose services are required in virtually all segments of industry and trade. DAkkS, thus, has a unique level of competence regard all questions relating to accreditation and conformity assessment in Germany.

## Our services

We provide comprehensive information on the notifications submitted by the German government with respect to technical regulations. We also categorize and answer any questions about the content of the regulations and forward further queries to the individual Government Ministries in charge.

**All information services are free of charge to the person making the inquiry.**

DIN Software also provides information to businesses inside and outside Germany on national and international standards and technical rules listed in the DITR Database. With its 500,000+ current bibliographic datasets for national, European and international standards and technical rules published by approximately 300 standards setting bodies, the DITR Database is the world's largest collection of standards data covering all business processes where standards are used.

Through the establishment of a national accreditation body DAkkS, Germany has achieved an accreditation system that is transparent for manufacturers, consumers and conformity assessment bodies. The accreditation procedure creates trust in the results of certificates, test reports and inspections and supports their global recognition and comparability. In this context, DAkkS makes an important contribution to the quality assurance of products and services, consumer protection and the competitiveness of the German economy. This highly specialized knowhow is available to those using the service of the TBT Enquiry Point for Germany.

The **TBT Enquiry Point for Germany** can be reached at [auskunft@din.de](mailto:auskunft@din.de)

**Your questions on technical regulations and conformity assessment in import or export are becoming too complex? Contact us, the TBT Enquiry Point for Germany, at:**

**[auskunft@din.de](mailto:auskunft@din.de)**

On behalf of the



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