

Bolivia outlines vaccine import needs in use of WTO flexibilities to tackle pandemic

The government of Bolivia has formally notified the WTO of the country's need to import COVID-19 vaccines, taking another step towards using flexibilities in WTO intellectual property rules as part of its pandemic response.

Bolivia notified the WTO it needed to import 15 million doses of a vaccine under the legal system introduced in a 2017 amendment (https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news17_e/trip_23jan17_e.htm) to the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). That amendment, which created Article 31bis of the TRIPS Agreement, provides an additional legal pathway for import-reliant countries to access affordable medicines, vaccines and other pharmaceutical products.



Bolivia's submission follows through on its February notification signalling that it intended to exercise the flexibilities under the amendment.

Bolivia's notification opens up the possibility of importing the needed vaccines from any one of around 50 WTO members (https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/par6laws_e.htm) that have put in place domestic laws providing for the production and export of medicines made under compulsory licence through this system.

"This is an example of a WTO member seeking to make use of available tools under the TRIPS Agreement to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, even as members seek to expand the range of options through the TRIPS waiver proposal," said Antony Taubman, Director of the WTO's Intellectual Property Division. "This step provides one practical component of what could be a wider process of countries signalling urgent and unmet needs and encouraging a combined, coordinated response by international partners."

The WTO Secretariat has been encouraged by members in the TRIPS Council to provide any necessary technical assistance to facilitate use of the system to import pharmaceutical products manufactured under compulsory licence.

More

- [COVID-19 and world trade](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/covid19_e.htm) (https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/covid19_e.htm)
- [Intellectual property](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/trips_e.htm) (https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/trips_e.htm)
- [TRIPS and public health](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/pharmpatent_e.htm) (https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/pharmpatent_e.htm)
-  [#IntellectualProperty](https://twitter.com/hashtag/IntellectualProperty?src=hash) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/IntellectualProperty?src=hash>)
-  [#publichealth](https://twitter.com/hashtag/publichealth?src=hash) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/publichealth?src=hash>)

Share

 [RSS news feeds \(https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/webcas_e/rss_e.htm\)](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/webcas_e/rss_e.htm)