BIPM update to the regular meeting of the WTO TBT Committee, November 2026

October 2026

Introduction

The objective of this report is to provide key annual updates (relevant to the trade community) from the International Bureau of Weights and Measures/Bureau international des poids et mesures (BIPM) to the regular meeting of the WTO TBT Committee scheduled for 11-13 November 2026.

Liaison with the WTO

The BIPM plays a fundamental role in the global scientific and economic framework by ensuring consistent and accurate measurements across countries. Having recently celebrated its 150th anniversary, the BIPM continues to make a significant impact across diverse fields, including science, industry, trade, and everyday life.

The BIPM maintains and develops the International System of Units (SI), which underpins reliable measurements worldwide — essential for fair trade, regulatory compliance, and product quality. The metrological traceability is the backbone that ensures confidence in measurements results. It links measurements at the workplace to the SI or other international accepted references. There are various ways to demonstrate that internationally recognized paths have been followed and the CIPM MRA being one of the key mechanisms for ensuring traceability to the SI.

The CIPM MRA - *Mutual Recognition Arrangement* adopted by the International Committee for Weights and Measures (CIPM), the BIPM's executive organ, is a critical technical framework for ensuring the reliability, consistency, and acceptance of measurement standards worldwide. It plays an essential role in facilitating international trade by providing a universally recognized mechanism to ensure that measurement results (such as weight, length, volume, and other physical quantities) are consistent across borders. The CIPM MRA supports WTO TBT Agreement, Article 6 (Recognition of Conformity Assessment Procedures). The CIPM MRA has been signed by the national metrology institutes (NMIs) of Member States and Associates, and international organizations invited by the CIPM. As of today, the NMIs from more than 100 countries, representing approximately 98% of the world's GDP (and 85% of world population), participate.

The BIPM and the WTO have been cooperating since 2013 (the BIPM holds *ad hoc* observer status in the WTO TBT Committee) to ensure effective dissemination of information on the importance of quality infrastructure (QI) and in particular metrology as one of its key elements among trade regulators and international/intergovernmental organizations with *ad hoc* observer status in the WTO TBT Committee.

Activities by the BIPM contribute directly to the WTO TBT Agreement's objectives by promoting internationally recognized measurement standards, supporting regulatory alignment, enabling mutual recognition of conformity assessments, and facilitating inclusive participation in international trade, particularly for developing economies.

In the light of the 150th Anniversary of the signing of the Metre Convention and the creation of the BIPM, the thematic session on Technical Assistance – Role of Metrology in facilitating Trade was organized in November 2025 to explore the role of metrology in facilitating trade and supporting the effective implementation of the TBT Agreement. In this context, WTO Members discussed, among others, barriers that hinder participation of developing and least-developed country Members in the international metrology system, and explored practices to overcome such barriers, including showcasing current and upcoming initiatives.

Further information on the links between BIPM and the WTO is available at https://www.bipm.org/en/liaison-partners/wto-tbt.

Below are some BIPM activities of potential interest to the WTO TBT Committee.

Ongoing work within the BIPM

The **28th meeting of the General Conference on Weights and Measures (CGPM)** was held in Versailles, France, from 13 to 15 October 2026. The CGPM is the plenary and policy-making body and supreme authority of the BIPM. Composed of representatives of the Member States, it meets every four to six years to take decisions on scientific, institutional and financial matters related to the BIPM and its work. Significant resolutions—covering topics such as universal accession to the Metre Convention (including the creation of an "observer state" status), the future definition of the second, the establishment of an international lunar reference time scale, and the digital transformation of the global metrology system—were adopted by the Member States during the CGPM.

As of October 2026, the BIPM has 69 Member States and 34 Associates. The BIPM is pleased to welcome *Albania, Azerbaijan, Peru* and *Uzbekistan* (formerly Associate States), as well as the *Dominican Republic* as new Member States, and *Armenia* and *Nigeria* as new Associate States.

With the creation of the **"Observer State" status**—which represents the initial level of engagement with the BIPM—States that do not yet participate in BIPM activities as Member States or Associate States, but which commit to using the SI/International System of Units and UTC/Coordinated Universal Time, may now apply for this status.

The BIPM Capacity Building and Knowledge Transfer Programme will support the implementation of the Observer State initiative.

Capacity building and knowledge transfer activities

The BIPM Capacity Building and Knowledge Transfer (CBKT) Programme aims to increase the effectiveness with which Member States and Associates engage in the world-wide coordinated metrological system. The programme has a highly appreciated portfolio that continues to expand.

The CBKT initiatives are delivered through various activities such as workshops, laboratory placements and remote-learning activities, including the BIPM e-learning platform, which also hosts knowledge transfer material from the regional metrology organizations.

The CBKT Programme supported the participation of young metrologists in various technical training activities organized at the BIPM headquarters and at partner national metrology institutes, enabling them to gain in-depth knowledge and experience through research activities.

Liaison with international organizations

Liaison with UNIDO

During the 28th meeting of the CGPM, a j**oint UNIDO–BIPM–OIML publication, "Why Accurate Measurements are Essential for a Better World"** was presented; it is a collection of case studies illustrating how measurement, often behind the scenes, serves as the backbone of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Through concrete case studies, this publication illustrates how precise and reliable measurements contribute to economic development, international trade, environmental protection, public health, and the improvement of quality of life. A launch webinar, to be held online on 9–10 December 2026, will feature the BIPM, UNIDO, and OIML as they examine the publication's findings and their relevance for policymakers and development partners.

Digital transformation of metrology

The BIPM is extending the role of the Metre Convention into the digital world. This requires a digital anchor of trust for the metrological community, providing digital systems with authoritative references for representing measurement information. A major milestone in this area has been the release, in June 2026, of the first official version of the SI Reference Point, which makes the definitions of the SI available in a machine-actionable format well suited to unambiguous use by digital systems, including generative AI systems.

The SI Reference Point has been endorsed as one of the accepted vocabularies for expressing units of measurement in Digital Product Passports (DPPs). Its use in DPPs improves interoperability between the formats developed by economic operators and illustrates the continuing key role of metrology in reducing technical barriers to trade.

The digital transformation work of the BIPM remains embedded in the wider international quality infrastructure. To support this coordination, the BIPM has convened other leading international organizations of the scientific and quality infrastructure to sign a Joint Statement of Intent on the digital transformation, which seeks to promote a fully digital ecosystem for measurement information at the service of humankind: the SI Digital Framework.