Regulatory coherence in wine regulation and trade: the example of the World Wine Trade Group

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What does regulatory coherence look like in the wine trade?

The World Wine Trade Group
- Formed in 1998 in response to changing industry dynamics.
- Recognises that cooperation to improve regulatory coherence benefits producers and consumers.
- Unique & flexible Government/Industry structure.

Membership
- Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Georgia, New Zealand, South Africa, USA are core members.
- Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, PR China have also participated.

Structure
- Three “arms”
  - Government Section
  - Regulators’ Forum
  - Industry Section
- Chair rotates on an annual basis
- No permanent secretariat

Meetings
- 1 full meeting in Member Economy
- 1 inter-session meeting
- Govt & industry meet together and separately
- Guests invited to address topics of interest or concern
Activities

• Information sharing
• Coordination on common issues in international fora
• Negotiating international agreements to promote regulatory coherence

WWTG agreements

• “The art of the possible”
• Harmonisation & equivalence not always achievable in this forum
• Mutual acceptance preferred
• Full transparency is essential
• TBTs only – not tariffs, health

Agreement on mutual acceptance of oenological practices

Wine made in one member according its own rules will be accepted by all other members.
• WTO consistency
• Health & safety protected
• No additional certification
• New practices subject to notification

Agreement on requirements for labelling

A single “market” label for all destinations
• Common mandatory information aligned
• Other mandatory information flexible
• Other descriptive information permitted
• Nothing misleading or deceptive

Ongoing programme

• Certification MoU
• Mutual acceptance for sustainability & carbon labelling
• MRLs
• New members

Why it works

#1. Trust and goodwill
• Initial caution → long-term relationships
• Govt to Govt
• Industry to Govt

#2. Agreed baselines & goals
• Trade facilitation
• WTO principles
• Health & safety / consumer protection
Why it works

#3. Stakeholder involvement
- Industry can contribute proposals
- Focus on fine details of trade

#4. Low-cost, flexible structure
- Not dominated by process
- Low barriers to participation

#5. Facilitation not negotiation
- Not tied to a single mode of operating
- All about “the art of the possible”

The results

- Safe and sanitary products
- Fewer trade barriers
- Problems resolved quickly
- An approach that is applicable to the APEC WRF

Thank you!