VIETNAM'S ANTI-DUMPING LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON CORRELATION WITH INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS AND IN PRACTICE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Many countries must commit to removing or reducing non-tariff barriers while participating in trade liberalization and international economic integration. This has created a more open and favorable legal corridor for imported goods to have the opportunity to compete efficiently with domestic goods. The fact that imported goods have flooded the import market and, in some cases, are dumped has created pressure on output for the same or similar goods produced in the importing country's market, profits, and jobs, even

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causing damage to the similar manufactured goods of domestic manufacturers. Therefore, many countries have had to issue anti-dumping laws to protect their domestic production against the dumping of imported goods. The anti-dumping law is an inevitable need to protect domestic production from the unfair competition of dumping imported goods.

Most countries have developed anti-dumping legislation to implement it legally and effectively. Importing countries have the right to enact antidumping laws based on the general guidelines outlined in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Anti-Dumping Agreement (ADA). The contents of antidumping laws usually include several basic regulations, such as those on the determination of dumping, the assessment of material damage to domestic manufacturers in importing countries, the establishment of a causal relationship between dumping and material damage, specific anti-dumping measures, and the procedures for reviewing the application of anti-dumping tax. The anti-dumping

process is conducted in a specific order based on the anti-dumping laws of the importing country.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to a World Bank Report by Bruce Yandle and Elizabeth M. Young on Dumping, Antidumping, and Efficiency, dumping is a form of price discrimination in international trade.³ It involves selling goods in the importing country's market at a lower price than the market price of the same goods elsewhere. From the perspective of consumers, the authors argue that increasing supply in the importing country's market benefits consumers, as they can buy goods at lower prices. They contend that low prices for goods should be encouraged and not punished. However, they also stress that dumping should not be used to clear domestic excess inventories or to weaken competitors. The debate over whether to allow dumping in international trade and whether antidumping measures are necessary continues to generate

³ Bruce Yandle & Elizabeth M. Young, World Bank Report (1987).

opinions among researchers worldwide. Sharing Yandle and Young's view on not using antidumping measures, Raj Bhala, in his work "Rethinking Antidumping Law" from the College of William & Mary Law School, presents several arguments against such measures. 4 Bhala believes that many businesses sell goods at low prices not to engage in unfair competition but to address routine business circumstances.⁵ His research emphasizes the need for global anti-dumping measures due to their anticompetitive and trade-restrictive nature.⁶ If other countries impose anti-dumping measures, they must also develop their policies.

Bruce A. Blonigen and Thomas J. Prusa, in their study "Antidumping," published by the National Bureau of Economic Research, report an increasing trend in anti-dumping cases and conclude that these measures are some of the most significant trade policy

⁴ Raj Bhala, "Rethinking Antidumping Law," College of William & Mary Law School (2002).

⁵ *Id*.

⁶ *Id*.

obstacles to international trade. Over the past 25 years (up to the time of their analysis), countries have increasingly used anti-dumping measures to protect their import-competing industries. Additionally, they point out that while anti-dumping policies have become a central research subject and are influenced by political and economic factors, the unique combination of political manipulation, incentives, and intrigue surrounding these instruments has sparked widespread research interest worldwide. In a study of recent US anti-dumping trends, Shelby Anderson, William Isasi, and David Lindgren, in "Trade Wars: Anti-Dumping And Countervailing Duty Trends," analyzed the legal, strategic, and economic aspects of the administration's trade policies. 8 They assessed the implications of recent changes for the country and the global trading system. Their findings reveal that the aggressive use of anti-dumping measures and the enforcement of countervailing duties by the US are

⁷ Bruce A. Blonigen & Thomas J. Prusa, *Anti-dumping*, National Bureau of Economic Research, NBER Working Paper No. w8398, 7-8 (July 2001).

⁸ Shelby Anderson, William Isasi, and David Lindgren, "Trade Wars: Anti-Dumping And Countervailing Duty Trends" (2018).

creating new challenges for foreign companies and US importers.

Although the anti-dumping law is supposed to ensure fairness in international trade, it also serves other purposes. Developing countries like India and Brazil utilize anti-dumping measures to protect their nascent industries. Meanwhile, for developed countries, anti-dumping law acts as a tool to restrict market opening and limit penetration from developing nations.⁹ The anti-dumping law has become an essential legal instrument for both developing and developed countries to address acts of dumping of imported goods, ensuring a fair competitive environment, and, at times, serving as a means for countries to retaliate against one another. Based on the WTO's framework rules, countries develop procedures to identify practices deemed dumping and apply antidumping measures against imported goods.

The WTO Anti-dumping Agreement (ADA) specific provisions provides on anti-dumping

⁹ Vu Thi Nhu Hang, Comparison of Anti-dumping Laws between Vietnam and the United States, Master's thesis, Hanoi, 8 (2014).

measures promulgated by WTO members. The provisions of this Agreement are binding on all WTO members. In other words, each WTO member country has the right to enact and apply its anti-dumping laws, but must fully comply with the mandatory provisions on the content and procedures in the WTO's ADA regulation. The domestic legislation of each country may be specific, but must not be contrary to the relevant provisions of this Agreement of the WTO.

Member States are obligated to ensure that their regulations and enforcement related to anti-dumping measures are consistent with the principles of the ADA. ¹⁰ Suppose it is found that a member country has a legal provision or its investigation agency that is, in fact, inconsistent with the provisions of the WTO. In that case, it may file a complaint against this to the WTO, and the WTO dispute settlement procedures will settle it. 11 As a member of the WTO, the anti-dumping

¹⁰ Bruce A. Blonigen & Thomas J. Prusa (2001).

¹¹ Nguyen Thi Thu Hien, Anti-dumping Dispute Settlement within the WTO Framework and the Participation of Developing Countries and Vietnam- Theoretical and Practical Issues, Doctoral thesis in jurisprudence, Hanoi, 37 (2014).

regulations in Vietnam are greatly influenced by WTO agreements, specifically the anti-dumping agreement.

III. METHODOLOGY

Based on multilateral agreements related to antidumping commitments that Vietnam has signed with international organizations such as the WTO, CPTTP, and EVFTA, it shows that Vietnam proactively participates in these mechanisms to ensure fair competition in international trade. Regulations on determining dumping actions and applying antidumping measures of the Anti-Dumping Agreement, the article sheds light on the specifics of Vietnam's current anti-dumping law related to the provisions on anti-dumping measures and the practice of applying these measures, thereby providing recommendations for Vietnam in solving anti-dumping lawsuits against the dumped imported goods in the Vietnamese market.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Vietnam's Participation in the International Anti-Dumping Legal System

On January 11, 2007, Vietnam officially became the 150th member of the WTO, also accepted the status of being a developing country, and was treated as a non-market economy. Since Vietnam has had full rights and obligations and enjoyed special and differential treatment for developing members in dispute settlement at the WTO to protect legitimate interests. By the end of November 2021, there were 41 disputes at WTO involving Vietnam, in which Vietnam plays the role as a complainant 5 cases (in which 4 cases involved in anti-dumping files), as a respondent 0 case(s), and as a third party 36 case(s). From there, the agreements under the WTO system will govern and regulate Vietnam's trade in goods, and the basic Agreement in the field of trade in goods is the 1994 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, often known as GATT 1994. One of the critical issues of GATT is anti-dumping (Article VI), which is specified in the Anti-dumping Agreement (ADA).

1. Vietnam and the Anti-dumping Agreement (ADA)

Vietnam has committed to fully applying the provisions of the Anti-dumping Agreement from the date of accession to the WTO without any transition period. Vietnam ensures that any legal documents of Vietnam on the application of anti-dumping measures in force at the time of Vietnam's accession to the WTO are consistent with the WTO's provisions on antidumping. Moreover, Vietnam will only apply antidumping measures once the legal documents are entirely consistent with the provisions of the Antidumping Agreement.

The Anti-dumping Agreement provides for the following specific groups of issues: the first is the provision of content: which includes detailed provisions on how and criteria for determining dumping, damage, and causality between dumping and injury; the second is procedural regulations: including provisions related to the investigation procedures for imposition of anti-dumping tax; the third is the provision of the procedure for settling disputes between member states concerning anti-dumping duties: the provisions of Article 17 of the ADP, including the rules applicable to the settlement of disputes between members of WTO concerning a member's measure of imposition of anti-dumping duty; the fourth is the regulation on the authority of the Commission on Anti-dumping Practices (Committee on Anti-dumping Practices): includes regulations on the membership, functions, and activities of the Commission in the process of administering on antidumping measures taken in member countries.

> 2. Vietnam and The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)

Vietnam officially joined the CPTPP on November 12, 2018, and the Agreement took effect on January 14, 2019. The CPTPP Agreement consists of 07 Articles and 01 Appendix stipulating the relationship with the TPP Agreement, which has been approved by 12 countries, including Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, and Chile. The United States, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam signed on February 6, 2016, in New Zealand phosphorus, as well as handled other issues related to the validity, withdrawal from, or accession to the CPTPP. According to this Agreement, CPTPP countries commit to eliminating from 97% to 100% of import tax lines for goods originating from Vietnam, depending on the commitments of each country. Almost all of Vietnam's exports to other CPTPP countries will be eliminated as soon as the Agreement comes into effect or according to the schedule. 12 Accordingly, Vietnam will eliminate import tax on 66% of tariff lines as soon as the Agreement comes into effect and 86.5% of tariff lines after three years from the date of entry into force of the Agreement. The

¹² Kim Thi Hanh, Completing the Anti-dumping Law, LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH JOURNAL PUBLICATION, No. 22 (230) (Nov. 2012).

remaining items have a tax reduction schedule from 5 to 10 years. 13

> 3. Vietnam and the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA)

On June 30, 2019, Vietnam and the EU officially signed the EVFTA. The Agreement consists of 17 Chapters, 2 Protocols, and several memorandums of understanding, with the main contents being: trade in goods (including general provisions and commitments to open markets), rules of origin, customs and trade facilitation, food hygiene and safety measures (SPS), technical trade barriers (TBT), trade in services (including general regulations and commitments to markets), investment, trade open remedies. competition, state-owned enterprises, government trade. procurement, intellectual property, sustainable development, cooperation and capacity building, legal issues institutional theory.

¹³ Nguyen Hop Toan, TEXTBOOK OF ECONOMIC LAW, National Economics University (2013).

Implementing commitments under this Agreement, "For Vietnam's exports, as soon as the Agreement comes into effect, the EU will eliminate import taxes on about 85.6% of tariff lines, equivalent to 70.3% export turnover of Vietnam to the EU. After 07 years from the date of entry into force of the Agreement, the EU will eliminate import tax on 99.2% of tariff lines, equivalent to 99.7% of Vietnam's export turnover. For the remaining 0.3% of export turnover, the EU committed to giving Vietnam a tariff quota with an import tax within the quota of 0%. Thus, nearly 100% of Vietnam's exports to the EU will be eliminated after a short roadmap. So far, this is the highest level of commitment that a partner gives to Vietnam in FTAs that have been signed. This benefit is significant when the EU is continuously one of the two largest export markets.

In contrast, Vietnam commits to eliminating tariffs for EU exports as soon as the Agreement comes into effect, with 48.5% of tariff lines (accounting for 64.5% of import turnover). Then, after seven years, 91.8% of tariff lines, equivalent to 97.1% of export turnover

from the EU, were eliminated by Vietnam. After ten years, the level of tariff elimination is about 98.3% of tariff lines (accounting for 99.8% of import turnover). For the remaining 1.7% of the EU's tariff lines, they apply a 10-year import tax elimination roadmap or tariff quotas according to WTO commitments (Nam VT, 2015).14

B. Anti-dumping Measures Regulations under the Vietnamese Legal System

Anti-dumping is one of the trade defense measures applied by the state to deal with the negative effects of dumped products in the market. The most commonly applied measure is to impose taxes to eliminate the "unfair" price advantage of these products. In recent years, Vietnam has actively participated in the process of deep international economic integration. In the international trade institutions of which Vietnam is a member, there are regulations on anti-dumping of imported goods. WTO has regulations in Article VI of

¹⁴ Tran Van Nam (Ed.), TEXTBOOK OF INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL LAW, National Economics University (2015).

GATT and the Anti-Dumping Agreement (ADA). Regional agreements and free trade agreements also have regulations on this issue. When participating in international trade transactions, Vietnamese goods may be investigated by the importing country and subject to anti-dumping measures. At the same time, Vietnam also has the right to investigate and apply anti-dumping measures to imported goods determined to be dumped.

In order to meet the requirements of the integration process and accession commitments, Vietnam has gradually built and perfected the legal framework on anti-dumping of imported goods. In 2004, Vietnam issued the Anti-Dumping Ordinance on Imports, providing the first legal basis for Vietnam to conduct investigations and apply anti-dumping measures on imported goods. In 2017, the Law on Foreign Trade Management 2017 was passed by the National Assembly, marking an important step forward in perfecting the law regulating international trade activities in general and in the field of anti-dumping on imported goods in particular. In the past 10 years, from the anti-dumping case on imported stainless steel, Vietnam has also conducted additional investigations and imposed anti-dumping taxes. The practice of applying the law in this field shows that there are still certain limitations and shortcomings. Within the framework of the WTO, Vietnam has just participated in the process of resolving anti-dumping disputes as a plaintiff and a third party. However, in the context of Vietnam stepping up the application of trade defense measures in general and anti-dumping measures on imported goods in particular, Vietnam can completely become a defendant in lawsuits at the WTO. Therefore, it is necessary to study Vietnam's anti-dumping laws on imported goods and review them to ensure their compliance with WTO regulations and international trade institutions that Vietnam has participated in.

Regarding anti-dumping measures:

In Clause 2, Article 77 of the Law on Foreign Trade Management 2017 in Vietnam, anti-dumping measures include: 15

(1) Application of anti-dumping duties

Anti-dumping tax is an additional import tax applied in cases where dumped goods imported into Vietnam cause or threaten to cause significant damage to the domestic manufacturing industry or prevent the formation of a domestic manufacturing industry.

Conditions for applying anti-dumping duties:

- Imported goods dumped in Vietnam, and the dumping margin must be specifically determined.
- The dumping of goods is the cause of or threatens to significant damage to the domestic cause manufacturing industry, or prevents the formation of a domestic manufacturing industry. 16
- (2) Commitment to eliminating dumping organizations and individuals producing and exporting goods subject to anti-dumping measures with the Investigation Authority of Vietnam or domestic

¹⁵ Law on Foreign Trade Management, Article 77, Clause 2 (2017).

¹⁶ Law No. 107/2016/QH13, on Export and import duties, Article 4, 12 (Apr. 6, 2016); also, Law 05/2017/QH14 Foreign Trade Management in Vietnam.

manufacturers, if approved by the Investigation Authority.

Regarding conditions for applying anti-dumping measures:

Anti-dumping measures are applied to imported goods when all the conditions specified in Article 78 of the Law on Foreign Trade Management 2017 are met, as follows:17

- Goods imported into Vietnam are dumped with a specifically determined dumping margin, except for the case specified in Clause 2, Article 78 of the Law on Foreign Trade Management 2017;¹⁸
- The domestic industry is significantly damaged or is threatened with causing significant damage preventing the formation of the domestic industry;
- There is a causal relationship between the import of dumped goods as prescribed in Point a, Clause 1, Article 78 of the Law on Foreign Trade Management 2017 and the damage to the domestic manufacturing industry as prescribed in Point b, Clause 1, Article 78 of the Law on Foreign Trade Management 2017.¹⁹

In addition, Clause 2, Article 78 of the Law on Foreign Trade Management 2017 stipulates: anti-

¹⁷ Law on Foreign Trade Management, Article 78 (2017).

¹⁸ Id. at Clause 2.

¹⁹ *Id.* at Clause 1(a) and (b).

dumping measures shall not be applied to imported goods with a dumping margin not exceeding 2% of the export price of goods to Vietnam.²⁰

At the same time, in the case of imported goods originating from a country with a volume or quantity not exceeding 3% of the total volume or quantity of similar goods imported into Vietnam and the total volume or quantity of goods originating from countries meeting the above conditions does not exceed 7% of the total volume or quantity of similar goods imported into Vietnam, these countries are excluded from the scope of anti-dumping measures.

Regarding measures to apply anti-dumping tax, according to Article 12 of the Law on Export Tax and Import Tax 2016, the conditions for applying antidumping tax are: Dumping import goods in Vietnam and the dumping margin must be specified; the dumping of goods causes or threatens to cause material injury to a domestic industry or prevents the formation of a domestic industry.²¹ In the principle of

²⁰ Id. at Clause 2.

²¹ Law on Export Tax and Import Tax, Article 12 (2016).

application: anti-dumping duties shall be applied only to the extent necessary and reasonable to prevent or limit significant damage to the domestic industry; the application of anti-dumping tax is carried out when the investigation has been conducted and must be based on the investigation concluded under the law; antidumping tax is applied to goods dumped into Vietnam; and the application of anti-dumping tax must not cause damage to domestic socio-economic interests. The time limit for the application of anti-dumping tax shall be at most five years from the effective date of the decision on the application. In case of necessity, the decision to apply an anti-dumping duty may be extended.

Regarding the measure of commitment, according to Clause 2, Article 81 of the Law on Foreign Trade Management 2017, after the preliminary conclusion and before the end of the investigation, the producer and exporter of the investigated goods can make a commitment to the Investigation Agency on the voluntary adjustment of the selling price or voluntary restriction of the volume and quantity of the

investigated goods exported to Vietnam.²² However, the investigating agency may accept, not accept, or propose to adjust the contents of the commitment based on consulting organizations and individuals representing the domestic manufacturing industry.²³

The commitment will include the following main contents: Scope of goods; the reference price includes self-determined price, price increase, price adjustment plan; periodic notification obligations; the obligation to cooperate with the investigating authority in the process of implementing the commitment; and other contents determined by the investigating authority to be appropriate. The above commitments will be considered based on: the application of the commitment is likely to remedy significant injury or threaten to cause significant damage to the domestic industry, or significantly prevent the formation of a domestic industry, of the domestic manufacturing industry; the current management mechanism can

²² Law on Foreign Trade Management, Article 81, Clause 2 (2017).

²³ Decree 10/2018/ND-CP (2018), detailing several articles of the law on foreign trade management on trade remedies.

implementation effectively monitor the commitments; the ability to evade anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures through commitments; and factors that the investigating authority other determines to be appropriate.²⁴

C. Anti-dumping Investigation Conducted by Vietnam on Imported Goods in Practice

Anti-dumping measures have been applied to protect the domestic industry and remove difficulties for Vietnamese enterprises' production and business. Accordingly, until the end of 2015, Vietnam had only investigated and applied two trade remedies for cooking oil and cold rolled stainless steel (stainless steel). However, only in the period 2016 to 2022, the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Vietnam initiated an investigation and applied 25 trade remedy measures to of production activities domestic protect manufacturing industries, specifically against products such as DAP/MAP fertilizer, monosodium glutamate (self-defense and anti-dumping), iron and steel

²⁴ Decree 10/2018/ND-CP (2018).

products such as billet, long steel, galvanized steel, section steel, colored corrugated iron, aluminum profiled bar, film BOPP, filament yarn, HFCS liquid sugar, cane sugar.

In September 2022, the Ministry of Industry and Trade applied temporary anti-dumping measures on some furniture products; it stopped applying safeguard measures to some DAP/MAP fertilizer products. In August 2022, anti-circumvention measures for several cane sugar products, anti-dumping measures on some welding materials products, and anti-dumping measures on some products were implemented. Hshaped steel products; In May 2022, stop applying antidumping measures for some galvanized steel products.

The Ministry of Industry and Trade issued Decision No. 132 on keeping the application of antidumping measures for several cold-rolled (coldpressed) steel products in coils or sheets of Chinese origin imported into Vietnam. Thus, the above products are subject to anti-dumping tax rates ranging from 4.43 to 25.22%, depending on the specific product and export enterprises. Related to the above

case, on September 3, 2019, many domestic steel enterprises submitted manufacturing dossiers requesting anti-dumping investigations for some Chinese steel products imported into Vietnam. The Ministry of Industry and Trade has decided to investigate the case under regulations. The results show that, in some Chinese steel products, there are anti-dumping actions of foreign factors with manufacturers and exporters and the threat of material injury to the domestic industry. In anti-dumping cases, from 2013 to 2023, Vietnam has investigated 16 antidumping cases against goods imported from countries such as China, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, of which the majority of cases come from China ²⁵

The application of anti-dumping measures also caused the massive import growth of these products to decrease significantly. As for galvanized steel products, each year, imports doubled compared to the previous year; after applying anti-dumping measures,

²⁵ Trade Remedy Authority of Vietnam, Cases Documents (2023), http://www.trav.gov.vn/?page=case-prosecute.

the import volume decreased significantly. By using trade remedy measures, some enterprises have significantly improved their production and business situation, escaped losses, and gradually stabilized production, such as Hai Phong DAP Fertilizer Company and Viet Trung Steel Company.²⁶

However, some provisions of the law on the antidumping of goods imported into Vietnam are general and lack specific regulations that businesses can apply explanation. immediately without any further Vietnam's anti-dumping legal regulations are scattered in many legal documents; the content of these regulations is still a "framework," adjusting issues of principle without going into details. Besides, the antidumping investigation in Vietnam is still being conducted under international law, specifically the Anti-dumping Agreement, which has yet to be fully codified into the national law, for example, lack of provisions on articles of association. Specific

²⁶ VCCI, Lists of Anti-dumping Cases Conducted by the Vietnam Authority against Foreign Imports (2023, 2024), https://antidumping.vn/download/f5898/thong-ke-cac-vu-dieu-tra-ap-

dung-bien-phap-chong-ban-pha-gia-do-viet-nam-tien-hanh-voi-hangnhap-kha.pdf.

conditions and the way to calculate the normal value according to different calculation methods, the specific method of determining damage to the domestic industry, and regulations on the conditions for applying the measure of price.

In addition, the investigation process to apply antidumping measures takes a long time, causing domestic enterprises to suffer damage from dumping. Besides, Vietnamese enterprises often neglect anti-dumping issues and the damage it cause, so many dumping cases have been ignored. In addition, there are several reasons that the domestic industry does not submit a request for investigation to apply anti-dumping measures, such as enterprises in the industry cannot agree with each other in terms of benefits, in terms of responsibility for filing, or do not want their business information to be revealed.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the global trend, when tariff barriers of many countries are removed, in addition to having many market opportunities for Vietnamese products and services abroad, Vietnamese businesses must also compete with each other to maintain their domestic market and market share. Therefore, building the antidumping law is a practical need for developing the country's economy. However, if the anti-dumping law is abused to protect the manufacturing industry, it will lead to a monopoly, causing damage to the economy consumers; the competitiveness manufacturing industry will be destroyed, especially since this action will violate international commitments and agreements.

With the current Vietnamese legal system on antidumping, Vietnamese manufacturing industries can completely use the lawsuit to request the application of anti-dumping measures to deal with the phenomenon of foreign goods being imported at dumping prices in Vietnam, causing damage. However, to use this tool effectively, to improve Vietnam's anti-dumping regulations, some recommendations should considered as follows:

Firstly, specific provisions on the case where the state agency initiates the dumping investigation by itself without the enterprise applying, including provisions such as: which agency has the right to anti-dumping investigation by itself; initiate an procedures for initiating an investigation, and a competent authority to approve the self-initiation of an investigation.

Second, collect and prepare data and evidence regarding foreign goods being dumped (according to the prescribed calculation formula) and on the damage caused by such dumping to the manufacturing industry (with factors proving damage according to regulations) to ensure that the lawsuit is accepted. Fully prepare the necessary resources for the lawsuit (both financial and human) because legal proceedings are often lengthy, with high demands for evidence and arguments. The provisions regarding evidence in the investigation and application of anti-dumping measures need to clearly include the following contents: identify the source of evidence; procedures for handing over the evidence; procedures for verification and collection of evidence; on-site investigation procedures; procedures for soliciting expertise and examining evidence alleged to

be forged; and procedures for entrusting evidence collection.

Third, it is necessary to have an independent monitoring or consulting organization to advise the anti-dumping agency in some necessary cases.