

WTO Domestic Regulation and Services Trade

Putting Principles into Practice

Edited by Aik Hoe Lim and Bart De Meester





"This book is a timely and valuable contribution to a better understanding – both in Geneva and across the globe – of the sensitive and sometimes complex interplay between the push for liberalization and the demands for domestic regulation."

*Roberto Azevêdo
WTO Director-General*

About this publication

Domestic regulation of services sectors has a significant impact on services trade liberalization, which is why General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) disciplines are negotiated in the WTO. With the help of analyses and case studies from academics, regulators and trade experts, this book explores the scope and limits of WTO legal principles to promote domestic regulatory reform. Case studies discuss country-specific challenges and experiences of regulating important service sectors, such as finance, telecommunications, distribution, legal, education, health, postal and logistics services, as well as the role of regulatory impact assessments. The findings will interest trade officials, policymakers, regulators, think tanks, and businesses concerned with the implications of domestic regulation on access to services markets, and with the opportunities for formulating trade disciplines in this area. It is also a useful resource for academics and students researching regulatory approaches and practices in services sectors.

Breaks new ground by examining the scope and potential of WTO legal principles against the backdrop of actual regulatory experiences.

"The 'regulatory world' and the 'trade policy world' seem to exist in separate but parallel universes. Yet, as economies continue to integrate and barriers to foreign market entry reduce, many of the challenges and problems in international trade in services are surfacing in the realm of regulation. It thus seemed opportune to put a collection of economic and legal essays together with sector-specific cases reflecting on services trade, regulatory challenges and experiences."

Aik Hoe Lim and Bart De Meester (Editors)

Aik Hoe Lim is a Counsellor in the Trade in Services Division of the WTO Secretariat, where he is Secretary to the body responsible for negotiating domestic regulation disciplines for services.

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What's inside?

The book explores the **theoretical underpinnings** for regulation, the problems that regulation is typically intended to resolve and the potential consequences for services trade.

Legal essays delve deep into each of the main domestic regulation principles which trade negotiators have been seeking to craft to reduce the impact of regulatory diversity, to simplify procedures and make them more transparent and to avoid unnecessary complexity or disguised restrictions.

Country and sector-specific case studies focus on a particular regulatory experience or challenge; they discuss general approaches, mechanisms or solutions that have been applied across a range of sectors. The case studies help shed light on how some of the issues which have been discussed in the domestic regulation disciplines have surfaced or been addressed at the sector level.

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