
WTO Trade Rules and Trade Remedies Training Course for Government and Industry

11 – 15 October 2027
Cape town





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Programme Summary

WTO trade rules and trade remedies is a five-day training course for trade policy officials, trade compliance heads and legal advisers at advanced level, culminating in a trade measure assessment for a product or market of their choice. Governments must defend their measures and their exporters, while companies face anti-dumping and safeguard actions abroad with little warning. The approach moves from core GATT obligations through goods, standards and services rules to trade remedies and dispute settlement. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in WTO trade rules and trade remedies.

The Business Case

Trade measures can close a market overnight or protect a domestic industry for years. Officials who cannot test a measure against WTO commitments risk challenge, and exporters who respond late to an investigation often accept higher duties than the evidence supports. Teams that read the agreements and the investigation procedure can anticipate action and build a defensible record.

- Market Access: Is protected as tariff bindings, origin rules and technical requirements are checked before goods ship.
- Duty Exposure: Falls as exporters engage early in anti-dumping and countervailing investigations with complete data.
- Policy Defensibility: Improves as new measures are screened against WTO obligations before adoption.

Principles and Evidence Base

- GATT Core Obligations: Most-favoured-nation treatment Article I, national treatment Article III and general exceptions Article XX frame Session 1.
- TBT and SPS Agreements: Their disciplines on technical regulations and food safety measures structure Session 2.
- Anti-Dumping Agreement, SCM Agreement and Agreement on Safeguards: Together they set the investigation tests applied in Session 4.
- Dispute Settlement Understanding DSU: Its panel and appeal procedures guide the case strategy in Session 5.



Intended Participants

- Officials who negotiate, notify or defend trade measures for their government.
- Heads of trade compliance who manage tariff classification, valuation and origin for importers and exporters.
- Legal advisers who represent companies in trade remedy investigations.
- Investigating authority staff who assess dumping, subsidy and injury claims.

The programme serves ministries of trade and economy, customs administrations, exporters and industry associations.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate a trade measure against most-favoured-nation, national treatment and general exception rules.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose whether a technical regulation or food safety measure meets TBT or SPS disciplines.
3. Participants will be able to construct a dumping margin and injury argument using the Anti-Dumping Agreement tests.
4. Participants will be able to compare anti-dumping, countervailing and safeguard routes and justify the appropriate response.
5. Participants will be able to assess services commitments under GATS and preferential terms under regional trade agreements.
6. Participants will be able to prioritise options for consultation, negotiation or dispute settlement in a trade conflict.

Programme Structure

Day 1: WTO Trade Rules and Core GATT Obligations

What do WTO members promise each other, and where are the exceptions?

- Most-Favoured-Nation Treatment Under GATT Article I
- National Treatment Under GATT Article III
- Tariff Bindings and Schedules of Concessions
- General Exceptions Under GATT Article XX
- Regional Trade Agreements Under GATT Article XXIV

Day 2: Customs, Standards and Non-Tariff Measures

When does a border or product requirement become a barrier to trade?

- Customs Valuation Agreement and Transaction Value
- Preferential and Non-Preferential Rules of Origin
- TBT Agreement and Technical Regulations
- SPS Agreement and Risk Assessment for Food Safety



- Notification Obligations and Trade Concerns

Day 3: Services, Intellectual Property and Market Access

How do commitments beyond goods shape access to foreign markets?

- GATS Modes of Supply and Schedules of Specific Commitments
- Market Access and National Treatment Limitations in Services
- TRIPS Minimum Standards and Enforcement
- Accession Commitments and Their Legal Effect
- Market Access Barrier Mapping for a Priority Sector

Day 4: Trade Remedies: Anti-Dumping, Subsidies and Safeguards

How are trade remedy investigations initiated, argued and concluded?

- Dumping Margin Calculation and Normal Value
- Injury and Causation Analysis
- SCM Agreement: Prohibited and Actionable Subsidies
- Safeguard Measures and Serious Injury
- Investigation Questionnaires, Verification and Undertakings

Day 5: Applying WTO Rules to Trade Disputes and Remedies

Which route resolves the trade problem at least cost and risk?

- Dispute Settlement Understanding: Consultations, Panels and Appeal
- Testing a Measure Against Day 1 and Day 2 Obligations
- Remedy Response Plan Drawing on Day 4 Investigation Tests
- Negotiation Versus Litigation Decision Matrix
- Trade Measure Assessment Completion

Methodology

The programme relies on case analysis of published WTO disputes and trade remedy investigations in steel, petrochemicals, agriculture and services. Participants work in mixed government and industry teams, taking the roles of investigating authority, exporter and complaining member.

- Suggested activity: Screening a proposed product labelling rule against TBT disciplines.
- Suggested activity: Preparing an exporter's response to an anti-dumping questionnaire.
- Suggested activity: Drafting a request for consultations under the DSU.



Capstone Output

Each participant completes a trade measure assessment for a product, sector or market relevant to their organisation. It sets out the applicable commitments, the consistency of the measure, the remedy or defence options available and a recommended course of action.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is WTO trade rules training suitable for officials new to trade remedies?

Yes, provided they already work in trade policy, customs or trade law. It is set at advanced level and assumes familiarity with import and export procedures.

Which agreements does WTO trade rules and trade remedies training rest on?

It rests on GATT core obligations, the TBT and SPS Agreements, GATS, TRIPS, the Anti-Dumping, SCM and Safeguards Agreements and the Dispute Settlement Understanding.

How is the trade measure assessment from WTO trade rules training used at work?

You can use it to brief ministers or a board and to decide whether to negotiate, defend or bring a case.

How does WTO trade rules training differ from international trade operations courses?

It addresses the legal rules governing measures between governments, rather than shipping terms, documentation and logistics for individual transactions.