



## Pilot Course on Negotiating Regional Trade Agreements for Trade in Times of Crisis and Pandemic

23 July to 6 August 2021

### *Introduction*

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed countries' reliance on ad-hoc unilateral measures in response to crisis. To combat the pandemic, countries took measures such as export restrictions while also in some cases expediting procedures for imports of essential goods. Overall, countries showed little coordination despite the existence of a large number of trade agreements. The hundreds of regional trade agreements (RTAs) signed by economies appear to provide little or no guidance on handling trade in times of pandemic or crisis. In order to fill this gap, ESCAP together with UNCTAD and other UN Regional Commissions, as well as experts from public and private sectors launched a global [Initiative on Model Provisions for Trade in Times of Crisis and Pandemic in Regional and other Trade Agreements \(IMP\)](#) in May 2020. Following a global [Policy Hackathon](#) to generate ideas on how to tackle this issue, a comprehensive **Handbook on Provisions and Options for Trade in Times of Crisis and Pandemic** has been developed.

A course based on the Handbook is being piloted for the first time in Asia and the Pacific, aiming to build capacity of trade negotiators and related stakeholders in the region, and to gather feedback on the Handbook and the course materials before it is rolled out regionally – and made available globally. To achieve the aims, the course will endeavour to (1) enhance the understanding of the need for improving trade agreements to ensure better response to pandemics and other crises; (2) provide a range of options of provisions that could be used in future trade agreements; and (3) get feedback from negotiators and policy analysts, which can be integrated in future iterations of the course and the Handbook.

Upon studying the course materials, passing the quizzes, attending the live sessions and providing feedback, participants will get an official **course certificate**.

### *Principal lecturer*

Video lectures and overall course facilitation will be done by Katrin Kuhlmann, Visiting Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Centre and President and Founder, New Markets Lab, who is also the lead author of the Handbook. Her areas of research and expertise include international economic law, law and development, regional trade agreements and comparative economic law. She is also a member of the Trade Advisory Committee on Africa at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). In addition to practicing trade and corporate law at two international law firms, she spent six years as a trade negotiator with the USTR's Office, where she focused on WTO accession negotiations, regional trade, non-tariff measures, intellectual property rights, and agricultural issues. She holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School and a BA in Economics from Creighton University.

### **Course format**

The pilot course is organized as a facilitated online e-learning course, as follows:

#### 1. Video lectures and reading

The course will consist of a pre-recorded introductory session and 9 subject-specific sessions of about 10-15 minutes each - corresponding to the Handbook content. The participants are expected to read chapters of the Handbook related to each subject first, then watch the recorded video lectures. The Handbook and video recordings will be sent to participants from 23 July, well in advance of the live lectures scheduled on 4-6 August.

#### 2. Quizzes

After studying with the Handbook and videos, the participants are expected to take online quizzes associated with the course materials. Participants will have the opportunity to take the quizzes multiple times but are asked to take them at least once before each relevant live lecture. To obtain a certificate, a course participant should achieve more than 75% correct answers on the quizzes.

#### 3. Live sessions

Three interactive live sessions will be held to provide clarification on questions and further discussion on each subject. Katrin Kuhlmann will facilitate the live sessions, with other experts involved in the IMP initiative also invited to speak at the live sessions. After studying the course materials and completing the quizzes, the participants will be asked to send written questions (if any) before each live session.

*Note that this course is offered for the first time on a pilot basis and participants are requested to kindly note down any feedback to the content and format for improvement.*

### **Tentative Programme**

Subject areas	Live sessions	Guest expert (short presentation and Q&A)
(video lectures by Katrin available on 23 July) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Countries' responses to COVID-19</li><li>• Essential goods and services</li></ul> (Handbook Chapters Introduction, I, II)	<b>4 August</b> 10:30 – 12:15 BKK  (Guest speakers may join in at 11:15)	<b>Simon Evenett</b> (on essential goods/services)  <b>Henry Gao</b> (TBC)
(video lectures by Katrin available on 26 July) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trade facilitation</li><li>• SPS/TBT</li><li>• Intellectual property</li></ul> (Handbook Chapters III, IV, V)	<b>5 August</b> 10:30 – 12:15 BKK  (Guest speakers may join in at 11:15)	<b>Yann Duval</b> (on trade facilitation)  <b>Miho Shirotori</b> (on SPS/TBT)  <b>Josefita Pardo de Leon</b>

		(on IPR)
(video lectures by Katrin available on 29 July) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital Trade</li> <li>• Transparency</li> <li>• Development</li> <li>• Building forward better</li> </ul> <i>(Handbook Chapters VI, VII, VIII, IX)</i>	<b>6 August</b> 10:30 – 12:15 BKK (Guest speakers may join in at 11:15)	<b>Deborah Elms</b> (on digital trade)  <b>Bipul Chattopadhyay</b> (on development)

***Guest speakers (tentative)***

- Bipul Chattopadhyay, Executive Director, CUTS International (Consumer Unity & Trust Society), India.
- Deborah Elms, Executive Director, Asian Trade Centre and Vice Chair, Asia Business Trade Association.
- Henry Gao, Associate Professor, Singapore Management University School of Law.
- Josefita Pardo de León, Legal Affairs Officer, Intellectual Property, Government Procurement and Competition Division, WTO.
- Miho Shirotori, Officer-in-Charge, Division on International Trade and Commodities, UNCTAD.
- Simon J. Evenett, Professor of International Trade and Economic Development, University of St. Gallen.
- Yann Duval, Chief, Trade Policy and Facilitation, UN ESCAP.

***Registration***

Please register by filling the [registration form](#), kindly note that we approve registration on a selective basis and that seats are limited. You will be notified as soon as possible (no later than 21 July) if you are successfully registered.

**Registration deadline:** 20 July 2021

Note: This first pilot course will be limited to participation of trade negotiators and related stakeholders from South-West Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, East and North-East Asia, South-East Asia and Oceania /Pacific Islands, that are either Members or Associate Members of ESCAP. Applicants from other regions or economies will be informed of future courses.