



UNITED NATIONS

Policy Hackathon on Model Provisions for Trade in Times of Crisis and Pandemic in Regional and other Trade Agreements

An initiative of the United Nations, in collaboration with ARTNeT, WTO and other organizations from civil society, academia and the private sector¹

8 June to 23 July 2020

GUIDANCE FOR PARTICIPANTS

*In support of “building back better” after COVID-19, this policy hackathon aims to gather relevant inputs from all interested stakeholders from government, academia, civil society and private sector to support the development of provisions that could be included in regional and other trade and/or economic partnership agreements to guide national trade policies during and after a crisis or pandemic. **The selected participants/teams will have 45 days, starting 8 June 2020,² to contribute innovative solutions towards ensuring that the collective benefits of trade arrangements are least compromised in a situation of crisis and pandemic. Contributions are expected to focus primarily on how trade agreements/provisions can more effectively keep essential supply chains flowing and trade lanes open; and support a timely response and recovery from crisis, keeping in mind the sustainable development goals.***

What are registered participants expected to deliver? Participants (individuals or teams) are expected to submit a relevant written input of enough quality that it can be posted on the initiative website by the organizers, as deemed appropriate by them. Contributions to this initiative may include, inter alia:

- Review of best practices/crisis initiatives taken unilaterally by one or more countries, and whether and how these could be included in future RTAs and trade-related agreements.
- Review of experience of the challenges/difficulties faced – or preventive actions taken- by a country (or group of country) related to trade during COVID-19 or other crises; and

¹ Please see the website for the list of collaborating organizations, as well as members of the Core Expert Group supporting the initiative. <https://www.unescap.org/resources/initiative-model-provisions-trade-times-crisis-and-pandemic-regional-and-other-trade>

² On exceptional basis, flexibility may be provided on final date of submissions for teams from academic institutions, based on request from team leader justified based on relevant course or study programme schedules.

Contributors may decide on which set of issue(s) and/or sector(s) they may focus on, depending on whether they are interested in measures/provisions to mitigate the immediate effect of a crisis/pandemic (e.g. shortage of essential goods) or in measures to support the recovery efforts (e.g., sustainable investment). To the extent possible, they may specify their intended focus at the time of registration, in which case the ESCAP Secretariat, as coordinator of the initiative, will aim to provide a more specific list of background documents to support delivery.

The format and style of contribution is fully flexible, keeping in mind the need for contribution to be as practical as possible for use by trade negotiators and policy makers – not simply reiterating the broad principles and measures already outlined by many agencies and governments. In that context, legal experts may think of providing alternative language and/or a menu of alternative provisions on the issues they have chosen to focus on, going from *less to more binding provisions* or from *more to less trade restrictive provisions or exceptions*. Economists may consider including impact analysis of different measures/provisions in their contributions, and/or linking proposed measures and provisions to observed development impacts of the pandemic and associated ad-hoc policy responses. Contributors are also encouraged to examine how RTA provisions to mitigate impacts of crisis/pandemic and facilitate recovery may need to differ depending on trade patterns and partners within an RTA.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and all contributors are expected to provide clear and complete references to the secondary sources they rely on.

Selected reference documents and other information on the initiative are available through the dedicated webpage for the initiative at: <https://www.unescap.org/resources/initiative-model-provisions-trade-times-crisis-and-pandemic-regional-and-other-trade>

Should you need more guidance, please contact ESCAP (email: duvaly@un.org, copied to tuntiwigit@un.org).