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Work Package 3: Innovation and Competitiveness in Trade Governance

This work package considers how trade can be regulated to further, and without compromising, competition and innovation. In the third phase of the NCCR the focus is on two distinct areas: (a) intellectual property (IP) protection and government procurement, and (b) the regulation of new and emerging technologies. The research seeks to define priorities for developing countries in IP protection and appropriate levels of protection and enforcement, taking into account historical and economic aspects, as well as field work. In the area of new technologies, the work package looks particularly at the intersection of Internet and trade governance as well as the challenges posed by nanotechnology and synthetic biology.

Progressive regulation

Three specific research areas: competitiveness, intellectual property rights enforcement, and public procurement are all taken into account in shaping trade rules appropriate for diverging levels of competitiveness and social and economic development. The concept of graduation – i.e. that progressive liberalisation and regulation can be paced and introduced only gradually according to the level of economic development of developing countries – is tested in these discrete areas.

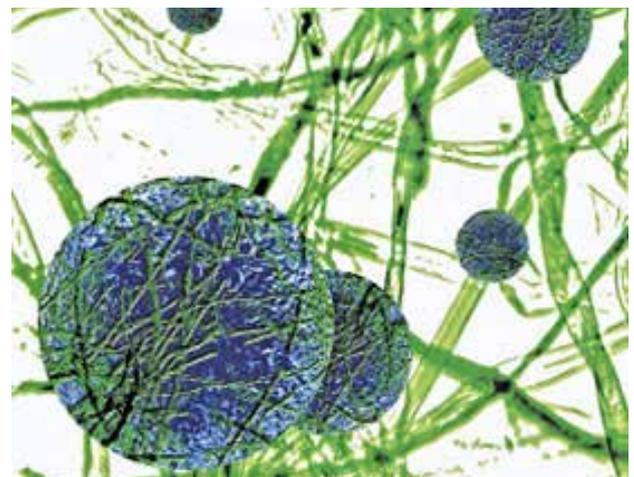
An additional project seeks to integrate the work on graduation and IP enforcement with research on public procurement and competition policies as important shapers of trade governance. It looks inter alia at incentives for implementing international procurement regulations in developing countries, the role of public procurement in fostering international competition and competitiveness, and the interface between competition and procurement law.

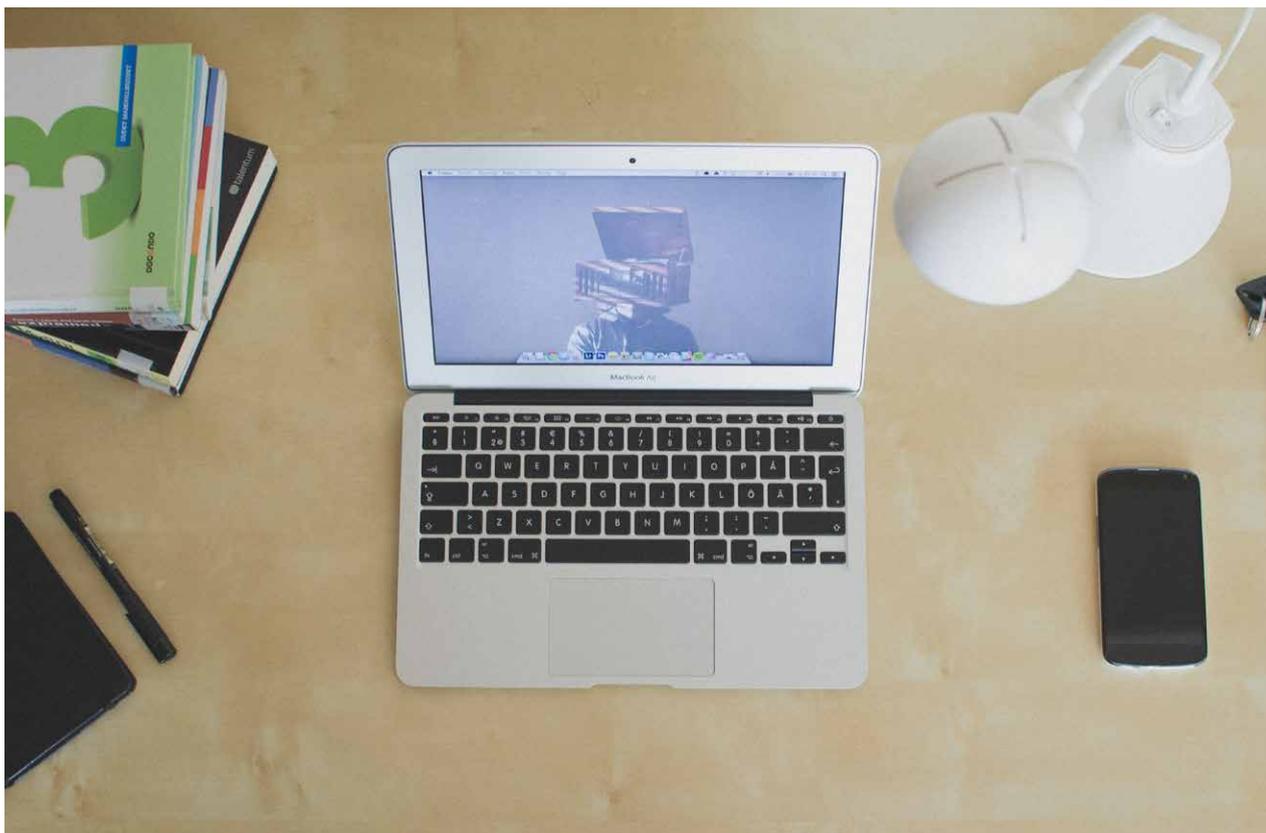
Governing new technologies

New technologies pose a challenge to existing regulatory models, which often need to be adjusted. In exploring the implications of new technological developments for global trade governance, research focuses

on digital and nano technologies, as well as on synthetic biology.

With regard to the Internet, the work package seeks to recommend changes in WTO law so that it is better placed to address current and future digital trade issues. More broadly, it aims at interfacing trade and Internet governance debates and suggests future-oriented governance models that involve multiple, often non-state actors, and ensure the provision of global public goods, such as freedom of information and cultural diversity.





Internet governance

“The governance of the Internet is a particularly complex topic as it touches upon multiple governance domains.

It is not only about the actual management of critical Internet resources such as IP addresses and domain names but also about much broader issues such as the safeguarding of fundamental human rights in cyberspace, about protection of freedom of speech and of privacy. Trade rules matter too.

Our project is perhaps the only research hub that explores the role of trade rules in global Internet governance.”

Mira Burri, Senior Research Fellow

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