

Foreword

The world has been confronted by multiple challenges in recent years. From the devastating health and economic consequences caused by the COVID-19 pandemic to the growing impact of climate change, these crises have risen alongside longstanding global concerns, such as alleviating poverty and fostering sustainable development. International trade has a pivotal role to play in addressing these pressing issues. However, the trading of certain products can entail risks, necessitating the need for measures such as export licences and restrictions in certain circumstances to manage these risks.

Global cooperation has led to international agreements and conventions in a variety of areas, ranging from protecting the environment to safeguarding public health, and promoting peace and security. Many WTO members are party to conventions and agreements with these objectives, leading to a wide range of export regulations and controls for the trading of controlled and sensitive goods. The publication examines how these international agreements co-exist with WTO rules such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 and the transparency requirements regarding the procedures for the notification of quantitative restrictions.

While these international agreements have traditionally focused on regulations governing the importation of controlled and sensitive goods, an increasing number include rules governing exports. Examples of such agreements include the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, more commonly known as CITES, the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions on hazardous chemicals and wastes, and the United Nations International Drugs Control Conventions.

This publication provides insights into some of the international agreements covering export regulations aimed at environmental protection, hazardous waste management, weapons control and combating the spread of illicit drugs, and would not have been possible without valuable contributions from the secretariats and implementing bodies of the international agreements and conventions included in this book.

The book is intended to serve as a guide for policymakers, government officials, academia and members of the public with an interest in the areas covered. By fostering a better understanding of the existing international agreements regulating exports and how they link to the multilateral trading system, the WTO can help to strengthen global cooperation, promote transparency and perhaps even inspire future agreements seeking to strike a balance between advancing international trade and protecting the global community against potential risks.



Suja Rishikesh Mavroidis

Director
WTO Market Access Division