Domestic regulation of services sectors has a significant impact on services trade liberalization, which is why General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) disciplines are negotiated in the WTO. With the help of analyses and case studies from academics, regulators and trade experts, this book explores the scope and limits of WTO legal principles to promote domestic regulatory reform. Case studies discuss country-specific challenges and experiences of regulating important service sectors, such as finance, telecommunications, distribution, legal, education, health, postal and logistics services, as well as the role of regulatory impact assessments. The findings will interest trade officials, policy-makers, regulators, think tanks and businesses concerned with the implications of domestic regulation on access to services markets, and with the opportunities for formulating trade disciplines in this area. It is also a useful resource for academics and students researching regulatory approaches and practices in services sectors.

Aik Hoe Lim is a Counsellor in the Trade in Services Division of the WTO Secretariat, where he is Secretary to the body responsible for negotiating domestic regulation disciplines for services.

Bart De Meester is an Associate at the Geneva Office of Sidley Austin LLP. He previously worked as a Legal Affairs Officer at the Trade in Services Division of the WTO.
About this publication

Domestic regulation of services sectors has a significant impact on services trade liberalization, which is why General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) disciplines are negotiated in the WTO. With the help of analyses and case studies from academics, regulators and trade experts, this book explores the scope and limits of WTO legal principles to promote domestic regulatory reform. Case studies discuss country-specific challenges and experiences of regulating important service sectors, such as finance, telecommunications, distribution, legal, education, health, postal and logistics services, as well as the role of regulatory impact assessments. The findings will interest trade officials, policymakers, regulators, think tanks, and businesses concerned with the implications of domestic regulation on access to services markets, and with the opportunities for formulating trade disciplines in this area. It is also a useful resource for academics and students researching regulatory approaches and practices in services sectors.

"The ‘regulatory world’ and the ‘trade policy world’ seem to exist in separate but parallel universes. Yet, as economies continue to integrate and barriers to foreign market entry reduce, many of the challenges and problems in international trade in services are surfacing in the realm of regulation. It thus seemed opportune to put a collection of economic and legal essays together with sector-specific cases reflecting on services trade, regulatory challenges and experiences."

Aik Hoe Lim and Bart De Meester (Editors)

Aik Hoe Lim is a Counsellor in the Trade in Services Division of the WTO Secretariat, where he is Secretary to the body responsible for negotiating domestic regulation disciplines for services.

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Contents

1 An introduction to domestic regulation and GATS
Aik Hoe Lim and Bart De Meester

PART I
Impediments to services trade, regulatory theory and principles

2 Why regulate? An overview of the rationale and purpose behind regulation
Tinne Heremans

3 Domestic regulation: what are the costs and benefits for international trade in services?
Hildegunn Kyvik Norda’s

PART II
Legal perspectives on WTO principles and domestic regulations

4 Reasonableness, impartiality and objectivity
Andrew Mitchell and Tania Voon

5 Balancing legal certainty with regulatory flexibility
Markus Krajewski

6 Who’s afraid of necessity? And why it matters?
Panagiotis Delimatsis

7 Mutual recognition of services regulation at the WTO
Joel P. Trachtman

PART III
Case studies

8 Legal services in the United States
Erica Moeser and Laurel S. Terry

9 Telecommunications reform in China: fostering competition through state intervention
Henry Gao

10 Information communications technology: the Mauritian experience of regulation and reform
Krishna Oolun

11 Regulation of postal services in a changing market environment: lessons from Australia and elsewhere
Siva Somasundram and Iain Sandford

12 Mobile money services provision in East Africa: the Ugandan experience
Joan Apecu, Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo and Yusuf Atiku Abdalla

13 Financial services liberalization and regulation in Japan: implications for future negotiation on market access and domestic regulations
Masamichi Kono, Koichi Iwai and Yoshitaka Sakai

14 Domestic regulations in Malaysia’s higher education sector
Tham Siew Yean and Nik Ahmad Kamal Nik Mahmod

15 Domestic regulations and India’s trade in health services: a study of hospital and telemedicine services
Rupa Chanda and Pralok Gupta

16 Operating integrated logistics services in a fragmented regulatory environment: what is the cost?
Ruosi Zhang

17 Domestic regulation of retail food distribution services in Israel: the missing link between food prices and social protest
Tomer Broude and Lior Herman

18 Regulatory impact analysis: addressing the trade and regulatory nexus
Darrell Porter and Lauren Wight

PART IV
Concluding remarks

19 Services liberalization, negotiations and regulation: some lessons from the GATS experience
Hamid Mamdouh

20 Addressing the domestic regulation and services trade interface: reflections on the way ahead
Aik Hoe Lim and Bart De Meester
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What’s inside?

The book explores the theoretical underpinnings for regulation, the problems that regulation is typically intended to resolve and the potential consequences for services trade.

Legal essays delve deep into each of the main domestic regulation principles which trade negotiators have been seeking to craft to reduce the impact of regulatory diversity, to simplify procedures and make them more transparent and to avoid unnecessary complexity or disguised restrictions.

Country and sector-specific case studies focus on a particular regulatory experience or challenge; they discuss general approaches, mechanisms or solutions that have been applied across a range of sectors. The case studies help shed light on how some of the issues which have been discussed in the domestic regulation disciplines have surfaced or been addressed at the sector level.

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