How the WTO is structured

The WTO’s top-level decision-making body is the Ministerial Conference, which usually meets every two years.

Below this is the General Council (normally ambassadors and heads of delegation in Geneva, and sometimes officials sent from members’ capitals), which meets several times a year in the Geneva headquarters. The General Council also meets as the Trade Policy Review Body and the Dispute Settlement Body.

At the next level, the Goods Council, Services Council and Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Council report to the General Council.

Numerous specialized committees, working groups and working parties deal with the individual agreements and other areas such as the environment, development, membership applications and regional trade agreements.

All WTO members may participate in all councils and committees, with the exceptions of the Appellate Body, Dispute Settlement panels and plurilateral committees.

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Committees on
- Trade and Environment
- Trade and Investment
- Sub-Committee on Least Developed Countries
- Regional Trade Agreements
- Balance of Payments
- Restrictions
- Budget, Finance and Administration

Working parties on
- Accession

Working groups on
- Trade, debt and finance
- Trade and technology transfer

Plurilateral
- Information Technology Agreement Committee

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Council for Trade in Goods

Committees on
- Agriculture
- Anti-Dumping Practices
- Customs Valuation
- Import Licensing
- Market Access
- Rules of Origin
- Safeguards
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
- Subsidies and Countervailing Measures
- Technical Barriers to Trade
- Trade Facilitation
- Trade-Related Investment Measures
- Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products

Working party on
- State Trading Enterprises

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Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

Committees on
- Trade in Financial Services
- Specific Commitments
- Working parties on
- Domestic Regulation
- GATS Rules

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Council for Trade in Services

Special Sessions of
- Services Council/ TRIPS Council/
- Dispute Settlement Body/Agriculture Committee/Trade and Development Committee/Trade and Environment Committee

Negotiation groups on
- Market Access Rules

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Trade Negotiations Committee

Doha Development Agenda Negotiations:
- Trade Negotiations Committee and its bodies

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Key
- Reporting to General Council (or a subsidiary)
- Reporting to Dispute Settlement Body
- Plurilateral committees inform the General Council or Goods Council of their activities, although these agreements are not signed by all WTO members
- Trade Negotiations Committee reports to General Council