

WTO Negotiations and EGS: Sectoral initiative on climate change

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The Environmental Area Initiative (EAI) approach to negotiating environmental goods and environments in the WTO, proposed by Cottier and Baracol (UNCTAD, 2009), aims to offer an alternative and more viable approach to linking trade negotiations and climate change mitigation policies. It builds upon the win-win philosophy entailed in many facets of the Doha Development Agenda. The EAI is not limited to negotiating tariffs and services commitments, as approaches in the EGS negotiations so far are, but can be seen as a consolidating approach which brings together all WTO issues pertinent to the environmental area/s identified.

This project aims to develop in full the EAI approach, in particular addressing modalities-related issues and gaps in the negotiating proposals on the table: non-tariff barriers, technology transfer, and special and differential treatment. The resulting enabling framework must cover these areas, as mandated in the DDA, which are as well crucial to engaging developing countries' further interest in liberalization commitments. As these areas, especially as they apply to EGS often fail to be addressed with sufficient clarity in existing WTO agreements, and supplementary or special provisions may need to be elaborated, and linkages among existing provisions established. The project will present an example of how the EAI approach can apply to climate mitigation. The enabling framework will be highlighted because of the directional issues associated to climate mitigation technologies at least in the short to medium-term -- they flow from the developed to the developing countries. An examination of how the enabling framework may also benefit South-South trade in climate-mitigation related goods and services, which is a recent trend, will also be done.