

TiSA Glossary

4th industrial revolution

Transformation of global capitalism through new technologies that combine digital, physical and biological elements.

Algorithm

A self-contained procedure or formula for solving a problem, based on conducting a sequence of specified steps or actions, often combined in a computer programme.

Big data

Very large or complex data sets that are mined to reveal trends and patterns of behaviour, usually to use for commercial advantage.

Certification

The US domestic process of approving steps taken by another country to comply with an agreement as a precondition for US notification that its domestic requirements have been concluded.

Commercial presence

Having an office, branch, or subsidiary in a foreign country, known in GATS as “Mode 3” of service delivery.

CPCs

United Nations Central Product Classifications used to identify the services sectors and subsectors that are subject to commitments in a country’s schedule. There are several versions of these CPCs, dating from 1991.

Cross-border supply

The consumer of a service and the supplier of a service are in different countries.

Developing country

A designation used at the WTO, but without any formal definitions of either “developed” and “developing” countries. Members adopt that designation for themselves, but other members can challenge their use of special and differential treatment.

Electronic commerce

The production, advertising, sale and distribution of services via telecommunications networks (eg. Amazon.com or Expedia.com).

eWTP

The World e-Trade Platform proposed by Jack Ma, the owner China’s AliBaba.

FTA

“Free trade agreement” whose objective is to liberalise the rules that govern transactions between the parties, usually covering a wide range of areas, including goods, services,

investment, intellectual property, government procurement, competition, etc.

GAFA

The dominant tech companies of Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon

GATS

“The General Agreement on Trade in Services” is the agreement on services to which all WTO members are automatically a party.

Global South

A term used to describe countries of Latin America, Africa, much of Asia, and the Middle East collectively, in contrast to affluent countries, described by contrast as the Global North.

Limitations

The explicit exclusion of a government measure or an aspect of a service from a sectoral commitment in a country’s schedule.

Local content measure

A requirement that the service or service supplier buys a certain amount of local content for incorporation in the service.

Measures

All forms of government regulation: statute, regulation, by-law, administrative decisions, policy, practice or any other action a government takes in relation to a service.

MFN

“Most-favoured-nation treatment” the principle of not giving services and suppliers from parties to the agreement less favourable treatment than is given to their counterparts from any other country.

Mode 1

The technical description for delivery of a service by a supplier in one party to a consumer of the service in another party.

Mode 2

The technical description for delivery of a service by a supplier in one party to a consumer of the service who uses the service in that country.

Mode 3

The technical description of a commercial entity of one party establishing a commercial presence in the territory of another party.

Mode 4

The technical description of the temporary presence of natural persons of one party in another party’s territory to undertake work in a service sector.

Party’s schedule

A schedule that sets out the commitments that have been adopted by a party through negotiation.

National treatment

Giving services or service providers of the other party no less favourable treatment that their national counterparts receive.

Natural persons

Real people, as distinct from juridical persons such as companies and organizations.

Negative list

A list that specifies which services, modes of delivery, and/or regulations and other measures are not subject to certain rules of the agreement.

Nullify and impair

Damage to the benefits that a party expects to receive from its membership of TiSA that is caused by another party making changes to its services regime or failing to carry out its obligations.

Offer

A party’s proposal to commit to a certain level of liberalization, usually by improving access to its markets or national treatment, in response to a request from another party during negotiations; involves initial and subsequent offers.

Policy space limitation

This limitation in a party’s schedule protects its right to maintain and introduce new measures that are inconsistent with its obligations to specified rules. In TiSA that applies to national treatment. These limitations are usually specified by name or by the service sub-sector or activity.

Positive list

A list that sets out which services, modes of delivery, and/or regulations and other measures are subject to certain rules of the agreement.

Ratchet

Any new liberalisation by a party is automatically locked in to that party’s schedule. In TiSA that applies to national treatment (removing discriminatory restrictions on foreign suppliers or preference to national suppliers).

Request

A list of the services sectors, modes of delivery and measures that one party asks another party to commit to liberalise in its schedule during the course of negotiations.

Really Good Friends of Services

A group of WTO members formed to promote the further liberalization of services.

Schedule

A Party’s list of binding commitments, primarily on market access to services markets and national treatment, but with scope to make commitments on additional matters, such as adopting an annex.

Sector

The description of the general service category that is subject to commitments or rules.

Smart products

Physical things that have digital systems embedded in them that transmit information for purposes relating to the thing.

Source code

Instructions to a computer written in a form that is readable by humans before being converted into object or machine code.

Standstill

The rule applying in a particular subsector at the time the agreement comes into force (unless another time is stated) cannot be made any more restrictive. This applies in TiSA to national treatment, where domestic services and suppliers receive better treatment than their counterparts from other TiSA parties.

State-owned Enterprise

An enterprise in which central government owns more than 50% of shares or can appoint a majority of directors, which is principally engaged in activities undertaken with an orientation towards profit-making and which can decide its own production and prices.

Subsector

A more specific service category within a general category of a service.

Supply of a service

All stages of production, distribution, marketing, sale and delivery of a commercial service.

TISA

Trade in Services Agreement being negotiated among 23 parties.

TPP or TPPA

Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement negotiated between the Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam, USA.

TTIP

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Treaty negotiation between the US and EU

Universal service obligation

Obligation that government placed on certain regulated services to supply a baseline level of the service

Universal postal service obligation (UPS0)

Obligation on government to provide a baseline level of a postal service to every resident in the country.

WTO

“World Trade Organisation”; whose (currently 164) members are committed to obey the organisation’s trade rules. These rules cover services through the GATS.