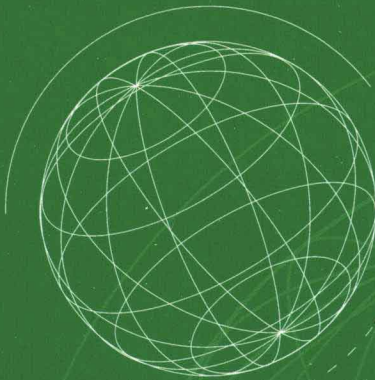




WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION

A Handbook on the WTO TRIPS Agreement

Edited by Antony Taubman, Hannu Wager
and Jayashree Watal



CAMBRIDGE

A HANDBOOK ON THE WTO TRIPS AGREEMENT

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and
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PREFACE

At the heart of the World Trade Organization (WTO), as an international organization, is a set of rules that regulate trade between nations: a body of agreements which have been negotiated and signed by governments of the majority of the world's trading nations, with the aim of promoting transparency, predictability and non-discrimination in trading relations. These agreements, covering trade in goods, trade in services and trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights, help to define and inform the multiple roles of the WTO, in administering the trade agreements, providing a forum for trade negotiations, handling trade disputes, monitoring national trade policies, providing technical assistance and capacity building for developing countries, and cooperating with other international organizations. Understanding these agreements and their practical, policy and legal contexts therefore provides significant insights into the WTO as an institution, its activities and international role, its partnerships with other organizations, and the way in which WTO Member governments identify and pursue their national interests through this intergovernmental forum.

When, in 1994, at the end of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, governments settled on the cluster of agreements that created and defined the WTO, the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, or the TRIPS Agreement, was part of the package. The TRIPS Agreement was not negotiated as a stand-alone treaty, and did not enter into legal force on its own, but is one of the multilateral trade agreements (MTAs) that are integral to the overarching Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization. This status means that when the TRIPS Agreement entered into force in 1995, it was as part of a composite set of trade agreements that are together binding on countries that choose to join the WTO as Members. The WTO Agreement also made disputes between Members about trade and intellectual property subject to the same dispute settlement mechanism as is used for a wide range of trade issues. But the TRIPS

Agreement also incorporated significant elements of the established multilateral intellectual property agreements administered by the UN specialized agency for intellectual property, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Hence the TRIPS Agreement has a dual character – an important element of international trade law, it also draws heavily on, and builds upon, the established heritage of international intellectual property (IP) law.

The TRIPS Agreement has also come to the fore in a wide range of international policy discussions – ranging over public health, biodiversity, the environment, and human rights, and other debates concerning policy settings for innovation, knowledge-based economic growth and technology diffusion. The need for a practical knowledge of TRIPS, its provisions and its institutional context therefore extends beyond the traditional circle of trade negotiators and IP lawyers, and this *Handbook* has been prepared to serve the needs of this wider community of legislators, diplomats, policy-makers, other government officials, representatives of civil society and industry, practitioners, journalists, students and other interested parties in the general public.

This publication is the latest in a series of WTO *Handbooks*, aimed at providing a non-technical overview of key elements of the WTO system. As a *Handbook* on the TRIPS Agreement, it provides a general account of the Agreement itself, and describes its objectives, principles and other provisions. The TRIPS Agreement has not been a static document since its entry into force in 1995, and the *Handbook* reflects the evolving context of TRIPS, in particular:

- While the *Handbook* is not a legal textbook, and it does not explore questions of legal interpretation, it does describe some of the experience in analysing and interpreting the TRIPS Agreement in the context of dispute settlement.
- The *Handbook* provides an overview of the institutional framework within the WTO that administers the TRIPS Agreement, in particular the TRIPS Council.
- And the *Handbook* gives an update of some of the key developments, such as the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health and the ensuing amendment to TRIPS, and ongoing negotiations and policy discussions within the WTO.

The *Handbook* is up to date at the time of writing, but readers should be aware that some of the processes it describes are dynamic, and several

passages have been highlighted as areas where further developments may potentially have occurred since mid-2011.

For reasons of space and brevity, the *Handbook* concentrates on the text of the TRIPS Agreement and on TRIPS-related developments within the WTO itself and does not describe in detail the important discussions and debates in other international policy processes and organizations that have dealt with TRIPS; a very brief description is provided to assist the reader to understand this broader context of TRIPS, but this is not intended to give authoritative guidance, which can instead be obtained from the organizations concerned.

Prospective readers should not pick up this *Handbook* expecting close legal analysis of TRIPS provisions, nor authoritative statements about the implications or impact of the TRIPS Agreement, nor extensive descriptions of the complex policy debates that surround the TRIPS Agreement. There is a vast academic, policy and legal literature concerning the TRIPS Agreement, its interpretation, and these related issues; this *Handbook* does not venture into this territory that has been widely explored and mapped by many expert authors. Instead, this *Handbook* seeks to give the reader an accessible, non-technical overview of the Agreement, and describes how to access and make use of some of the key official documentation that relates to the TRIPS Agreement and related issues. The initiative to publish this *Handbook* responds to the practical feedback received from countless active participants in technical cooperation, and readers are encouraged to provide further feedback to the address ipd@wto.org for possible use should there be a future decision to produce a revised and updated edition.

Antony Taubman

Director

Intellectual Property Division, WTO Secretariat

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DISCLAIMER This publication provides a general, non-technical introduction to the TRIPS Agreement, and to the related work of the World Trade Organization, to assist in promoting general understanding and awareness, including for training courses and educational activities. It should not be viewed as advancing any form of legal interpretation or any policy position, and no views or analysis in this publication should be attributed to the World Trade Organization, its Secretariat or its Members.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| AOC | appellation d'origine contrôlée |
| AOP | appellation d'origine protégée |
| BATF | Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CESCR | United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights |
| CMO | collective management organization |
| CTM | Community trademark |
| DSB | Dispute Settlement Body |
| DSU | Dispute Settlement Understanding |
| FDI | foreign direct investment |
| FTA | free trade area |
| GATT | General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade |
| GATS | General Agreement on Trade in Services |
| GI | geographical indication |
| GSPOA | Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property |
| ICESCR | International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights |
| INAO | Institut National d'Origine et de la Qualité |
| IP | intellectual property |
| IPIC | Intellectual Property in Respect of Integrated Circuits |
| IPR | intellectual property right |
| LDC | least-developed country |
| MFN | most-favoured-nation |
| MTA | multilateral trade agreements |
| MTO | Multilateral Trade Organization |
| PDO | Protected Designation of Origin |
| PGI | Protected Geographical Indication |
| R&D | research and development |
| RTA | regional trade agreement |
| TK | traditional knowledge |
| TRIPS | Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |

| | |
|--------|--|
| UNDESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UPOV | International Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties |
| WCT | WIPO Copyright Treaty |
| WGTC | Working Group on the Interaction between Trade and Competition Policy |
| WHA | World Health Assembly |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WIPO | World Intellectual Property Organization |
| WPPT | WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----------|
| <i>List of figures</i> | xvi |
| <i>List of boxes</i> | xvii |
| <i>List of tables</i> | xviii |
| <i>Preface</i> | xix |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i> | xxii |
| <i>List of acronyms and abbreviations</i> | xxiii |
| I Introduction to the TRIPS Agreement | 1 |
| A Introduction | 1 |
| 1 General | 1 |
| 2 Historical and legal background to TRIPS | 4 |
| 3 Place of TRIPS in the World Trade Organization | 8 |
| 4 Overview of TRIPS provisions | 10 |
| (a) General provisions and basic principles | 10 |
| (b) Standards concerning the availability, scope and use of intellectual property rights | 10 |
| (c) Enforcement | 12 |
| (d) Certain other matters | 12 |
| B General provisions and basic principles of the TRIPS Agreement | 12 |
| 1 Objectives and principles | 12 |
| 2 Minimum standards agreement | 13 |
| 3 Beneficiaries | 14 |
| (a) Industrial property | 14 |
| (b) Copyright | 15 |
| (c) Performers | 15 |
| (d) Producers of phonograms | 15 |
| (e) Broadcasting organizations | 15 |
| 4 National treatment and most-favoured-nation treatment | 16 |
| 5 Exhaustion | 18 |
| C Procedures for the acquisition and maintenance of intellectual property rights | 20 |

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| D | Transitional arrangements and other matters | 21 |
| 1 | Transition periods | 21 |
| | (a) Developed countries and non-discrimination (all Members) | 21 |
| | (b) Developing countries and economies in transition | 21 |
| | (c) Least-developed countries | 22 |
| | (d) Acceding countries | 23 |
| 2 | Protection of existing subject matter | 23 |
| | (a) Application of the rules | 23 |
| | (b) Additional requirements in respect of pre-existing works and phonograms | 24 |
| 3 | Transfer of technology | 24 |
| 4 | Technical cooperation | 25 |
| 5 | Security exceptions | 26 |
| E | Institutional arrangements | 26 |
| 1 | Decision-making procedures | 27 |
| 2 | The work of the Council for TRIPS | 30 |
| | (a) Notifications | 30 |
| | (b) Review of national laws and regulations | 32 |
| | (c) Forum for consultations | 32 |
| | (d) Forum for further negotiation or review | 33 |
| | (e) Cooperation with the World Intellectual Property Organization | 34 |
| II | Copyright and related rights | 36 |
| A | Introduction | 36 |
| 1 | General | 36 |
| 2 | What are copyright and related rights? | 36 |
| 3 | What is the relationship of the TRIPS Agreement with the pre-existing provisions of the Berne and Rome Conventions? | 37 |
| B | TRIPS provisions on copyright | 39 |
| 1 | What is the subject matter to be protected? | 39 |
| | (a) 'Literary and artistic works' | 39 |
| | (i) <i>Computer programs</i> | 39 |
| | (ii) <i>Databases</i> | 40 |
| | (b) Derivative works | 40 |
| | (c) Certain other categories of works | 41 |
| | (d) Certain principles governing eligibility for copyright protection | 41 |
| | (i) <i>Idea/expression dichotomy</i> | 41 |
| | (ii) <i>Originality</i> | 41 |

| | |
|---|----|
| (iii) <i>Automatic protection</i> | 42 |
| (iv) <i>Independence of protection</i> | 43 |
| 2 What are the rights to be conferred on authors? | 43 |
| (a) General | 43 |
| (b) Reproduction right | 44 |
| (c) Rental right | 44 |
| (d) Rights of public performance, broadcasting and communication to the public | 44 |
| (e) Rights of translation and adaptation | 45 |
| (f) Moral rights | 46 |
| 3 What are the permissible limitations and exceptions? | 46 |
| 4 Term of protection | 48 |
| C TRIPS provisions on related rights | 51 |
| 1 Relevant rights under the TRIPS Agreement | 52 |
| (a) Performers | 52 |
| (b) Producers of phonograms | 52 |
| (c) Broadcasting organizations | 52 |
| 2 Limitations and exceptions | 53 |
| 3 Term of protection | 53 |
| III Trademarks | 54 |
| A Introduction | 54 |
| 1 General | 54 |
| 2 What is the role of trademarks? | 54 |
| 3 What is the relationship of the TRIPS Agreement with the pre-existing provisions of the Paris Convention? | 56 |
| B TRIPS provisions on trademarks | 57 |
| 1 What is the subject matter to be protected and what are the conditions for registration? | 57 |
| (a) Subject matter of trademark protection | 57 |
| (i) <i>Distinctive signs</i> | 57 |
| (ii) <i>Trade names</i> | 59 |
| (iii) <i>Collective marks and certification marks</i> | 59 |
| (b) Conditions for registration as a trademark | 60 |
| (i) <i>Priority</i> | 60 |
| (ii) <i>Publishing requirement</i> | 60 |
| (iii) <i>Reasons which may not constitute grounds for refusal of trademark registrations</i> | 61 |
| (iv) <i>Reasons which may constitute grounds for refusal of trademark registrations</i> | 63 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| (v) <i>Reasons which must constitute grounds for refusal or invalidation of trademark registration in Members</i> | 63 |
| 2 What are the rights to be conferred on trademark owners? | 66 |
| (a) General | 66 |
| (b) Trademark rights | 66 |
| (c) Rights with respect to well-known trademarks | 69 |
| (d) Licensing and assignment of rights | 71 |
| (e) Other requirements | 71 |
| 3 What are the permissible exceptions to trademark rights? | 72 |
| (a) Permissible exceptions | 72 |
| (b) No compulsory licensing permitted | 73 |
| 4 Term of protection | 75 |
| IV Geographical indications | 76 |
| A Introduction | 76 |
| 1 General | 76 |
| 2 Background | 76 |
| 3 What is the relationship with the pre-existing provisions of the Paris Convention? | 77 |
| B TRIPS provisions on GIs | 78 |
| 1 What is the subject matter to be protected? | 78 |
| (a) TRIPS definition of geographical indications | 78 |
| (b) Elements of the Article 22.1 definition | 78 |
| (i) <i>It is a sign</i> | 79 |
| (ii) <i>Function of identification</i> | 79 |
| (iii) <i>Subject matter of identification</i> | 79 |
| (iv) <i>The geographical origin identified by the geographical indication</i> | 80 |
| (v) <i>Quality, reputation, or other characteristics essentially due to the geographical origin</i> | 80 |
| (c) Geographical indications, indications of source, rules of origin, appellations of origin and trademarks | 80 |
| (i) <i>Geographical indications and indications of source</i> | 83 |
| (ii) <i>Geographical indications and rules of origin</i> | 83 |
| (iii) <i>Geographical indications and appellations of origin</i> | 83 |
| (iv) <i>Geographical indications, trademarks and certification marks</i> | 83 |
| (d) Right holders and eligible users | 84 |
| 2 What are the conditions for getting protection? | 84 |
| 3 Protection and rights conferred | 85 |
| (a) For geographical indications for all goods (Article 22) | 85 |

| | | |
|-------|---|-----|
| (i) | <i>Protection against use by others (Article 22.2)</i> | 85 |
| (ii) | <i>Protection against use as a trademark (Article 22.3)</i> | 87 |
| (iii) | <i>Factually true but misleading use (Article 22.4)</i> | 87 |
| (b) | Additional protection for geographical indications for wines and spirits (Article 23) | 88 |
| (i) | <i>Protection against use by others (Article 23.1)</i> | 89 |
| (ii) | <i>Protection against use as a trademark (Article 23.2)</i> | 90 |
| (iii) | <i>Homonymous geographical indications for wines (Article 23.3)</i> | 90 |
| (iv) | <i>Negotiation of a multilateral register of geographical indications for wines (Article 23.4)</i> | 90 |
| 4 | Exceptions and international negotiations | 91 |
| (a) | Exceptions | 91 |
| (i) | <i>Generic terms (Article 24.6)</i> | 91 |
| (ii) | <i>Prior trademark rights (Article 24.5)</i> | 92 |
| (iii) | <i>Prior use of the geographical indication (Article 24.4)</i> | 92 |
| (iv) | <i>Time limit to challenge trademarks under Article 22.3 and Article 23.2 (Article 24.7)</i> | 93 |
| (v) | <i>Use by a person of his name (Article 24.8)</i> | 93 |
| (vi) | <i>GIs not protected in their country of origin or which have fallen into disuse in their country (Article 24.9)</i> | 93 |
| (b) | International negotiations, review and standstill | 94 |
| (i) | <i>International negotiations (Article 24.1)</i> | 94 |
| (ii) | <i>Standstill (Article 24.3)</i> | 94 |
| V | Patents | 95 |
| A | Introduction | 95 |
| 1 | What are patents? | 95 |
| 2 | What is the relationship with the pre-existing provisions of the Paris Convention? | 96 |
| B | TRIPS provisions on patents | 97 |
| 1 | What is the subject matter to be protected by patents? | 97 |
| (a) | In which areas must inventions be eligible for protection? | 97 |
| (b) | What conditions must inventions meet to be eligible for patent protection? | 98 |
| (i) | <i>Novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability</i> | 98 |
| (ii) | <i>Disclosure</i> | 100 |
| (iii) | <i>What are the permissible exclusions from patentable subject matter?</i> | 102 |
| (iv) | <i>Review of Article 27.3(b)</i> | 104 |
| (v) | <i>Relationship between the TRIPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore</i> | 104 |

| | | |
|-------|--|-----|
| 2 | What are the rights to be conferred on patent owners? | 105 |
| (a) | What are the rights to be conferred on owners of product patents? | 105 |
| (b) | What are the rights to be conferred on owners of process patents? | 105 |
| (i) | <i>Rights of process patent owners</i> | 105 |
| (ii) | <i>Burden of proof</i> | 106 |
| (c) | Non-discrimination with respect to enjoyment of patent rights | 107 |
| (i) | <i>The place of invention</i> | 107 |
| (ii) | <i>The field of technology</i> | 107 |
| (iii) | <i>Whether products are imported or locally produced</i> | 107 |
| (d) | What other rights do patent owners have? | 108 |
| 3 | What are the permissible exceptions to patent rights? | 108 |
| (a) | Limited exceptions | 108 |
| (b) | Compulsory licences | 109 |
| 4 | What is the minimum period of protection to be accorded? | 114 |
| (a) | Term of protection | 114 |
| (b) | Revocation | 115 |
| VI | Industrial designs, layout-designs of integrated circuits, undisclosed information, anti-competitive practices | 116 |
| A | Introduction | 116 |
| B | Industrial designs | 116 |
| 1 | What is an industrial design? | 117 |
| 2 | What has to be eligible for protection as an industrial design? | 117 |
| (a) | General formalities for the protection of industrial designs | 118 |
| (i) | <i>Formalities</i> | 118 |
| (ii) | <i>Priority</i> | 118 |
| (b) | Provisions regarding formalities for industrial designs in the textile sector | 118 |
| 3 | What are the rights to be conferred on an owner of a protected industrial design? | 119 |
| 4 | What are the permissible exceptions to the rights conferred? | 120 |
| 5 | How long does the protection of an industrial design have to last? | 120 |
| C | Layout-designs (topographies) of integrated circuits | 121 |
| 1 | What is a layout-design (topography) of an integrated circuit? | 121 |

| | | |
|------------|---|------------|
| 2 | What has to be eligible for protection as a layout-design of an integrated circuit? | 122 |
| 3 | What are the rights to be conferred on the owner of a protected layout-design? | 123 |
| 4 | What are the permissible limitations and exceptions to the rights conferred? | 124 |
| | (a) Reproduction for private or research purposes | 124 |
| | (b) Parallel creation | 124 |
| | (c) Innocent infringement | 124 |
| | (d) Exhaustion | 125 |
| | (e) Compulsory licensing | 125 |
| 5 | How long does the protection of a layout-design have to last? | 125 |
| D | Undisclosed information | 126 |
| 1 | Undisclosed information (trade secrets) | 126 |
| 2 | Undisclosed test and other data | 128 |
| E | Control of anti-competitive practices in contractual licences | 129 |
| 1 | Introduction | 129 |
| 2 | Overview of the relevant provisions of the TRIPS Agreement | 131 |
| VII | Enforcement | 135 |
| A | Introduction | 135 |
| 1 | Background | 135 |
| 2 | What is IPR enforcement? | 136 |
| 3 | Application of basic principles | 137 |
| 4 | What is the relationship of the TRIPS Agreement with pre-existing provisions in other conventions and treaties? | 138 |
| B | General obligations | 138 |
| C | Civil and administrative procedures and remedies | 140 |
| 1 | Fair and equitable procedures | 140 |
| 2 | Evidence | 141 |
| 3 | Remedies | 141 |
| | (a) Injunctions | 141 |
| | (b) Damages | 142 |
| | (c) Other remedies | 142 |
| 4 | Right of information | 143 |
| 5 | Indemnification of the defendant | 143 |
| D | Provisional measures | 144 |
| 1 | Why and what type of provisional measures? | 144 |
| 2 | Procedural requirements and safeguards against abuse | 144 |
| E | Border measures | 146 |
| 1 | Scope and coverage | 146 |

| | | |
|------|---|-----|
| (a) | Mandatory coverage of pirated copyright goods and counterfeit trademark goods | 146 |
| (b) | Optional coverage | 147 |
| 2 | Procedural requirements and safeguards against abuse | 148 |
| (a) | Application, including evidence and description of goods | 148 |
| (b) | Notice of suspension | 149 |
| (c) | Duration of suspension | 149 |
| (d) | Posting of security/payment of compensation | 149 |
| 3 | Right of inspection and information | 150 |
| 4 | Remedies | 150 |
| 5 | Special rules for <i>ex officio</i> action | 151 |
| F | Criminal procedures | 151 |
| 1 | Scope and coverage | 151 |
| 2 | Remedies | 151 |
| (a) | Measures and intellectual property rights at issue | 152 |
| (b) | Summary of key Panel findings | 152 |
| G | Cooperation and contact points | 153 |
| 1 | Cooperation between Members | 153 |
| 2 | Contact points | 154 |
| VIII | Dispute prevention and settlement | 155 |
| A | Introduction | 155 |
| B | Dispute prevention and the review of national implementing legislation | 156 |
| C | Dispute settlement | 157 |
| 1 | General | 157 |
| 2 | Non-violation and situation complaints | 159 |
| D | Description of the dispute settlement procedures | 161 |
| 1 | Consultations between the parties | 161 |
| 2 | Panel examination | 163 |
| 3 | Appellate review | 163 |
| 4 | Adoption of the Panel/Appellate report(s) and implementation | 164 |
| E | Experience in the area of TRIPS | 166 |
| 1 | A guide to resources | 176 |
| IX | TRIPS and public health | 179 |
| A | Introduction | 179 |
| B | Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health | 180 |
| 1 | Concerns that triggered the discussions | 180 |