International rules on cross-border trade and investment are increasingly complex. There is the WTO, World Bank and UNCTAD, but also hundreds of bilateral investment treaties (BITs) and free trade arrangements ranging from GSP, EU EPAs and COMESA to ASEAN, CAFTA and TPP. Each has its own negotiation, implementation and dispute settlement system. Everyone is affected but few have the time and resources to fully engage.

Who we are
TradeLab aims to empower countries and smaller stakeholders to reap the full development benefits of global trade and investment rules. Through pro bono legal clinics and practice, TradeLab connects students and experienced legal professionals to public officials especially in developing countries, small and medium-sized enterprises and civil society to build lasting legal capacity. Through ‘learning by doing’ we want to train and promote the next generation of trade and investment lawyers. By providing information and support on negotiations, compliance and litigation, we strive to make WTO, preferential trade and bilateral investment treaties work for everyone.

How we can help
- Research and analysis for treaty negotiations
- Compliance assessment of domestic or foreign laws
- Assessment of legal claims or defence strategies
- Writing of party and third party submissions
- Preparation of amicus curiae briefs
- Legal and economic research on cutting edge trade or investment questions.

Students and supervisors can work in a variety of languages.

What are legal clinics
Legal clinics are composed of small groups of highly qualified and carefully selected students. Faculty and other professionals with longstanding experience in the field closely supervise the work. Clinics are win-win for all involved: beneficiaries get expert work done for free and build capacity; students learn by doing, obtain academic credits and expand their network; faculty and expert mentors share their knowledge on cutting-edge issues and are able to attract or hire top students with proven skills.

How it works
Clinic projects are selected on the basis of need, available resources and practical relevance. Two to four students are assigned to each project. Students are teamed up with expert mentors from law firms or other organizations and carefully prepped and supervised by Academic Supervisors and Teaching Assistants. Students benefit from skills and expert sessions, do detailed legal research and work on several drafts shared with supervisors, mentors and the beneficiary for comments and feedback. The Clinic culminates in a polished legal memorandum, brief, draft law or treaty text or other output tailored to the project’s needs. Clinics deliver in three to four months. Work and output can be public or fully confidential, for example, when preparing legislative or treaty proposals or briefs in actual disputes.

How to submit your project
If you or your organization has a legal question or project or you simply want to learn more about the Clinic, please visit www.tradelab.org. All requests will be treated confidentially.
Examples of completed clinic projects
Established in 2008 at the Graduate Institute’s Centre for Trade and Economic Integration, TradeLab legal clinics have completed 80 unique projects on international trade and investment law matters for a range of stakeholders including international and non-governmental organizations, Geneva-based missions, public institutions and SMEs.

Defining and Defending the Interest of Countries in WTO and Plurilateral Negotiations on Fisheries Subsidies
An analysis and recommendations directed at defining the notions that are key to the ongoing negotiations on fisheries subsidies.

Should Mexico join ICSID?
An assessment of the pros and cons of different arbitration fora, and how they play out for the specific case of Mexico.

Options for a WTO Member to retaliate after winning a WTO dispute
Can IP rights be suspended in retaliation? How to ensure equivalence between the violation and the retaliation? How to design an effective retaliation scheme in the copyright area?

SME land owner and possible expropriation rights
What redress options are available to a landowner whose land was expropriated by the government?

Other selected projects
Illicit trade and international economic law
An analysis of Export Restriction Rules and Proposals under the WTO
Services Trade under the East African Community Common Market Protocol
WTO consistency of green automotive policies (confidential)
Counterclaims in investor-state dispute settlement
Trade & investment treaty implications of the UK leaving the EU
WTO consistency of a proposed Carbon Tax bill (confidential)
Assisting African nations in the reform of investment treaties
Issues and tensions in public procurement of ‘green innovation’: a cross-country study.

The University of Ottawa’s bilingual, bilingual Faculty of Law, situated in Canada’s capital, has one of the richest selections of international law courses in the world. We offer specialized LLMs in international trade and investment law, global sustainability and environmental law, international humanitarian and security law, technology law, and health law. We have student clinics with real clients in these fields and are home to the internationally renowned Human Rights Research and Education Centre.

Queen’s University Faculty of Law provides students with a unique curriculum in international law. The International Law Programs at Herstmonceux Castle in Southern England offer summer courses in public international law and international business law. In their upper years, students can pursue further studies in a wide range of international law subjects, participate in moots on international trade law, public international law and commercial arbitration, and in the International Economic Law Clinic with the University of Ottawa.

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TradeLab clinic network
The Graduate Institute, Geneva
Georgetown University Law Center, Washington, D.C.
University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law, Ottawa
Queen’s University, Faculty of Law, Kingston
International Economic Law and Policy (IELPO), Barcelona
Trade Policy Training Centre in Africa (TRAPCA), Arusha
Jindal Global Law School, Sonipat, India
Qatar University, Doha

Disclaimer
All documents and communications issued by our clinics are for research purposes only and on a pro-bono basis engaged in by students. The Clinic is a pedagogical exercise to train students in the practice of international economic law, not professional legal advice. No client-attorney relation is, at any time, established. No Clinic document or other communication can in any way bind, or lead to any form of liability or responsibility for, its authors, the supervisors of the Clinic or the academic institutions involved.