



Global Trade and Blockchain Symposium

2-3 December 2019

Draft agenda – Room CRI

New technologies are shaping the way we work and trade. One technology in particular, blockchain, keeps making the headlines. How transformative could this technology be for international trade? What is its potential and what are the challenges that come with its deployment?

The event will present various use cases that aim at facilitating international trade using blockchain, from trade finance, to transportation and logistics, border procedures, and agriculture. It will discuss how this technology can be used in IP intensive industries and what we can do to avoid creating unnecessary standards-related barriers to trade in blockchain and other emerging digital technologies. It will also explore the implications of the rise of blockchain and other digital technologies for developing countries and review what could be done to ensure that they reap the benefits that these technologies open. Finally, it will provide an opportunity to discuss the role of international organizations in promoting a regulatory and policy framework conducive to the deployment of this technology while mitigating the risks that may arise.

2 December 2019	
10-10.20	Opening remarks - DG Azevêdo, WTO
10.20-10.45	Keynote speech(es) tbc
10.45-11.30	Session 1: What is Blockchain and DLT? This session will present the main characteristics of Blockchain.
11.30-13.00	Session 2: Towards frictionless trade? The private sector perspective International trade remains labour and paper-intensive. This session will explore how private sector companies are using the technology to remove frictions from international trade, with a particular focus on trade finance to transportation and logistics.
13.00-15.00	Lunch break
15.00-16.30	Session 3: Facilitating commodity trade through blockchain This session will focus on the use of blockchain technology in agriculture and agricultural trade. The blockchain technology might be a real game changer in the agricultural sector where it can be used for a range of purposes such as improving food traceability, speeding up transactions, facilitating access to credit, creating new market places or facilitating food transport. The use of this technology will therefore help to improve production, connect producers with buyers and smooth trade flows. The speakers will be looking at the different uses of this technology through specific examples. The session will also look at the experience of China that is a one of the world leaders in applying blockchain technology.



16.30-18.00	<p>Session 4: Trade facilitation in action</p> <p>Bureaucratic delays and inefficient border procedures continue to impose significant costs on businesses. Trade facilitation—the simplification, modernization and harmonization of export and import processes—has therefore emerged as a key focus of trade policy. Can the blockchain technology facilitate border procedures? This session will explore the opportunities that the technology could open and discuss various use cases.</p>
3 December 2019	
10.00-11.30	<p>Session 5: TBT, standards and digital trade: Blockchain and other emerging technologies</p> <p>This session will explore linkages between trade, standards, the TBT Agreement, and emerging digital technologies, such as the Internet of Things, Additive Manufacturing, Artificial Intelligence and 5G, with emphasis on Blockchain. It will focus on how to avoid creating unnecessary standards-related barriers to trade in Blockchain and other emerging digital technologies, including through regulatory cooperation and alignment to relevant international standards.</p>
11.30-13.00	<p>Session 6: Blockchain, Intellectual property and Government Procurement (room 2)</p> <p>Intellectual property protection, in particular patent protection, is crucial to the development and deployment of blockchain technology. In recent years, the number of patent applications for blockchain related innovations have been growing rapidly. Meanwhile blockchain technology is finding its applications in intellectual property protection and management, while its true potential has yet to be reached. This session will introduce the current patent landscape of blockchain related innovations, its trends and new challenges arising. It will present a few real-world applications of blockchain technology in IP intensive industries, that shows how these industries can benefit from blockchain technology in the future.</p>
13.00-15.00	Lunch break
15.00-16.30	<p>Session 7: From lagging behind to leapfrogging: Ensuring inclusive tech in developing world</p> <p>The session will focus on current and future opportunities and challenges for strengthening the use of digital solutions, including the application of blockchain, in developing countries and the LDCs. It will provide an opportunity to explore regulatory precedents, concerns, and responses to the changes brought about by new technologies. The panel discussion will include the different roles of stakeholder groups and partnerships, and the alliances required for LDCs to benefit more fully from digital technologies</p>



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16.30-17.50	<p>Session 8: The way forward: What role for international trade cooperation? How best to promote a conducive policy environment?</p> <p>This session will discuss governance and regulatory issues and explore the role of governments and international organizations in enabling the development of a policy environment conducive to the deployment of the technology in international trade. It will discuss potential follow-up actions.</p>
17.50-18.00	<p>Closing remarks</p> <p>WTO Deputy-Director General Xiaozhun Yi</p>