



# Trade Guide: WTO IT Agreement

## WTO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT

### What is this Agreement and what does it do?

Under the Information Technology Agreement, commonly known as the ITA, participants have eliminated all import duties on a wide range of information technology (IT) products. A list of the current signatory countries, which account for approximately 95 per cent of world trade in IT products, and a list of the few countries that have been allowed to delay their duty reductions on a handful of products, can be found below.

The six main categories of goods receiving duty-free status are computers, telecommunications equipment, semiconductors, semiconductor manufacturing equipment, software, and scientific equipment.

The ITA was negotiated under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and was signed at a WTO Ministerial Conference in Singapore on December 13, 1996. It went into effect on March 13, 1997. It has no expiration date.

### Who benefits from this Agreement?

This Agreement can benefit any company that wishes to export any of the information technology products specified in the Agreement to any of the signatory countries. The elimination of duties promotes reduced transaction costs, greater market access, increased sales and enhanced export revenues.

### How can this Agreement help my company?

The wide range of information technology products on which duties have been eliminated under this Agreement are listed in Attachments A and B to the Agreement's [Annex](#). In recognition of the rapid advances in IT technology, the Agreement calls for an annual product review to expand coverage to new products. The ITA Committee in the WTO has also initiated work on non-tariff measures affecting the sector.

The Agreement invites all WTO-member countries and all countries in the process of acceding to the WTO to become ITA members.

Link to the the WTO's Information Technology Agreement web site for a current [list of signatories](#).

Original ITA signatories that were allowed to maintain tariffs on a handful of products beyond January 1, 2000, are Taiwan, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia and Thailand. Tariffs on these products will be eliminated in stages, reaching zero no later than 2005.

As of July 2015, the ITA covered 80 participants, representing approximately 97 percent of world trade in information technology products.

Disputes under the Information Technology Agreement can be resolved through the WTO's dispute settlement process, which is described in the [Trade Guide to the WTO Understanding on the Settlement of Disputes](#).

## **Can the U.S. Government help me if I have a problem?**

Yes. If you are exporting IT products covered by this Agreement to any ITA-member country, and you are being charged any tariffs on your goods (unless the country involved has been granted an exception— see previous section), contact the Office of Trade Agreements Negotiations and Compliance (TANC) through [its public hotline at the U.S. Department of Commerce](#).

TANC can help you understand your rights under this Agreement and can alert the relevant U.S. Government officials to make inquiries, if appropriate, with the other country involved to help you resolve your problem.

In addition, if you discover that any of the signatory countries has erected non-tariff measures which limit your access to a signatory country's IT market, please contact us.

How can I get more information?

The complete text of the WTO Information Technology Agreement is available from the Office of Trade Agreements Negotiations and Compliance's [WTO Agreements database](#).

If you have questions about the Information Technology Agreement or how to use it, you can [e-mail](#) the Office of Trade Agreements Negotiations and Compliance (TANC), which will forward your message to the Commerce Department's Designated Monitoring Officer for this Agreement. You can also contact the Designated Monitoring Officer at the following address:

Designated Monitoring Officer -

Information Technology Agreement

Office of Health and Information Technologies

U.S. Department of Commerce

1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W. Room 20001

Washington, D.C. 20230

Tel: (202) 482-1333

Fax: (202) 482-5522

The Designated Monitoring Officer can also provide you with additional information and contacts.

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You can also visit the following Internet sites to obtain further information on the ITA:

[The Office of Information and Communication Technologies Home Page](#)

Located in the International Trade Administration, the Office of Information and Communication Technologies (OICT) helps U.S. companies increase international sales and overseas business opportunities in the information technology sectors of computers and networking equipment, microelectronics, telecommunications, and instrumentation by monitoring business and economic trends in the IT and Communications industries and providing data on trade and global markets and influencing the development of U.S. trade policy in these sectors.

The Electronic Commerce team provides general trade and policy analysis and research, including analyzing foreign countries' e-commerce laws and initiatives and participating in international discussions to promote a favorable global policy environment for electronic commerce growth. The Information Technology and Telecommunications teams actively support U.S. IT firms' efforts to expand their business opportunities overseas. As specialists in the IT and telecommunications industry, our staff counsel U.S. IT and telecommunications firms on overseas market conditions and the practical aspects of exporting IT and telecommunications products and services; identify market barriers as they affect IT and telecommunications exports; and work closely with the U.S. Trade Representative to negotiate the removal of these barriers. Export promotion activities include trade missions and technical seminars that introduce U.S. businesses to overseas IT and telecommunications end-users.

[The World Trade Organization's Information Technology Agreement Home Page](#)

The WTO's Information Technology Agreement Home Page enables American exporters of information technology products to obtain further details about this Agreement.