

TESS Forum on Trade,
Environment,
& the SDGs

For inclusive international
cooperation and action on
trade and sustainability

Annual Report 2025



**GENEVA
GRADUATE
INSTITUTE**

INSTITUT DE HAUTES
ÉTUDES INTERNATIONALES
ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT
GRADUATE INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL AND
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

TESS is housed at the Geneva
Graduate Institute.

TESS

Forum on Trade,
Environment,
& the SDGs

The Forum on Trade, Environment, & the SDGs (TESS) works for a global trading system that effectively addresses global environmental crises and advances sustainable development. To foster inclusive international cooperation and action on trade and sustainability, our activities seek to catalyse inclusive, evidence-based, and solutions-oriented dialogue and policymaking, connect the dots between policy communities, provide thought leadership on priorities and policy options, and inspire governments and stakeholders to take meaningful action.

This report was designed by Tohu Design.

All stock images are from unsplash.com and pexels.com.

Contents

Message From the Executive Director	02
About TESS	04
Inclusive International Cooperation and Action on Trade and Sustainability: Review of Key Outcomes and Impact	08
Sustaining Progress on Sustainability in the Multilateral Trading System	09
Cultivating Coherence and Inclusion on Trade and Climate Policy	13
Supporting Cooperation Towards an Ambitious and Fair Plastics Treaty	18
Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and a Nature-Positive Trading System	22
Integrating Developing Country Perspectives on Trade and Sustainability	28
Providing Thought Leadership on Issues of Trade and Sustainability	30
Spotlight	36
First Annual Conference on Trade, Climate, and Sustainable Development	36
Year in Review	40
Partners and Funders	44
Annexes	46

This report reviews how we work for a global trading system that addresses global environmental crises and advances the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*



* TESS work contributes directly and/or indirectly to all 17 SDGs. The eight SDGs listed here are those most directly addressed by our activities.

Message From the Executive Director

Welcome to the TESS Annual Report. In this report we review our work in 2025 and share some of our main achievements. We present how we made a difference as we strive for a global trading system that effectively addresses global environmental crises and advances sustainable development.

For TESS, 2025 was a year of incredible growth and impact; made possible with the support and collaboration of an expanding set of partners, colleagues, and friends from around the world.

In 2025, we saw trade-related issues capture the world's attention in unprecedented ways—from the fallout of US tariffs to the prominence of trade in climate discussions and the reordering of supply chains. Amidst the turmoil of the daily headlines and in a context of cascading environmental crises, pronounced economic uncertainty, and heightened geopolitical tensions, TESS remained steadfastly committed to achieving our mission of fostering inclusive international cooperation and action on trade and sustainability in all three of its dimensions—economic, social, and environmental.

While a vast array of stakeholders highlight the urgent need for effective policymaking and enhanced cooperation among governments, global governance is falling short. The world is failing to deliver on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals at the scale and speed required. Alongside the mounting challenges of stark economic inequalities, food insecurity, and poverty in many parts of the world, the international community collectively faces an extraordinary set of environmental crises—climate change, nature loss, and pollution—threatening the stability, resilience, and prosperity of economies and communities everywhere, but especially the world's poorest and most vulnerable.



At TESS, it is our conviction that only through stronger and more inclusive international cooperation—including around trade—can these interconnected global challenges be addressed.

This volatile period is a time to deepen attention to sustainable development as a lodestar for a prosperous, resilient, and just future. Across the many international processes relevant to advancing trade and sustainability, this is a critical moment to strengthen thought leadership on pathways forward, consolidate evidence of what is working, and focus attention on delivering concrete results for people and planet. Among the issues for attention, a long overdue conversation is needed on what it would mean for the global trading system to recognize and address the role and value of nature as a fundamental basis of economic activity and human welfare—and the types of trade cooperation and systemic reforms this would require.

In 2025, TESS achieved results of which we are proud.

At the World Trade Organization (WTO), despite the overall turbulence in international trade and the many challenges confronting the organization, we helped sustain progress on sustainability and trade through our reputation as a credible, trusted facilitator and our hands-on engagement in supporting the day-to-day work of government delegations in Geneva to grapple

constructively with complex issues at hand. TESS work is reflected in a number of final documents prepared for the Fourteenth WTO Ministerial Conference, notably by the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD) and the Dialogue on Plastic Pollution. In the Committee on Trade and Environment and in TESSD, we helped frame and support discussions on trade-climate measures around critical issues of transparency, coherence, interoperability, and development.

The 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Brazil demonstrated growing recognition of the need to grapple with tensions and opportunities at the nexus of trade and climate. TESS was on the ground in Belém engaged in a range of events and collaborations designed to support inclusive cooperation on climate, trade, and sustainable development, including a stakeholder roundtable hosted by the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate, which TESS supports as its Secretariat. COP30 also saw the launch by the Brazilian COP Presidency of the Integrated Forum on Climate Change and Trade (IFCCT), designed to promote dialogue and solution-building at the intersection of trade and climate change, which TESS is proud to support as the anchor organization of the IFCCT's joint Secretariat.

An important part of our work in 2025 was to support cooperation towards an ambitious and fair global plastics treaty. We continued to support the work of the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution (HAC) as part of its Secretariat function, while facilitating cooperation with an even wider group of countries, known together as the "HAC and Friends." Leading up to the resumed fifth negotiating session in Geneva, we continued to play a leadership role in emphasizing the importance of advancing the protection of human health in the treaty.

A notable outcome in 2025 was the release in June of a landmark report of an International Expert Group on Environmentally Harmful Agricultural Subsidies convened by TESS. The findings aim to provide guidance to policymakers and inform discussions on options for cooperative action at the WTO and beyond, as well as in the context of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

A cross-cutting objective across all of our activities is to support the engagement and participation of developing countries and their stakeholders in discussions on international trade and sustainability. In 2025, this included providing formal and informal settings for delegations and stakeholders to exchange views, build shared understandings, and review opportunities to shape the agenda for international deliberations.

Finally, in October, we hosted the first edition of the TESS annual Conference on Trade, Climate, and Sustainable Development (TCSD). TCSD brought together a vibrant and diverse community of experts committed to finding pathways for effective, inclusive international cooperation on trade, climate, and sustainable development—and to connect the dots across policy communities, disciplines, and regions.

Many more examples of our achievements in 2025 are described in this report. Although much remains to be done, we are confident that solid foundations have been laid for future success and impact as we approach our five-year anniversary.

I wish to thank TESS staff for their dedication and energy throughout the year, and their shared commitment to consolidating our role as a leading, trusted actor working to advance sustainability in trade. I also wish to thank our many partners and supporters whose collaboration has been vital to enable us to deliver on our mission.

Thank you—together, we're making a positive difference!



Carolyn Deere Birkbeck
Founder and Executive Director, TESS

About TESS

OUR VISION

Our vision is a world where the global trading system effectively addresses global environmental crises and advances sustainable development goals.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to foster inclusive international cooperation and action on trade and sustainability.

OUR APPROACH

Based in International Geneva, TESS aims to support the multilateral dialogue, inclusive international cooperation, and policy action necessary to align trade and trade policies with the urgent need for environmental action, sustainable development, and just transitions.

Our activities catalyze inclusive, evidence-based, and solutions-oriented dialogue and policymaking, bridge policy communities, provide thought leadership on policy priorities and options, and inspire meaningful action at the intersection of trade and sustainability.

We add strategic value to existing efforts by fostering collaborations among key actors, stakeholders, and policy communities while integrating a diversity of international perspectives and expertise.

In so doing, we actively promote the engagement and representation of developing country voices in international agenda-setting on trade and sustainability.

OUR TOOLBOX

We **convene** public briefings, high-level dialogues, expert meetings, expert groups, and off-the-record informal discussions.

We **inform** and **advise** key stakeholders and government officials on strategic developments and opportunities.

We **curate** and **produce** policy-relevant analysis and briefings, working with a diverse array of international experts and partners.

We **support** strategic partnerships, collaborative initiatives, and consultations for joint efforts.

HOW WE WORK



Connect

We foster inclusive, solutions-oriented dialogue on trade, environment, and sustainable development, connecting the dots between policy communities and processes.



Incubate

We support action-oriented solutions, catalyse new initiatives, and introduce promising new perspectives and proposals into policy processes.



Inform

We inform by facilitating access to policy-relevant updates, evidence, and analysis in accessible formats and building shared understandings.



Equip

We support governments and stakeholders to monitor and participate effectively in relevant international processes, with a cross-cutting focus on supporting engagement of actors from developing countries.

OUR THEMES AND FOCUS AREAS

Our work is organized around four core **themes**, reflecting the triple planetary crises of climate change, nature loss, and pollution, and a number of specific **policy areas** responding to evolving and emerging policy developments.

Alongside, we are engaged in several **initiatives** that respond to strategic policy opportunities, including convening a number of *international expert groups* and acting as the Secretariat of the *Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate* and the *High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution* and the anchor organization of the joint Secretariat of the *Integrated Forum on Climate Change and Trade*.

Our **policy areas** include: subsidies and green industrial policies; environmental goods, services, and technologies; trade and finance; and standards and regulations.

* See our results framework in the Annex for an illustration of how we generate impact.

Our four **core themes** are:



CLIMATE CRISIS

Fostering inclusive international cooperation on trade and trade policies to advance climate mitigation and adaptation, climate-resilient development, and fair transitions.

tessforum.org/work/climate-crisis



NATURE, FOOD, AND RESOURCES

Fostering inclusive international cooperation on nature-positive trade and trade policies relevant to support biodiversity and sustainability in agriculture, food systems, and use of natural resources..

tessforum.org/work/natural-environment



PLASTIC POLLUTION

Fostering inclusive international cooperation on trade and trade policies to support global efforts to end plastic pollution.

tessforum.org/work/plastic-pollution



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Fostering inclusive international cooperation on trade and trade policies to enable a circular economy that serves sustainable development priorities and environmental goals.

tessforum.org/work/circular-economy

OUR INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY NETWORK

TESS benefits from the support of a regionally diverse International Advisory Network (IAN) drawn from a broad range of international organizations, stakeholder groups, and research institutions. The IAN supports us through advice on emerging strategic policy developments, research, and collaboration opportunities.

Find out more: tessforum.org/people

OUR STEERING COMMITTEE

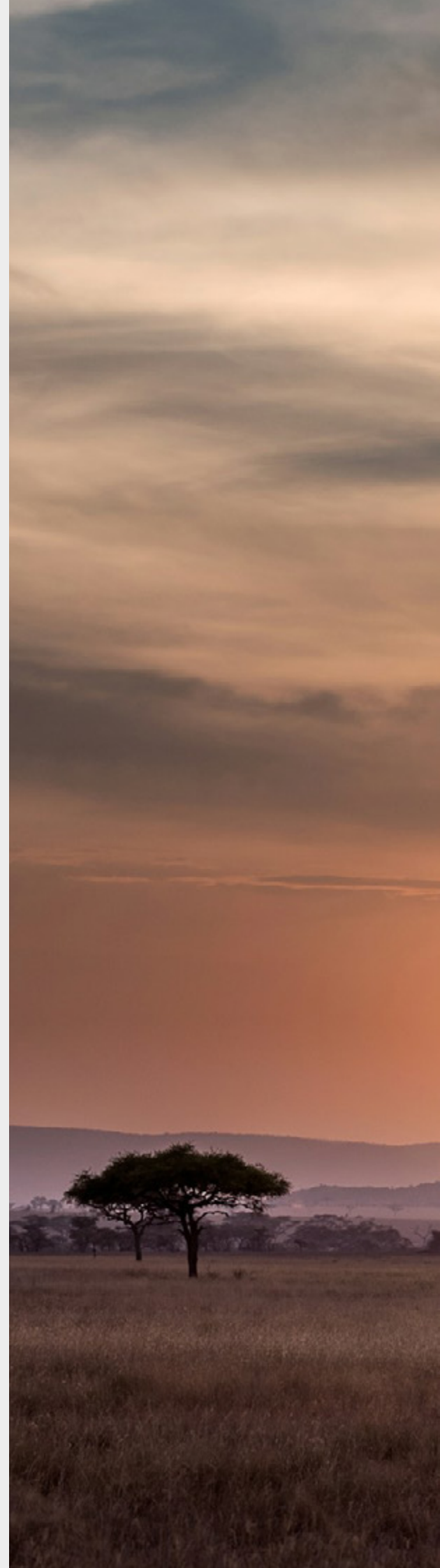
The TESS Steering Committee provides guidance on strategy and priorities. The committee is comprised of eminent representatives from different backgrounds actively involved in international trade, environment, and sustainable development.

Find out more: tessforum.org/people

GOVERNANCE

TESS is subject to the Geneva Graduate Institute's governance and oversight mechanisms, as well as its financial administration, human resources, and oversight systems.

Find out more: tessforum.org/governance





Inclusive International Cooperation and Action on Trade and Sustainability: Review of Key Achievements and Impact

Sustaining Progress on Sustainability in the Multilateral Trading System



TESS has established itself as a key convener and thought leader on trade, environment, and sustainable development in the multilateral setting, contributing to mounting momentum on trade and sustainability issues within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

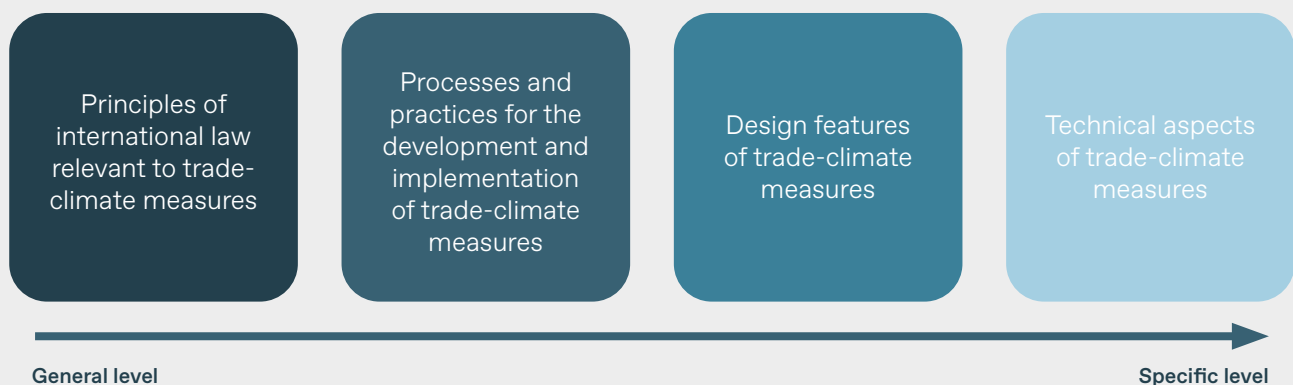
Despite the turbulence in international trade and the many challenges confronting the organization—not least the pressing calls for reform—the broad majority of WTO members share a conviction that environment and trade issues require sustained attention and stronger, more inclusive collective action. TESS seeks to ensure that this sentiment on the part of members moves towards concrete outcomes that address global environmental and sustainable development challenges in ways that are ambitious, effective, and just.

Over the past five years, we have built and cemented our reputation as a neutral, trusted, and credible facilitator that curates timely, evidence-based information and introduces tangible ideas in multilateral discussions, including in the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE), and in the context of the member-led Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD), Dialogue on Plastic Pollution (DPP), and Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform (FFSR) initiative, which we have accompanied since their launch.

A specific value-added of TESS is the hands-on engagement and presence of our staff in supporting the day-to-day work of delegations in Geneva to grapple constructively with complex issues of trade and sustainability. Our reputation as a trusted convener helps forge conversations with a diversity of WTO members and link them to relevant expertise. Given the sensitivity and tensions surrounding trade diplomacy in general—and trade and sustainability specifically—this ability to gather people in off-the-record and informal settings is a core and recognized hallmark of TESS.

More generally, on the sustainability agenda at the WTO, we play a unique role in supporting regular dialogue among delegations at the technical and ambassadorial level across the membership, between policymakers, experts, and civil society, and between the trade and environment policy communities.

Levels of Intervention Raised in Discussions on Cooperation on Trade-Climate Measures



Source: TESS. (2025). *Fostering enhanced international cooperation on trade-related measures with climate objectives at the WTO: Coherence, transparency, development, and interoperability*. Forum on Trade, Environment, & the SDGs (TESS).



Some members have expressed their interest to continue the CTE discussions on trade and climate measures in 2026, focusing on transparency but also covering other aspects, such as the development dimension, interoperability, and coherence. It shows continued interest and momentum in discussing trade-related climate measures in an in-depth manner in the CTE. Thank you very much for TESS engagement on these issues.

Takaaki Sashida, Counsellor,
Permanent Mission of Japan to the
International Organizations in Geneva

In 2025, through our series of roundtables, behind-the-scenes support, and written inputs, we helped frame discussions on trade-climate measures in TESSD, and subsequently in reinvigorated discussions in the CTE around issues of transparency, interoperability, and development. We also provided support for non-binding guidance to be adopted on the design and implementation of trade measures with climate objectives. Discussions are ongoing and expanding—for example on carbon standards—and a voluntary transparency exercise will commence on a pilot basis.

During the year, as the TESSD co-convenors and sponsors worked towards finalizing a comprehensive package of documents ahead of the Fourteenth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) in Cameroon in March 2026, we provided ongoing support and inputs on next steps for the entire initiative across its four working groups. With the support of TESS among many other stakeholders, TESSD has pioneered new forms of engagement within the WTO on trade and sustainability, acting as an incubator of ideas and a testing ground for new models of cooperation.

TESS work is reflected in the final documents prepared for MC14; notably on circular economy where our presentations and publications are quoted as well as on trade-related climate measures as noted above. In recognition of our constructive and supportive role in accompanying this initiative since its conception, TESS Executive Director Carolyn Deere Birkbeck was invited to speak at the launch event of the MC14 package to reflect on its achievements and—crucially—the road ahead.



This publication by Carolyn Deere Birkbeck provides a timely and insightful analysis of how TESSD has become a key driver of renewed momentum on trade and environment issues at the WTO. As co-convenor of TESSD with Costa Rica, Canada welcomes this reflection on progress achieved over the past five years and will continue to build on these efforts.

H.E. Mrs. Nadia Theodore, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the World Trade Organization



As one of the co-convenors of one of the TESSD informal working groups, we have been able to count on TESS when we have needed expert input on substantive aspects or when we have been looking for partners for informal activities. TESS has been a relevant actor and a constructive partner.

H.E Mrs. Sofia Boza Martinez, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Chile to the WTO

Throughout 2025, we remained actively engaged in supporting the work of the DPP, including through providing written inputs and suggestions reflected in the MC14 statement and broader outcome package (for more information see section below on the plastics treaty). A notable achievement and concrete outcome from the DPP process in 2025 was the adoption of amendments to the Harmonized System, which includes new subheadings on plastics and plastic products that will enter into force in 2028 following the seventh review cycle. These amendments—which are an important contribution to improving transparency in trade flows of plastics and plastic products, particularly single-use products, and therefore their regulation—are the result of sustained engagement on the part of the DPP and its participating members, with longstanding technical support provided by TESS among other stakeholder organizations. It also stems from constructive collaboration with the World Customs Organization.

In 2025, we further helped frame discussions in the WTO setting on trade and sustainable agriculture. This included contributing to the first workshop on agricultural trade and sustainability, organized by Brazil on 22 September, in the context of a new sustainable agriculture initiative. This was part of a broader set of TESS inputs and activities aimed at advancing discussions on trade and sustainable agriculture (see section on promoting sustainable agriculture below).

We continued to host our series of ambassadors' roundtables on trade and sustainability launched in 2024, bringing together a diverse group of ambassadors in an informal and off-the-record setting to discuss priorities and opportunities for cooperation, including in the context of MC14 and WTO reform discussions.

Overall, TESS helped provide valuable impetus to constructive discussions and processes in the multilateral setting on how to anchor sustainability in a trading system fit for the future we need.

Find out more: tessforum.org/initiatives/tess-at-the-world-trade-organization



Cultivating Coherence and Inclusion on Trade and Climate Policy



Discussions on the trade, climate, and sustainable development nexus have highlighted the extraordinary complexity of the issues at hand as well as the many perspectives and concerns that need to be reconciled. Yet growing consensus is emerging that there are no credible pathways to tackle the climate crisis without trade and trade policies aligned with the Paris Agreement objectives. Not only is such alignment an essential component of any global strategy to reduce greenhouse emissions, adapt to climate change, and foster climate-resilient development, it will require inclusive international cooperation. Tensions over trade are already complicating climate cooperation, as strikingly manifest at the 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Brazil.

For this reason, promoting greater coherence and cooperation on climate and trade is a core purpose of our work on the climate crisis. Notably, given the multidimensional nature of the challenges at hand, it involves connecting the dots between multiple processes and breaking traditional silos prevailing in the international arena and between policy communities.

Here we highlight two initiatives, with other areas of our climate work found in later sections of this report, including a compilation of articles from leading experts for a Synergies series on how the trading system can contribute to addressing the climate crisis, a series of sectoral briefing notes on net zero pathways, and the first TESS Annual Conference on Trade, Climate, and Sustainable Development (see spotlight).

An essential requirement for greater coherence across climate and trade policymaking is the integration of developing country perspectives, including on positive agendas for international cooperation that can enable them to achieve climate-resilient and sustainable development. For more information on our 2025 activities related to this cross-cutting dimension of our work, see the section on integrating developing country perspectives on trade and sustainability.

Supporting the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate

In 2024, TESS was nominated to act as the Secretariat of the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate. This nomination was a recognition of the pivotal role TESS and our Executive Director had played in the creation of this initiative. The coalition brings together more than 60 ministers from different regions and varying levels of development, climate vulnerabilities, and trade circumstances to foster inclusive international cooperation at the nexus of climate, trade, and sustainable development.

Co-led by the trade ministers of Ecuador, the European Union, Kenya, and New Zealand, the coalition is in a unique position to drive a positive trade contribution to the global climate agenda and to advance ministerial-level political dialogue.



For Ecuador, as co-lead of the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate, TESS has been a very valuable partner. Their expertise, openness, and constant collaboration have made a real difference in helping the coalition achieve concrete results and continue advancing our shared vision.

H.E Mr. Ambassador José Valencia, Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the World Trade Organization



Throughout 2025, TESS was active through its Secretariat role in providing technical support for coalition outcomes and facilitating coalition meetings, consultations, and outreach, engaging members, stakeholders, and partners.

An important tranche of this support involved preparations for the 3rd Ministerial Meeting alongside MC14, where the coalition would adopt a Ministerial Communiqué highlighting, among others, the ambition to deepen collaboration and explore new avenues for joint action. A senior officials meeting was held in Geneva on 15 October to prepare the groundwork. As part of its engagement strategy, the coalition convened on 24 October a high-level roundtable on the sidelines of UNCTAD16 exploring priorities for international cooperation on trade and climate-resilient sustainable development.

The coalition was also present at COP30, ahead of which the co-leads released a joint message emphasizing the importance of a trade contribution to the global response to climate change. Alongside COP30, the coalition held a high-level panel on 14 November on trade's contribution to advancing the global climate agenda where it announced the publication of a brochure of examples of collaborative actions by coalition members. The brochure aims to offer inspiration for potential cooperation by highlighting a sample of initiatives through which coalition members are advancing the eight areas identified under the Menu of Voluntary Actions endorsed at the 2nd Ministerial Meeting at MC13 in February 2024.

Find out more: tessforum.org/initiatives/coalition-of-trade-ministers-on-climate



Coalition panel at COP30 – 14 November, Belém



Coalition roundtable at UNCTAD16 – 24 October, Geneva



Facilitating Key Cooperative Efforts on Trade at COP30

Beyond our continued work for the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate, TESS was on the ground at COP30 in Belém to support efforts to promote inclusive cooperation on trade, climate, and sustainable development and foster greater alignment between these policy regimes.

COP30 saw the launch by the Brazilian COP Presidency of the Integrated Forum on Climate Change and Trade (IFCCT), designed to promote dialogue and solution-building at the intersection of trade and climate change. Co-led by the governments of Brazil and Australia, the forum concluded in early 2026 a consultative phase, including on modalities and thematic focus. The IFCCT is intended to run for an initial phase of three years and could play a critical role in connecting the dots between different processes and acting as a unique bridge between the trade and climate communities focused on constructive dialogue and practical solutions.

Ahead of the launch, TESS was proud to have been invited to serve as the anchor organization of the joint Secretariat of the IFCCT.

In September, we published in Synergies an adapted version of the speech delivered by Ambassador André Aranha Corrêa do Lago, President-Designate of COP30, at the World Trade Organization's Public Forum on 17 September 2025, where he announced Belém's flagship initiative on climate change and trade. The article was referenced in the international press, including in the Financial Times.

Find out more: ifcct.org



This is a very welcome initiative. It begins to address one of two problems that seem to frustrate effective global governance, in climate change and in many other fields of concern. The problem that it begins to address is that existing international law and governance seems excessively siloed and insufficiently adaptable to grapple with the polycene.

Joel Trachtman, Professor of International Law, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University (in the International Economic Law and Policy Blog)

TESS further co-organized three COP30 side-events. We convened with LeadIT a panel on industrial decarbonization, in partnership with the FACT Dialogue we organized a panel on the importance of smallholder inclusion in sustainable agri-food chains, and with UNCTAD, IISD, Youth Negotiators, and ISO we supported a session on affordable access to technologies.

Find out more: tessforum.org/work/climate-crisis

“

As the world accelerates its transition towards climate-neutrality, international trade must serve as a vital tool for sustainable development. The Coalition offers a unique platform to translate high-level dialogue into tangible, scalable action. We appreciate the professional support of the TESS Secretariat in coordinating the Coalition's activities and promoting engagement among members, and anticipate the Coalition's continued growth, standing ready to advance practical solutions at the trade-environment nexus.

Ukrainian Delegation at COP30

Supporting Cooperation Towards an Ambitious and Fair Plastics Treaty



In March 2022, the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) adopted Resolution 5/14 to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) with the mandate to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. Realizing the ambition of a treaty to end plastic pollution requires attention from governments and stakeholders alike on how we can harness international economic cooperation to transform the plastics economy, support a just transition to sustainability, and foster new economic opportunities, especially for developing countries. Since its launch, TESS has supported the work of the INC to develop and conclude a treaty that is fit for purpose to protect human health and the environment from plastic pollution.

In August 2025, as governments readied to resume the fifth negotiating session in Geneva (INC-5.2), we continued to support the work of the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution (HAC) as part of its Secretariat function, while fostering efforts to mobilize an even wider group of countries pursuing a fair, effective, balanced, and ambitious treaty. The HAC now facilitates the cooperation of about 100 INC members under the broad umbrella of the “HAC and Friends.”

We also supported the treaty process through participation at relevant intergovernmental meetings such as UNEA-7 in Nairobi, the UN Ocean Conference in Nice, the World Health Assembly in Geneva, and the COPs of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) conventions in Geneva, among others, as well as organizing and facilitating a set of events and informal expert working groups. Our team provided further contributions through developing policy and technical documents with experts and holding consultations focused on fostering convergence on several indispensable, but challenging, elements of the negotiations—on chemicals of concern, financing, trade-related issues, and addressing sustainable production and consumption of primary plastic polymers—as well as the operationalization of the protection of human health from the adverse impacts of plastic pollution as a core objective for the treaty.



WHO has collaborated closely over several years with TESS and other health allies, to promote strong protections for health in the international legally binding treaty on plastic pollution currently under negotiation. TESS consistently provides valuable support for well-informed and constructive discussions between INC delegations, supporting member states in their negotiation towards a treaty to effectively protect both the environment and public health. We look forward to continuing to work together in this process and to address the health harms arising from plastic pollution.

Kate Robertson, Technical Officer (Legal), World Health Organization



Through INC-5.2 and into its final hours, our team was substantively involved as trusted advisors and technical experts to governments in their efforts to broker compromises on critical political and technical issues. TESS also played a leadership role in emphasizing the importance of advancing the protection of human health, joining with The Lancet Countdown on Plastics and Health in the days preceding INC-5.2 to host a high-profile public event for the launch of the new multi-year Countdown.

Throughout 2025, TESS continued to support the work of the INC by promoting cooperation on how trade and trade-related policies can contribute to international efforts to tackle plastic pollution. In the build up to MC14, we remained actively engaged in supporting the work of the co-facilitators and WTO members participating in the DPP, including providing suggestions for the MC14 statement and substantive inputs to the summary and synopsis elements of the MC14 outcome package. In our interventions, we consistently emphasized the importance of focusing the work of the DPP on a set of concrete, pragmatic, and effective outcomes ahead of MC15. TESS also supported the work of the DPP by co-hosting an official side event at the 2025 BRS COPs with the DPP co-coordinators, Barbados and Ecuador, on the interlinkages between plastic pollution and transparency in trade flows in the context of multilateral environmental agreements.

Find out more: tessforum.org/initiatives/tess-and-the-global-plastics-treaty-negotiations



On behalf of the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the outstanding engagement of the Geneva Graduate Institute and TESS before and during the INC-5.2 in Geneva. The excellent collaboration with TESS throughout the INC process has been of great value. TESS contributions have been substantial in terms of both expertise and logistical support.

H.E. Mr. Felix Wertli,
Ambassador, Head of the
International Affairs Division,
Federal Office for the
Environment, Switzerland



TESS has played a practical and consistent role in facilitating dialogue between governments and stakeholders across the INC negotiation process. Its timely and well-structured documents have provided delegations with useful reference material at key moments in the negotiations. As advisor to the Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty, TESS has also contributed relevant input and helpful comments that have supported the Coalition in navigating the discussions and identifying a workable way forward.

Ambrogio Miserocchi, Plastic Policy Lead, Ellen MacArthur Foundation and Co-lead Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty



The Dominican Republic aligns itself with the spirit of the High Ambition Coalition and wishes to express its appreciation for the engagement and support provided by the TESS team. We have greatly benefited from their positive spirit, responsiveness, and consistent technical guidance throughout the negotiations. Their expertise, constructive approach, and readiness to assist have helped strengthen our capacity to engage effectively and substantively in the plastics treaty process.

Claudia Taboada, Head of Delegation and Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations



Through HAC coordination and support, the TESS team has been instrumental in offering relentless support to member states during INC negotiations and preparations. Kudos team!

Peter Magombo, Principal Environmental Officer, Department of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change, Malawi



High Ambition Coalition at INC-5.2 – 7-14 August, Geneva



Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and a Nature-Positive Trading System



Amidst many promising initiatives and collaborations to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity, promote sustainable agriculture and food systems, and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, the reality is that the world is not moving fast enough in the right direction. At TESS, we see our core mission as helping to develop a more systemic vision and agenda for a nature-positive trading system—one that recognizes and addresses the role and value of nature as a fundamental basis of economic activity and human welfare.

Trade and trade-related policies can play a critical role in both driving and responding to the many crises facing the natural world and the associated threats to livelihoods around the world. Only through inclusive international cooperation can we forge effective, fair trade rules and policies that proactively support environmental outcomes and address the dependence of economic activity and sustainable development on nature.

Here we highlight two strands of work that we successfully pursued in 2025 to achieve such cooperation. Referenced in this report are other examples of our activities striving towards nature-positive trade and trade policies relevant to supporting sustainability in agriculture, food systems, and use of natural resources. This includes, among others, the formation of an expert group on critical minerals following our inaugural TCSD Conference (see spotlight below).

Generating Momentum on Trade and Sustainable Agriculture

A unique TESS contribution in discussions on trade and agriculture is our engagement with a diverse group of countries from the perspective of sustainability priorities, which is not the framing normally used in agricultural trade negotiations. These efforts are filling a significant gap in identifying trade policy solutions at the international level to help drive sustainable agriculture and food systems.

An important outcome in 2025 was the release in June of a landmark report of an International Expert Group on Environmentally Harmful Agricultural Subsidies. The group—mobilized by TESS in 2024 and composed of world leading experts from academia, think tanks, and intergovernmental and stakeholder organizations representing a diversity of geographical origins and perspectives—was asked to contribute to discussions on what constitutes environmentally harmful agricultural subsidies and identify a set of subsidies for priority action. The findings are intended as guidance to policymakers and to inform discussions on options for cooperative action in the WTO as well as in the FAO, OECD, UNEP, and World Bank and in the context of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The report reviews the current state of knowledge on agricultural subsidies and their impacts on the environment and discusses trade-offs across different policy objectives. It suggests possible approaches and pathways to building shared understandings of what could be defined as environmentally harmful agricultural subsidies as well as options for collaborative approaches to address them.



Find out more: tessforum.org/initiatives/expert-group-on-environmentally-harmful-agriculture-subsidies

“

Many thanks for sharing the report and congratulations! It's a valuable and much need contribution to the discussion about subsidies.

Juha Siikamäki, Chief Economist
& Global Director, Economy and
Finance Team, International Union for
Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

The expert group report was extremely well received and widely circulated among relevant actors. Along with other inputs provided by TESS, it was reflected in discussions at the WTO on agricultural trade and sustainability as part of the new initiative on sustainable agriculture spearheaded by Brazil and now supported by other WTO members.

During the year, we sustained our ongoing engagement with agriculture and nature stakeholders working on subsidies beyond the trade community to foster a stronger focus on the importance of international coordination and cooperation on trade-related aspects—including in the context of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and its Target 18 to identify and eliminate, phase out, or reform incentives, including subsidies, harmful for biodiversity, while reducing them by at least \$500 billion per year by 2030.

In 2025, our efforts to positively contribute to discussions on trade and agriculture from the perspective of environmental and sustainable development priorities also included hosting dedicated sessions on a range of key issues at Geneva Trade Week, TCSD in partnership with IFPRI and the FAO, and COP30 where we partnered with the FACT Dialogue. At TCSD we announced the future formation of a new expert group on sustainable agriculture.

“

It was a pleasure to be part of the session discussing how global disruptions are reshaping the way we think about agrifood systems and trade. The choices made today will determine whether trade becomes a source of fragmentation or a foundation for a more sustainable and secure global food system.

Valeria Piñeiro, Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)



Advancing New Partnerships and Collaborations on Nature and Trade

Despite our growing understanding of the role and value of nature as a fundamental basis of economic activity and human welfare, incentives that drive its destruction are built deep into our economies. In 2025, we advanced new partnerships and collaborations to harness the positive impacts of trade and trade-related policies in support of nature-positive outcomes rather than as drivers of environmental harm.

In partnership with WWF International, we co-published a discussion paper to spur reflection on the potential building blocks of a new narrative and policy agenda on international trade that places nature and people at its heart. The paper aims to inform forward-looking strategic dialogue, cooperation, and action on potential pathways and entry points to support global policy and advocacy work on a trade agenda that could reverse biodiversity loss, support the climate agenda, and advance sustainable development in all three of its dimensions.

The discussion paper was launched in September at a packed session of the WTO Public Forum co-organized with WWF International, drawing a huge amount of interest from the room. In December, TESS Executive Director Carolyn Deere Birkbeck was invited to the annual meeting of the WWF International Board. At the meeting, Carolyn spoke at a high-level dialogue on international trade cooperation and nature, providing an opportunity for a high-level exchange on strategic approaches to ensure that nature is front and centre in the future international trading system and that trade cooperation contributes to the transformative changes we need for nature and people.

Processes That Provide Opportunities for Advancing Sustainability in Trade



Source: Deere Birkbeck, C. (2025). *Accelerating progress on nature, climate change, and sustainable development in a shifting international trading system*. Forum on Trade, Environment, & the SDGs (TESS) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).



On behalf of the WWF Director-General and the WWF International Board, I would like to thank you for your very insightful and thoughtful contributions to the dialogue on accelerating progress on trade, human health, and peace and security for nature and people. Thank you, again, for helping us develop our engagement on the trade policy space. Our partnership is strong and growing. Looking forward to continuations on WTO including reform, plastics—and much more!

Efraim Gomez, Director of Global Policy, WWF International

In July, we published a briefing note on *Fostering a sustainable bioeconomy: The role of international cooperation on trade*. TESS prepared the paper as an input to the work of NatureFinance in support of the G20 Initiative on Bioeconomy under the South African presidency. This contribution to the ongoing activities of NatureFinance on the trade and bioeconomy nexus examines how trade and trade-related policy can promote a sustainable and nature positive bioeconomy and suggests possible cooperative approaches to be pursued internationally.

Another partnership we developed in 2025 was with the World Resources Forum. TESS was an official partner of the World Resources Forum 2025 and moderated the plenary session on *Trading in transition: can supply security and sustainability coexist?* The panel explored how global trade systems for minerals and metals can ensure supply security while meeting environmental and social standards. TESS was also invited to moderate the launch event of the Geneva Dialogues on Mineral and Metal Resources, a series of events to explore interlinkages between the various multilateral debates and negotiations addressing mineral and metal resources governance in Geneva and beyond. The dialogues are organized by the Geneva Environment Network in partnership with Switzerland, Senegal, and intergovernmental and stakeholder organizations, including TESS.

Find out more: tessforum.org/work/natural-environment



World Resources Forum – 2 September, Geneva



Geneva Dialogue on Mineral and Metal Resources – 13 February, Geneva

Integrating Developing Country Perspectives on Trade and Sustainability



A cross-cutting objective across all of our activities is to support the engagement and participation of developing countries and their stakeholders in discussions on international trade and sustainability with a view to positively contributing to agenda-setting and inclusive cooperation. In so doing, we aim to integrate and amplify developing country perspectives in these discussions for cooperation agendas that enable the achievement of climate-resilient and sustainable development and just transitions.

Examples of this commitment to actively promoting the engagement and representation of developing country voices in international agenda-setting on trade and sustainability can be found throughout this report.

In 2025, our efforts to facilitate the engagement of developing countries on issues at the nexus of trade, environment, and sustainable development included providing formal and informal settings for delegations and stakeholders to exchange views, build shared understandings, and review opportunities to shape the agenda for international deliberations. These activities fed into a broader dynamic whereby a growing number of developing countries are demonstrating their interest and participating in substantive discussions on trade, environment, and sustainable development priorities in multilateral settings; be it at the WTO or in the UN climate negotiations.

In the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate we strive to secure the participation of ministers from countries at varying levels of development, climate vulnerabilities, and trade circumstances. In the context of the HAC and in our work with a range of INC delegations, stakeholders, and technical experts, we seek to ensure that our support through informal expert working groups, information documents, events, and consultations fosters inclusive collaboration and appropriate representation of developing country interests and priorities in the plastics treaty negotiations.

Across all of the events TESS hosted or organized in 2025, 43% of the participants came from developing countries. Our objective for 2026 is to ensure that this representation reaches at a minimum 50%. In convening our international expert groups—be it on trade-climate measures, circular economy and sustainable development, environmentally harmful agricultural subsidies, or critical minerals—we systematically invite experts representing a diversity of geographical origin, development circumstances, and perspectives. This diversity and inclusiveness, which is wired into our expert group model, is translated in the reports, guidance, and policy options that emerge from the work of these experts groups.

In our online platform Synergies, 40% of the expert contributors in 2025 were from developing countries— including 46% in our landmark series on where the trading system can contribute to addressing the climate crisis and supporting climate-resilient development (see section below on thought leadership). Here too, we will continue to amplify developing country voices in discussions on trade and sustainability by launching in 2026 a suite of regional mini-series drawing perspectives from Africa and the Asia Pacific.



“

TESS has created a space for developing countries to engage with one another and create shared understandings of development-related trade and environment challenges and opportunities. Beyond this, TESS has been able to achieve an “intangible” in occupying a credible middle ground and provide the space for both developed and developing countries to have an open and informal interface.

Gabriel R. Bautista, Minister Counsellor,
Permanent Mission of the Philippines to
the WTO

“

My participation in the HAC’s informal and parallel meetings has given me the opportunity to benefit from its professionalism, responsiveness, breadth of knowledge, and valuable technical advice, which helped me better prepare and finalize my country’s position and interventions during the negotiations. We thank the HAC and TESS for their consistent support to developing countries during the negotiations, helping us adopt a stronger position towards achieving a binding global agreement.

Joachim Pagnibam T. Meba,
Environmental Lawyer, Head
of Climate Change Division,
Environment Department, Togo

Providing Thought Leadership on Issues of Trade and Sustainability



Addressing global environmental crises such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and plastic pollution requires coherent and collaborative policy approaches across jurisdictions and between policy communities. In this complex policy ecosystem, TESS occupies a unique space in providing thought leadership and guidance on issues of trade, environment, and sustainable development, predominantly on priorities and opportunities for inclusive international cooperation.

Our approach to thought-leadership is multifaceted. It involves convening inclusive dialogues that encourage collaboration among governments and diverse stakeholders, informing policy with accessible, timely, and relevant analysis, incubating action-oriented solutions into policy processes, and equipping governments and stakeholders—particularly from developing countries—for effective participation.

In recognition of the distinct value and perspective that we bring to discussions on trade and sustainability, TESS is regularly invited to speak at or partner for events at key international gatherings. In 2025, TESS attended a number of high-profile international gatherings seeking to address some of the challenges facing people, nature, and planet. We were present at the:

- Second resumed session of the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-16-R2) in Rome in February
- 5th United Nations Ocean Forum on trade-related aspects of Sustainable Development Goal 14 in Geneva in March
- Meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS COPs) in Geneva in May
- Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly in Geneva in May
- 2025 UN Ocean Conference in Nice in June
- Resumed Fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution (INC 5-2) in Geneva in August
- 16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD16) in Geneva in October,
- 2025 UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém in November
- Seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) in Nairobi in December.

Alongside each of these processes, we engaged with governments and stakeholders through various activities, stressing the importance of trade-related solutions and inclusive cooperation. We were regularly contacted by journalists from the international and specialized press to provide context and analysis.

During the year, we were also invited to participate in the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos in January, WTO Trade and Environment Week in Geneva in July, the WTO Public Forum and Geneva Trade Week in Geneva in September, the World Resources Forum in Geneva in September, and at numerous events hosted by a range of organizations and networks, including the OECD, UNCTAD, UNEP, Organisation of African Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP), and the Geneva Environment Network.



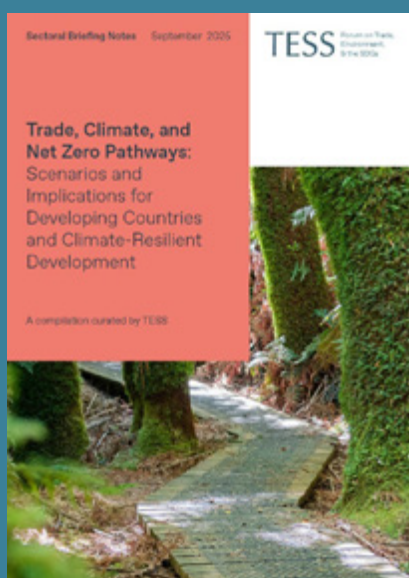
Many thanks TESS for organizing interesting and thought-provoking conversations on the nexus between trade and climate.

Richard Baron, Director, Trade Programme, European Climate Foundation



Great to connect in Davos about the importance of trade as an instrument for market creation and sustainable development. I hope we can find ways to be even stronger together!

Steintje van Veldhoven, Global Vice President
World Resources Institute, CEO WRI-Europe



From October 2024 to September 2025, TESS commissioned and published a series of sectoral briefing notes on *Trade, climate, and net zero pathways: Implications for developing countries and climate-resilient development*.

Launched during COP30, the compilation collates the series of nine briefing notes on current and anticipated transformations in key sectors on the road to net zero and in the context of the unfolding climate crisis, focusing on implications for developing countries, climate-resilient development, and international trade cooperation. The sectors covered are agriculture, carbon markets, critical minerals, digital transformation, energy transition, fisheries, heavy industries, shipping, and textiles and garments. The briefing notes are each authored by independent experts in these respective fields.

Find out more: tessforum.org/latest/publication-series-on-net-zero-pathways-and-implications-for-developing-countries

In 2025, TESS organized 43 policy dialogues and numerous consultations with government officials and stakeholders. We published 15 policy papers and 40 articles by experts on critical and evolving policy issues at the intersection of trade environment, and sustainable development tailored to the needs of our audiences.



TESS-WWF session at WTO Public Forum – 18 September



Geneva Trade Week Reception – 15 September



Geneva Trade Week Opening Plenary – 15 September



Stakeholder Roundtable Breakfast – 17 September

On 15–18 September, we hosted, supported, and participated in a range of events on trade and sustainability during the WTO Public Forum and Geneva Trade Week.

At the Public Forum, we co-organized with WWF International a session on trade agendas for nature, climate, and sustainable development. For the 2025 edition of Geneva Trade Week, we were delighted to lead the high-level opening plenary, inviting Geneva-based ambassadors and international experts to spur discussion on a proactive, forward-looking agenda on trade and sustainability. We also organized roundtables across the week on critical issues at the nexus of trade and sustainability, including on sustainable agriculture, circular economy, water footprints, the net-zero transition, and subsidies and industrial policies. Our partners for these events included UNCTAD, the World Economic Forum, Circular Innovation Lab, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, and Chatham House.

We hosted our third annual stakeholder breakfast roundtable bringing together leading climate and trade experts from around the world. This roundtable has become a staple on the annual calendar of events alongside the Public Forum.

2025 Top Publication Downloads

Policy Papers

1. *Addressing the Climate Technology Gap Through Effective Technology Transfer* by Vicente Paolo Yu
2. *Addressing Chemicals of Concern in Plastics: Pathways to Protection of the Environment and Human Health in the Plastics Treaty* by TESS
3. *Principles of International Law Relevant for Consideration in the Design and Implementation of Trade-Related Climate Measures and Policies* by a TESS International Expert Group
4. *Critical Minerals – Trade, Climate, and Net Zero Pathways: Scenarios and Implications for Developing Countries and Climate-Resilient Development* by Peter Wooders & Simon Lobach
5. *Identifying Environmentally Harmful Agricultural Subsidies at the International Level* by a TESS International Expert Group
6. *Energy Transition – Trade, Climate, and Net Zero Pathways: Scenarios and Implications for Developing Countries and Climate-Resilient Development* by Ben Walker & Ellie Belton
7. *The Transition to an Economy That Values Nature* by Ruth Davis
8. *Trade, Circular Economy, and Sustainable Development: Guidance on Approaches and Good Practices for the Design of Trade-Related Circular Economy Policies and Measures* by a TESS International Expert Group
9. *Accelerating Progress on Nature, Climate Change, and Sustainable Development in a Shifting International Trading System* by Carolyn Deere Birkbeck
10. *Fostering Enhanced International Cooperation on Trade-Related Measures with Climate Objectives at the WTO: Coherence, Transparency, Development, and Interoperability* by TESS

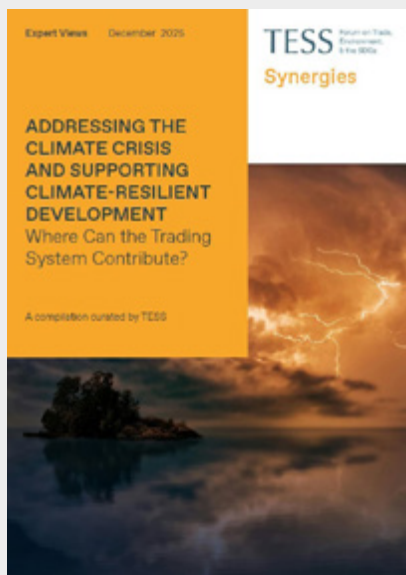
Synergies Articles

11. *Trading Our Way Out of Plastic Pollution: The Role of Sustainable Substitutes and Alternatives* by Lorenzo Formenti & Henrique Pacini
12. *COP30: An Integrated Vision for Climate Change and Trade* by André Aranha Corrêa do Lago
13. *How Trump's Tariffs Could Hit Developing Economies – Even Those Not Involved in the Trade War* by Selim Raihan & Kunal Sen
14. *The Emerging Principle of Common Concern of Humankind and International Trade Regulation* by Thomas Cottier
15. *Making a Border Carbon Adjustment Mechanism Work for Climate, Trade, and Equity* by Kasturi Das & Kaushik Ranjan Bandyopadhyay
16. *WTO at a “Crossroads” in Addressing Trade and Climate Nexus* by Jean-Marie Paugam
17. *Regional Green Trade Bloc to Fight Both Climate Change and Protectionism* by Ma Jun
18. *Tariffs, Women Workers, and How Trade Narratives Render the Most Vulnerable Invisible* by Caroline Dommen
19. *Equity in Motion: Revenue Disbursement for a Just and Equitable Maritime Transition Under the IMO'S Net-Zero Framework* by Sebastiano Gianino & Ludovic Laffineur
20. *Trade Barriers Are Slowing Clean Energy Deployment – Here's How to Fix It* by Valerie Picard

* See the Annex for a full list of policy papers and articles published in 2025.

SYNERGIES

Synergies is our online platform featuring expert commentary and opinions. Launched three years ago, Synergies fosters dialogue and incubates ideas on how to shape a global trading system that effectively addresses global environmental crises and advances sustainable development. Drawing on perspectives from leading experts and practitioners across policy communities from around the world, Synergies cultivates solutions-oriented analysis for a sustainable future.



In 2025, Synergies cemented its reputation as a trusted channel and primary venue for discussion and ideas on trade and sustainability. Over the year, the articles published in Synergies generated over 17,000 page views (up 70% from 2024) and were frequently referenced in third-party platforms. Notable initiatives included a mini-series on the impacts of US tariffs on developing countries and sustainability and an in-depth series on where the trading system can contribute to addressing the climate crisis and supporting climate-resilient development.

The series was designed to spur discussion on a proactive, forward-looking, and inclusive agenda. It includes 34 contributions authored by leading experts from around the world and published online throughout 2025. A compilation was released at the end of the year. The articles provide a rich diversity of perspectives and ideas on how international cooperation on trade can be enhanced to drive urgent action on the Paris Agreement's climate goals in a manner that supports climate-resilient development.

Find out more: tessforum.org/latest?filters=expert-views



Strategic Digital Engagement Driving Impact

In 2025, the TESS digital communications strategy matured as its social media audience grew and coalesced around key moments on the trade and sustainable development calendar. The TESS approach to social media shifted from broad-based broadcasting toward a more refined “stakeholder-centric” engagement model. This approach prioritizes high-value interactions over vanity metrics and, as such, TESS was able to better position itself as a central node within the global trade and sustainable development digital landscape.

Our organic reach (i.e. non-paid content) in 2025 was defined by a series of “power peaks” that aligned with the multilateral trade calendar. The first occurred over WTO Trade and Environment Week (30 June – 4 July), where the TESS digital footprint saw a significant spike. During this period, LinkedIn impressions surged from a daily average of 95 to an average of 319 over the week. This surge reached a peak of 1,453 impressions on 4 July, which brought together a series of announcements commemorating the four-year anniversary of TESS, an overview of TESS activities during Trade and Environment Week, and the release of the TESS Quarterly Newsletter (Q2 2025).

This momentum was sustained through Geneva Trade Week and the WTO Public Forum in September, ultimately culminating in the first annual Conference on Trade, Climate, and Sustainable Development (TCSD) in October. On the second day of TCSD, we achieved our highest engagement density of the year, with 1,205 impressions and a 9.09% engagement rate—roughly 60 times the industry average for non-governmental organizations.

Exceptional Engagement

Notably for 2025, social media activity was not defined by the scale of our reach, but the exceptional quality of engagement. While industry averages for non-profits typically hover around 3% engagement rate (i.e. the percentage of people who engage with posts when seeing them), TESS accounts achieved extremely high levels of interaction:

- LinkedIn engagement rate: 7.23% (2.4x the industry benchmark)
- X (Twitter) engagement rate: 6.71% (in the top 1% of professional accounts)
- Newsletter average click rate: 5.7% (well above the industry average of 3.27%)

These figures represent more than just “likes”; they reflect a high volume of profile audits, document downloads, and detail expands by a specialized audience. This level of engagement confirms that TESS has built a curated audience of policy professionals and decision-makers. Unlike typical social media growth, which often dilutes audience quality, TESS data shows that as reach expanded, the relevance and depth of stakeholder interaction remained remarkably high.

Another notable takeaway from our 2025 social media activity is that audience growth has not resulted in dilution of engagement (a typical challenge for organizations). TESS total impressions increased by over 300% between the second and fourth quarters of 2025 and engagement rates remained stable.

Spotlight

First Annual Conference on Trade, Climate, and Sustainable Development



On 23–24 October, we hosted the first edition of the TESS annual Conference on Trade, Climate, and Sustainable Development (TCSD). TCSD brought together a diverse group of 125 international experts with a shared conviction that cooperation on trade is key to tackling the climate crisis and global sustainability challenges.

Over two days of in-depth panels and thematic discussions on critical issues at the nexus of trade, climate, and sustainable development, participants focused on prospects for forging pathways forward around three foundational themes for trade cooperation: *climate action, resilience, and justice*.

The range of topics discussed included trade in the UNFCCC process, sustainable agriculture, trade-related measures with climate objectives, industrial policies, sustainable investment and technology models, adaptation and resilience-building, the trade-finance nexus, heavy industry decarbonization, and clean energy access and transitions. Participants also discussed the current geopolitical realities and prospects for cooperation as well as the opportunities and challenges for enhanced cooperation on trade, climate and sustainable development.

TCSD combined four public panels with eight closed thematic brainstorming sessions and two lunchtime dives designed to deepen dialogue and generate practical ideas for ways forward. The conference was attended in person by a regionally diverse range of senior experts from research centres, think tanks, and academia, as well as stakeholder organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and government. The public panels were live-cast and there were opportunities for hybrid participation in thematic sessions.

The conference demonstrated that there is a vibrant, growing, and diverse community of experts who are committed to finding pathways for effective, inclusive international cooperation on trade, climate, and sustainable development—and to connect the dots across policy communities, disciplines, and regions.

In this and future editions, the aim is to ensure that one of the lasting legacies of TCSD will be to strengthen this expert community of practice—including through new collaborations and connections, and through building and sustaining momentum on positive agendas for international cooperation on a range of critical issues at the intersection of trade, climate, and sustainable development.

Find out more: tcsdconference.org/



Thank you for organizing an amazing programme. There were participants from diverse fields and I learned a lot. We would be interested in collaborating in the future. Congratulations to the TESS team.

James Nedumpara, Professor and Head of the Centre for Trade and Investment Law, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade

TCSO Achievements and Goals

- *Strengthen a regionally diverse and vibrant community of practice* across trade, climate, and development policy communities to support the international cooperation needed for climate action and just transitions.
- *Connect the dots across policy communities, disciplines, and regions* to chart practical and cooperative pathways forward for climate action, resilience, and justice.
- *Stimulate new collaborations and partnerships* to build and sustain momentum on positive agendas for international cooperation on trade, climate, and sustainable development.
- *Explore new ideas and promote solutions-oriented discussions* drawing on the depth and diversity of knowledge, practice, and expertise of the participants.
- *Form thematic expert groups for ongoing work* to identify actionable solutions and policy options on a selection of themes discussed at the conference.





TCSO Opening Panel – 23 October



TCSO Lunchtime Dive – 23 October



TCSO Panel – 23 October



TCSO Thematic Session – 24 October



TCSO Reception – 23 October



TCSO Reception – 23 October



Wonderful people with innovative ideas and an optimism to follow up on ideas that need to move towards fruition. Thank you very much TESS for organizing TCSD.

Atul Kaushik, Advisor, Center of Geoeconomics for the Global South (COGGS)



So pleased to join the TESS team and others to listen and learn from the rich and diverse country experiences seeking to overcome the challenges of climate change. Especially pleased to learn of efforts to raise the profile of climate adaptation! Congratulations to all for an excellent conference.

Jodie Keane, Senior Research Fellow, ODI Global



Our sincere gratitude to the TESS team for putting together an absolute top-notch programme around trade-industry-climate. It shows how much can be done with deep knowledge, ideas, drive, and partners and friends—to move the discussion forward and make the worlds of trade and climate silos meet.

Per Andersson, Head of Secretariat, Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT)

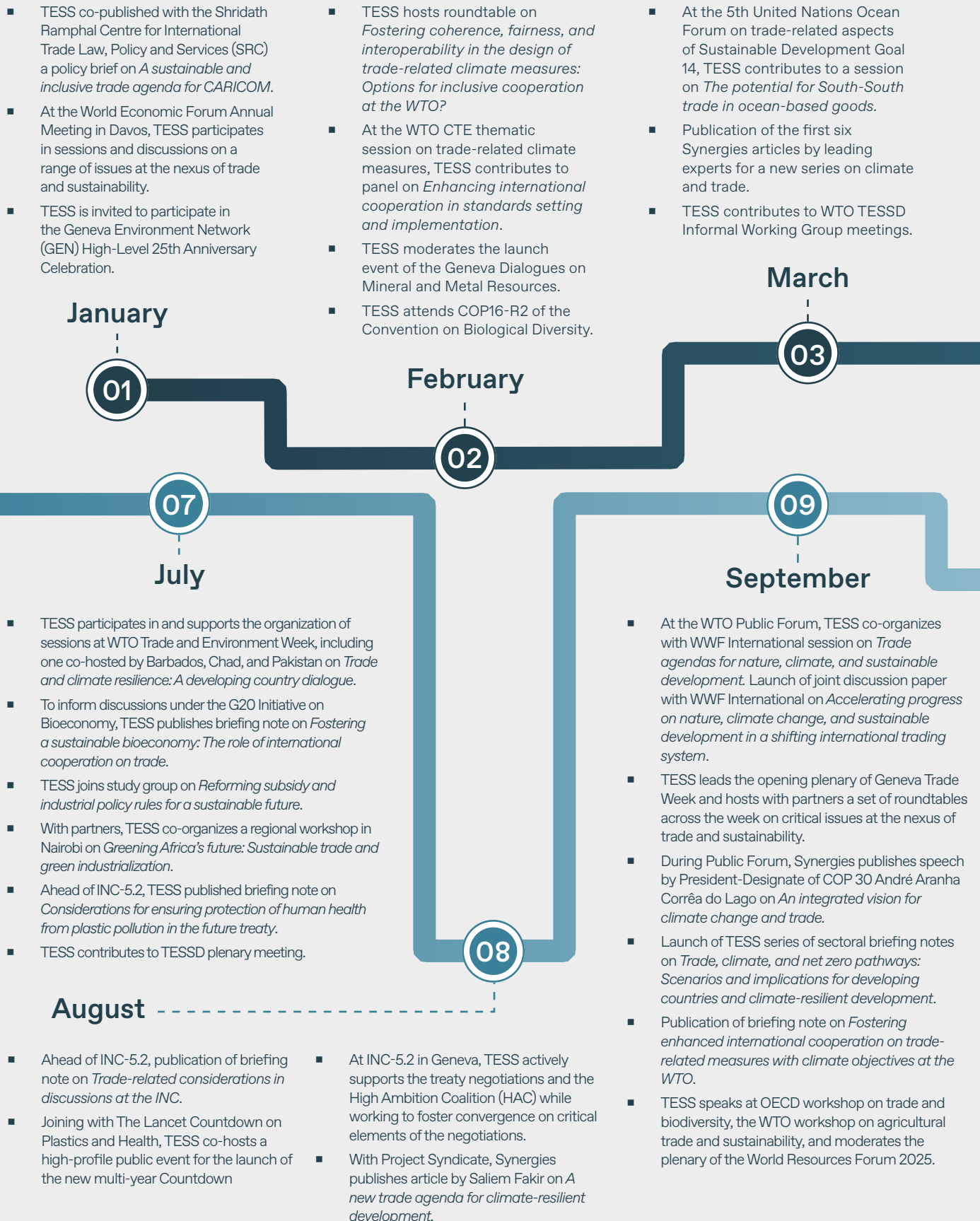


Congratulations to TESS for organizing this excellent event and fostering a much-needed discussion of trade and sustainability. It was a privilege to comment on the significance of the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ on climate change for trade policy and trade-related climate measures.

Nicolas Lockhart, Partner, Sidney Austin

Year in Review

2025 Timeline of Key Activities



- Publication of briefing note on *Climate mitigation measures and policy interoperability approaches*.
- TESS supports the governments of Mexico and Switzerland in hosting an event on *Addressing chemicals of concern in plastics: Pathways to protection of the environment and human health in the plastics treaty*.
- Launch of Synergies mini-series on the impacts of US tariffs on developing countries and sustainability.
- TESS attends first Africa Region Workshop of the DPP.

April

04

- In partnership with the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, Remaking Trade for a Sustainable Future project, and IDOS, TESS co-hosts a two-day workshop in South Africa on *Reimagining cooperation on trade and sustainability: An African perspective*.
- With the governments of Ecuador and Barbados, TESS co-organizes a BRS COPs official side event on *Plastic pollution and transparency in trade flows in the context of MEAs and the protection of the environment and health*.
- Alongside the 78th World Health Assembly, TESS co-hosts with University of Portsmouth and International Geneva Global Health Platform a side event on *Protecting people and planet: Supporting implementation of the future plastics treaty*.
- TESS celebrates World Biodiversity Day in post assessing the state of play of global action to reverse biodiversity.

May

05

- Publication of the landmark report of an international expert group convened by TESS on *Identifying environmentally harmful agricultural subsidies at the international level*.
- In partnership with ODI Global, IIED, and EIF, TESS co-hosts a workshop on *Securing finance and technology for LDCs' climate-resilient development: The role of trade and international cooperation*.
- For World Environment Day focused on plastic pollution, TESS speaks at high-level dialogue organized by GEN.
- TESS partners with WWF International to host a roundtable on *Accelerating progress on nature, climate change, and sustainable development in a shifting international trading system*.
- TESS participates in UN Ocean Conference around issues of plastic pollution.

June

06

10

October

- TESS hosts in Geneva the first edition of the TESS Annual Conference on Trade, Climate, and Sustainable Development (TCSD), convening 125 international experts over two days of panels and brainstorming sessions.
- With TESS support, Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate convenes high-level roundtable alongside UNCTAD16 on *Priorities for international cooperation on trade and climate-resilient sustainable development*.
- TESS contributes to WTO TESSD Informal Working Group meetings and DPP pre-plenary meeting ahead of MC14.

11

November

- Alongside COP30 in Belém, TESS organizes various sessions with partners on industrial decarbonization, access to technologies, and sustainable agriculture and deforestation. TESS supports the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate to host event on *Trade's contribution to advancing the global climate agenda*. Publication of Coalition's *Brochure of collaborative actions by members*.
- TESS invited to serve as the anchor organization of the joint Secretariat of the Integrated Forum on Climate Change and Trade (IFCCT), launched at COP30.

12

December

- Launch of Synergies compilation of 34 expert views on *Addressing the climate crisis and supporting climate-resilient development: Where can the trading system contribute?*
- At the annual meeting of the WWF International Board, TESS invited to speak on trade and nature.
- TESS attends the plenary meeting of the OECD-led Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation and Approaches (IFCMA).
- TESS supports HAC participation at UNEA-7 in Nairobi.

2025 in Numbers

Dialogues and Publications

43

Policy
Dialogues



2,402

Dialogue
Participants



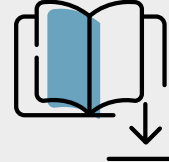
15

Policy Papers



10k+

Publication
Downloads (+25%)*



40

Articles
(Expert Views)

17k+

Article Views (+70%)*

43%

Dialogue Participants
from Developing Countries



41%

Article Authors from
Developing Countries



* Percentages represent year-on-year change from 2024

2025 in Numbers

Digital Communications

4,247

Newsletter
Subscribers
(+20%)*



5.7%

Newsletter
Average Click Rate



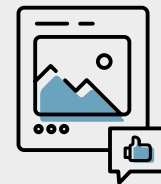
5,643

LinkedIn & X
Followers (+26%)*



7.2%

LinkedIn Average
Engagement Rate



116,877

LinkedIn & X
Organic Impressions**

6.7%

X Average
Engagement Rate

72,371

Website Page Views
(+16%)*



30k+

Website Visits
from New Users
(+12%)*



** Estimates based on April-December data

Partners and Funders

Our Founding Partners



Launched in 2021, TESS grew from a founding partnership of the Geneva Graduate Institute and the United Nations Environment Programme. At the institute, we are housed within the Centre for Trade and Economic Integration and its Geneva Trade Platform.



Our involvement with TESS reflects the Graduate Institute's long-standing engagement with International Geneva, and our commitment to sustainability as core to the Graduate Institute's vision and mission. TESS is a timely response to the growing interest in revived multilateral cooperation on the critical intersections of trade, environment, and the SDGs and the need for more inclusive global governance.

Marie-Laure Salles, Director, Geneva Graduate Institute



The world faces triple environmental crises of climate, pollution and biodiversity loss. At UNEP, we are delighted to partner with the Graduate Institute to foster multilateral cooperation on the trade and trade policies needed to promote green economies and sustainable development and to phase out unsustainable trade, production and consumption. International agendas on sustainable trade must respond to developing country priorities and advance progress on the SDGs, and will require more interaction between trade and environment policy communities. Based in International Geneva but with a global outlook and advisory network, TESS is designed to respond to these priorities.

Elisa Tonda, Chief, Resources and Markets Branch, Industry and Economy Division, United Nations Environment Programme



Our Funders



TESS is a non-profit initiative financed through grants, contracts, and in-kind contributions from philanthropic donors and governments.

TESS gratefully acknowledges the financial support for our work, which included support from the European Climate Foundation, Quadrature Climate Foundation, Minderoo Foundation, Open Society Foundations, The Pew Charitable Trusts, World Bank, and World Wide Fund for Nature, and the governments of Australia, France, Germany, Monaco, and Norway.

TESS is independent and does not advocate on behalf of any specific government or stakeholders.

Our Partnerships



TESS works to foster engagement with a diverse range of experts and institutions from all regions, focusing in particular on ensuring representation of developing country voices in international agenda-setting on trade and sustainability. Our various activities are implemented through a variety of partnerships, including joint publications and research as well as events co-hosted with international organizations, governments, stakeholders, universities, research centres, and think tanks based in International Geneva and around the world, and contributing to events and processes convened by others.

Our approach to partnerships is driven by our commitment to supporting inclusive international cooperation on trade and sustainability and building synergies across policy communities, developing a network of complementary expertise, and strengthening a community of practice aligned with our vision.

A core strength of our work is our commitment to moving ideas into action by identifying and working with people and institutions that can be agents of change.

* See the Annex for a list of our 2024 partnerships.



Annexes

Steering Committee Members

Debapriya BHATTACHARYA

*Chair, Southern Voice; Distinguished Fellow,
Centre for Policy Dialogue*

Vanessa EROGBOGBO

*Director, Division of Sustainable and
Inclusive Trade, International Trade Centre*

Emmanuelle IVANOV-DURAND

*Permanent Representative of France to
the WTO, Permanent Mission of France to
the United Nations and other international
organizations in Switzerland*

Bernice LEE

*Research Director, Futures, and Hoffmann
Distinguished Fellow for Sustainability,
Chatham House*

Joost PAUWELYN

*Professor, International Law; Co-Director,
Centre of Trade and Economic Integration,
Geneva Graduate Institute*

Elisa TONDA

*Chief, Resources and Markets Branch,
Industry and Economy Division, United
Nations Environment Programme*

Matthew WILSON

*Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Barbados to the United Nations, World
Trade Organization and other International
Organizations in Geneva*

2025 Partnerships

TESS involved more than 300 experts from academia, think tanks, and intergovernmental and stakeholder organizations from around the world, including in our dialogues, international expert groups, public and private events, publications, and online platform of expert views.

Across our various activities, we partnered with a diversity of organizations and institutions for specific events, joint publications, roundtables, initiatives, or as speakers at their events.

International Organizations

Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF)
 International Labour Organization (ILO)
 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
 Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP)
 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
 Pacific Islands Forum
 Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS Secretariat)
 UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
 World Health Organization (WHO)
 World Trade Organization (WTO)

Stakeholder Organizations

African Climate Foundation (ACF)	International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
Boston College	International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)	Minderoo Foundation
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)	NatureFinance
Centre Scientifique de Monaco	Oak Foundation
Chatham House – Royal Institute of International Affairs	ODI Global
Circular Innovation Lab	Shridath Ramphal Centre, University of the West Indies (SRC)
Climate Action Platform Africa (CAP-A)	Strathmore University
Columbia University Center on Global Energy Policy	The Lancet
E3G	Trade Negotiations & Investment Forum (TNIF)
Ellen MacArthur Foundation	University of Cape Town Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance
Eunomia Research & Consulting	University of Heidelberg
European Climate Foundation (ECF)	University of Portsmouth Revolution Plastics Institute
Geneva Environment Network (GEN)	World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)
Geneva Platform for Resilient Value Chains	World Economic Forum
Geneva Trade Platform (GTP)	World Resources Forum (WRF)
German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)	World Resources Institute (WRI)
Global Health Platform	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF International)
Global Maritime Forum (GMF)	Youth Negotiators Academy
Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)	

Public and Private Initiatives

Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability (ACCTS)
 Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate
 Dialogue on Plastic Pollution (DPP)
 Forest, Agriculture, and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue
 Geneva Beat Plastic Pollution Dialogues
 Geneva Cities Hub
 High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution (HAC)
 Integrated Forum on Climate Change and Trade (IFCCT)
 Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF)
 Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT)
 Remaking Trade Project (RTP)
 The Global Commission on the Economics of Water
 Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD)

Countries Participating in TESS Policy Dialogues in 2025

Government officials and delegates from the following countries attended one or more TESS policy dialogue as speakers or participants.

Armenia	Guatemala	Poland
Argentina	Guinea	Portugal
Australia	Hungary	Republic of Congo
Austria	Iceland	Republic of Korea
Azerbaijan	India	Rwanda
Bangladesh	Indonesia	Saudi Arabia
Barbados	Ireland	Senegal
Benin	Italy	Serbia
Brazil	Jamaica	Sierra Leone
Burkina Faso	Japan	Singapore
Cabo Verde	Kenya	Slovenia
Cambodia	Liberia	Somalia
Cameroon	Lithuania	South Africa
Canada	Malawi	Spain
Chad	Malaysia	Sri Lanka
Chile	Mali	Sweden
China	Malta	Switzerland
Colombia	Mauritius	Thailand
Cook Islands	Mexico	The Gambia
Costa Rica	Moldova	Timor-Leste
Cuba	Monaco	Togo
Denmark	Morocco	Tunisia
Dominican Republic	Mozambique	Türkiye
Ecuador	Netherlands	Uganda
Egypt	New Zealand	Ukraine
European Union	Nicaragua	United Arab Emirates
Federated States of Micronesia	Niger	United Kingdom
Fiji	Nigeria	United States of America
Finland	Norway	Uruguay
France	Pakistan	Vanuatu
Gabon	Palau	Venezuela
Germany	Panama	Yemen
Ghana	Paraguay	Zambia
Greece	Peru	Zimbabwe
Grenada	Philippines	

2025 Dialogues and Publications

Policy Dialogues

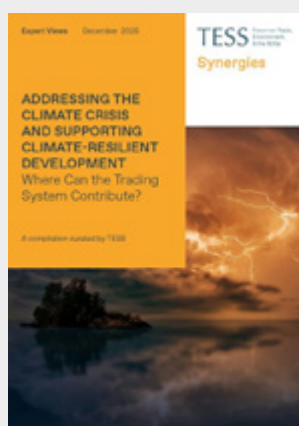
1. *Launch of the Geneva Dialogues on Mineral and Metal Resources* – Geneva (13 February)
2. *Fostering Coherence, Fairness, and Interoperability in the Design of Trade-Related Climate Measures: Options for Inclusive Cooperation at the WTO?* – Online (19 February)
3. *Ambassadors' Roundtable on Trade and Sustainability* – Geneva (22 April)
4. *Addressing Chemicals of Concern in Plastics: Pathways to Protection of the Environment and Human Health in the Plastics Treaty* – Geneva (29 April)
5. *BRS COPs Official Side Event – Plastic Pollution and Transparency in Trade Flows in the Context of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the Protection of the Environment and Health* – Geneva (02 May)
6. *Expert Consultation | Developing Trade Policy Incentives for Sustainable Agriculture* – Geneva (09 May)
7. *Protecting People and Planet: Supporting Implementation of the Future Plastics Treaty* – Geneva (21 May)
8. *Reimagining Cooperation on Trade and Sustainability: An African Perspective* – Cape Town, South Africa (26 May)
9. *Securing Finance and Technology for LDCs' Climate-Resilient Development: The Role of Trade and International Cooperation* – Geneva (04 June)
10. *World Environment Day Celebration 2025 | Multilateral Geneva Collectively Acting to Beat Plastic Pollution* – Geneva (05 June)
11. *Informal Exchange Among Developing Country Delegates on Trade & Sustainability* – Geneva (20 June)
12. *Accelerating Progress on Nature, Climate Change, and Sustainable Development in a Shifting International Trading System* – Geneva (26 June)
13. *Trade and Climate Resilience: A Developing Country Dialogue at WTO Trade and Environment Week* – Geneva (02 July)
14. *Transparency, Interoperability, Coherence and Development: Fostering Inclusive Cooperation on Trade and Climate at the WTO* – Geneva (09 July)
15. *Greening Africa's Future: Sustainable Trade and Green Industrialisation* – Nairobi, Kenya (24 July)
16. *Launch Event: Announcing The Lancet Countdown on Health and Plastics* – Geneva (04 August)
17. *Fostering Opportunities for Cooperation on Sustainable Agriculture and Trade: So, How Do We Get There?* – Geneva (15 September)
18. *Taking the Pulse on the Trade and Sustainability Agenda: Where to Next for International Cooperation?* – Geneva (15 September)
19. *Fostering Inclusive Cooperation on Circular Economy, Trade, and Sustainable Development: Prospects and Sectoral Insights* – Geneva (16 September)
20. *Water, Trade, and Sustainable Development: Exploring the Water Footprints of Traded Food, Textiles and Minerals* – Geneva (16 September)
21. *Trade and the Transition to Net Zero: Scenarios and Pathways for Climate Resilient Development in Key Sectors* – Geneva (16 September)
22. *Trade Agendas for Nature, Climate, and Sustainable Development* – Geneva (18 September)
23. *Developing Country Breakfast on Trade & Sustainability* – Geneva (15 October)
24. *Opportunities, Challenges, and Pathways for Enhanced Cooperation on Trade, Climate, and Sustainable Development* – Geneva (23 October)
25. *Trade, Climate, and Sustainable Agriculture – Effective International Cooperation and Positive Incentives* – Geneva (23 October)
26. *Trade, Industrial Policies, and the Drive for Net-Zero and Climate-Resilient Development – What Priorities and Prospects for Cooperation?* – Geneva (23 October)
27. *The ICJ Advisory Opinion on Climate and Implications for Trade Cooperation* – Geneva (23 October)
28. *Building Resilience to the Impacts of the Climate Crisis – How Can Trade Cooperation Support Adaptation and Climate-Resilient Development?* – Geneva (23 October)
29. *Decarbonization of Heavy Industry – Priorities for Trade and Technology Cooperation* – Geneva (23 October)
30. *Getting a Grip on Political Realities and Prospects for Cooperation – National and Regional Perspectives* – Geneva (23 October)
31. *Climate, Trade, and Sustainable Development at COP30 and in the UNFCCC Process – Pathways for Cooperation* – Geneva (24 October)

32. *Trade-Related Measures With Climate Objectives – Pathways for Fostering Cooperation* – Geneva (24 October)
33. *Trade, Critical Minerals, and Net Zero – Navigating Security, Development, and Sustainability Priorities* – Geneva (24 October)
34. *Towards Sustainable Investment and Technology Models in Support of Climate Action* – Geneva (24 October)
35. *Exploring Priorities at the Trade, Climate, Debt, and Finance Nexus – Integrated Approaches and Implications for Trade Cooperation* – Geneva (24 October)
36. *From Fossil Fuels to Net-Zero Energy – Trade Cooperation for Clean Energy Access and Transitions* – Geneva (24 October)
37. *Fostering Trade Cooperation on the Climate Crisis Amidst Trade Uncertainty and Multilateral Challenges* – Geneva (24 October)
38. *Developing Countries Breakfast on Trade, Environment & Sustainable Development* – Geneva (04 November)
39. *Technology, Transition, and Trust: The Role of Trade and International Cooperation for Just and Equitable Industrial Decarbonization* – Belém, Brazil (14 November)
40. *Trade's Contribution to Advancing the Global Climate Agenda: Examples for Collective Action* – Belém, Brazil (14 November)
41. *Affordable Access to Technologies Vital to Achieving Climate Goals* – Belém, Brazil (15 November)
42. *Fostering International Cooperation on Trade, Sustainable Agriculture, and Deforestation – The Importance of Smallholder Inclusion* – Geneva (15 November)
43. *Positive Psychology and Ecology* – Geneva (01 December)



Policy Papers

1. *Shipping – Trade, Climate, and Net Zero Pathways: Scenarios and Implications for Developing Countries and Climate-Resilient Development* by Eleanor Criswell, Sophie Deyon, and Ludovic Laffineur (13 January)
2. *Energy Transition – Trade, Climate, and Net Zero Pathways: Scenarios and Implications for Developing Countries and Climate-Resilient Development* by Beth Walker and Ellie Belton (12 February)
3. *Agriculture – Trade, Climate, and Net Zero Pathways: Scenarios and Implications for Developing Countries and Climate-Resilient Development* by Christophe Bellmann (11 April)
4. *Climate Mitigation Measures and Some Policy Interoperability Approaches* by Scott Vaughan (25 April)
5. *Identifying and Tackling Environmentally Harmful Agricultural Subsidies in the WTO - Note on Greenhouse Gas Emissions* by Anthony Cox (06 May)
6. *Identifying Environmentally Harmful Agricultural Subsidies at the International Level* by International Expert Group on Environmentally Harmful Agricultural Subsidies (04 June)
7. *Fostering a Sustainable Bioeconomy: The Role of International Cooperation on Trade* by Carolyn Deere Birkbeck and Christophe Bellmann (29 July)
8. *Considerations for Ensuring Protection of Human Health From Plastic Pollution in the Future Treaty* by TESS (31 July)
9. *Trade-Related Considerations in Discussions at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to Develop an International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution, Including in the Marine Environment* by TESS (05 August)
10. *Critical Minerals – Trade, Climate, and Net Zero Pathways: Scenarios and Implications for Developing Countries and Climate-Resilient Development* by Peter Wooders and Simon Lobach (14 August)
11. *Digital Transformation – Trade, Climate, and Net Zero Pathways: Scenarios and Implications for Developing Countries and Climate-Resilient Development* by Yasmin Ismail and Nadira Bayat (08 September)
12. *Trade, Climate, and Net Zero Pathways: Implications for Developing Countries and Climate-Resilient Development* by TESS (ed.) (15 September)
13. *Accelerating Progress on Nature, Climate Change, and Sustainable Development in a Shifting International Trading System* by Carolyn Deere Birkbeck (17 September)
14. *Fostering Enhanced International Cooperation on Trade-Related Measures with Climate Objectives at the WTO: Coherence, Transparency, Development, and Interoperability* by Christophe Bellmann, Carolyn Deere Birkbeck, Yasmin Ismail, and Brian Kelly Nyaga (17 September)
15. *Addressing the Climate Crisis and Supporting Climate-Resilient Development: Where Can the Trading System Contribute?* by TESS (ed.) (11 December)



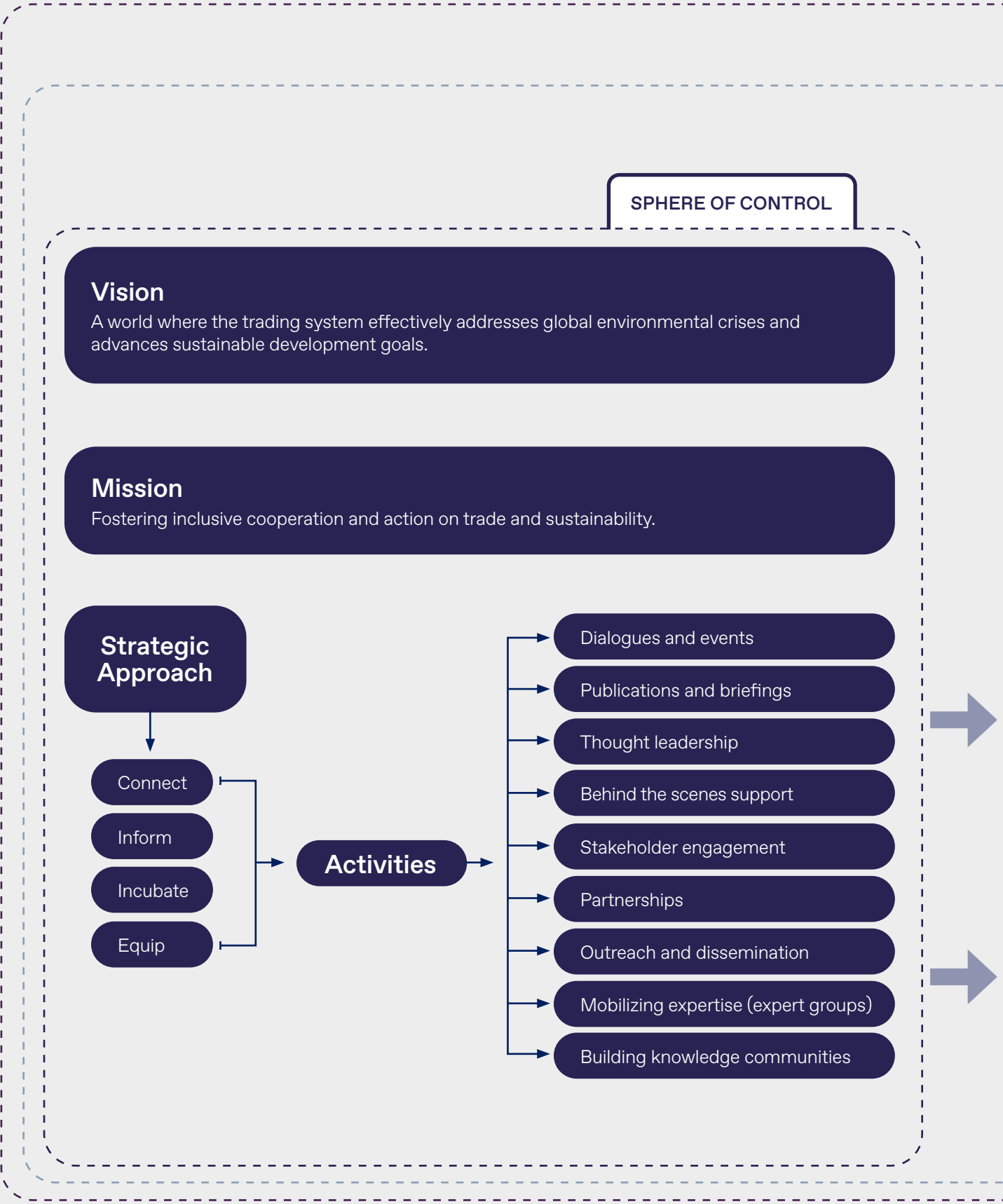
Synergies Articles

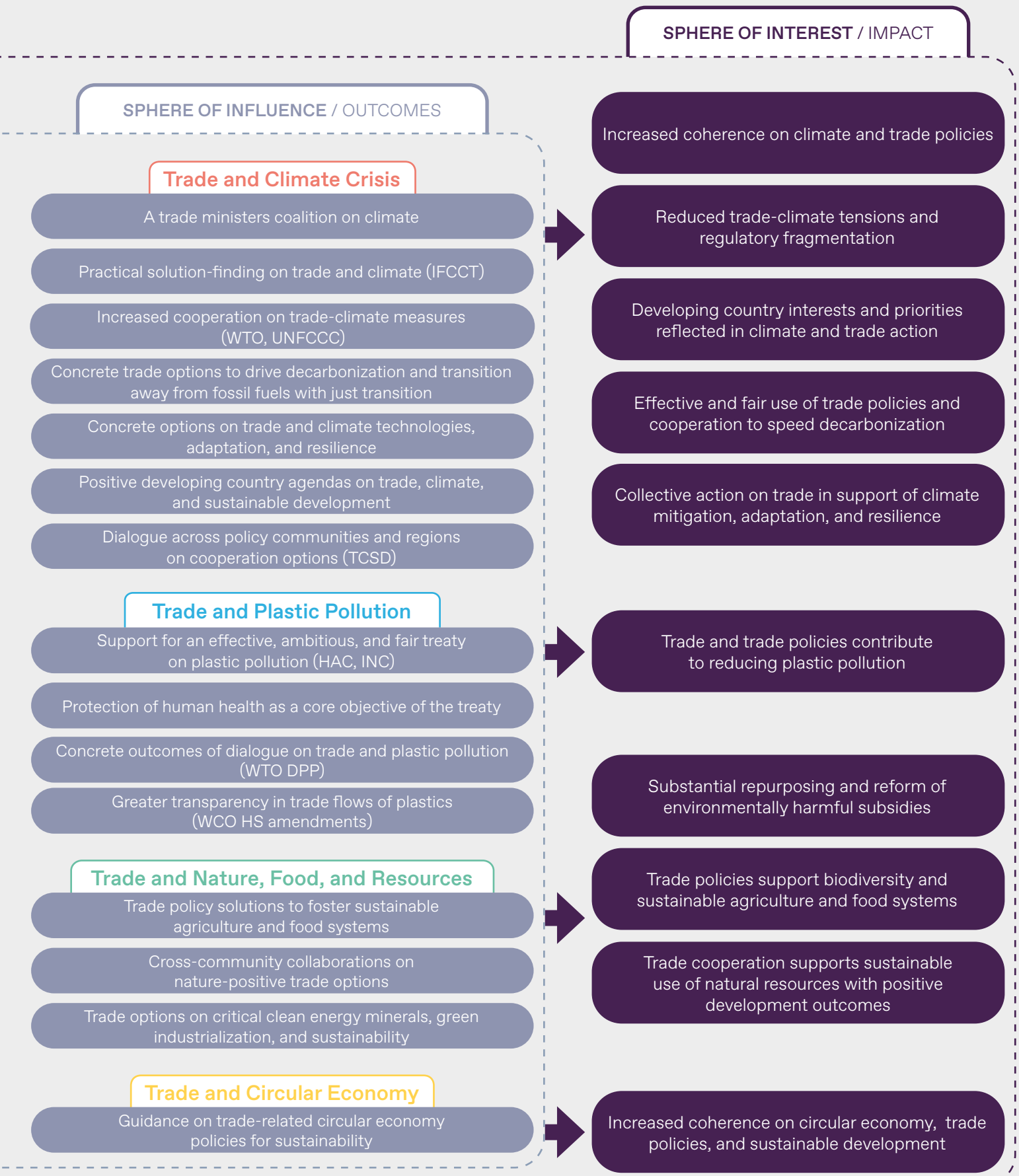
1. *The World Wildlife Trade Regulator Is 50 – Here's What Has Worked and What Needs to Change* by Dan Challendar and Michael't Sas-Rolfes (25 February)
2. *Adaption to Climate Change and the International Trading System: Addressing Losses in Productive Capacity* by Jodie Keane, Bernardo Arce, and Laura Kelly (03 March)
3. *Using Market Mechanisms to Make the Global Food System More Sustainable and Resilient* by Jason Clay (11 March)
4. *Why Regional Initiatives Are Key to Addressing the Catastrophic Risks of Climate Change and Underdevelopment* by Kennedy Mbeva (17 March)
5. *Trade Barriers Are Slowing Clean Energy Deployment – Here's How to Fix It* by Valerie Picard (20 March)
6. *Advancing a Trade and Sustainable Development Agenda for African, Caribbean, and Pacific States* by Junior Lodge (25 March)
7. *Regional Green Trade Bloc to Fight Both Climate Change and Protectionism* by Ma Jun (28 March)
8. *Fisheries Subsidies and the WTO: How Far Have We Come?* by Tristan Irschlinger (31 March)
9. *Trump Reciprocal Tariffs: Penalizing Vulnerable Economies* by Jodie Keane, Bernardo Arce, and Prachi Agarwal (04 April)
10. *Deconflicting the Trade-Climate Nexus: We Need to Think Beyond Business As Usual* by Trevor Sutton (07 April)
11. *Attacking the World's Poor* by Daniel Gay (08 April)
12. *Tariffs, Women Workers, and How Trade Narratives Render the Most Vulnerable Invisible* by Caroline Dommen (25 April)
13. *How Trump's Tariffs Could Hit Developing Economies – Even Those Not Involved in the Trade War* by Selim Raihan and Kunal Sen (06 May)
14. *Enhancing Coherence Between Agricultural, Trade, and Health Policy Objectives in the Climate Crisis Context* by Anne Marie Thow and Dori Patay (02 June)
15. *Financing Sustainable Trade for Just Transitions to Climate-Resilient Economies* by Vinaye Ancharaz and Riad Sultan (04 June)
16. *Improving Environmentally Sound Trade Through Economic Diplomacy: The Role of Standards* by Greg Messenger (16 June)
17. *Turning Tides: How the New Geopolitics Is Undermining Global Sustainability Goals* by Valeria Piñeiro, Joseph Glauber, and Juan Pablo Gianatiempo (26 June)
18. *Why the EU's Clean Industrial Policy Cannot Work Without Real Partnerships* by Sarah Jackson (30 June)
19. *How Economic Development Can Be Accomplished Through South-South and Triangular Cooperation* by Rania Al-Mashat (10 July)
20. *Enabling the Clean Energy Transition Through Trade and Cooperation* by Carlos A Kuriyama (21 July)
21. *Equity in Motion: Revenue Disbursement for a Just and Equitable Maritime Transition Under the IMOS Net-Zero Framework* by Ludovic Laffineur and Sebastiano Gianino (28 July)

22. *A New Trade Agenda for Climate-Resilient Development* by Saliem Fakir (31 July)
23. *Towards a Fairer Global Trade and Finance System for a Just and Inclusive Climate Transition* by Shimukunku Manchishi (06 August)
24. *Inclusive Ecodesign Requirements for a Just Transition* by Colette van der Ven and Cláudia Azevedo (14 August)
25. *Resilient by Design: Reimagining Trade for Climate Justice in Africa and Beyond* by Saliem Fakir (19 August)
26. *Securing a Sustainable Future for All: Critical Minerals, Industrial Policies, and the Role of Trade and Investment Frameworks* by Ieva Barsauskaite and Isabelle Ramdoo (19 September)
27. *What the WTO's Deal to Curb Fisheries Subsidies Means and What it Could Achieve* by Daniel Skerrett and U. Rashid Sumaila (25 September)
28. *COP30: An Integrated Vision for Climate Change and Trade* by André Aranha Corrêa do Lago (26 September)
29. *The "World Court" and Climate Change* by Jorge E. Viñuales (02 October)
30. *Climate and Agriculture: Looking Beyond Agricultural Subsidy Reform* by Anthony Cox (16 October)
31. *Pathways to Inclusive Green Industrial Policy: Building Shared Opportunities Across Economies* by Aaron Maltais and Timothy Suljada (22 October)
32. *From "Greening Trade" to "Trading Green": Can Developing Countries Turn EU Unilateral Measures Into an Advantage?* by Alfonso Medinilla (28 October)
33. *Trading Africa's Green Minerals at a Crossroads: A Call for Regional Coordination* by Marit Kitaw and Yasmin Ismail (30 October)
34. *How Can We Enhance Cooperation on Trade Measures With Climate Objectives at the WTO and Beyond?* by Christophe Bellmann, Carolyn Deere Birkbeck, Yasmin Ismail, and Brian Kelly Nyaga (01 November)
35. *Towards a Global Cooperation Agenda on Trade, Climate, and Sustainable Development* by Christophe Bellmann and Carolyn Deere Birkbeck (06 November)
36. *Trade is the World's Untapped Climate Accelerator* by Jorge Arbache (20 November)
37. *Trade Cooperation Pathways for Climate Action, Resilience, and Justice* by Arunabha Ghosh (02 December)
38. *For a Just Transition, Trade Cooperation Should Focus on Areas of Highest Impact for Both Climate and Development* by Amina Mohamed (04 December)
39. *Opportunities for Trade Policy and Cooperation to Shift Course on Climate Change and Nature Loss* by Daudi Sumba (08 December)
40. *Regulating Food and Agricultural Trade: Time for a Radical New Approach* by Caroline Dommén (15 December)



Results Framework











tessforum.org



@TESSForum



@tessforum.bsky.social



info@tessforum.org

© 2026 Forum on Trade, Environment,
& the SDGs (TESS)
Published by the Forum on Trade,
Environment, & the SDGs (TESS)

Geneva Graduate Institute
Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2
CH-1202 Genève
Switzerland

TESS Forum on Trade,
Environment,
& the SDGs