

Scope

2000-14: 33,000 academic contributions

2015 alone: about 2,000

Half of them on the accession of China

About 40 key contributions reviewed in the book

Key Themes

The rationale for accession

Accession process

Legal aspects of accessions

Economics of accessions

Accessions and domestic reforms

Reforms of the accession process

Accession process

: complexity of the multilateral trading system, unevenness in the capacity of the applicants, and the demand for negotiating machinery.

plays the central role in the accession process and needs to demonstrate sustained commitment to accession.

: have the inherent interest in obtaining concessions from acceding countries and leveraging their negotiating capacity accordingly.

accession decisions are made unanimously by the membership, introducing a balance between the incumbent and acceding countries.

Legal aspects of accessions

: a single body of WTO accessions law should be viewed dynamically, with specific legal rules inferred from the international legal system, the WTO Agreement, accession protocols, and WTO case law

: The legitimacy of the practice when the incumbent members prescribe obligations to the acceding countries that exceed requirements of the WTO Agreement is usually questioned

: whether accession practices strengthen or weaken the multilateral system; high commitments by acceding countries complement the existing rules, help close the loopholes, and contribute to the ongoing reforms of trading rules

: On balance, a number of practical suggestions on upgrading the existing accession rules are gradually emerging

Accessions and domestic reforms

Credible anchor for domestic regulatory and administrative reforms

Improved governance, reduced rent-seeking behavior and corruption

Help governments credibly distance themselves from domestic lobbies

Help limit tariff evasion

Positive and significant impact on the quality of institutions

Reform of the accession process

Update the catalogue of all existing accession rules that deviate from WTO rules
Include them in the official WTO analytical index for ease of reference,