

GENEVA
TRADE
PLATFORM

GENEVA TRADE WEEK

28 SEPTEMBER - 2 OCTOBER

**CONCEPT NOTE AND CALL
FOR SUBMISSIONS**

Geneva Trade Week

Our Vision

There has never been a more important time to revitalize the global conversation about trade, trade policy and the international trading system. To fill the void left by the cancellation of the 2020 WTO Public Forum, the Geneva Trade Platform (GTP) is organizing a week of primarily digital events, discussions, and debates that we are calling "Geneva Trade Week (GTW)."

There is an undeniable need to open the sometimes-opaque world of international trade policymaking to a broader audience, and to invite that audience to share their perspectives with officials, delegates, and one another. In addition, there is clear demand for deep, technical discussions among leading experts on the thorniest economic, legal, and practical challenges facing the international trading system.

Beyond these goals, we are cognizant and keen to emulate the important role major events play in providing networking opportunities for trade specialists and practitioners alike, and a platform to highlight exciting research, impactful projects, and bold new ideas.

In delivering Geneva Trade Week, we aim to leverage the possibilities unlocked by remote digital delivery to experiment with new formats that broaden the range of contributors and participants. Specifically, GTP's Geneva Trade Week aims to provide the international trade community with a range of spaces within which to meet, share ideas, and collaborate:

Inclusive spaces that speak to and give voice to stakeholders and voices "beyond the bubble"

Neutral spaces where top experts can engage on detail with candor and thoroughness

Gathering spaces facilitating networking and new connections

Prominent spaces where new research, exciting projects and bold ideas can find a policy audience

This concept note lays out our vision for Geneva Trade Week and - in the spirit of 'Covid creativity' - invites you to join us in shaping the event into something relevant, useful, and engaging.

We're open to any and all suggestions, thoughts and collaboration opportunities but are specifically seeking:

- By July 15th: [Proposals for formal GTW sessions](#) across our four streams
- At any time: [Suggestions and ideas](#) for new formats, event types, and collaborations to make GTW more inclusive, dynamic, and relevant.

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Thematic Streams

The bulk of Geneva Trade Week will be built around four thematic streams, each with eight formal events and a single high-level plenary session. These will be:

Rethinking Trade

Values, Principles and Methods

1

This stream focuses on the massive questions confronting the international community and the future of trade. Why do we want to promote trade? What are the goals, values, and guiding principles we want driving the international trading system? Sessions will be designed around a broad audience and the big questions.

Rebooting the WTO

2

This stream, divided into three sub-themes, is designed to host technical discussions between experts, academics and policymakers on how to create a stronger international trading system.

Rebooting the Operating System (Execution)

Rebooting the Rules (Negotiations)

Rebooting Dispute Settlement (Adjudication)

Sustainability

3

Trade policy isn't even approaching living up to its potential as a force for sustainable, environmentally sound development. This stream will feature both broad discussions on harnessing trade for sustainability and technical exchanges between experts on what can be done.

Trade and...

4

A host of issues have historically hovered at the edges of the trade conversation. This stream and the non-exhaustive list of sub-themes will house discussions on topics from what trade can offer in facilitating global recovery from Covid-19 to how blockchain will shape international commerce.

... inequality

... gender

... digital

... health

... diversity

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Our Principles - Session Guidelines

We are requiring that all sessions adhere to a number of core principles to ensure Geneva Trade Week is an inclusive, diverse and engaging event.

Duration and Format

- Sessions should aim to conclude within 60 minutes.
- In the interests of global accessibility and given the global pandemic, most sessions will take place either entirely or primarily online.
- All sessions will be recorded and accessible for viewing during and after the Week.

Diversity of Representation

- All events should feature a diversity of gender and maximize geographical representation.
- In addition to providing an opportunity to hear from the world's most prominent experts and thinkers, Geneva Trade Week will actively seek to elevate less prominent voices. We will prioritize sessions that prominently incorporate new or lesser known voices and will encourage participants recommended for multiple events to consider nominating alternatives.
- While we will accept and consider multiple submissions from a single organization, we will prioritize ensuring pluralistic organizational representation.
- We welcome submissions for sessions in languages other than English.

Audience Awareness

- We will be asking all session organizers to identify whether their intended primary audience is international trade policy professionals or the broader trade audience, and to shape their content accordingly.

Creativity

- The panel format is a classic for a reason, but international trade policy discussions tend to rely on it almost exclusively.
- We expect Geneva Trade Week to feature a good number of valuable panel discussions, but will favorably consider proposals for events in alternative and creative formats.

Interactivity and Engagement

- Though nothing can replace meeting in person, Geneva Trade Week will provide every opportunity for discussion, engagement, and interactions between participants. All sessions should work to incorporate audience engagement and generous time for Q&A. We will favorably consider submissions which incorporate interactivity or discussion with the audience and which lean into the curated discussion component.

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Session Types

Geneva Trade Week will feature events divided across the thematic streams and organized in line with our Session Principles.

Plenary Sessions

The Geneva Trade Platform and its thematic partners will organize a high level plenary event each day. These will address each of the four thematic streams, beginning with a discussion during the opening plenary on where the international trading system needs to grow to meet the challenges of a tumultuous time.

Formal Sessions

Organized on the basis of your proposals and submissions, these sessions will form the bulk of the Week's content. These will be shaped and facilitated by their organizers in close collaboration and drawing on support from the Geneva Trade Platform team.

In a break from traditional practice, sessions will consist of two components.

The first component will generally take the form of more traditional webinar content such as a moderated panel discussion, a fireside chat or an interview with an expert or policymaker. During this component, participants, and organizers will be asked to arrive at a question, idea or concept to shape the second component, a lightly curated open discussion among the audience and session presenters.

Our goal with this structure is to provide a more inclusive and participatory space for Geneva Trade Week attendees to engage with the ideas raised by thought provoking sessions, beyond what a short Q&A round enables. This should make sessions more interactive, and encourage the development and exploration of concrete outcomes and conclusions.

We are accepting [formal session submissions](#) until 15 July.

Out-of-the-Box Sessions and Ideas

Our goal is for Geneva Trade Week to be an exciting, memorable and interesting experience and we're committed to exploring, innovating and experimenting.

Reach out to us with your best ideas for:

- What we can do before the Week to collect ideas, proposals, questions and polls.
- Innovative formats and new ideas for use during the Week.
- Ways we can follow up after the Week including ways to obtain outputs, follow-up on ideas and undertake useful outreach.
- Suggestions for how we could best curate background information and supplemental materials.

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Connecting and Elevating

The Geneva Trade Platform was created in part to help connect diverse trade constituencies, break down silos and shine a spotlight on the policy implications of new research, projects, and ideas.

To that end we want to ensure Geneva Trade Week provides ample space over and above the various sessions to showcase interesting work, voices, and ideas.

We're currently examining possibilities including:

- Short videos with key messages, especially from participants who may struggle to participate live due to timezone challenges or a lack of digital infrastructure
- A catalogue of one-pagers on new research or exciting projects
- Poster sessions
- Book presentations
- Report walk-throughs

We will also be looking into ways to utilize the technology available to maximize opportunities for engagement, networking, and introductions among Geneva Trade Week participants.

The GTP looks forward to receiving your [session submissions](#) and [hearing your ideas](#).

