



The GTA handbook

Data and methodology used by the Global Trade Alert initiative

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This handbook is incomplete and subject to updates. For questions, please refer to data@globaltradealert.org.

Note:

The most up-to-date and comprehensive description of the GTA's methodology was recently published in [Evenett \(2019\). Protectionism, state discrimination, and international business since the onset of the Global Financial Crisis. *Journal of International Business Policy*.](#)

For references, please cite as:

Simon J. Evenett and Johannes Fritz (2019). *The Global Trade Alert database handbook*.
Manuscript, 3 February 2020.

4 Data classification

This chapter includes descriptions of all fields in the GTA database and their potential values. Except for the announcement date, all described fields are recorded on the intervention level.

4.1 Intervention types

This section describes the content of each intervention type monitored by the Global Trade Alert. To orientate the reader, the different intervention types are described under unifying subheadings. An alphabetical list with references to those subheadings can be found in section 4.1.10.

A concise table of the new intervention types including correspondences to those used by other monitoring initiatives as well as those used on the first version of the GTA database can be found section appendix A starting on page 14.

The details of what constitutes each intervention type will be added shortly.

4.1.1 Capital controls and exchange rate policy

- Control on personal transactions
- Controls on commercial transactions and investment instruments
- Controls on credit operations
- Competitive devaluation
- Repatriation & surrender requirements
- Trade payment measure (see export and import section)

4.1.2 Export and import policy instruments

- Export ban
- Export licensing requirement
- Export quota
- Export subsidy
- Export tariff quota
- Export tax
- Export tax incentive
- Export-related non-tariff measure, nes
- Other export incentive
- Import ban
- Import incentive
- Import licensing requirement
- Import monitoring
- Import quota
- Import tariff
- Import tariff quota
- Import-related non-tariff measure, nes
- Internal taxation of imports
- Foreign customer rule
- Trade balancing measure
- Trade finance
- Trade payment measure

4.1.3 Foreign investment policy

- FDI: Entry and ownership rule
- FDI: Financial incentive
- FDI: Treatment and operations, nes

4.1.4 Labor force migration policy

- Labour market access
- Post-migration treatment

4.1.5 Localisation policy

- Local labour
- Local operations
- Local sourcing

4.1.6 Public procurement policy

- Public procurement access
- Public procurement localisation
- Public procurement preference margin
- Public procurement, nes

4.1.7 Subsidies and state aid

- Bailout (capital injection or equity participation)
- Financial assistance in foreign market
- Financial grant
- In-kind grant
- Interest payment subsidy
- Production subsidy
- State loan
- Tax or social insurance relief
- State aid, nes

4.1.8 Trade defense instruments

- Anti-Circumvention
- Anti-Dumping
- Anti-Subsidy
- Safeguard

4.1.9 Other instruments

- Intellectual property protection
- Sanitary and phytosanitary measure
- Technical barrier to trade

4.1.10 Intervention type index

Click on the intervention type of interest to be forwarded to the relevant document section.

- [Anti-Circumvention](#)
- [Anti-Dumping](#)
- [Anti-Subsidy](#)
- [Bailout \(capital injection or equity participation\)](#)
- [Competitive devaluation](#)
- [Control on personal transactions](#)
- [Controls on commercial transactions and investment instruments](#)
- [Controls on credit operations](#)
- [Export ban](#)
- [Export licensing requirement](#)
- [Export quota](#)
- [Export subsidy](#)
- [Export tariff quota](#)
- [Export tax](#)
- [Export tax incentive](#)
- [Export-related non-tariff measure, nes](#)
- [FDI: Entry and ownership rule](#)
- [FDI: Financial incentive](#)
- [FDI: Treatment and operations, nes](#)
- [Financial assistance in foreign market](#)
- [Financial grant](#)
- [Foreign customer rule](#)
- [Import ban](#)
- [Import incentive](#)
- [Import licensing requirement](#)
- [Import monitoring](#)
- [Import quota](#)
- [Import tariff](#)
- [Import tariff quota](#)
- [Import-related non-tariff measure, nes](#)
- [In-kind grant](#)
- [Intellectual property protection](#)
- [Interest payment subsidy](#)
- [Internal taxation of imports](#)
- [Labour market access](#)
- [Loan guarantee](#)
- [Local labour](#)
- [Local operations](#)
- [Local sourcing](#)
- [Other export incentive](#)
- [Post-migration treatment](#)
- [Production subsidy](#)

- Public procurement access
- Public procurement localisation
- Public procurement preference margin
- Public procurement, nes
- Repatriation & surrender requirements
- Safeguard
- Sanitary and phytosanitary measure
- State loan
- Tax or social insurance relief
- Technical barrier to trade
- Trade balancing measure
- Trade finance
- Trade payment measure

4.2 Further classification choices

This section describes the contents of each classification field collected in the GTA database.

4.2.1 GTA evaluation

We record the direction of the change for each intervention using the “GTA evaluation”. The evaluation is signalled by a triangle in one of three different colours. These are:

- Red triangle: The intervention almost certainly discriminates against foreign commercial interests.
- Amber triangle: The intervention likely involves discrimination against foreign commercial interests.
- Green triangle: The intervention liberalises on a non-discriminatory (i.e., most favoured nation) basis; or improves the transparency of a relevant policy.

4.2.2 Affected commercial flow

The affected commercial flow field includes the predominantly affected flow direction. There are three potential values. Only one value can be assigned to each intervention.

- Inward: The predominantly distorted market is the domestic market of the implementing jurisdiction.
- Outward: The documented change concerns an outflow restriction. The predominantly affected market is the outflow destination.
- Outward subsidy: In general, this value is only chosen for export incentives and trade finance interventions. In exceptional cases, a state aid awarded to an exporting company which generates its sales exclusively abroad may be classified as an outward subsidy.

4.2.3 Dates

Subject to availability, various dates are collected for each database entry. These are:

- Announcement date: The issuance date of the documented government statement.
- Implementation date: The date the documented change is enforced.
- Prolongation date: The prolongation date of a change that was originally announced as temporary.
- Removal date: The date the documented change is either withdrawn or fully replaced by a further change. Note that changes that have only been partially replaced or withdrawn do not include a removal date.

- Investigation status date: see [trade defence taxonomy](#).

The “announced as temporary” field signals which measures were from the outset implemented for a limited time only. This field distinguishes such measures from those which have been withdrawn or supplanted by a further deliberate act from the responsible government entity.

4.2.4 Implementation level

The GTA database differentiates the announcements of different government levels or agencies. In total, it distinguishes 6 different actors. These are:

- Supra-national: Announcement by supra-national bodies with binding consequences for its member states. Examples include the European Commission as well as the steering bodies of customs unions.
- National: Announcements made by central government including the central bank, where relevant.
- Sub-national: Announcements made by lower levels of government such as regional, state, provincial and municipal governments.
- National Financial Institution (NFI): Announcements made by a publicly owned bank such as the National Development or Export-Import bank. GTA-relevant central bank announcements are subsumed as part of the national level.
- International Financial Institution (IFI): Announcements made by a publicly owned bank with more than one shareholding member state.

Note that the GTA relevance assessment described in section 3 restricts the documented announcements to those with a discriminatory component and a likely impact on market conditions. This generally rules out changes made by economically small entities or many of the world’s IFIs.

4.2.5 Jurisdictions

Besides the acting jurisdiction(s), each GTA database entry may include two additional sets of countries. Each is defined as follows:

- Implementing jurisdiction(s): The jurisdiction(s) for which the described change is announced. Note that for announcements made by supra-national entities, all complying member states are marked as implementing jurisdictions. An example would be import tariff changes announced by the European Commission and enforced by all member states. Also see the [“Implementation level” field](#) for the allocation of database entries across various governmental agents.
- Distorted market(s): The jurisdiction(s) whose market conditions are about to be changed. For actions affecting inflows such as an import tariff or an FDI restriction, the distorted market is equal to the implementing jurisdiction. For an outflow-related measure such as an export ban or an export subsidy, the distorted market is the export destination of the affected product, service, investment or labour force. See also the [“affected flow” field](#) for this distinction.
- Affected Jurisdiction(s): The jurisdictions whose commercial interests are potentially affected by the announced change. For inflow-related measures, the affected jurisdictions are the inflow sources of the affected goods, service, investment or labour force. For outflow restrictions, the affected jurisdictions are the export destinations of the affected product, service, investment or labour force. For outward subsidies, the affected jurisdictions are the exporters to the distorted market which now compete with a subsidised rival in the affected product, service or investment.

4.2.6 Product classification and identification

The GTA uses the Harmonised System (HS, version 2012) at the 6-digit level. At this level, the Harmonised System includes more than 5'000 different products. Each product is commonly referred to as its own “tariff line”. The details of this classification and its correspondence to others are available from the [World Customs Organisation](#). The United Nations Statistics Division published [a helpful summary](#).

In cases where the official source includes product information in the Harmonised System or a related classification, the products are chosen accordingly. In cases where no such information is available, the GTA team chooses the likely tariff lines based on the announcement text and the Harmonised System descriptions.

The “Official tariff line” box signals how the affected products are identified. The box is ticked in cases where the official source included the necessary information. In all others, it is left empty.

4.2.7 Sector classification and identification

The GTA uses the Common Product Classification (CPC, version 2.1) at the 3-digit level. The details of this classification and its correspondence to others are available from the [United Nations Statistics Division](#).

For interventions that include product-level information, the associated sectors are selected based on the United Nation’s correspondence table for CPC 2.1 and HS 2012. In all other cases, the sector code is chosen by the GTA team according to the wording of the official source.

4.2.8 Selectiveness of the intervention

Most GTA database entries bound the scope of a government interventions through the identification of the affected products and sectors. However, such interventions may be further selective within the products and sectors affected. Two classification fields of the GTA database are designed to collect such differences.

First, the “eligible firms” field specifies which subset of the firms active in the affected product or sector is subject to the documented change. The field may take one of the following values.

- All: There is no additional selection beyond the sectors and products.
- SMEs: Only SMEs which are active in the selected products and sectors are subject to the documented change.
- Firm-specific: The documented change targets enumerated firms.
- State-controlled: The documented change was made for enumerated state-controlled firms. Firms with a public ownership stake exceeding 50 percent are considered “state-controlled”.
- State trading: The documented change was made for enumerated state trading enterprises. State trading enterprises are majority publicly owned firms that have special privileges on cross-border transactions e.g. the monopoly on imports of a staple food.

The final piece of the classification that signals the selectiveness of an intervention is the “horizontal intervention” box. It signals that all sectors have been affected.

4.2.9 Severity of the intervention

To compare the differences across the collected government interventions, the severity of the change in market conditions is a key concern. It is very difficult to construct such a metric which is valid across the 50+ policy instruments and the different commercial flows (goods, services, investment and labour force migration) documented by the GTA. In general, the information collected via the product and sector scope, the implementation period as well as the selectiveness of the intervention may provide some guidance. Besides these fields, two direct attempts to provide *additional* information about the severity of an intervention are made in the GTA database.

First, where possible, we record the prior and the new value of the changed market condition. These fields thus collect quantifiable information about the height of the documented change. The units permitted by this field are US Dollar values (e.g. for subsidies, grants or state loans), percentages and USD per measuring unit MT/tonne/kg/item (e.g. for tariffs) as well as quantities (e.g. for quotas). These prior and new values can be collected for the intervention as a whole (e.g. in sector-wide industrial policy interventions) or on the product level (e.g. individual tariff changes).

Second, two tick boxes offer a binary classification in more and less severe interventions. The “tariff peak” tick box is marked in export and import tariff cases which cross or end up with an applied tariff of 15 percentage points. Furthermore, the “jumbo” tick box is marked for interventions that affect a large amount of trade (this function is currently not deployed).

4.2.10 Trade defence taxonomy

Due to their internationally standardized implementation process, trade defence instruments have two additional taxonomy fields. The trade defence instruments documented in detail by the GTA are anti-circumvention, anti-dumping, anti-subsidy and safeguard investigations.

The two additional taxonomy fields for trade defence instruments are the investigation status and the investigation status date. Using these two fields, GTA database entries on trade defence include the dates for the initiation of the investigation, the date on which a preliminary duty and/or a definitive duty was imposed, the extension date of a trade defence duty, as well as the review date of a definitive duty. The termination date is collected for investigations that were terminated without the imposition of a preliminary or definitive duty.

The investigation status dates correspond to the dates in the regular GTA taxonomy as follows. The initiation date of the investigation is equal to the announcement date. The date on which the first duty of the investigation is enforced is the inception date. This first duty can be either a preliminary or a definitive duty. The date a trade defence duty is withdrawn or no longer prolonged is equal to the revocation date.

Section appendix

A: Correspondence of intervention types to UN MAST

MAST chapter	Description	GTA intervention type
A	A Sanitary and phytosanitary measure	Sanitary and phytosanitary measure
B	B Technical barriers to trade	Technical barrier to trade
CAP	Capital control measures	Repatriation & surrender requirements
CAP	Capital control measures	Controls on commercial transactions and investment instruments
CAP	Capital control measures	Controls on credit operations
CAP	Capital control measures	Control on personal transactions
D	D Contingent trade-protective measures	Import monitoring
D1	D1 Antidumping	Anti-dumping
D1	D1 Antidumping	Anti-circumvention
D2	D2 Countervailing measure	Anti-subsidy
D31	D31 General (multilateral) safeguard	Safeguard
D32	D32 Agricultural special safeguard	Special safeguard
E1	E1 Non-automatic import-licensing procedures other than authorizations for SPS or TBT reasons	Import licensing requirement
E2	E2 Quotas	Import quota
E3	E3 Prohibitions other than for SPS and TBT reasons	Import ban
E6	E6 Tariff-rate quotas (TRQ)	Import tariff quota
P12	Export quotas	Foreign customer limit
F7	F7 Internal taxes and charges levied on imports	Internal taxation of imports
FDI	FDI measures	FDI: Entry and ownership rule
FDI	FDI measures	FDI: Treatment and operations, nes
FDI	FDI measures	FDI: Financial incentive
G	G Finance measures	Competitive devaluation
G	G Finance measures	Trade payment measure
I1	I1 Local content measures	Local sourcing
I1	I1 Local content measures	Local operations
I1	I1 Local content measures	Local labour
I1	I1 Local content measures	Localisation incentive
I2	I2 Trade-balancing measures	Trade balancing measure
X	Instrument unclear	Import-related non-tariff measure, nes
X	Instrument unclear	Instrument unclear
L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	Bailout (capital injection or equity participation)
L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	State loan
L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	Financial grant
L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	In-kind grant
L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	Production subsidy
L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	Interest payment subsidy
L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	Loan guarantee
L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	Tax or social insurance relief

L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	Consumption subsidy
L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	Import incentive
L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	Financial assistance in foreign market
L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	State aid, nes
L	L Subsidies (excluding export subsidies under P7)	Price stabilisation
M1	M1 Government Procurement Market Access Restrictions	Public procurement access
M2	M2 Government Procurement Domestic Price Preference	Public procurement preference margin
M3	M3 Government Procurement Local Content Requirement	Public procurement localisation
M5	M5 Government Procurement Tendering Process	Public procurement, nes
MIG	Migration measures	Labour market access
MIG	Migration measures	Post-migration treatment
N	N Intellectual Property	Intellectual property protection
P11	P11 Export prohibition	Export ban
P12	P12 Export quotas	Export tariff quota
P12	P12 Export quotas	Export quota
P13	P13 Licensing- or permit requirements to export	Export licensing requirement
P5	P5 Export taxes and charges	Export tax
P7	P7 Export subsidies	Tax-based export incentive
P7	P7 Export subsidies	Export subsidy
P7	P7 Export subsidies	Trade finance
P8	P8 Export credits	Other export incentive
P9	P9 Export measures, n.e.s.	Export-related non-tariff measure, nes
TARIFF	Tariff measures	Import tariff

B: Correspondence of intervention types used on the old GTA website

Prior website	New website
Bailout / State aid	Bailout (capital injection or equity participation)
Bailout / State aid	State loan
Bailout / State aid	Financial grant
Bailout / State aid	In-kind grant
Bailout / State aid	Production subsidy
Bailout / State aid	Interest payment subsidy
Bailout / State aid	Loan guarantee
Bailout / State aid	Tax or social insurance relief
Bailout / State aid	State aid, nes
Bailout / State aid	Price stabilisation
Competitive Devaluation	Competitive devaluation
Consumption Subsidy	Consumption subsidy
Export Incentive	Tax-based export incentive
Export Incentive	Export subsidy
Export Incentive	Other export incentive
Export Taxes or Restriction	Export tax
Export Taxes or Restriction	Export ban
Export Taxes or Restriction	Export tariff quota
Export Taxes or Restriction	Export quota
Import Ban	Import ban
Import Subsidy	Import incentive
Import tariff	Import tariff
Import tariff	Internal taxation of imports
Intellectual Property Protection	Intellectual property protection
Investment Measure	Repatriation & surrender requirements
Investment Measure	Controls on commercial transactions and investment instruments
Investment Measure	Controls on credit operations
Investment Measure	Control on personal transactions
Investment Measure	FDI: Entry and ownership rule
Investment Measure	FDI: Treatment and operations, nes
Investment Measure	FDI: Financial incentive
Localisation Requirement	Local sourcing
Localisation Requirement	Local operations
Localisation Requirement	Local labour
Localisation Requirement	Localisation incentive
Migration Measure	Labour market access
Migration Measure	Post-migration treatment
Non-Tariff Measure (not otherwise specified)	Trade payment measure
Non-Tariff Measure (not otherwise specified)	Trade balancing measure
Non-Tariff Measure (not otherwise specified)	Export licensing requirement
Non-Tariff Measure (not otherwise specified)	Import licensing requirement
Non-Tariff Measure (not otherwise specified)	Export-related non-tariff measure, nes
Non-Tariff Measure (not otherwise specified)	Import-related non-tariff measure, nes
not available	Instrument unclear
Other Service sector measure	Foreign customer limit

Public procurement localization	Public procurement localisation
Public procurement preference	Public procurement preference margin
Public procurement, nes	Public procurement access
Public procurement, nes	Public procurement, nes
Quota (incl. Tariff-Rate Quote)	Import tariff quota
Quota (incl. Tariff-Rate Quote)	Import quota
Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measure	Sanitary and phytosanitary measure
Technical Barrier to Trade	Technical barrier to trade
Trade Defence Measure (AD, SG, CVD)	Import monitoring
Trade Defence Measure (AD, SG, CVD)	Anti-dumping
Trade Defence Measure (AD, SG, CVD)	Safeguard
Trade Defence Measure (AD, SG, CVD)	Anti-subsidy
Trade Defence Measure (AD, SG, CVD)	Anti-circumvention
Trade Defence Measure (AD, SG, CVD)	Special safeguard
Trade Finance	Trade finance
Trade Finance	Financial assistance in foreign market