



ENhancing our understanding of Trade Impacts
on Climate, industries, and the Environment



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Expert Webinar, co-hosted with GTN: “Trade & Climate at COP30”

ENTICE Listening Mechanism: Thematic online seminar series

16/12/2025



1 Context

A few weeks after the close of COP30, in Belém, Brazil in November 2025, an expert webinar co-hosted by ENTICE and the [Green Trade Network](#), on December 16, 2025, examined the key trade-related developments that shaped the outcome in Belém.

The summit confirmed that the trade–climate nexus is now a central element of global climate politics. President Lula described this COP as a “COP of truth,” in that it clarifies once and for all certain major fault lines... most of which relate to geoeconomic considerations.

Concerns from Global South countries over unilateral climate-related trade measures, particularly the EU’s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), dominated early consultations and placed the EU in a defensive posture. Despite these tensions, the final COP30 decision text marked an unexpectedly constructive step forward. Parties reaffirmed that climate measures, including unilateral ones, must avoid arbitrary discrimination or disguised restrictions to international trade. Crucially, the text established a new workstream of structured UNFCCC discussions on trade and climate between 2027 and 2028, leading to a dedicated report. Negotiators evaluated four options to address the trade–climate interface, ultimately endorsing the more ambitious option of convening three formal trade–climate dialogues at upcoming Bonn sessions. Parallel to negotiations, the Brazilian Presidency launched the Integrated Forum on Climate Change and Trade (IFCCT), signalling an effort to enhance coherence between trade and climate regimes. Additional proposals—such as the Africa Group’s call for mandatory UNFCCC notification of unilateral trade measures—highlight the growing political sensitivity and strategic importance of this agenda.

This webinar aimed to unpack these developments, assess their implications for global climate governance, and explore what they mean for future cooperation on trade and climate.

The webinar aimed to serve the first of the ENTICE project’s series of online seminars, as part of its transdisciplinary ‘listening’ mechanism (Task 1.3). On the day, it was attended by 45 participants.

2 Agenda

The agenda of the event is available below:

Green Trade Network & ENTICE

Expert Webinar on Trade and Climate at COP30

Date: Tuesday, 16 December

Time: 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Place: Online

Time	Session
3:30-3:45 PM	Opening remarks • Pierre Leturcq (Institute for European Environmental Policy- IEEP, Green Trade Network) • Lukas Hermwille (Wuppertal Institut, ENTICE)
3:45-4:00 PM	Keynote address Michael Mehling (Massachusetts Institute of Technology – MIT)
4:00-4:30 PM	Panel discussion • Ieva Barsauskaite (International Institute for Sustainable Development - IISD) • Ellie Belton (Third Generation Environmentalism - E3G) • Markus Gehring (Centre for International Sustainable Law – CISDL) • Professor Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger (Centre for International Sustainable Law – CISDL) • Carolyn Deere Birbeck (Forum on Trade, Environment & the SDGs - TESS Forum)
4:30-5:00 PM	Q&A

[Register here](#)

3 Summary

The scope of the webinar was to review the outcomes of the UNFCCC COP30 climate conference in Belém, Brazil in November 2025, of relevance to trade, assess the expectations from and role of emerging institutional initiatives linking trade and climate, and discuss the prospects for progress amidst growing geopolitical uncertainty.

On behalf of the [Green Trade Network](#) (GTN), Pierre Leturcq ([Institute for European Environmental Policy](#) - IEEP) opened the webinar, welcoming participants and briefly introducing GTN. Representing the ENTICE research consortium, Lukas Hermwille ([Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy](#) - WI) then took the floor to summarise the scope of the webinar and the aims of the ENTICE project in terms of strengthening our scientific understanding of the interplay of the trade-climate-industry nexus as well as of the impacts of trade and trade policy on climate change and action. In this respect, Maro Baka ([E3-Modelling](#) - E3M) complemented this introduction to ENTICE, by discussing in detail its research approach as well as objectives to leverage stakeholder inputs, advance the modelling of trade, climate, and industrial policy interactions, improve data foundations and transparency, and analyse the sectoral impacts of climate and trade policies (e.g., on agriculture, forestry, materials).

Following this framing part, Michael Mehling ([Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) - MIT) in his keynote address discussed how, historically, trade and climate regimes had been until recently deliberately separated, with trade often framed as something never to disrupt. But, since the Paris Agreement in 2015, trade and climate have become increasingly harder not to intertwine, with issues such as competitiveness or leakage finding their way into negotiations and the climate agenda. COP30 marked a turning point, in this respect, as the first UNFCCC climate conference to explicitly refer to trade in its outcome. In particular, labelled the implementation COP, the Belém conference saw the establishment of a three-year Climate–Trade Dialogue under the UNFCCC subsidiary bodies, a formal recognition of the need to avoid unjustifiable trade restrictions in climate measures, and the launch of the Integrated Forum on Climate Change and Trade (IFCCT) as an initiative of the Brazilian presidency. Michael also discussed the increasing fragmentation of various platforms addressing trade from a climate perspective (including WTO, G7 Climate Club, Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate, and other formal or informal initiatives), the growing role of unilateral measures (such as carbon border adjustment mechanisms) and geopolitical power dynamics, as well as his expectations of uneven and politically contested but unavoidable progress alongside the acceleration of climate action.

Pierre Leturcq (IEEP) then opened the panel discussion, giving the floor to GTN members to share some insights, covering different angles of the discussion and following their engagement with one or several of these initiatives.

Ieva Barsauskaite ([International Institute for Sustainable Development](#) - IISD) first noted the parallels between earlier WTO deadlock and current COP trade discussions. She also highlighted the “Brussels effect”, with the EU pioneering in addressing carbon leakage (with measures such as CBAM and EUDR) and showing a non-conventional, innovative way forward—which, however, still needs much discussion and alignment. In this direction, she observed rapid global diffusion of carbon pricing and CBAM-type instruments, although the big question would be how governments can select the right format in their context.

Reporting from her on-the-ground experience at COP30, Ellie Belton ([Third Generation Environmentalism](#) - E3G) emphasised the significance of formal acknowledgement of trade in UNFCCC outcomes and noted the developing countries’ constructive engagement and proposals for concrete changes. However, she also

argued for realism and the need to shift focus from debating CBAMs onto interoperability and technical solutions, while flagging the risks of “forum fatigue” (complementing Ieva’s point on the lack of clear division of scope and responsibilities among the various platforms).

Markus Gehring ([University of Cambridge](#)) took the floor and reflected on the long-term evolution from outright rejection of trade–climate discussions to their current integration, while warning against the dialogue becoming a proxy for contesting EU policy. He later focused on aspects revolving around national contributions under the “Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities” principle (CBDR-RC): he called for linking NDC implementation more explicitly with trade cooperation and raised legal questions around CBDR in trade measures.

Finally, Carolyn Deere Birkbeck ([Forum on Trade, Environment & the SDGs - TESS](#)) stressed the growing relevance of trade for mitigation, adaptation, and climate-resilient development alike, in fact arguing that this multiplicity of platforms is necessary due to the urgency and complexity of challenges ahead. She also updated the participants on the continued work of the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate as well as the design and consultative phase of the IFCCT towards solution-oriented dialogue, before emphasising the importance of the EU’s participation in the Forum.

Eventually, Lukas Hermwille (*WI*) highlighted both the opportunity and the fragility of the current momentum on trade and climate, noting the challenge of orchestration across fragmented initiatives. He also observed the alignment between the new UNFCCC trade dialogues and the timeline of the next Global Stocktake, concluding that structured engagement on trade and climate is now both unavoidable and timely. He then wrapped up this exciting public part of the discussion, before opening the Chatham House-driven panel exchange, which in turn focused on aspects of negotiations, consensus, and engagement among countries.

The webinar was recorded and is available online [here](#).