

**María Julia Oliva**  
UNCTAD Bio Trade Initiative

**Paper title:** Trade, intellectual property and agricultural biotechnology: Key links and considerations from a sustainable development perspective

**Abstract:**

International trade and intellectual property rules significantly affect the development, use, and implications of biotechnology. Provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements, for example, increasingly define Members' policy space in areas such as environmental and consumer protection. The recent WTO ruling on the application of the European Union approval procedures for biotechnology products is a clear example of the multiple, complex and important links between the international trading system and biotechnology. Intellectual property rules, moreover, determine to which extent biotechnology products can be patented, impact the extent to which they can be used for research purposes, and influence biodiversity conservation, food security, and traditional farming practices.

The objective of the present article is to provide a brief overview of the key links between trade and intellectual property rules and agricultural biotechnology, particularly as they are relevant for sustainable development strategies and policies. Relevant multilateral trade and intellectual property rules will be identified and their relationship with biotechnology-related laws and policies will be analyzed. It is hoped that such analysis will inform and enhance the interdisciplinary and wide debate sought at the Wonbit Conference in June, 2007.