

CALL FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT- IRCTD -2025 (30th – 31st October 2025)

The World Trade Organization Chairs Programme (WCP)-Rwanda, UR-Sweden programme and the AeTrade Group are organising an international research conference on Trade and Development.

The WCP-Rwanda aims to strengthen knowledge and understanding of the trading system among academics, citizens and policy makers in Rwanda by stimulating not only teaching and outreach activities but also research in the areas of international trade. It offers the opportunities to build talents and get policy-oriented research results and outreach activities to engage the stakeholders. In particular, it looks forward to conducting research that is relevant to inform about how to boost Rwanda's regional trade integration with additional focus on trade policy and multilateral trade-related issues.

The UR-Sweden Programme for Research, Higher Education and Institutional Advancement is a collaborative initiative between the University of Rwanda (UR) and Swedish universities, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Launched in 2002 and currently in its fourth phase (2019–2026), the programme aims to bolster Rwanda's transition to a knowledge-based economy by enhancing research capacity and postgraduate training at UR .

Key objectives include increasing the number of PhD and Master's degree holders, improving the quality and quantity of research, and fostering the application of research findings in policymaking and societal development. The programme supports various disciplines, including environmental research, natural sciences, health, management , social sciences, and research support services. It offers PhD training, postdoctoral fellowships, Master's programs, research and innovation grants, and support for research infrastructure like ICT and libraries.

AeTrade Group is an African social enterprise headquartered in Kigali, Rwanda with a central commitment to digitalize trade in Africa at a larger scale. The group encourages investment in small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) with a view to create shared prosperity and many jobs for the growing youth population across the continent. The AeTrade Group is founded on the principles of independence and sustainability aligned to the principles of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. AeTrade Group approach is partnering with various partners in academia, public and private sector as well as non-governmental organizations to create meaningful pathways for employment for youth in Rwanda and across the continent in order to participate in various projects and programs that accelerate

digital and financial inclusion using various digital tools in e-commerce, e-payments, as well as e-learning amongst others.

The venue, dates and objectives of the conference

The conference will be held at Nobleza Hotel from 30th to 31st October 2025. The main objective of the conference is to create a space for presentation of current research findings in the field of trade and development. The conference will be also a space for networking between academics, policy makers, industry practitioners and other stakeholders, aiming at long-term sharing of knowledge and discussions of highly current issues about trade and development.

Specific objectives:

- To share the research findings with policy makers and private sector operators.
- To encourage and enhance evidence-based research on research sub-themes mentioned below
- To foster dialogue that promotes the exchange of ideas and innovative thinking among researchers, development practitioners and policymakers

Conference sub-themes

With the above considerations in mind, the international research conference proposes to address the following thematic streams

Research themes include:

- Regional trade and trade policy
- International trade agreements and trade negotiations
- Africa's benefits and challenges to regional and international trade
- Digital trade
- The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)
- International trade and trade financing
- Global value chains and trade
- Trade and environment
- Trade and gender
- Entrepreneurship and trade
- Data science and trade
- Artificial intelligence and trade ecosystem

Organising and scientific committees

A Scientific Committee is constituted with leading figures in the fields mentioned above. The Committee will help identify Speakers, reviewers of abstracts and full papers. An organizing Committee is also being set up with representatives of the conference partners who will play the key role in spearheading the event.

Organising committee:

Prof Jonas Barayandema (University of Rwanda, WTO Chair), Prof François Niragire (University of Rwanda, WTO Co-Chair), Prof Charles Ruranga (ACE-DS, Director), Ms. Treasure Maphanga (AeTrade Group) and Immaculate Bugingo (AeTrade Group), Dr Benjamin Mudaheranwa (University of Rwanda, Sida Subprogramme Team Leader), Prof Samuel Mutarindwa (University of Rwanda, Director of research and Innovation), Prof Rama Rao (Emeritus Professor of Management and Guest Faculty/Member- Board of Studies, Andhra University School of International Business), Dr Ignace Kabano (ACE-DS, Head of Training), , Dr Jean Bosco Shema (University of Rwanda), Dr Fidele Mutemberezi (University of Rwanda), Dr Joseph Akumuntu (University of Rwanda).

Scientific committee:

Olof Brunninge, Jönköping International Business School, Jönköping University (Sweden), Dr Joseph Mung'atu (Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology), Dr Richard Newfarmer (International Growth Centre), Dr Trudi Hartzenberg (Executive Director of Tralac), Dr John Ngubiri (Makerere University), Dr Wilberforce Nuwagira (Senior Principal Economist at National Bank of Rwanda), Dr Mathias Karangwa (Director of Research at National Bank of Rwanda), Prof Rama Rao (Emeritus Professor of Management and Guest Faculty/Member- Board of Studies, Andhra University School of International Business), Prof Charles Ruranga (ACE-DS, Director), Prof François Niragire (University of Rwanda, WTO Co-Chair), Prof Jonas Barayandema (University of Rwanda, WTO Chair), Prof Samuel Mutarindwa (University of Rwanda, Director of Research and Innovation), Dr Benjamin Mudaheranwa (University of Rwanda, Sida Subprogramme Team Leader), Dr Fidele Mutemberezi (University of Rwanda).

Papers submission guidelines:

Interested authors are invited to submit abstracts and original research papers in word or PDF format through: <https://efiling.ur.ac.rw/wtochairs-sida-aetrade/research-conference> with a copy to wtochairsdatascienceconference@gmail.com

The submission must be done in two steps:

1. Create an account on platform
2. Login and submit

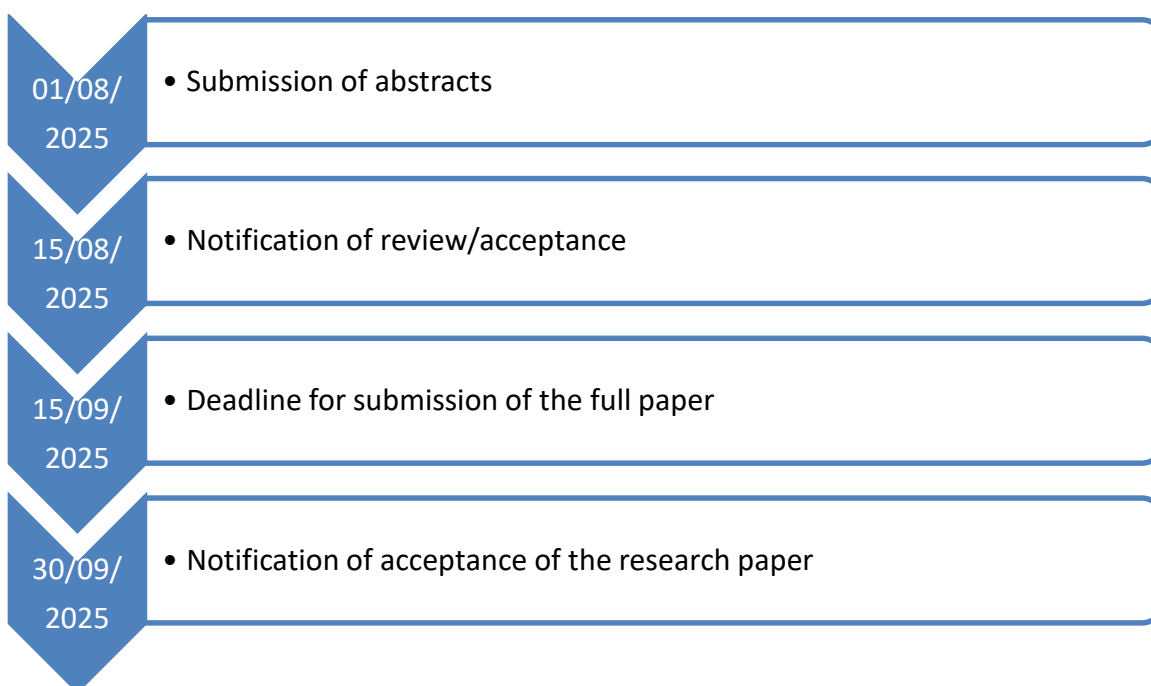
Paper Structure

- Title
- Author details (and affiliation)
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Research problem
- Aim/Purpose/Objectives

- Literature review
- Methodology/Approach
- Findings/Results
- Conclusion/Implications/Recommendations
- Acknowledgements (when appropriate)
- References
- Appendices (when appropriate)

Formatting & Paper Length Limit

- Paper length: Full paper: maximum 20 pages, including references, tables/ charts and keywords
- Abstract length: 200-350 words
- Key words: 3-5 words
- Font: 12-point Times New Roman
- Paragraph: Single-spaced
- Margin: Normal (Top :2.54 cm Bottom: 2.54 cm; Left: 3.18cm, Right: 3.18cm)
- Page numbers: Bottom-centered
- Layout: One-column Portrait
- Format: MS Word-compatible file



All research papers received will be reviewed by the scientific committee. Papers that will be deemed to be of high quality and to make significant contributions to the aims of the conference will be accepted for presentation at the conference.