

O BRASIL E AS ENERGIAS RENOVÁVEIS – UM ESTUDO DAS NEGOCIAÇÕES DE BENS AMBIENTAIS NA OMC

MICHEL AUGUSTO PAIXÃO; SILVIA HELENA MIRANDA
ESALQ.

Abstract:

The necessity to mitigate environmental damages and to preserve the environmental resources has pushed countries to rethinking their production and consumption models, focusing on the sustainable development principles. Facing this new paradigm, a concern has raised in stimulating the use of environmental goods. Consequently, issues regarding the definition and classification of environmental goods have emerged in trade negotiations and in academia and, more recently, also in the conceptual scope of the Green Economy developments.

Due to this scenario and current discussion on environmental goods at the World Trade Organization (WTO), the role to Brazil as a major player in their markets might become particularly important, once Brazilian exports and, mainly, imports of environmental goods is significant, particularly to renewable energies. This statement can be supported by Brazilian potential in this energy sector (REN21, 2010) and by the investments that are projected to happen to enhance production of renewable sources (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010-11).

However, the outcomes to Brazil in facing this new commercial reality that, until 2007, were dependent on negotiations to environmental goods at the Committee on Trade and Environment – Special Session – WTO, are now related to the Green Economy near developments. One of the biggest matters that challenge Brazilian policy makers is the dispute on classifying environmental goods among WTO member-countries. To illustrate this point, developed countries have proposed lists to negotiate environmental goods, which include several equipment used to produce renewable energy, and are classified as industrial goods, and arguing that they can be considered clean technology. This position affects developing countries, which usually are importers of such devices, facing negative trade impacts on their trade balance, which could be even worsened by tariff reductions.

This is, indeed, Brazil's case, as the country imports a considerable quantity of industrial goods in the renewable energy category, according to the classification proposed by OECD and the European Union. On the other hand, the ethanol, which shows an exporting potentiality for Brazilian companies, has been excluded by most of lists proposed by developed countries. The same kind of debate that has been enveloping the environmental goods negotiation at the WTO is likely to prevail also in the scope of the Green Economy.

Thus, the goal of this study is to evaluate the Brazilian trade balance for renewable energy, based upon the list proposed by OECD and by the European Union, both being negotiated at the WTO, and to identify the variables that affect imports and exports of those goods. Besides, we build scenarios to project impacts over the Brazilian trade balance taking into consideration the plausible outcomes of international negotiations and tariff cuts to environmental goods, specifically to renewable energy goods. We apply a VAR model (Vector auto-regressive model), based on Castro and Cavalcanti (1997).

Key-words: Brazil, Renewable energy, Inational Trade; Environmental goods; WTO;
VAR model; Green Economy