

Introducing the TRIPS Flexibilities Navigator

Over the last year or so, we've been keeping you [up-to-date](#) with the development of a new tool to aid policymakers, advocates and others, including academics, to unlock the potential of TRIPS flexibilities as a mainstream policy instrument to improve and secure access to needed medicines: [The TRIPS Flexibilities Navigator](#).

Many among you will remember that the Navigator was born as the winning idea of Health Action International's first ever Diplohack. This collaborative exercise took place back in October 2020, gathering participants from fields as varied as the legal profession, economists and software development, plus students and academics based across Europe, to work in teams and pitch ideas to a panel of experts. We are very excited that what began that Autumn Day, on the morning of which none of us really knew what would emerge from the team discussions, has sprung into a working resource with the potential to have big impact on the quest to achieve better and more sustainable access to health technologies.

What exactly is the Navigator?

The [TRIPS Flexibilities Navigator](#) provides the background and information necessary for all stakeholders to facilitate and contribute to the process of mainstreaming the legitimate use of health-oriented intellectual property management tools, including [compulsory licensing and other flexibilities](#), contained in the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Agreement. We believe that these tools should be recognised as part of the portfolio of policies portfolio available to pursue a public health agenda that goes beyond emergency situations and should not be limited to a specific geographical area or disease. Instead, they should be seen as another available intervention to counter increasing economic burdens linked to the procurement of pharmaceuticals faced by low-, middle, and high-income countries alike.

The Navigator relies on a number of publicly available, outside sources, including the invaluable information collected by [Medicines Law & Policy](#) as part of their own [TRIPS Flexibilities Database](#) and the information on the legal basis for use across European countries. It brings together this data with existing information from the [European Patent Office](#) on the domestic legal basis for the use of TRIPS flexibilities in national contexts, plus pressure points for advocacy and research opportunities on the use of these tools and the information volunteered by users. The result is an action-oriented information clearing house for evidence-based decision making to improve access to medicines.

What Comes Next?

The Navigator, in its current form, is by no means the end of this process. The most critical phase to ensure its success begins now with you, the user and supporter. The data

resources we have relied on up to this point, as important and useful as they are, only paint part of the picture. Much more needs to be filled in and, with that, a network willing and able to push the agenda to the point it works for people around the world. For that reason, we are calling on stakeholders to not only use the Navigator, but actively contribute to it and, by so doing, become part of a growing community. What is missing, yet essential to further the impact of the movement? What contacts can we make that perhaps we haven't thought about? Are there examples of recent use of flexibilities we did not mention and are worthy the attention? Are you an academic who has written on the subject and would like your research disseminated? Throughout the tool, there are opportunities to contribute information and contact us with your input and insight.

We'll continue to reach out to our network to help to update and improve the Navigator, and update this blog with progress in the coming months.

For now, please visit <https://www.flexibilitiesnavigator.org/> and be part of the growing network.