Service firms may encounter the following impediments to trade.

- Excessive restrictions on temporary entry into the country with burdensome visa or work permit processes
- Non-recognition of professional credentials
- Rules that substantially restrict external financial transfers
- Discriminatory access vis-à-vis a national firm or other foreign competitor to distribution networks, for example, retail or telecommunications networks
- Discriminatory treatment vis-à-vis a national firm or other foreign competitor under the regulatory framework of the industry, for example, discriminatory registration or authorization requirements
- Excessive delays or arbitrary treatment in licensing or accreditation procedures
- Requirements for employment of nationals when operating in the market
- Limitations on the type or quantity of service products allowed in the market
- Product specific restrictions that impede your ability to provide services in their market
- Restrictions on the availability of foreign currency available to the traveller to purchase services abroad
- Requirements for the formation of a joint venture, or prescription of specific corporate structure, when operating in the market
- Limitations on the ability to use corporate name, when operating in the market
- Limitations on the percentage of ownership of the firm, when operating in the market
- Limitations on the geographic location of the firm in the market
- Requirements that local marketing and advertising firms be used, when operating in the market
- Prohibitions on the provision of a service by a foreign firm in the market
- Imposition of high fees or taxes on repatriation of earnings
- Industry administrative rules and procedures that are difficult to obtain and understand
- Industry measures that are NOT administered in a reasonable, objective and impartial manner with regard to foreign firms
- Restrictions on foreign participation in government procurement processes
According to the GATS, service trade impediments may also be characterized as:

- Limitations on the number of service suppliers whether in the form of numerical quotas, monopolies, exclusive service suppliers or the requirements of an economic needs test;
- Limitations on the total value of service transactions or assets in the form of numerical quotas or the requirements of an economic needs test;
- Limitations on the total number of service operations or on the total quantity of service output expressed in terms of designated numerical units in the form of quotas or the requirements of an economic needs test;
- Limitations on the total number of natural persons that may be employed in a particular service sector or that a service supplier may employ and who are necessary for, and directly related to, the supply of the specific service in the form of numerical quotas or the requirements of an economic needs test;
- Measures which restrict or require specific types of legal entity or joint ventures through which a service supplier may supply a service; and
- Limitations on the participation of foreign capital in terms of maximum percentage limit on foreign shareholding or the total value of individual or aggregate foreign investment.