



Iain Sanford, FCIArb is a senior independent lawyer, arbitrator and mediator with almost three decades of experience in international dispute resolution and public international law.

Qualified in common law jurisdictions (England & Wales, New Zealand, Australia and Ireland), he is an expert in treaty interpretation and cross-border matters, bringing experience as a neutral and counsel across various international courts and tribunals. Having advised, and appeared for and against, sovereign States, international organizations and private parties across Asia, the Pacific, the Gulf, Europe and the Americas, he brings to neutral roles a breadth of engagement – and an absence of fixed allegiance – that underpins genuine independence and impartiality.

Seats and governing laws: has worked in proceedings seated in London, Stockholm, the Philippines, Australia and Fiji, under a range of governing and procedural laws, including proceedings under UNCITRAL rules. Sectors: trade and investment; life sciences and healthcare; transportation, media and technology; defense and dual-use goods; energy, mining and commodities. Languages: English (native), French (intermediate).

EXPERTISE

- International dispute resolution, drawing on experience as a WTO dispute settlement panelist, and as counsel in investment, WTO, ICJ and law of the sea proceedings
- International investment law and investor-State dispute settlement (ISDS), with strength in treaty interpretation and procedure
- International trade law, including disputes and advisory work concerning all aspects of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, trade remedies (trade defence), and trade related aspects of intellectual property rights
- International sanctions and export controls, including more than fifteen years advising governments and enterprises across multiple jurisdictions on trade restrictions, dual-use and defense export controls, and related compliance matters
- International commercial disputes, particularly in the transportation, media, technology and life sciences sectors
- Public international law, including the law of the sea, international environmental law, and sustainable development
- The regulation of trade in marine and other natural resources, at the intersection of international trade law, the law of the sea and international environmental disciplines, including the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.

NEUTRAL ROLES & INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

Sandford's background in neutral roles, combined with extensive counsel experience across diverse forums and on both sides of trade and investment disputes, demonstrates his capacity to discharge arbitrator duties with independence and integrity:

- WTO Appellate Body Secretariat: Provided legal support to six Appellate Body divisions and two WTO arbitrators, developing understanding of independence, impartiality, confidentiality and tribunal procedure at an institutional level.
- WTO Panelist experience: Served as panelist in WTO dispute settlement proceedings (*US – Shrimp (Viet Nam)*, DS404), handling procedural and substantive matters including jurisdictional objections and merits analysis.
- Mediator experience: successfully mediated an international dispute involving maritime services and access to port infrastructure.
- Current institutional listings: WIPO List of Neutrals, EU List of Candidates Qualified to Serve as Chair in Arbitrations under EU Trade Agreements, WTO Indicative List of Governmental and Non-Governmental Panelists. Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCIArb).
- Professional ethics: Member of CIARB Professional Conduct Committee, demonstrating commitment to the high standards of arbitral ethics and conduct.

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

Iain Sanford Legal & Dispute Resolution, Geneva, Switzerland

Independent arbitrator, mediator & legal counsel

2026-present

As an independent practitioner, Sanford is focused on expanding his practice as a neutral arbitrator and mediator. In addition to appointments as a neutral, he continues to counsel clients, focusing on international trade matters and treaty implementation.

Foley Hoag, Paris, France & Geneva, Switzerland

Partner

2025

Sanford led teams advising State and corporate stakeholders on high-stakes legal matters involving international investment and trade law, IP licensing as well as various issues arising from supply chain disruptions resulting from changes to US tariffs and trade policy.

Mandates included:

- Counsel to a State in connection with a threatened ICSID arbitration.
- Advising on ratification and implementation of a new multilateral treaty.
- Advising a candidate country on WTO accession.
- Advising a variety of commercial clients on sanctions matters.
- Guiding multinational enterprises on critical challenges arising from global trade disruptions, regulatory shifts and international disputes.

Sidley Austin, Geneva, Switzerland

Partner

2015-2024

Counsel

2012-2014

Sanford worked on investment and commercial disputes and litigated before a variety of international tribunals. He led teams representing a variety of sovereign clients both defending and challenging trade measures in the WTO. He also worked on a variety of trade-related advisory matters.

Highlights included serving as counsel to:

- a media company in a 10-figure investment treaty arbitration with a State under UNCITRAL rules and the Agreement on the Islamic Conference (public international law, London seat).
- State and commercial clients on protection of investments under bilateral investment treaties and investment provisions of FTAs.
- WTO Members in connection with more than 20 WTO disputes, with subject matter ranging from protection of intellectual property rights to trade in the products of living marine resources.
- States in advisory opinion proceedings concerning climate change before the ICJ and ITLOS.
- a State in connection with proceedings under Annex VII of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- a State in connection with all aspects of Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) negotiations, including labor, environmental practices, and fair economic practices.
- various commercial clients in the agricultural chemicals and healthcare industries on compliance and advocacy strategies including in connection with development of environmental and health standards.
- commercial clients in respect of international sanctions matters.
- the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture (pro bono), examining existing international export control regimes as input for her proposals for a new international convention banning trade in items used for torture.

In addition to other work, Sandford oversaw or directly supervised numerous development-focused consulting projects as co-leader of Sidley's "Emerging Enterprises" and "Trade for Development" pro bono programs between 2021 and 2024. Under his leadership, the programs were recalibrated to focus on impacts in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), forged partnerships with ITC YE!, ITC SheTrades and WIPO Green, integrated over 70 new client projects and trained over 5000 developing country entrepreneurs on relevant legal topics, with participation by over 500 firm lawyers across 14 offices.

Minter Ellison, Canberra, Australia

Special Counsel, Director International Trade Group

2005-2012

Sandford's practice at Minter Ellison focused on foreign direct investment in Australia, compliance with Australian export control, sanctions, and anti-corruption laws, as well as trade remedies. His work also included seeking administrative law review of Australian trade measures, as well as private dispute resolution, particularly in the transportation sector.

Highlights included:

- Mediator in a confidential matter between the operator of port infrastructure and users (Fiji law, Fiji seat).

- Counsel in arbitral proceedings concerning the acceptability of certain insurance bonds in lieu of other financial security arrangements under the dispute resolution rules of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) (Philippines law, Manila seat).
- Counsel in arbitral proceedings concerning IATA financial security requirements under IATA dispute resolution rules (Australian law, Australian seat).
- Counsel in mediated proceedings concerning IATA financial security requirements under IATA dispute resolution rules (Australian law, Australian seat).
- Advising prospective investors on Australia's foreign investment screening regime, including preparing approval applications under the Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act and engaging with the Foreign Investment Review Board.
- Advising a mining industry association on issues arising under international investment law (including prospective investment treaty claims) in respect of a proposed tax measure.
- Advising Australian industry stakeholders on protection of investments under Australia's network of bilateral investment treaties.
- Building one of Australia's leading trade remedies practices, representing clients in landmark safeguard, anti-dumping and countervailing duty proceedings, including in appeals to the then Trade Measures Review Officer (now Anti-Dumping Review Panel) and the Federal Court of Australia.
- Leading compliance, due diligence, and internal investigation projects for Australian and multinational clients on anti-corruption, sanctions, and responsible supply chain management, including in high-risk and developing markets.

WTO Appellate Body Secretariat, Geneva, Switzerland

Legal Officer

2002-2005

Sandford supported six Appellate Body divisions to conduct WTO appeals and two WTO arbitrators to conduct WTO arbitrations between Members.

He participated in trade policy technical assistance activities for developing countries and other WTO Members, primarily in relation to dispute settlement procedures.

He worked extensively on 2004 revisions to the Appellate Body's Working Procedures as well as knowledge management initiatives, such as the first edition of the Appellate Body's Repertory.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Wellington, New Zealand & Ottawa, Canada

Legal Adviser, Legal Division

1997-2002

Second Secretary, NZ High Commission, Ottawa

1999-2002

As an early-career professional, Sandford advised on matters of public international law and domestic implementation of New Zealand's international commitments. Work included assisting on the conclusion and implementation of new treaties and arrangements, WTO matters (including active disputes), and bilateral trade – particularly with Australia. He provided counsel on negotiation of two bilateral investment treaties, a proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment and, in the light of that experience, adjustment of New Zealand's policy stance in respect of international investment treaties.

On posting in Ottawa, he represented New Zealand in Canada, including at international meetings. He participated in international dispute settlement proceedings concerning Canadian trade measures.

APPOINTMENTS, LISTINGS AND AFFILIATIONS

Appointments

Panelist in the WTO dispute *United States – Shrimp (Vietnam)* (DS404)

Mediator – confidential matter concerning maritime services and access to port infrastructure

Neutral/Arbitrator Listings

WTO Indicative List of Governmental and Non-Governmental Panelists

EU List of Candidates Suitable for Appointment as Chairpersons for Arbitrations under EU Trade Agreements

WIPO List of Neutrals

Professional Affiliations / Leadership

Fellow, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCIArb)

Member, International Mediation Institute (IMI Qualified Mediator)

Chair, International Bar Association, Committee on International Trade in Legal Services

Member, Friends of Multilateralism Group

Associate Member, New Zealand Law Society

Member, Law Society of England & Wales

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Teaching

Adjunct Faculty, Walsh School of Foreign Policy, Georgetown University in Qatar (2023) – teaching “Trade and Investment Law and Policy” in the Executive Master in Diplomacy and International Affairs (EMDIA) program.

Adjunct Professor, University of Canberra (2008-14)

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS & EDUCATION

Admissions

Barrister & Solicitor: High Court of **New Zealand**; Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory and High Court of **Australia**

Solicitor: **Ireland** and **England & Wales** (current practicing certificate)

Consultant Juridique Étranger: **Paris**, France (2025 – resigned 2026)

Education

2002, Master of Laws, University of Ottawa, Canada

1997, Bachelor of Laws, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

1996, Bachelor of Arts, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

LANGUAGES & NATIONALITIES

English (mother tongue), French (B2/B2)

New Zealand (citizen), Switzerland (citizen)