



Martín Gustavo Ibarra

President of Araújo Ibarra

Tax Residence Country: Colombia

Profile

Martín Gustavo is a lawyer and economist, with a specialization in Export Promotion from Italy's ICE and in Comparative Law from the University of Texas at Dallas. He is President of Araújo Ibarra International Business Consultants, a firm specialized in international trade for Latin America, and one of the most recognized Latin American experts in free zones, special economic zones, foreign trade mechanisms, investment promotion, industrial parks, and internationalization strategies.

Throughout his career, he has advised governments, multilateral organizations, investment promotion agencies, and private sector stakeholders on the design, strengthening, and promotion of special regimes and foreign trade instruments aimed at competitiveness, investment attraction, and international integration.

He has also developed significant teaching experience in courses related to foreign trade, free zone regimes, and internationalization mechanisms at several universities in Colombia, including Universidad de los Andes and Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

He is currently an advisor to the Board of Directors of the World Free Zones Organization (WFZO) and was the founder and first president of the Association of Free Zones of the Americas (AZFA).

Experience

He participated in the World Bank mission that contributed to the creation of China's Special Economic Zones in 1983, a milestone that became one of the most relevant global references for economic transformation, industrialization, and export-led development.

Since then, he has advised governments, multilateral organizations, investment promotion



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Education

- **Socioeconomic Lawyer** – Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
- **Comparative Law** – University of Texas in Dallas
- **Export Promotion** – Istituto per il Commercio Estero (ICE), Italy

Languages English – Spanish

agencies, port authorities, and private sector stakeholders on the design, restructuring, and international promotion of free zones and foreign trade mechanisms in most Latin American countries, as well as in selected countries in Asia and Africa.

He also played a key role as promoter and coordinator in the creation of Colombia's Ministry of Foreign Trade in 1991, today the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. His work contributed to Colombia's transition from a closed economy to a more globally integrated trade and investment framework, including the development of strategic regulations such as the new Customs Statute of 1984, the Framework Law on Foreign Trade, and the Free Zones Law of 1983.

In Colombia, he has been co-promoter of some of the country's most successful free zones, including Bogotá Free Zone, La Candelaria Free Zone in Cartagena, Pacific Free Zone in Valle del Cauca, Tayrona Free Zone in Santa Marta, Central Free Zone in Cartagena, and Santander Free Zone in Bucaramanga.

Through Araújo Ibarra International Consultants, he has provided advisory services in more than 50 countries, supporting processes to adapt and modernize free zone legislation in order to align it with international trade standards. His experience has been key to the successful promotion and development of more than 70 free zones worldwide. In Latin America and the Caribbean, he has worked in countries such as the Dominican Republic, Peru, Costa Rica, Panama, Jamaica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Argentina, and Paraguay, among others.

His contribution to free zones has not been limited to their creation. He has also led and advised on strategic plans, commercial development plans, national and international promotion strategies, investment attraction programs, and competitiveness roadmaps for free zones and special economic zones.

