

# E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme

## Year in Review 2023

Strengthening capacities, fostering collaboration





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Geneva, 2024

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# Contents

<b>List of Abbreviations and Acronyms</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>List of Figures, Tables, Boxes and Maps</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Message from Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Message from Torbjörn Fredriksson, Head, E-commerce and Digital Economy Branch</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Enhancing understanding</b>	<b>22</b>
Charting a path to data governance for development	23
Measuring digital trade and the value of e-commerce	27
New statistics and other research	29
<b>Strengthening capacities</b>	<b>33</b>
eTrade Readiness Assessments, E-Commerce Strategies and Action Plans, and sustained implementation support	34
Assistance with measuring the digital economy	45
E-commerce and Law Reform	45
<b>Empowering women digital entrepreneurs</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Building consensus</b>	<b>54</b>
Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy	55
Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy	56
Task Group on Measuring E-commerce Value (TG-eCOM)	57
<b>Fostering collaboration</b>	<b>58</b>
eTrade for all: connecting the dots	59
UNCTAD eWeek 2023	60
Digital cooperation for development	62
<b>Goals and objectives for 2024 and beyond</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Programme management</b>	<b>65</b>
Human resources	66
Financial information	66
Monitoring, evaluation and lessons learned	69
Risk analysis	69
Core Donor Advisory Board	70
<b>Annexes</b>	<b>71</b>
Annex 1. ECDE Programme results indicators, 2023	72
Annex 2. Updated ECDE Programme Results Framework	80
Annex 3. List of outstanding requests for assistance, as of February 2024	81
Annex 4. List of ECDE Programme key contacts	82

# List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

4G/LTE	Fourth generation of broadband cellular network technology
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CDAB	Core Donor Advisory Board
DER	Digital Economy Report
ECDE	E-commerce and Digital Economy
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECS	E-commerce Strategy
ERIA	Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
G20	Group of Twenty
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IGE	Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITC	International Trade Centre
JPO	Junior Professional Officer
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDEP	Pacific Digital Economy Programme
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
RPTC	Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SECO	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TG-eCOM	Task Group on Measuring E-commerce Value
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNGIS	UN Group on the Information Society
UPU	Universal Postal Union
US\$	United States Dollar
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society
WTO	World Trade Organization

# List of Figures, Tables, Boxes and Maps

## FIGURES:

Figure 1: Worldwide digitally deliverable services exports, by services products, 2010-2022	22
Figure 2: Evolution of digitally deliverable services exports	23
Figure 3: Imports of ICT goods, by region, 2000-2022	24
Figure 4: Rate of adoption of cyberlaw legislation worldwide and in LDCs (% of countries), 2021 vs. 2023	25
Figure 5: ECDE Programme funding partners, 2023	68

## TABLES:

Table 1: ECDE Programme obligated extra-budgetary expenditures by programme component and type, 2023	68
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## BOXES:

Box 1: A strengthened UNCTAD mandate	14
Box 2: Digital trade readiness: the case of LDCs	25
Box 3: Supporting the implementation of the eT Ready Action Plan of Tunisia	32
Box 4: Collaboration and partnership with the private sector	40
Box 5: Empowering beyond borders: the transformative impact of eTrade for Women	44
Box 6: eTrade for Women at the UNCTAD eWeek 2023	44

## MAPS:

Map 1: Where we worked in 2023	9
Map 2: UNCTAD eT Readies, E-Commerce Strategies and Action Plans (as of February 2024)	26

## Message from Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics



In 2023, the world passed the halfway point on the road to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. While progress has stalled, and even regressed on several SDGs and development indicators, there *are* tools that the

international community can and should use to turn the tide and deliver on the commitments of Agenda 2030. Digitalization is one such tool that has the potential to alter the current course of development, if well managed.

Recognition of the transformative power of digital technologies has been growing, not least in the economic development context, with far-reaching implications for private sector development, trade, and investment.

While much has been done in recent years to foster the development of an inclusive global digital economy, lots of work lies ahead. Digital divides are far from closed, and although the gap in the number of people having access to the internet worldwide narrowed by almost one billion between 2019 and 2022, for people and businesses in many developing countries benefits of the data-driven digital economy and trade landscape remain hard to capture. It remains the fact that most of the value creation and capture in the digital economy is concentrated in a small number of very large economies.

An innovative and sound approach to digital and data governance for development, further capacity building on various aspects of e-commerce and digital trade, sustained multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation remain essential to reaping inclusive and sustainable development gains from the fast-evolving digital economy. Targeted efforts to ensure the effective empowerment of women and other population groups at increased risk of being left further behind are particularly needed.

I am proud to present in this Year in Review the results that the ECDE Programme achieved to this end in 2023. I would like to convey my gratitude to all our partners, donors, and beneficiaries for their trust in our work which seeks to support developing countries' efforts to establish favorable conditions for people and businesses to benefit from digitalization.

I look forward to continued collaboration in 2024 and beyond as the United Nations presses on in exploring how best to boost digital cooperation, including through a Global Digital Compact and by leveraging the processes established at the World Summit on the Information Society. Discussions on how to chart the course will need to be multilateral and multistakeholder in nature, to ensure that future digital transformations benefit the many rather than the few.

## Message from Torbjörn Fredriksson, Head, E-commerce and Digital Economy Branch



2023 signified the end of the first five-year work plan of the ECDE Programme.

Since 2019, much has happened globally around e-commerce and the digital economy. The COVID-19 pandemic was critical in raising awareness of the

importance of being able to harness digital opportunities for development and resilience. The role of digital platforms and data flows was further accentuated by increased reliance on big data, cloud computing, the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence.

At the same time, many of the challenges we observed five years ago remain to be addressed. Digital divides have continued to widen. Market power in the digital economy has become even more concentrated, pointing to the need for policy responses at both national and international levels. It is therefore not surprising that political attention to the development implications of digitalization has also surged, including with the ongoing efforts to agree on a Global Digital Compact.

The overall trends reconfirm the relevance of the ECDE Programme. Our research during the past five years has put the spotlight on value creation and capture in the digital economy, the role of digital platforms and the need for better governance of data. The Programme has enabled better measurement of e-commerce and digital trade. In terms of technical assistance, more than 35 eTrade Readiness Assessments have been completed. Developing countries are also turning to us for preparing e-commerce strategies and action plans

to speed up the implementation of recommendations that have emerged through the assessments. The eTrade for Women initiative now involves some 300 women digital entrepreneurs from all developing regions. We have supported the building of consensus in difficult areas, such as how to make data work for sustainable development, and last year ended on a high with the UNCTAD eWeek 2023. I am happy to note that almost all targets set for the first five years were achieved or exceeded.

The ECDE Programme is greatly enabled by the commitment of its core donors: Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and, since late 2023, Australia. Their multi-year support to the Programme has allowed us to secure talented staff and competent consultants. Our work in specific areas has also benefited from support from several other funding partners highlighted in this Year in Review.

The task is far from finished. In the next four-year period, the ECDE Programme will continue to work with member States and partners to foster more sustainable development. Special attention will among other things be given to the interface between digitalization and environmental sustainability, to ensuring sustained support for the implementation of policy reform in the area of eTrade Readiness, and to the role of regional integration and collaboration.

I would like to close my message by expressing my sincere appreciation to the entire ECDE team and other UNCTAD colleagues, to our consultants, donors and partners, for making it possible for us to deliver. And finally, to our member States for putting your trust in our work.

# Executive summary

In 2023 a sluggish recovery from the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and growing geo-economic fragmentation set the scene for new technological disruptions such as the market entry of generative artificial intelligence (AI) and the ensuing race for market dominance. The growing use of digital technologies continued to impact, change, and reshape businesses in all sectors.

A narrowing gap in digital connectivity worldwide was welcome news in light of the previously reported halt in progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nevertheless, persisting disparities in countries' readiness to engage in and benefit from the fast-evolving data-driven digital

economy underscored the unabated need for support to developing countries and especially the least developed countries (LDCs) in this area.

Through the E-Commerce and Digital Economy (ECDE) Programme, UNCTAD worked with developing countries and the international community to equip policymakers and empower women digital entrepreneurs with the knowledge, capacities, and dialogue avenues they need to shape an inclusive e-commerce and digital economy ecosystem that works for sustainable development. The main results of this work in 2023 – the last year of the Programme's first five-year workplan – are outlined below.

## Enhancing understanding

UNCTAD's [Digital Economy Report \(DER\) 2021](#) continued to enrich the debate on data governance for development. Its analysis was reflected in a number of key outcomes, including a Statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China by the delegation of the Republic of Cuba at the informal consultations on the Global Digital Compact, the report of the High-Level Advisory Board (HLAB) on Effective Multilateralism on digital and data governance, and an expert report delivered to the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council among others. The DER 2021 also informed the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on information and communications technologies (ICT) for sustainable development.<sup>1</sup> By the end of 2023, the DER 2021 had been downloaded more than 165,000 times.

New research and analysis publications explored [G20 Members' Regulations of Cross-Border Data Flows](#) and approaches to [Measuring the value of e-commerce](#), while the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the [Handbook](#)

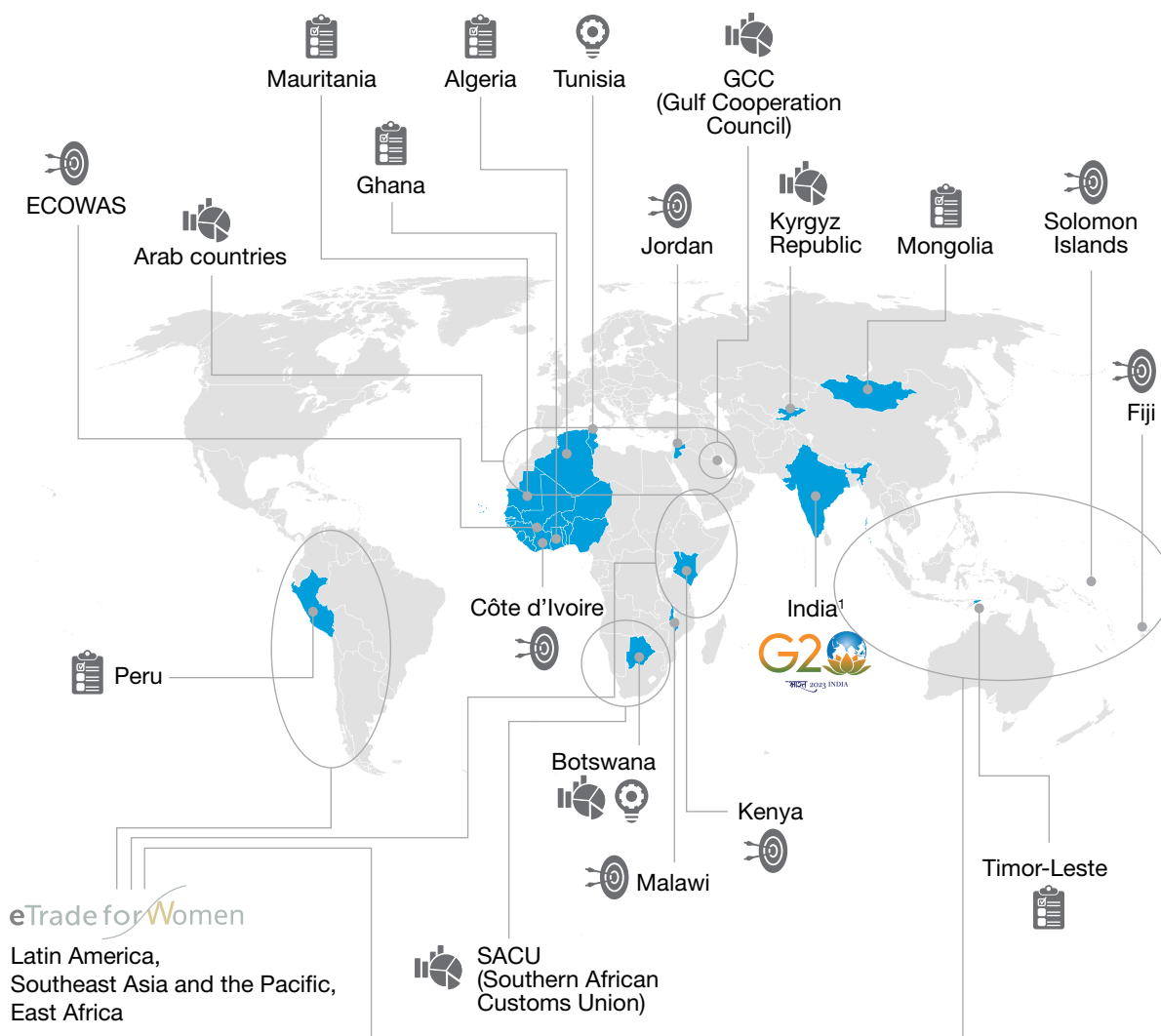
[on Measuring Digital Trade](#) (IMF-OECD-UNCTAD-WTO) laid a foundation for technical assistance and statistical capacity-building in the area of measuring digital trade. A joint report on [Digital Trade for Development](#) (IMF-OECD-UNCTAD-World Bank-WTO) explored opportunities and challenges for developing economies arising from digital trade, highlighting the role of international cooperation in that regard.

UNCTAD's Cyberlaw Tracker was updated to reflect global legislative changes across the four areas of e-transaction, data protection and privacy, cybercrime, and online consumer protection. Indirect taxation was added to the areas being tracked. A new online collection system was launched to optimize the process of collection of core indicators on ICT usage by businesses. UNCTAD also launched an improved database on trade in digitally deliverable services, while improvements to the underlying source data coming from customs declarations enabled the improvement of UNCTAD's statistics on ICT goods trade.

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/78/132.

## MAP 1: Where we worked in 2023

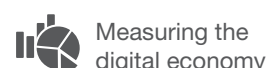
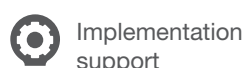
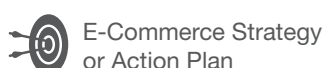


*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.*

<sup>1</sup> in close collaboration with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology

Includes capacity-building activities on measurement jointly organized with the IMF, OECD, World Bank and WTO, as well as partners from the United Nations Statistics Division, UNESCWA, and the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics.

### Legend:



Source: UNCTAD 2024.



## Strengthening capacities

UNCTAD continued its engagement with developing countries to strengthen their e-commerce enabling environment through eT Readiness Assessments (eT Readies) and the development of E-commerce Strategies. Four eT Readies were completed in 2023 – for [Ghana](#), Mauritania, [Mongolia](#), and [Peru](#) – bringing the total number to 36. Work on new eT Readies commenced in Algeria, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago and Zimbabwe.

In April, Jordan's National E-commerce Strategy was officially endorsed by the Council of Ministers and acknowledged as a powerful instrument for e-commerce expansion. The first regional E-commerce Strategy in West Africa – that of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) – was endorsed by the ECOWAS Council of Ministers in July, and the national E-commerce Strategy of Kenya was launched in December, to fortify the country's position as a digital frontrunner in Africa. Delivered under the Pacific Digital Economy Programme (PDEP), Solomon Islands' first [National E-commerce Strategy 2022-2027](#) was formally approved by the Cabinet. The development of national E-Commerce Strategies building on existing eT Readies got underway in Fiji and Côte d'Ivoire.

The [3<sup>rd</sup> eT Ready implementation review](#) confirmed previous trends and uncovered novel insights regarding the implementation processes of e-commerce policy actions and the role of the eT Readies, while also singling out the urgent need to bolster the capabilities of nascent governance arrangements to fast-track implementation. So far 25 countries have reported implementation progress.

To further strengthen implementation, UNCTAD developed a new eTrade Reform Tracker, whose functionalities enable the assignment of responsibilities, tracking of task execution, and reporting on the progress of time-bound deliverables. A live demonstration of its main features took place during the UNCTAD eWeek 2023. Feedback from the 26 participants (of whom 8 women) from 24 countries will be instrumental for fine-tuning UNCTAD's rollout strategy in 2024.

In the area of e-commerce and law reform, UNCTAD delivered two capacity-building courses - on digital identity for trade and development, and on the legal aspects of e-commerce respectively – to Pacific SIDS in the frame of PDEP.

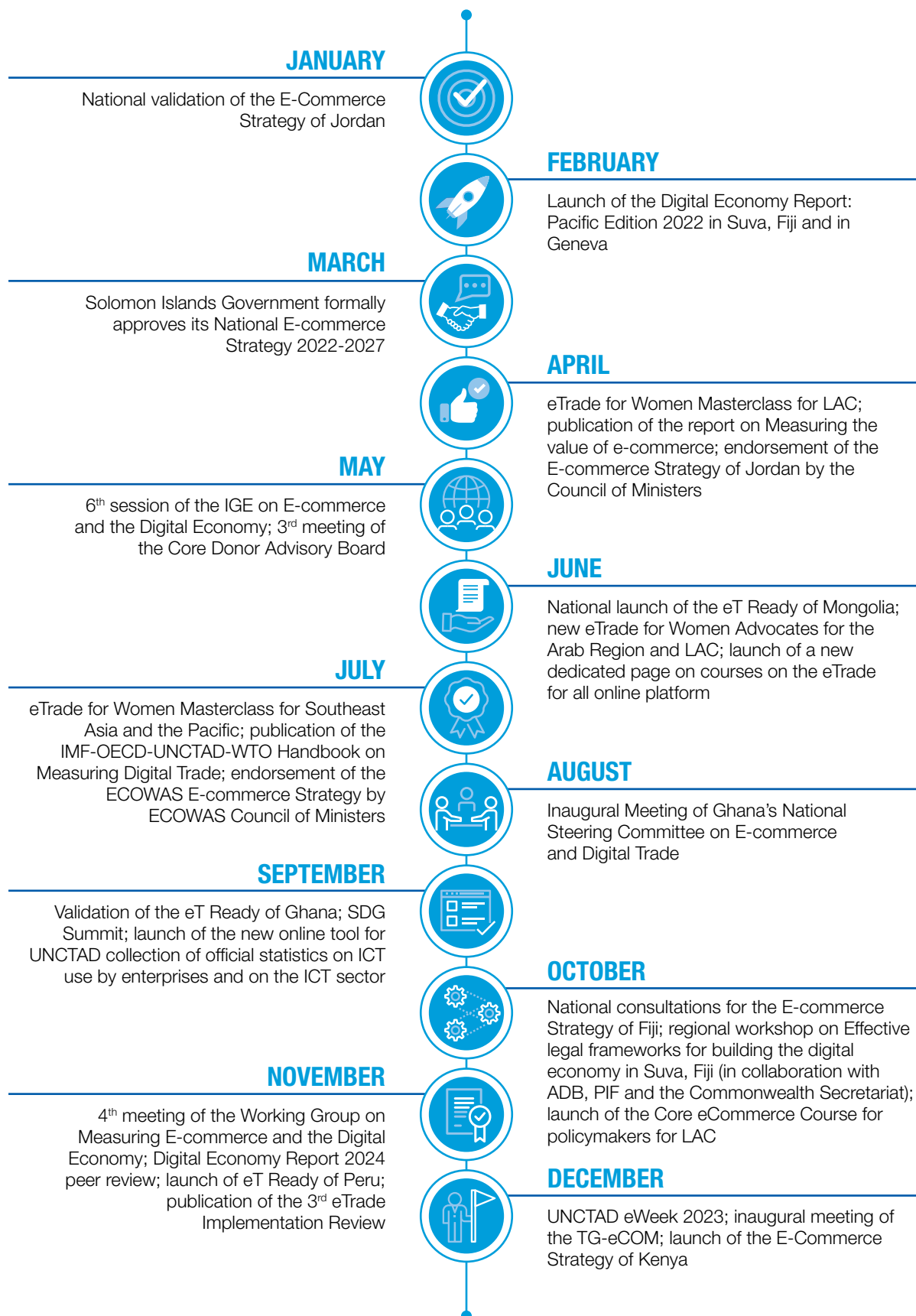
UNCTAD worked closely with the IMF, OECD, World Bank and WTO, as well as partners from the United Nations Statistics Division, UNESCWA, and the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, to deliver training and capacity building to help improve the availability of timely, robust, and comparable official statistics on the digital economy and digital trade.

More than 800 people (half of whom identified as women) from across the public and private sectors, civil society, and academia in 85 countries benefited from capacity-building activities across the areas of eTrade readiness, law reform and measurement (see Map 1). Throughout all technical cooperation and capacity-building activities, the ECDE Programme sought to collaborate with other parts of UNCTAD and effectively leverage partnerships with *eTrade for all* and other developing partners.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Intra-institutional collaboration took place with TrainForTrade, the Statistics Service, and colleagues working on the topics of trade facilitation and logistics, competition and consumer protection in particular.



## ECDE Programme highlights in 2023



## Empowering women digital entrepreneurs

More than 60 women digital entrepreneurs from 16 developing countries across Latin America and Southeast Asia and the Pacific benefited from empowerment and community-building activities delivered by the eTrade for Women initiative in partnership with the Advocates for the respective regions. Several *eTrade for all* partners also contributed, including the World Intellectual Property Organization and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA). Key developments in the eTrade for Women regional Communities included the strategic selection of 15 Community Leaders – more advanced members who played a crucial role in supporting organizational activities and strengthening the network. Their contribution to shaping more inclusive policies continued to be recognized – for instance, Ms. Betty Bâ, leader of the Francophone Africa Community, was appointed by the Government of Senegal as National advisor on digital inclusion and communication.

eTrade for Women contributed to 28 advocacy actions in 2023, to share insights into the challenges that women digital entrepreneurs in developing countries are faced with and raise awareness of the need for more and better targeted support. The four Advocates representing Francophone Africa,

English-speaking Africa, the Arab region and Southeast Asia, 14 Community Leaders, and one community member from the Pacific were also present at the UNCTAD eWeek 2023, where they took full advantage of the learning, advocacy and networking opportunities available throughout the event.

Since the launch of the eTrade for Women initiative in 2019, UNCTAD has delivered Masterclasses to more than 300 women from 40 countries and created five regional Communities that facilitate business, technical advice, and networking opportunities for their members. In 2023, an entrepreneur from Nigeria – Ms. Imade Osuoben - turned these opportunities into a prospering agri-food e-commerce business that in turn has impacted more than 4,000 rural women and youth through digital and financial literacy training, the distribution of more than 400 mobile phones and the disbursement of more than 3 million Nigerian naira (over US\$ 3,000) in 70 small business loans with 100 per cent loan repayment rate. The impact has been remarkable – 57 per cent average increase in income for rural female farmers and traders, 86 new bank accounts opened and an increase in savings among the women with bank accounts.

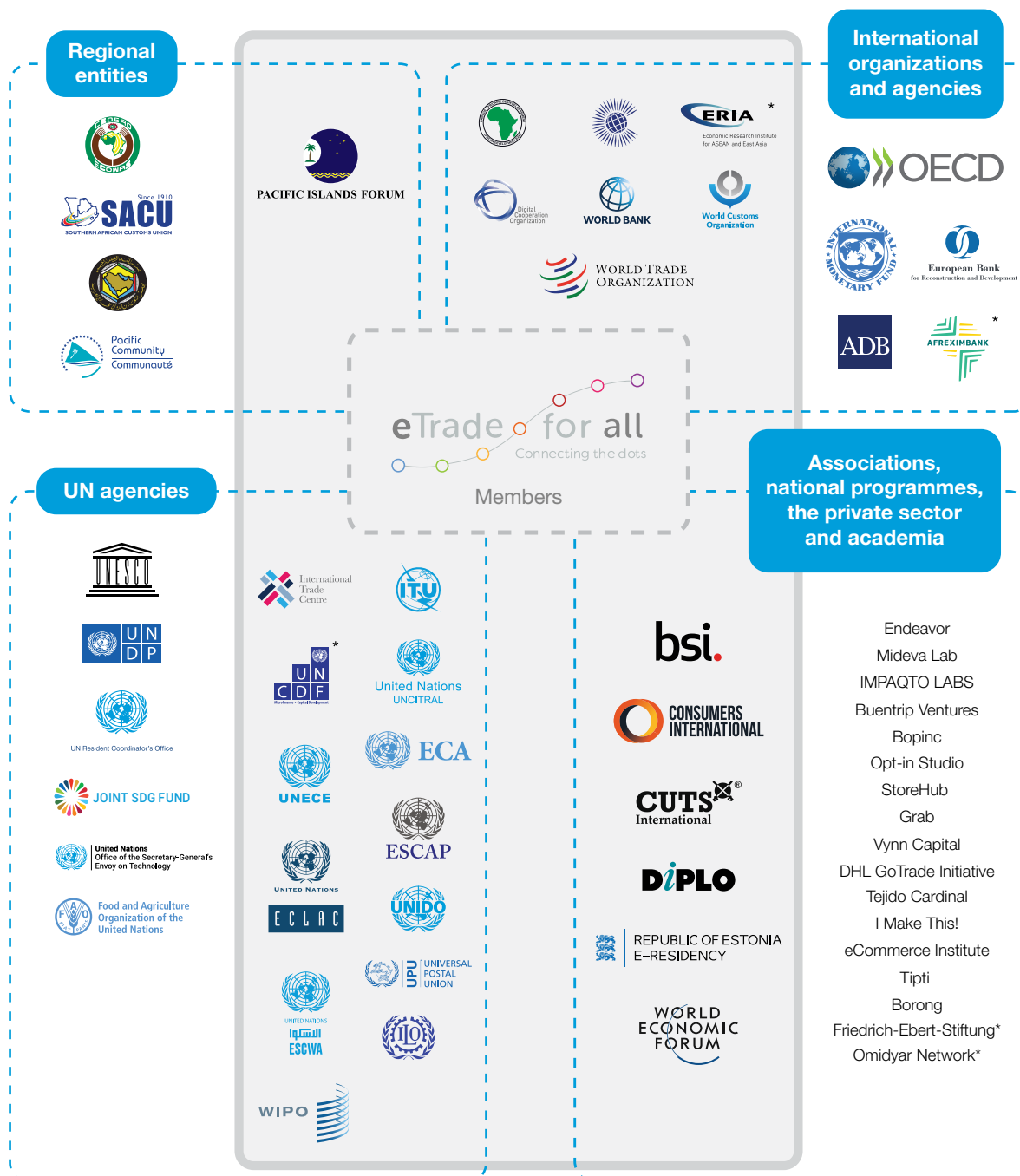
## Building consensus

The 6<sup>th</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGE) on E-commerce and the Digital Economy delivered as a main outcome a set of agreed policy recommendations on how to make data work for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A new Task Group on Measuring E-commerce Value (TG-eCOM) commenced work under the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy, with the aim to develop internationally agreed guidelines and recommendations on measuring the value of e-commerce transactions and support the development of internationally comparable statistics on e-commerce value.

In the G20 Development Working Group, UNCTAD provided support to India's G20 Presidency in developing the G20 Principles on Harnessing Data for Development (D4D). The Principles were adopted at the G20 Development Ministers' Meeting in June and endorsed in the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, which also reaffirmed the role of data for development and recognized the importance of data free flow with trust and cross-border data flows.

## ECDE Partners in 2023

## Funding partners



\*also a funding partner

## Fostering collaboration

Partners in the UNCTAD-led *eTrade for all* initiative continued to support and contribute to various technical cooperation and capacity-building efforts. UNCTAD, UNECLAC and selected *eTrade for all* partners launched a new distance learning Core E-commerce Course for policymakers from Latin America and the Caribbean, to bridge knowledge gaps in how to improve the environment for inclusive e-commerce development. Twenty-eight of the initiative's 35 partners actively contributed to the UNCTAD eWeek 2023.

The 2023 edition of the UNCTAD eWeek, which addressed the theme “Shaping the Future of the Digital Economy”, took place in Geneva and online in December. The event gathered more than 3,500 registered participants from 159 countries across all developing regions and country groups. It was the most widely attended and inclusive eWeek thus far, reinforcing its position as the leading global forum to discuss the development opportunities and challenges associated with the digital economy. Featuring over

150 sessions, the eWeek brought together government leaders, CEOs, heads of international organizations, civil society representatives and other key stakeholders to address critical issues such as governing digital platforms and artificial intelligence (AI), promoting eco-friendly digital practices, empowering women in the digital economy and enhancing developing countries' digital readiness. By outlining actions and steps needed to turn digital opportunities into shared and sustainable development gains, the eWeek outcome document, entitled “[The Geneva Vision on the Future of the Digital Economy](#)”, sent a strong message to the UN-convened Summit of the Future in September 2024.

UNCTAD collaborated with the Joint SDG Fund and other entities in the UN Development System on the incubation of a new investment window on Digital Transformation for development, to support joint programmes at the country level coordinated through UN Resident Coordinator Offices (UN RCOs).

## Communications and outreach



**12** new publications released



Numerous mentions in **national** and **international** media



**168,000** downloads

of Programme publications in 2023

**20** news items published on the UNCTAD website



More than **50,000 eTrade for all** visitors, **10** monthly newsletters



released to some **5,500 subscribers** as of December 2023 (up **55%** from 2022)

• For a total of over **17,000 views**



• *Story on the digital economy in the Pacific* was featured on **UN.org** – in multiple languages



UNCTAD eWeek 2023 garnered **significant global media attention**, with coverage spanning **295 articles** across **29 countries** and **8 languages**.

The dedicated webpage hosted by **UNCTAD.org** (in English, French and Spanish) recorded **more than 42,000 views**.



UNCTAD eWeek 2023 generated substantial engagement on social media platforms, with **700+ related posts on X** (formerly Twitter) and **LinkedIn** respectively (up from **450+** tweets in 2022).

Following a successful UNCTAD eWeek, **6,600 people** now subscribe to the **eWeek mailing list**.



The Programme's X (formerly Twitter) handle, **@ECDEatUNCTAD**, continues to be the **4<sup>th</sup> largest account** in UNCTAD,



boasting **8,000+** followers as of December 2023 – up **12%** from 2022, with a **60%** year on year increase in average impressions per post.

## The ECDE Programme @ 5 (2019-2023)

### OUR SUPPORT BENEFITED:

**109**

**countries** supported via technical cooperation or capacity-building activities<sup>3</sup>, including:

- **30 LDCs**
- **28 SIDS**
- **19 LLDCs**

**2,000+**

**participants** in **capacity-building** activities delivered in-person or online<sup>4</sup>, of whom at least **45% women**



**300+**

**women** digital entrepreneurs **empowered through eTrade for Women** interventions across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, the Arab Region, and the West Balkans

Close to

**10,000**

**participants** in the **UNCTAD eWeek** (formerly eCommerce Week)



### OUR RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS YIELDED:

**56**

publications released, for more than **1.32 million downloads**

**94**

news items published on the UNCTAD website, for close to **750,000 unique views**

**54**

monthly *eTrade for all* **newsletters** were sent to some **5,500 subscribers** (as of December 2023)

**100+**

**hours** of intergovernmental deliberations on e-commerce and the digital economy for development

**Numerous policy and academic citations** in developed as well as in developing countries

### OUR EFFORTS MOBILIZED:



Close to **US\$ 23 million** raised in extra-budgetary funding for supporting developing countries in e-commerce and the digital economy, from **20+ funding partners**



More than **30 staff** by the end of 2023, from a team of half a dozen when the Programme first started



**Hundreds of consultants** from both developed and developing countries, with a **good gender balance**



**35 partners** from **different sectors**, regions and areas of work with the collective vision of *eTrade for all*

<sup>3</sup> Includes those that benefited from joint capacity-building activities in collaboration with various partners (e.g., UNCTAD's TrainforTrade, IMF, OECD, the World Bank, WTO, UNSD and UN regional commissions). Does not include most overseas territories.



<sup>4</sup> Idem.




### ...ALL CONTRIBUTING TO:

- ➔ **Laying a foundation for data governance** for development
- ➔ **Intergovernmental consensus** on how to make **data** work for the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**
- ➔ **36** national or regional **eTrade Readiness Assessments**, with **25 countries** reporting **implementation progress** to date
- ➔ **Increase** in the adoption of **e-commerce strategies** and **action plans** by developing countries, beyond those directly supported by UNCTAD
- ➔ **Changing perceptions** about the role of **women** in the **digital economy**
- ➔ **Improved dialogue** between women digital entrepreneurs and policymakers in developing countries, to help shape a more inclusive policy and regulatory environment
- ➔ **Enhanced intergovernmental** and **multi-stakeholder collaboration**, and stronger partnerships in support of e-commerce and the digital economy for development

### ...AND INDIRECTLY TO:



**Increase in the adoption of cyberlaw legislation** worldwide and in developing countries in particular (see Figure 4)



**Increase in the share of Aid-for-Trade commitments** to the ICT sector (from **1.3%** in 2017 to **4.1%** in 2022)



**Increase in the uptake of e-commerce** (from **24%** of adults (aged 15+) worldwide in 2017 to **39%** in 2021)<sup>5</sup>

5 Based on World Bank Global Findex data.

## Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond

The Digital Economy Report 2024, which is devoted to the topic of Environmentally sustainable digitalization, trade and development, will be launched in the spring. New technical notes will explore the rise of digital trade in international agreements as well as measuring the value of e-commerce and the role of platforms. As part of PDEP, a second edition of the Digital Economy Report for the Pacific as well as a regional comparative review of e-commerce legislation will be released.

The Programme's main goals and objectives in the capacity-building domain include new eT Readies (e.g., for Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago and Zimbabwe) and E-commerce Strategies (e.g., for Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Timor-Leste and Mongolia), as well as sustained support for their implementation, including through the deployment of the newly developed eTrade Reform Tracker in several partner countries.

Three new Masterclasses (for Francophone Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean), the eTrade for Women Academy, and new training materials and technical assistance on measuring the digital economy will add to the Programme's capacity-building agenda. eTrade for Women will also expand its geographical reach to South Asia and appoint a first Advocate for the region.

Building on the 36 eT Readies conducted to date and their implementation, the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the IGE will explore the topic "Building digital readiness: From assessments to implementation". It will offer an opportunity to strengthen synergies between UNCTAD's consensus-building efforts, research and analysis, and technical cooperation, with a view to fostering increased political commitment for implementation of relevant policies and strategies at the national and regional levels.

The Programme will seek to further collaborate with its partners in joint programmes, including in the framework of the new Digital Transformation Window of the Joint SDG Fund. It will continue to work with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology in the implementation of the Roadmap on Digital Cooperation and support the preparations for the UN Summit of the Future and a Global Digital Compact. Finally, it will contribute to the discussions on digital governance envisaged as part of the events on occasion of UNCTAD's 60th anniversary celebration – UNCTAD@60, in June 2024.



# INTRODUCTION



In 2023 a sluggish recovery from the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and growing geo-economic fragmentation set the scene for new technological disruptions such as the market entry of generative artificial intelligence (AI) and the ensuing race for market dominance. The growing use of digital technologies, including frontier technologies, continued to impact, change, and reshape businesses in all sectors, from agriculture through manufacturing and especially services.

In developing as in developed countries, the data-driven digital economy has increasingly been taking hold over the “offline economy”, opening opportunities for innovation, increased productivity, new business models and access to new markets to those who are ready to seize them.<sup>6</sup> Against the backdrop of a previously reported halt in progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reports of the internet becoming more widespread and affordable overall provided a renewed sense of hope and ambition for the role of information and communications technology (ICT) in delivering on the commitments of Agenda 2030.<sup>7</sup>

But improved digital connectivity does not automatically translate into increased development gains from digitalization. Many developing countries and especially least developed countries (LDCs) continue to lack the digital infrastructure, skills, resources, enabling environments and access to capital necessary to compete and trade on an equal footing with developed countries in the digital economy. Evidence-based analysis of the policy options at the national, regional and global level, and effective technical assistance and capacity development support to law- and policymakers, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders in the digital economy remain key to leveling the field in digital readiness between and within countries and to finding solutions for harnessing e-commerce and the digital economy for sustainable development. The importance of facilitating multilateral and multi-stakeholder consensus-building and partnerships cannot be overstated.

This report outlines the main activities and results of UNCTAD's work in 2023 – the last year of the first five-year work plan for the ECDE programme – to equip policymakers and empower women digital entrepreneurs in developing countries with the knowledge, capacities, and dialogue avenues they need to shape an inclusive e-commerce and digital economy ecosystem that works for development.

UNCTAD's work in this area was primarily supported by its five core donors, namely Germany (through the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)), the Netherlands (through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Cooperation), Sweden (through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs), Switzerland (through the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs) and Australia (through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). Other funding partners included Australia, New Zealand and the European Union (through the Pacific Digital Economy Programme (PDEP), jointly implemented with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), the Republic of Korea, Japan, Estonia, the United Kingdom, the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and Omidyar Network.

Our work is delivered in collaboration with other parts of UNCTAD, including TrainForTrade, the Statistics Service, and colleagues working on the topics of trade facilitation and logistics, competition and consumer protection in particular. The Digital Economy Report 2024 (forthcoming) benefited from valuable input from relevant colleagues across the organization. The UNCTAD eWeek 2023 benefited from the participation of all parts of UNCTAD.

6 In Africa, for example, the fintech market is booming, with a projection to reach \$65bn by 2030, representing a 13-fold increase over 2021.

7 <https://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/Pages/PR-2022-11-30-Facts-Figures-2022.aspx>

### **Box 1: A strengthened UNCTAD mandate**

The Bridgetown Covenant – the outcome document of UNCTAD's 15<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference (2021) – recognized the widening digital divide and the uneven speed of digital transformation as two of the major global challenges that have become more acute since the Nairobi Maafikiano (2016). It called attention to the role of digitalization in transforming economies for a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable world, not least in view of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Covenant called on UNCTAD to strengthen the work on assisting developing countries to enhance their readiness to engage and integrate into the digital economy, thus contributing to the closing of the digital divide. In doing so, the Covenant reinforced UNCTAD's mandate to work on enhancing development gains from the digital economy, which is carried out through the ECDE Programme.<sup>8</sup> UNCTAD's work in this area is expected to be given additional prominence at its 16<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference, which is scheduled to take place in 2025.

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8 See [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/td-l-435\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/td-l-435_en.pdf)

# ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING



## Charting a path to data governance for development

In the absence of globally agreed common definitions and understanding of basic concepts related to data and data flows, the global landscape for the governance

of data is increasingly fragmented. In 2023, the gap in global data governance assumed added importance in light of the market entry and race in generative AI.

### Impact of the Digital Economy Report 2021

UNCTAD's [Digital Economy Report \(DER\) 2021](#) continued to enrich the debate on data governance for development. Its analysis was reflected in the following key outcomes:

#### In regional circles and the multilateral arena:

- Analysis from the DER 2021 informed the Statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China by the delegation of the Republic of Cuba at the informal consultations on the Global Digital Compact (GDC) on the third thematic deep divide - Data Protection - which noted that *“data protection is only one aspect of data governance and the Group considers that there is a lack of data governance. Data can be used to track, target or harm anyone if not governed. Inequalities in access to benefits from data risk leaving people and communities misinformed, divided, and vulnerable. Absence of data governance allows current practices to continue enabling and enlarging data and digital divides between countries and people, undermining decades of development. The benefits of digital data must be openly and equitably distributed to all people. The rules cannot be unilaterally defined. In order to ensure an inclusive process with representation of all developing countries, the United Nations needs to play a key role in advancing a more balanced global data governance.”*<sup>9</sup>
- The DER 2021 made a mark on the T20 compendium for India's G20 presidency, under core theme 2 - Our Common Digital Future, as well as on a T20 policy brief on building an information-sharing mechanism to boost regulatory frameworks on cross-border data flows.<sup>10</sup>
- The DER 2021 prompted discussions in the European Parliament and was the subject of a Parliamentary question E-003781/2022 to the European Commission.<sup>11</sup>



**The development value of data remains locked in, and the lack of a holistic approach to data governance continues to bear an opportunity cost to the attainment of the SDGs.**

9 See <https://misiones.cubaminrex.cu/en/un/statements/statement-behalf-group-77-and-china-delegation-republic-cuba-informal-consultations>

10 See [https://t20ind.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/ORF\\_T20-Summit\\_Essays.pdf](https://t20ind.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/ORF_T20-Summit_Essays.pdf)

11 See [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-003781-ASW\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-003781-ASW_EN.html)

The Commission shares the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) vision that a global governance of data is necessary to harness the positive and mitigate the negative impacts of digitalisation for the common good. [...] The EU has a strong interest in leading and supporting international cooperation with regard to data governance and shaping global digital standards in line with its values and interests. Commission services stand ready to collaborate with UNCTAD and other United Nations bodies for this purpose.

— From the answer given by Mr. Breton, European Commissioner for Internal Market, on behalf of the European Commission



#### Within the UN system:

- As a result of the wide uptake of the analysis of the DER 2021 at both country level and various regional and multilateral fora, at the 6<sup>th</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy in May member States agreed on a set of policy recommendations on how to make data work for the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (see [section](#) below).
- Based on the DER 2021, UNCTAD actively contributed to the report of the High-Level Advisory Board (HLAB) on Effective Multilateralism on digital and data governance, which called for a convergence on principles for data governance – one of the Secretary-General’s proposed actions for the proposed Global Digital Compact (see next point).
- Concordantly, in his policy brief on the proposed Global Digital Compact, the Secretary-General stated that all stakeholders should, among other things, “commit to developing common definitions and data standards for interoperability, access to data according to type of data, and data quality and measurement and to their monitoring and enforcement” and “consider the recommendation by the High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism on the multi-stakeholder development of a Global Data Compact for adoption by Member States by 2030.”



- The DER 2021 contributed to the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)'s endorsement in May 2023 of “International Data Governance – Pathways to Progress” – a paper and addenda developed through the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) Working Group on International Data Governance.<sup>12</sup> The paper articulates a vision for the governance of data at the international level and its addenda can serve as an analytical resource to support member States' efforts. Analysis from the DER 2021 was used in Addendum 1 in particular – “Mapping and comparing data governance frameworks”.
- Furthermore, the DER 2021 was cited extensively in an expert report delivered to the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council, which issued a call to *“reframe and broaden the international policy debate on data flows and governance, moving away from a silo approach towards a more holistic and coordinated global approach. Trade policy and negotiations alone cannot fully address all aspects of data, both economic and non-economic in nature, and therefore need to be an integral part of global efforts to harness data and digitalization for sustainable development”*.<sup>13</sup>
- The DER 2021 also informed the 2023 United Nations General Assembly Resolution on information and communications technologies for sustainable development, which called upon the international community to enhance its support to developing countries, including by increasing resources available, to build their capacities to equally and meaningfully benefit from data and participate in the digital economy.<sup>14</sup>
- Discussions on data governance and cross-border data flows were advanced during the 2023 inter-sessional panel of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in Lisbon, Portugal.<sup>15</sup>



<sup>12</sup> See <https://unsceb.org/international-data-governance-pathways-progress>

<sup>13</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5234-international-financial-obligations-digital-systems-and-human>

<sup>14</sup> See A/RES/78/132.

<sup>15</sup> See <https://unctad.org/meeting/commission-science-and-technology-development-2023-2024-inter-sessional-panel>



## Governing cross-border data flows: the case of the G20



Building on the DER 2021, UNCTAD's analysis of *G20 Members' Regulations of Cross-Border Data Flows* highlighted the multi-dimensionality of data and the diversity of areas potentially affected by data flows. Laws and regulations that are linked to cross-border data flows tend to focus on

personal data and provisions allowing their transfer abroad, specifically with respect to personal data protection and privacy. They are complemented by laws that are more specific to electronic communications, health, financial transactions and the public sector.

Data governance and the handling of data-related policy questions are therefore not limited to one single ministry or agency, suggesting a growing need to ensure having relevant expertise in data-related aspects across all ministries involved in data governance. A whole-of-government approach which clearly identifies one lead organization for the government's strategy on data governance may help coordinate policymaking across entities. The importance of multi-stakeholder dialogue cannot be overstated. Effectively addressing existing and future development opportunities and challenges related to data and data flows necessitates a holistic multilateral, multi-stakeholder, and multidimensional approach to data governance.

## Supporting India's G20 Presidency in its work on data for development

Following from its work with the G20 Digital Economy Working Group during Indonesia's G20 Presidency (2022), UNCTAD supported India's 2023 G20 Presidency as a knowledge partner for the Development Working Group. The support focused on the Working Group's priority theme on data for development (together with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology) against the Indian presidency's overall strong emphasis on data, digitalization and digital public infrastructure in multiple workstreams. This was the first G20 Presidency that recognized the important role data can play in the context of broader development and accelerating the SDGs.

In the Development Working Group, UNCTAD provided support to India's G20 Presidency in developing the G20 Principles on Harnessing Data for Development (D4D). The Principles were adopted at the G20 Development Ministers' Meeting in June and endorsed in the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, which also reaffirmed the role of data for development and recognized the importance of data free flow with trust and cross-border data flows.



UNCTAD Secretary-General Ms. Rebeca Grynspan meeting with H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India, on the sidelines of the G20 Development Ministers' Meeting, 11 June 2023



UNCTAD is finalizing the 2024 edition of the DER (DER 2024), which is devoted to the topic of *Environmentally sustainable digitalization, trade and development*.

The DER 2024 will explore this complex topic from the perspective of the main stages of the “ICT sector lifecycle”, i.e., from the environmental impacts from raw materials acquisition and manufacturing of ICT infrastructure and devices, through the use-phase,

with special attention to the environmental impacts related to energy and water of data centres, to the end-of-life phase and the potential for circularity related to digital devices. A dedicated chapter will explore the environmental impacts of e-commerce, before offering a discussion of policies to facilitate a more environmentally sustainable digital economy. Peer review meetings took place in November 2023, with the DER 2024 planned to be launched in the spring of 2024.



UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General Mr. Pedro Manuel Moreno speaking at the World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2023, 14 March 2023

## Measuring digital trade and the value of e-commerce

Available statistics on digital trade provide only a partial perspective on its evolution since the pandemic. There is a pressing need for more inclusive statistics on online retail sales, business-to-consumer, and business-to-business e-commerce and cross-border digital trade that can provide insights covering a wider range of countries, especially developing countries. Better statistics on the value of e-commerce (i.e., digitally ordered trade) in particular are needed to understand its economic role and contributions to GDP, employment and development.



To support statistical compilers in their efforts to measure digital trade, the IMF-OECD-UNCTAD-WTO *Handbook on Measuring Digital Trade* was published in July, with a translation in Arabic released in November. The Handbook provides clarifications on the concepts and definitions

related to digital trade and offers extensive compilation guidance based on recent efforts in both developed and developing economies, covering a variety of relevant survey and non-survey sources. As such, it provides the foundation for an active programme of technical assistance and statistical capacity building in this area.



In 2023 UNCTAD also published a report on *Measuring the value of e-commerce*. It provides a basis for the work of a task group of delegates from interested countries and international organizations under the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce

and the Digital Economy (see [section](#) further below), with a view to developing statistical guidelines for measuring the value of e-commerce sales and purchases. UNCTAD is developing statistical guidance to promote harmonization and support countries in measuring e-commerce sales, including cross-border e-commerce - thereby supporting the measurement of digitally ordered trade.

The Swedish Government has launched a reform agenda for development assistance as well as a new strategy for trade, investment and global competitiveness. A key ambition of both is to seek to create synergies between development cooperation, trade policy and trade promotion. Trade is an important contributor to growth as well as inclusive and sustainable development. Sweden is therefore a large aid for trade donor and, as regards digital trade, a proud core donor of UNCTAD's E-Commerce and Digital Economy Programme.

— Mr. Per-Arne Hjelmhorn, Director General for Trade, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden



To ensure that statistical compilers use the latest definition of ICT goods to identify those to be included when compiling ICT goods trade, a [new technical note](#) was released that sets out the relevant changes to the World Customs Organization (WCO) Harmonized Commodity

Description and Coding System - generally referred to as "Harmonized System" or simply "HS". The 2022 edition (HS22) introduced various changes to the HS structure, including additional product breakdowns

within ICT goods product codes, deletion of codes that had formerly been recorded as ICT goods, and the addition of substantive new classes of product codes which need to be assessed against the definition. This technical note sets out the relevant changes and identifies their implications for measuring ICT goods trade.

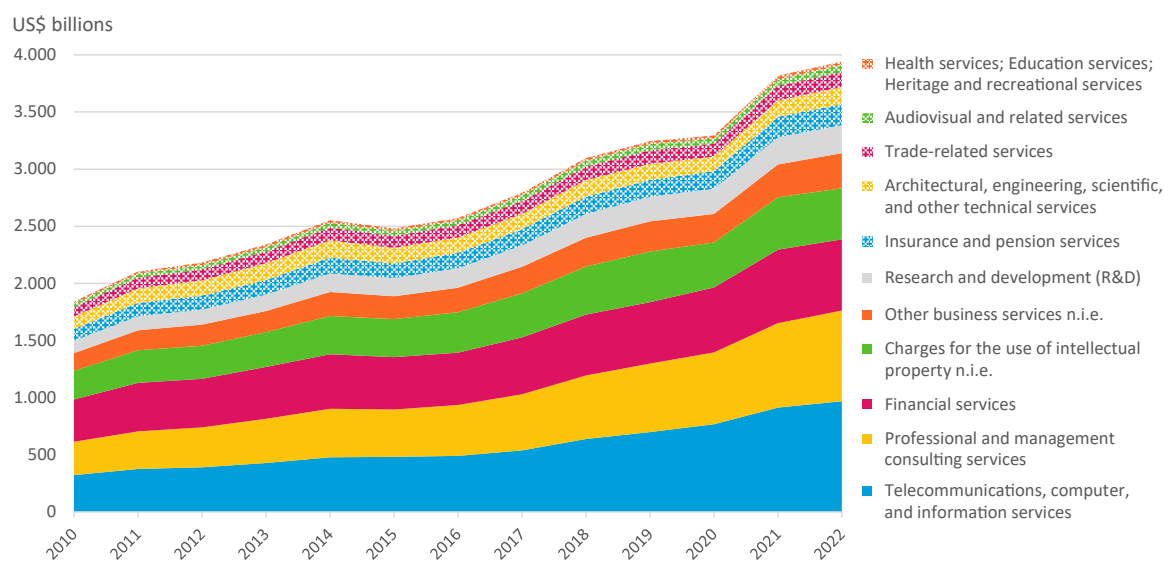
A second technical note examined the application of Digital Supply-Use Tables to improve the visibility of and information available on digital phenomena while being consistent with the existing national account statistics in developing economies.

## New statistics and other research

In September, UNCTAD launched an improved database on trade in digitally deliverable services. As well as aligning the statistics with the newly published IMF-OECD-UNCTAD-WTO Handbook on Measuring

Digital Trade, improvements were made to more accurately measure digitally deliverable services and a new breakdown showing the component digitally deliverable services products was added (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Worldwide digitally deliverable services exports, by services products, 2010-2022**



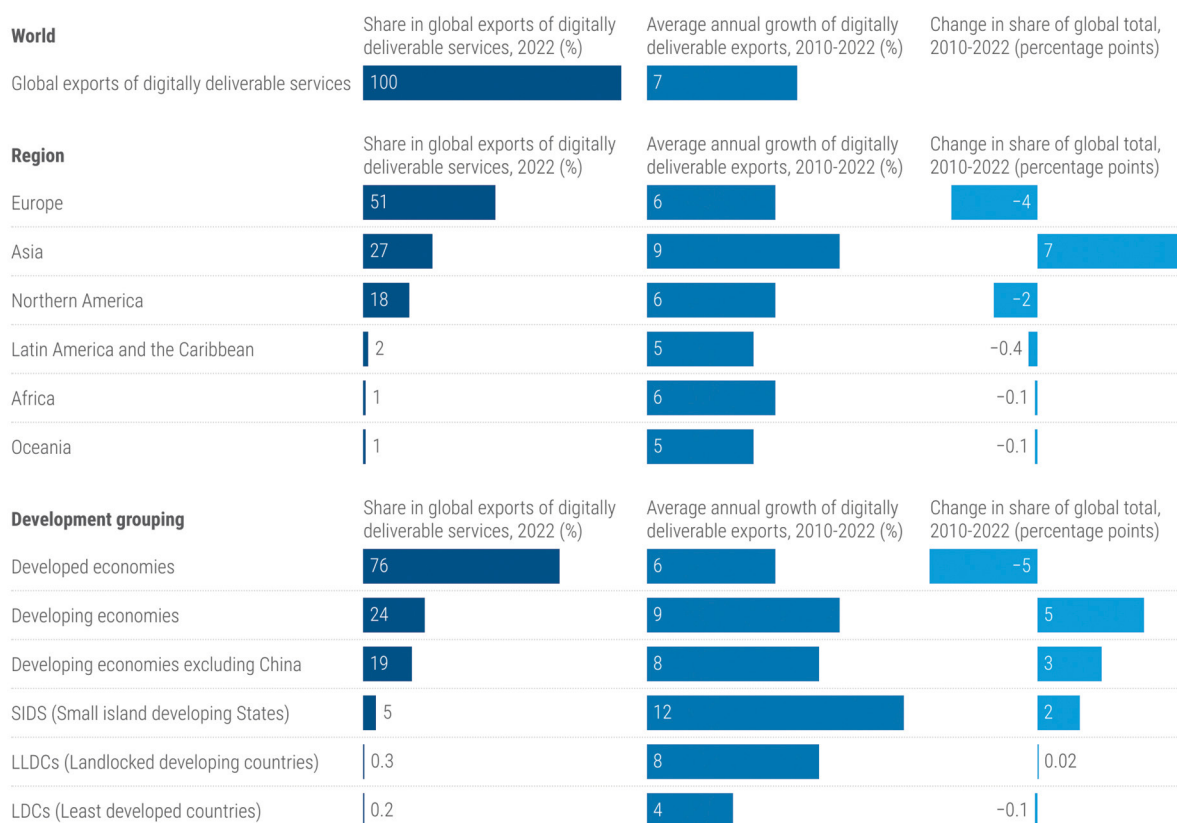
Source: UNCTAD Digital economy database (<https://unctadstat.unctad.org/wds/>)

New analysis indicated the rapidly increasing importance of digitally deliverable services, as worldwide exports grew by an average of 7% a year from 2010 to 2022. But it also found a notable shift occurring, as developing economies, led by those in Asia, have seen their share in global exports of digitally deliverable services increase by 5 percentage points over this period, while Europe and North America saw their shares decline (Figure 2). Even so, developed economies still accounted for three quarters of such exports in 2022.

Furthermore, some countries appear to be being left behind: despite growing their exports of digitally deliverable services by 8% and 4% per year respectively from 2010-2022, both LLDCs and LDCs represent less than half of 1% of global exports in 2022 - and the LDCs' share even decreased over this period.

**Figure 2: Evolution of digitally deliverable services exports**

## Digitally deliverable exports have grown but disadvantaged countries are being left behind



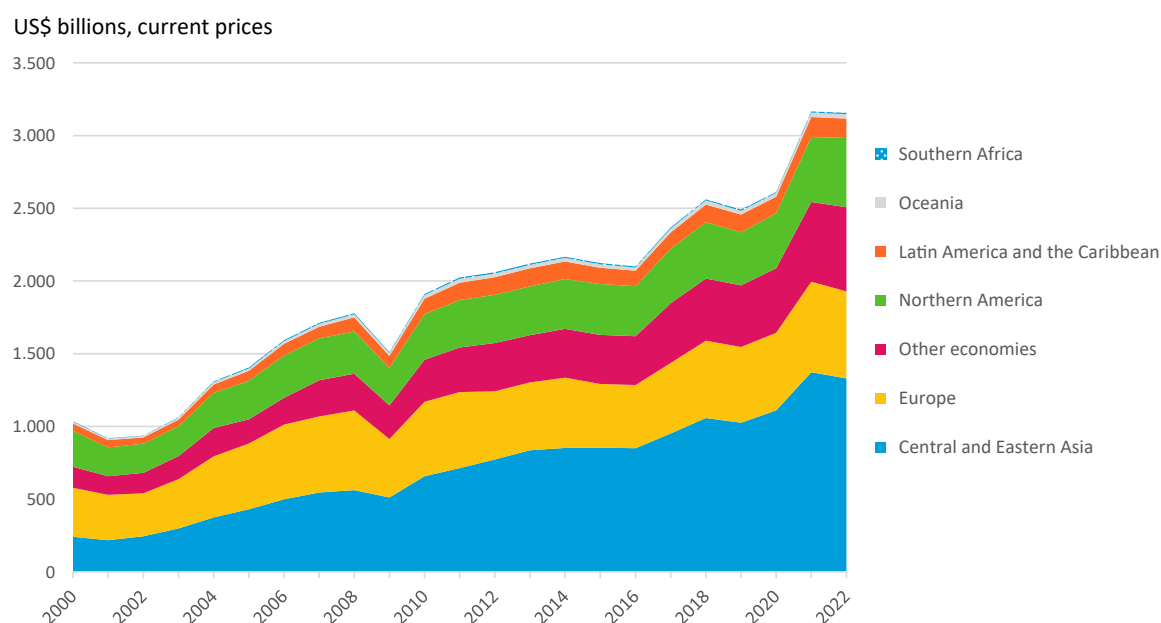
Note: Annual average growth based in exports in current prices.

Chart: UNCTAD • Source: UNCTAD estimates based on UNCTAD-WTO common data set on international trade in services

Improvements to the underlying source data coming from customs declarations enabled the improvement of UNCTAD's statistics on ICT goods trade in 2023. The resulting statistics show that global trade in ICT goods, which are a crucial foundation for the digital transformation, remained stable in 2022 at just under US\$ 3.2 trillion (Figure 3). This followed a period of sharp growth between 2019 - immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic - and 2021, during which the trade in ICT goods increased by around US\$ 0.7 trillion worldwide. Asia is both the largest importer and exporter of ICT goods by value, reflecting the region's role as a hub for the production of ICT products.

For many years, UNCTAD has undertaken regular collections of core indicators on ICT usage by businesses provided by countries' statistical authorities. In 2023, a new online collection system was launched which aims to make the collection process more efficient for participating countries and for UNCTAD. Real-time consistency checking supports countries in entering their statistics. The metadata tool makes it easy to select from standardized notes and to manage custom notes that recur across tables and years. Multiple contacts can be designated for the same country allowing tasks to be shared within or across relevant national organizations as appropriate. The system also supports active management of the collection process enabling the UNCTAD team to follow-up with countries to address issues and work to increase the number of countries participating.

**Figure 3: Imports of ICT goods, by region, 2000-2022**

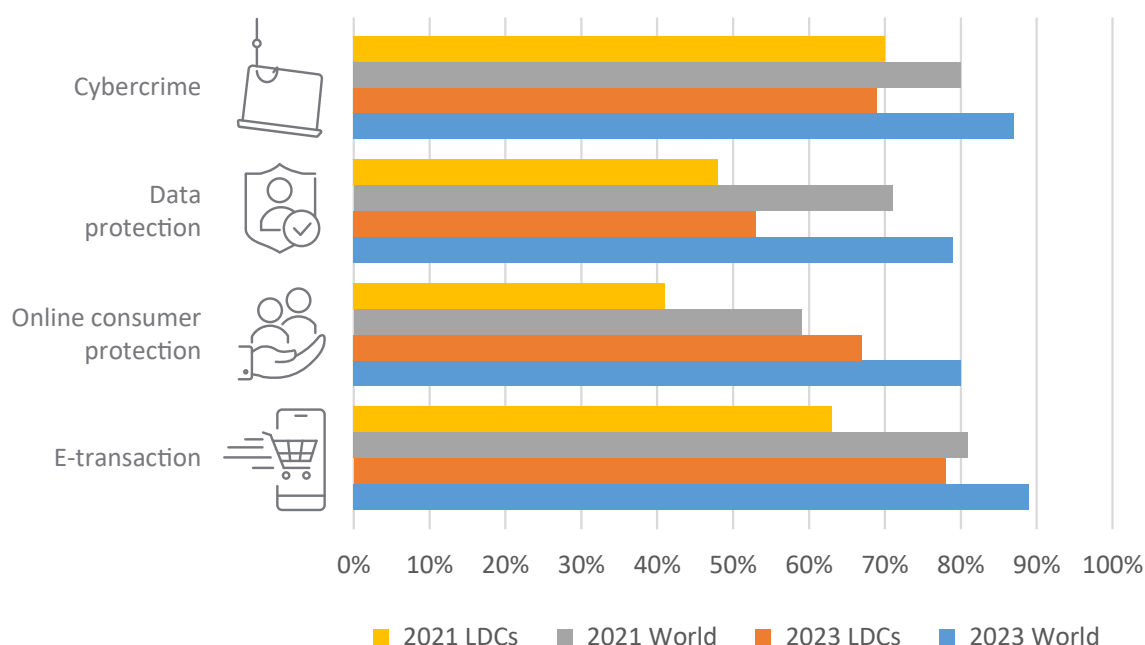


Source: UNCTAD Digital economy database (<https://unctadstat.unctad.org/wds/>)

UNCTAD's Cyberlaw Tracker was updated in December to reflect global legislative changes across the four areas of e-transaction, data protection and privacy, cybercrime, and online consumer protection. Indirect

taxation was also added to the areas being tracked. 2023 data revealed a significant global uptick in the adoption of legislation across all areas, though significant gaps persist between country groups. (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Rate of adoption of cyberlaw legislation worldwide and in LDCs (% of countries), 2021 vs. 2023**



Source: UNCTAD Cyberlaw Tracker

## Box 2: Digital trade readiness: the case of LDCs

Although 92% of the people in LDCs are covered by mobile networks, less than half have access to faster 4G networks that can support digital trade. Only 36% of the people in LDCs use the internet, partly due to high connectivity costs, and only an average of 6% shop online compared to 62% in advanced economies.<sup>16</sup>

LDCs' share of global exports of digitally deliverable services has declined since 2010, along with their share of total services trade. As buyers increasingly engage in digitally deliverable services trade, LDCs need to strengthen their ability to address key challenges. In 2022, LDCs accounted for 0.6% of global services trade but only 0.2% of digitally deliverable services exports.<sup>17</sup> Despite growing their exports of digitally deliverable services by 4% per year respectively from 2010-2022, LDCs represented less than half of 1% of such exports in 2022 – and their share even decreased over this period. In the Asia-Pacific region, where digital trade is fueling economic growth at a rate high above the global average, just six economies accounted for 85% of digitally deliverable exports in 2022, while the share for the region's LDCs was under 1%.<sup>18</sup> Doubling the share of LDCs in world trade – as stipulated in Sustainable Development Goal target 17.11 – is likely to be even more difficult unless the ability of countries to participate in and benefit from digital trade is strengthened.<sup>19</sup>

To keep up with the fast-evolving digital economy, LDCs increasingly need to adopt new regulations as well as to amend or clarify existing legislation. Data from UNCTAD's Global Cyberlaw Tracker indicates that 53% of LDCs have adopted data protection and privacy legislation (compared to 79% of countries overall) and 67% have adopted consumer protection legislation (compared to 80% overall). While this represents an overall increase in the rate of adoption of such legislation in LDCs, much remains to be done.

The continued increase in the share of Aid-for-Trade commitments to the ICT sector worldwide and in LDCs in particular has been a welcome development. Whereas that share stood at 2.2% in LDCs in 2017 (compared to 1.3% overall), it increased to 4.8% in LDCs in 2021 (compared to 4.1% overall), according to data from the OECD.

<sup>16</sup> According to data by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

<sup>17</sup> <https://unctad.org/news/digitally-deliverable-services-boom-risks-leaving-least-developed-countries-behind>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.unescap.org/kp/APTIR2023>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.un.org/technologybank/news/ldc-insight-4-strengthening-digital-capacities-least-developed-countries-even-more-urgent-post>



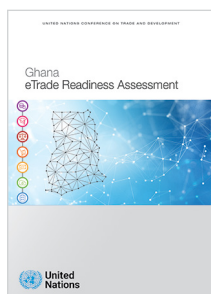
# STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES



## eTrade Readiness Assessments, E-Commerce Strategies and Action Plans, and sustained implementation support

UNCTAD continued to work with developing and least developed partner countries in conducting assessments of the state-of-play of their e-commerce enabling environment, in developing action plans to prioritize the implementation of key recommendations of the eTrade Readiness Assessments (eT Readies), and in developing E-Commerce Strategies.

Four eT Readies were completed in 2023 - for Ghana, Mauritania, Mongolia, and Peru - and three more were started - for Algeria, Timor-Leste, and Zimbabwe.



In **Ghana**, the eT Ready built on UNCTAD's longstanding engagement on e-commerce with West African countries as it followed eight national assessments and two regional assessments (for WAEMU and ECOWAS).<sup>20</sup> It shows that the Ghanaian Government has taken

steps to use digitalization as a driver of sustainable economic growth, through several policy interventions and programmes, including investments in ICT infrastructure, the roll-out of the Ghanaian digital addressing system, and the expansion in digital payments services, including the eCedi. With an internet penetration rate of 76% in 2023, targeted investments for rural connectivity, and significant mobile money account penetration, Ghana is well-positioned for e-commerce development. Areas identified by the report as requiring further attention include the high cost of internet access, digital skills, particularly for women and women owned enterprises, and access to finance as traditional commercial banks are risk-averse when it comes to financing digital start-ups. In addition to the policy recommendations included in the report, the eT Ready led to the establishment of a National Steering Committee on E-commerce and Digital Trade to facilitate intergovernmental policy coordination on e-commerce and digital trade. The eT Ready was launched on 6 November in Accra, Ghana.

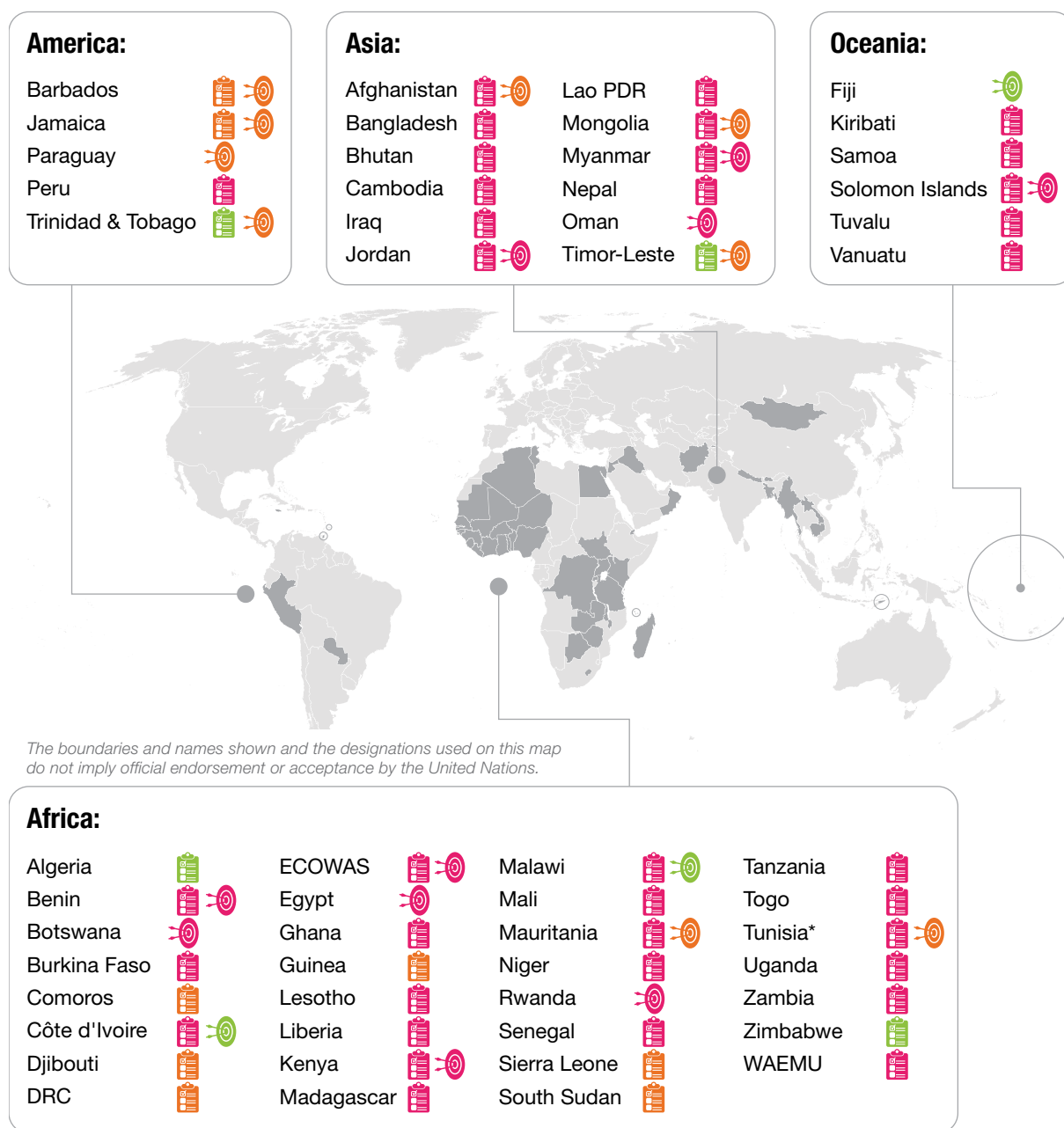


National multi-stakeholder consultations for the eT Ready of Ghana. Accra, Ghana, 15-17 March 2023

<sup>20</sup> The eT Ready of Ghana was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, with the financial support of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

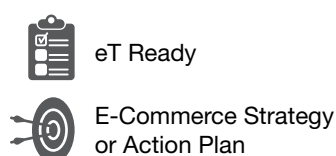


## MAP 2: UNCTAD eT Readies and E-Commerce Strategies/Action Plans, as of February 2024



\*An Action Plan has been developed; an E-Commerce Strategy has been requested.

Legend:



	Finalized	In progress	Requested
eT Ready	36	4	8
E-Commerce Strategy or Action Plan	11	3	9

Source: UNCTAD 2024.

The eT Ready of **Mauritania** was completed in 2023 and was presented in a dedicated session of the UNCTAD eWeek 2023.<sup>21</sup> It highlights the strong political will of the Government of Mauritania to make digital transformation a driver for accelerating the country's socio-economic development, notably with the adoption in December 2022 of the National Digital Transformation Agenda 2022-2025. The report highlights the improvement made in mobile internet connectivity despite the remaining regional disparities between major cities and rural areas in addition to the progress in laying a solid foundation for a digital payment infrastructure. Despite positive initiatives, persistent challenges and areas to be

improved remain, such as weak financial inclusion (20.9%) especially for women (15.5%) and youth (13.1%), e-commerce skills shortage and mismatch, inefficient delivery services due to the lack of a solid national addressing system, limited access to finance for e-commerce SMEs, a high informality rate, low technology adoption by SMEs, and the need to digitalize trade procedures to facilitate cross-border e-commerce. A national workshop for the validation of the eT Ready and its action matrix took place on 14 November in Nouakchott. A national launch of the report, including a high-level policy dialogue on the implementation of the eT Ready policy recommendations, is scheduled for early 2024.



H.E. Mr. Mohamed Louly, Minister of Digital Transition, Innovation and Administration Modernization of Mauritania, and UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General Mr. Pedro Manuel Moreno at the UNCTAD eWeek 2023, 6 December 2023

I was very happy to be involved in and contribute to the eT Ready of Mauritania as the academia representative. The cooperation with UNCTAD facilitated the setup of a cooperation framework with the Higher School of Digital Economy of Tunisia (ESEN Manouba), which will allow for an exchange of best practices in teaching e-business and other subjects related to digital economy, exchange of students as part of internships, visits from expert professors and participation in research seminars.

— **Dr. Cheikh Dhib, Director of the High Institute of Digital Studies (SupNum), Mauritania**



21 The eT Ready of Mauritania was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Digital Transition, Innovation and Modernization of Administration, with the financial support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).



The eT Ready of **Mongolia**, a landlocked country with a vast and sparsely populated landscape, was validated by the members of the National E-commerce Task Force in February and launched on 8 June in Ulaanbaatar during a week of high-level digital events.<sup>22</sup> A roundtable was organized with development partners to identify priority actions and areas of support and mobilize assistance. The report highlights the progress made by the Government, which recognizes e-commerce as a vehicle to boost economic transformation and export development. Progress was observed notably in the deployment of ICT infrastructure in urban areas and overall

increase of internet connectivity. Between 2017 and 2021, the share of Mongolians aged 15 years or older shopping online grew from 7% to 42% – the highest growth among landlocked developing countries and one of the highest in the world, according to World Bank data. Despite these notable achievements, challenges persist, including disparities in last-mile access to broadband connectivity, capacity to protect sensitive data, multiple addressing and e-payment systems, as well as a critical lack of awareness in investment opportunities for start-ups that are generally ‘young’ (the majority are less than 3 years of age). The eT Ready also feeds into the current strategy of the Government for becoming a ‘Digital Nation’ by 2024 and will provide the foundation for the development of a National E-commerce Strategy, planned for 2024.



Launch of the eT Ready of Mongolia with members of the National E-commerce Task Force, Ulaanbaatar, 8 June 2023

By offering an analysis of Mongolia’s e-commerce ecosystem and charting a roadmap for its further growth, the eTrade Readiness Assessment is one of the catalytic forces for Mongolia to rapidly develop e-commerce.

— H.E. Ms. Battsetseg Batmunkh, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Mongolia



<sup>22</sup> The eT Ready of Mongolia was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Digital Development and Communications, and with the financial support of the Republic of Korea and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.



The eT Ready of **Peru** conducted by UNCTAD in collaboration with UNECLAC was validated by the National Technical Committee for E-Trade, and officially launched on 15 November in Lima.<sup>23</sup> The assessment sheds light on the advances Peru has made, notably in deploying digital

connectivity infrastructure and introducing regulatory reforms to encourage competition, reduce fees, and enhance quality. The legal and regulatory framework is also considered as appropriate for e-commerce

development. Remaining bottlenecks include inter-institutional coordination and public-private dialogue, which are vital for the implementation of the recently adopted National Digital Transformation Policy (NDTP) across all e-commerce policy areas. Challenges include costly last-mile e-commerce logistics, lengthy delivery times, limited inland shipments, achieving greater financial inclusion through electronic payment adoption, as well as enhancing access to financing for MSMEs.

The eT Ready recommendations are aligned with Peru's NDTP and its aspirations to join the OECD and strengthen ties within the Pacific Alliance.



National launch of the eT Ready for Peru, Lima, 15 November 2023

In **Algeria**, work on the eT Ready commenced in 2023 and led to the establishment of a project steering committee to improve inter-ministerial coordination on e-commerce.<sup>24</sup> Excellent cooperation was established with the Ministry of Trade and Sector Promotion and the UN RCO. Two missions to Algiers took place during the year, with the first in September 2023 to

kick off activities, meet with public and private sector representatives, as well as the UN Country Team and development partners. National consultations in November 2023 engaged all relevant stakeholders in thematic sessions to delve deeper into the challenges and opportunities regarding the seven eT Ready policy areas.

<sup>23</sup> The eT Ready of Peru was developed under the leadership of the Secretariat of Government and Digital Transformation, with the financial support of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

<sup>24</sup> The eT Ready of Algeria is being developed with the financial support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).





National multi-stakeholder consultations for the eT Ready of Algeria. Algiers, 21 November 2023

In **Timor-Leste**, significant progress was achieved on the eT Ready and the development of a national E-commerce Strategy.<sup>25</sup> In May, a project kick-off mission was undertaken to meet with senior staff of the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry, public and private sector representatives, the UN Country Team, development partners and donors. Following the mission, national parliamentary elections were held and resulted in the formation of a new government on 1 July 2023. The newly appointed Minister of Commerce and Industry emerged as a strong project champion and formally opened the eT Ready national consultations held from 7-10 November. It was agreed that a working group under the National Trade Facilitation Committee would coordinate the development of the eT Ready. Following the consultations, initial findings were presented at a national workshop on 15 November. Representatives at the national workshop provided feedback on the initial priorities and strategic framework for a national E-commerce Strategy. The eT Ready and the Strategy are seen as national priorities that align with the country's efforts to join the WTO and ASEAN.

Preliminary work for the eT Ready of **Zimbabwe**, including identification of the focal point in the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and the mapping and compilation of relevant policy and regulatory documents, started in November.<sup>26</sup> The eT Ready is expected to be finalized by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2024.

Discussions are ongoing with **Trinidad and Tobago** for developing an eT Ready and national E-commerce Strategy. The Government has demonstrated its commitment by mobilizing domestic resources for the implementation of the project, with a project kick-off planned for early 2024.

UNCTAD also provided support to various countries for the preparation of eT Ready Action Plans to provide governments with an operational tool to prioritize and implement key e-commerce actions included in the recommendations of the eT Readies.

In **Malawi**, following multi-stakeholder discussions held in Lilongwe in February, a draft Action Plan was submitted to the Ministry of Trade and Industry to be reviewed by key national stakeholders to ensure alignment with ongoing initiatives.<sup>27</sup> Due to various unrelated challenges faced by the country in the second half of the year (floods, worsening of the cholera outbreak), which have mobilized domestic actors, the finalization of the Action Plan is still pending.

<sup>25</sup> The eT Ready and E-commerce Strategy of Timor-Leste are being developed with the financial support of the European Union through the Pacific Digital Economy Programme (PDEP).

<sup>26</sup> The eT Ready of Zimbabwe is being developed with the financial support of the Republic of Korea.

<sup>27</sup> The draft eT Ready Action Plan of Malawi was developed with the financial support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

### Box 3: Supporting the implementation of the eT Ready Action Plan of Tunisia

In **Tunisia**, follow-up support for the implementation of the eT Ready Action Plan (launched in October 2022) led to the organization of a capacity-building workshop in Tunis on 24 - 26 October. The workshop brought together 30 young e-commerce entrepreneurs (including 17 women), financial service providers, public and private Business Support Organizations, and development partners such as GIZ, SECO, and the UN RCO, to explore ways to lower the barriers to accessing finance faced by SMEs. Furthermore, the implementation of the Action Plan, through the support of GIZ, has contributed to digitalizing the Central Bank's information system and procedures related to foreign exchange operations which will contribute to facilitating cross-border e-commerce. ITC has also provided training and capacity-building workshops aiming at strengthening e-commerce skills and technical capacities of public and private sector operators.



Capacity-building workshop on the implementation of the eT Ready Action Plan of Tunisia, Tunis, 24 - 26 October

An increasing number of developing countries are requesting support from UNCTAD to develop E-commerce Strategies, including as a follow-up to an eT Ready. The first regional E-commerce Strategy supported by UNCTAD, and first regional E-commerce Strategy in West Africa, is that of **the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**.<sup>28</sup> The ECOWAS E-commerce Strategy and Implementation Plan 2023-2027 benefited from a robust regional consultative process that included direct consultations with over 450 key stakeholders and over 191 targeted institutions from the public and private sector. The Strategy reflects the priorities of ECOWAS Member States and the immediate needs of

actors in the ecosystem who agreed to prioritize: the strengthening of e-commerce institutions - including ministries responsible for trade - to drive sustainable and coherent e-commerce policy; enhancing trust within the e-commerce supply chain; improving market intelligence on e-commerce; and fostering inclusion by targeting women, youth, informal cross-border traders, rural populations and persons with disabilities. The Strategy was adopted by the ECOWAS Ministers of Trade and Industry (ECOMOTI) at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial meeting in April, before being endorsed by the ECOWAS Council of Ministers in July. UNCTAD will continue to work with the ECOWAS Commission to support the successful implementation of the Strategy.

<sup>28</sup> The regional E-commerce Strategy for the ECOWAS was developed with the financial support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

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The Commission commends the partnership with UNCTAD in the development of the regional ECS and its implementation plan. The process involved a diagnostic of eT Ready in member States which informed the development of the Strategy. Several consultations at the national and regional levels ensured a participatory approach throughout the process. The Commission welcomes the commitment of UNCTAD to continue to provide support in the implementation of the Strategy which supports the Community's Vision 2050.

— Mr. Kolawole Sofola, Ag. Director Trade, ECOWAS Commission

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5<sup>th</sup> Regional Meeting on the development of an ECOWAS E-commerce Strategy, Accra, Ghana, 20-21 March 2023

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, work commenced on the development of a national E-commerce Strategy, following up on one of the key recommendations of the eT Ready published in 2021.<sup>29</sup> National consultations were held in Abidjan in November to present the updated findings of the eT Ready across key policy areas, as well as

to discuss and validate the proposed orientations for the strategy, which will be aligned with the regional E-commerce Strategy for the ECOWAS. The draft strategy was shared with the Ministry of Trade and Industry in January and national consultations were organized in Abidjan in February 2024.

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29 The national E-Commerce Strategy of Côte d'Ivoire is being developed in close cooperation with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, with the financial support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.





In **Kenya**, following the submission of the draft E-commerce Strategy to the Government in January, focal points from the two co-chair ministries leading the strategy development process continued to meet regularly over the course of 2023.<sup>30</sup> These regular exchanges foreshadow the work

that will be undertaken by National E-Commerce Committee (once formally established), the State Department for Trade (as lead entity within the Ministry of Trade which carries the overall responsibility for e-commerce), and the State Department for Planning (that will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategy). The focal points have also started to identify priority actions for follow-up implementation support by UNCTAD and other development partners.

Kenya launched its national E-commerce Strategy on 13 December to fortify its position as a digital frontrunner in Africa by fostering inclusive and widespread utilization of trusted and secure e-commerce services based in the country. On the same day, a partner round table was organized which included representatives of several resident development partners and UN organizations active in the area of e-commerce and digital trade. The round table allowed the Government of Kenya to engage with partners on ongoing support relevant to the implementation of the strategy and potential for increased collaboration and synergies with the work of partners. On 14 December UNCTAD organized a sensitization workshop for the nominated members of the National E-Commerce Committee. UNCTAD will continue to support the strategy's implementation and help empower the national e-commerce committee in 2024.



Officials with copies of the strategy during its launch in Nairobi. Left to right: Alfred K'Ombudo, Principal Secretary, State Department for Trade; Shamika N. Sirimanne, UNCTAD Director of Technology and Logistics; Rebecca Miano, Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Trade, Investments and Industry; Eliud Owalo, Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Information, Communications and The Digital Economy; John Kipchumba Tanui, Principal Secretary, State Department for ICT and Digital Economy; and Alexander Fierley, Deputy Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Kenya

<sup>30</sup> The national E-Commerce Strategy of Kenya was developed in close cooperation with the Ministry of Trade, Investments and Industry and the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy, with the financial support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).



In **Jordan**, the National E-commerce Strategy was officially endorsed by the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister in April and acknowledged as a powerful instrument for e-commerce expansion.<sup>31</sup> The Strategy will be implemented through three stages over a 10-year timeframe, in line with Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision. Its implementation has already started with pilot projects as well as a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) on e-commerce conducted by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply with support from USAID. Other e-commerce initiatives are ongoing in line with the Action Plan embedded in the Strategy. Its overall goal is to create a prudent environment for e-commerce that attracts investment, provides better business and job opportunities for Jordanians, and enhances the competitiveness of MSMEs through e-commerce solutions for trading locally as well as globally.



In April, the Cabinet of **Solomon Islands** formally approved the country's National E-commerce Strategy 2022-2027.<sup>32</sup> Providing a clear roadmap to strengthen the business, policy and regulatory environment for e-commerce and digital trade, the strategy represents the culmination of a journey that started in 2018 with an eT Ready. The Government plans to establish an E-commerce Implementation Unit to coordinate the inter-ministerial implementation of the strategy. The strategy also aligns with the Pacific Regional E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap endorsed by Trade Ministers in 2021.

Building on the National E-commerce Readiness Assessment carried out in 2020, **Fiji** has made significant progress in developing a national E-commerce Strategy - a key priority for the Fijian Government, in line with its broader vision for digital transformation.<sup>33</sup> Consultations with over 100 policymakers, private sector actors and civil society representatives took place from 25 September to 4 October to update the findings of the 2020 assessment and to develop the framework for a national strategy, which will also align with the Pacific Regional E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap.



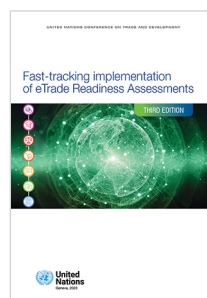
National consultations on the E-commerce Strategy of Fiji, Suva, 25 September – 4 October 2023

31 The national E-Commerce Strategy of Jordan was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply, with financial contribution from the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) "Trade for Employment" project on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Development, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

32 The national E-commerce Strategy of Solomon Islands was developed in close collaboration with the Ministry of Communication and Aviation and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration as part of the Pacific Digital Economy Programme (PDEP), a joint initiative of UNCDF, UNCTAD and UNDP, and with financial support provided by the Government of Australia.

33 The national E-commerce Strategy of Fiji is being developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives, SMEs and Communications, with financial support provided by the Government of Australia.

Building on two earlier reviews published in 2020 and 2022 of the state of implementation of past eT Readies' recommendations,<sup>34</sup> in 2023 UNCTAD conducted a 3<sup>rd</sup> review with the active participation of eT Ready Focal Points, mainly key technical officers in trade ministries and other selected stakeholders from line ministries. The 3<sup>rd</sup> review employed an updated methodology that was fine-tuned based on feedback received during two online capacity-building workshops organized to present the new methodology and share good reporting tips with partner countries' Focal Points. As a result, twenty countries participated in the review.



The report *Fast-tracking implementation of eTrade Readiness Assessments - Third edition* confirmed previous trends and uncovered novel insights regarding the implementation processes of e-commerce policy actions and the role of the eT Readies.

E-commerce is increasingly part of the policy mix that developing countries, including LDCs, are prioritizing to fuel their economic and trade diversification strategies. However, the report also singled out the urgent need to bolster the capabilities of nascent governance arrangements to fast-track implementation. While governance frameworks for e-commerce are being established in a growing number of countries and regions, several challenges remain to operationalizing them. Countries are calling for more support to develop capacity for strategic planning, results-based management, stakeholder engagement, monitoring, and evaluation.

**Coordination and coherence in policy frameworks at the national and regional level are essential. Policymakers need to work collaboratively to create an enabling environment that fosters eTrade readiness.**

In response to these challenges and the interest expressed by partner countries in the use of a web-based solution aimed at fostering effective collaboration, in 2023 UNCTAD developed the **eTrade Reform Tracker** (eTRT). The eTRT can serve as a valuable tool to support the effective implementation of an e-commerce strategy or similar policy document. It provides functionalities that enable the assignment of responsibilities, tracking of task execution, and reporting on the progress of time-bound deliverables. Additionally, it allows for the recording of information related to the involvement of development partners, thereby facilitating

the monitoring of resource mobilization efforts. A test beta version was presented to focal entities in Kenya and Tunisia between October and early November to collect preliminary comments, and a more advanced presentation in tandem with a live demonstration of the main features took place during the capacity-building workshop "Towards better coordination of eTrade implementation reforms" delivered as part of the UNCTAD eWeek 2023. Feedback from the participants, including on how the eTRT could be applied in the respective country contexts, will be instrumental to fine-tuning UNCTAD's rollout strategy in 2024.

<sup>34</sup> See <https://unctad.org/publication/fast-tracking-implementation-etrade-readiness-assessments> (2020) and <https://unctad.org/publication/fast-tracking-implementation-etrade-readiness-assessments-second-edition> (2022)

## Assistance with measuring the digital economy

UNCTAD works closely with other International Organizations to deliver training and capacity building to help improve the availability of timely, robust and comparable official statistics on the digital economy and digital trade in developing countries. In June, UNCTAD worked with the IMF to deliver a one-week regional workshop on measuring the digital economy in Gaborone, Botswana. The 36 participants (14 women) from 13 countries across Africa, gained understanding of the key concepts, frameworks, and sources used to measure e-commerce, the digital economy, and digital trade through lectures, exercises, and discussions. The workshop was well received with participant feedback indicating it was relevant to and useful for their work.

In November, UNCTAD collaborated with the IMF, OECD and WTO, as well as partners from the United Nations Statistics Division, UN ESCWA, and the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, to deliver a four-day workshop on Measuring Digital Trade. Funded jointly by the WTO and Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), which hosted the event at its center in Abu Dhabi, UAE, the workshop introduced 26 participants (10 women) representing the National Statistical Agencies and Central Banks of 14 Arab countries to the Handbook on Measuring Digital Trade. Participant feedback was strongly positive, with particular praise for the combination of varied lectures, discussions, exercises, and games, along with presentations from participating countries and invited guests, which together gave both conceptual and practical insights and understanding.

UNCTAD regularly delivers workshop and training sessions on various areas of digital economy measurement. Invited by the United Nations Statistics Division, UNCTAD contributed workshop sessions for 37 participants (13 women) from the five member States of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and 29 participants (17 women) from 9 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. UNCTAD also delivered technical seminars on e-commerce measurement for participants from the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (on invitation by GCC Stat) and for the Kyrgyz Republic, with 23 participants (17 women), as a contribution to a World Bank project on e-commerce measurement in Central Asian countries.



Regional workshop on measuring the digital economy, Abu Dhabi, UAE, November 2023

## E-commerce and Law Reform

In collaboration with TrainForTrade, UNCTAD delivered two capacity-building courses in 2023. The first one focused on digital identity for trade and development and was delivered from 13 February to 31 March to 164 participants (60% women) from Pacific SIDS as part of the Pacific Digital Economy Programme (PDEP). The course enabled policymakers and stakeholders to formulate and implement policies on digital identity related to trade and development. The second focused on the legal aspects of e-commerce and was delivered from 30 October to 8 December, to 264 participants (60% women) from 37 SIDS. The program strengthened the capacities of policymakers

to formulate digital economy-supportive trade policies and enhance crisis responsiveness through innovative learning approaches.

In partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Asian Development Bank and UNCTAD, a workshop on Effective Legal Frameworks for Building the Digital Economy was conducted on 18 - 20 October in Suva, Fiji. Forty-nine participants from 14 Pacific countries attended the workshop and feedback indicates that there is regional demand for targeted technical assistance in several areas including consumer protection, data protection,

taxation, cross-border data flows, intellectual property and cybersecurity. UNCTAD presented an overview and gap analysis of e-commerce legislation in the Pacific. Stakeholder feedback will shape a forthcoming legislative gap analysis publication by UNCTAD, expected in 2024.

UNCTAD finalized a study titled 'Indirect Taxation of E-Commerce and Digital Trade – Implications for Developing Countries'. The study identifies key concerns, urging policy and implementation adjustments. Drawing on global, regional, and national experiences, it proposes future policy options, taking into account stakeholder perspectives. The study includes insights from representatives of the private

sector, research institutes and 10 countries, as well as four international/regional organizations. The study will be published in 2024.

At UNCTAD's eWeek in December, a session was held on the Indirect Taxation of E-Commerce and Digital Trade, exploring its implications for developing countries. The session included a presentation of the study's findings, followed by an interactive discussion with panelists on future policy options for developing countries. Additional topics covered during the discussion involved the potential evolution of the role of tax administrations to keep pace with changes in new technologies and the economic landscape, as well as the role of international support in this context.

#### **Box 4: Collaboration and partnership with the private sector**

A key aspect of UNCTAD's technical cooperation with developing countries is strengthening public-private dialogue. In the context of the development of a national E-Commerce Strategy for example, this is achieved through the establishment or strengthening of existing public-private dialogue fora, support for public-private dialogue throughout the development process, integrating a public-private dialogue forum in the governance framework, and the promotion of various channels of public-private sector communication (meetings, publications, social media). Private sector representatives also benefit from various capacity-building activities, such as the workshops organized in the context of the Implementation Support Mechanism or the online training courses on digital identity for trade and development and on the legal aspects of e-commerce, delivered in collaboration with TrainForTrade. UNCTAD also partners with the private sector through the eTrade for Women Advocates (see next section), whose support for the delivery of Masterclasses and commitment to advocacy and policy dialogue with government officials and other decision-makers is crucial to promoting more inclusive digital economies in developing countries. The private sector is also strongly represented at the UNCTAD eWeek, accounting for close to 20% of registered participants in the UNCTAD eWeek 2023.

# **EMPOWERING WOMEN DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURS**



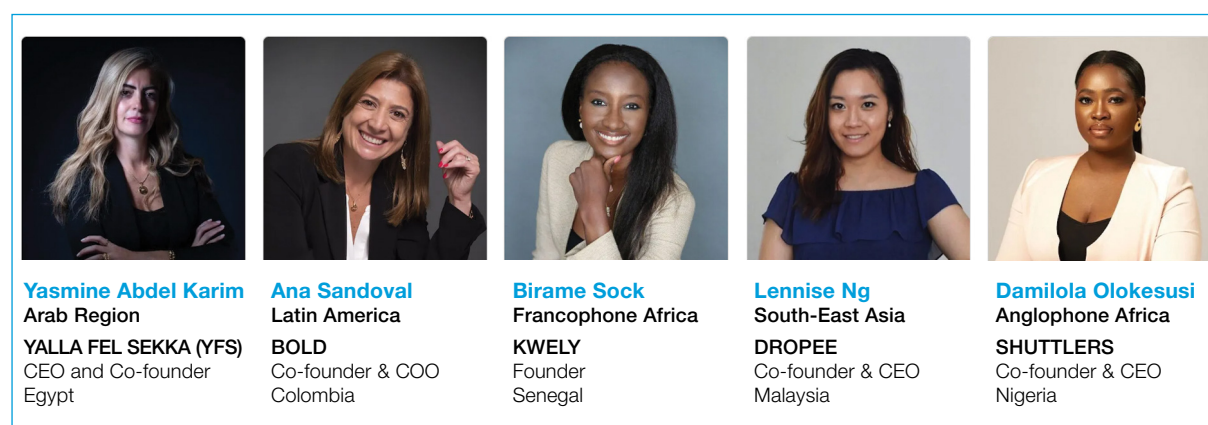


## Advocacy on a global stage

In 2023, the initiative welcomed two new Advocates for 2023-2024 - Yasmine Abdel Karim of Egypt (Advocate for the Arab region) and Ana Maria Sandoval of Colombia

(Advocate for Latin America and the Caribbean)<sup>35</sup>, who joined the existing cohort of Advocates.

## 2023-2024 Advocates



eTrade for Women played a pivotal role in advocating for women's digital entrepreneurship at the global stage, raising awareness about the major challenges at the individual, business and ecosystem level that women entrepreneurs are confronted with.

Some notable advocacy activities by the Advocates and Community members throughout the year include:

- Birame Sock was invited to take part in a moderated conversation convened by WTO Director-General, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, on making digital trade work for all at the World Government Summit, in the United Arab Emirates (13 February 2023).
- eTrade for Women organized two sessions on women digital entrepreneurship during the WSIS Forum, with the contribution of Lennise Ng and Betty Bâ and *eTrade for all* partners (13 March and 25 April 2023).
- Damilola Olokesusi contributed to the 6<sup>th</sup> session of UNCTAD's Intergovernmental Group of Experts on "How to make data work for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (10-12 May 2023).
- eTrade for Women hosted a Private Hearing with the Minister of Production, Investment and Foreign Trade of Ecuador and discussions with policymakers in charge of trade and entrepreneurship policies during the Masterclasses in Quito, Ecuador and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, providing valuable insights into the specific needs, challenges and opportunities for women digital entrepreneurs (April and July 2023).
- Former Advocate Pierangela Sierra was invited by the Peruvian Government to share her experience as a business leader with Latin American youth in celebration of International Women's Day (9 March 2023).

35 See <https://unctad.org/news/unctad-announces-new-advocates-women-e-commerce>

- eTrade for Women Advocates and members took part in the UNCTAD World Investment Forum in the United Arab Emirates (16-20 October 2023): Mona Ataya - former Advocate for the Arab region, Lennise Ng and Nancy Amunga contributed to various discussions about how to leverage investment to shape more inclusive digital economies.
- Betty Bâ was appointed by the Government of Senegal as National advisor on digital inclusion and communication.



Private Hearing with Mr. Julio José Prado, Minister of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries of Ecuador, in the context of the Masterclass for Latin America and the Caribbean, Quito, 25-28 April 2023

Beyond their mandate, former Advocates also commit to pursuing legacy projects that have the potential to generate longer-term impact.

For instance, Mona Ataya has been mentoring a small group of select women entrepreneurs in e-commerce from the Arab Region to help them take their businesses to the next level and expand their business opportunities.

Nina Angelovska is leading the Gender Equality Alliance across the Balkans, to promote equal pay, and contributes to the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation in partnership with UN-Women.

Pierangela Sierra launched a bootcamp programme to teach hundreds of young Ecuadorian women computer skills to boost their employability and raise a future generation of women in new technologies.

**Despite progress, the digital economy remains a heavily male-dominated environment. To bridge the gender divide, more women who are active players in the digital economy need to have a seat at the policy table.**

## Capacity building with impact

Engaging in impactful capacity building in partnership with the Advocates for the respective regions, eTrade for Women organized two in-person Masterclasses in 2023. The first Masterclass was held on 25-28 April in Quito, Ecuador, benefiting 23 women entrepreneurs from 6 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The second Masterclass, dedicated to Southeast Asia and the Pacific, took place in Kuala Lumpur,

Malaysia, from 24 to 27 July. The event was attended by 25 women entrepreneurs from 10 countries. Beyond the Masterclasses, the initiative provided specialized training for Community members. These sessions focused on crucial aspects for business growth, such as customer acquisition and retention, addressing specific needs identified within the network.



eTrade for Women Masterclass for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, 24-27 July 2023, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

## Community building

In 2023, eTrade for Women Communities continued to offer a dedicated space to encourage networking and peer learning and foster opportunities for cross-border interactions among Community members. With the resumption of in-person engagements, the initiative organized physical gathering in Kenya and Indonesia, where members had the opportunity to meet, establish meaningful connections, gain insights into local policy landscapes, and actively contribute to shaping the future of the network.

Key developments included the strategic selection of 15 Community Leaders - more advanced members of the Community selected to represent their fellows under a pro-bono assignment, thus playing a crucial role in supporting organizational activities and strengthening the network.

Thanks to the efforts made to foster the Communities, collaborations thrived, with members joining forces to maximize their impact. For instance, Imade Bibowei-Osuobeni from Nigeria and Millicent Abila from Kenya launched a new venture: Techherfrica, while in-person gatherings in Malaysia, Indonesia and Ecuador spurred further business collaborations.



### Box 5: Empowering beyond borders: the transformative impact of eTrade for Women

eTrade for Women's impact extends beyond individual entrepreneurs, creating a “domino effect” that positively affects entire communities.

This is evident in the concrete achievements of its beneficiaries who, building on the opportunities fostered by eTrade for Women, have become catalysts for change in their broader ecosystems. In 2023, one such young entrepreneur from Nigeria turned these opportunities into a prospering agri-food e-commerce business that in turn has impacted more than 4,000 rural women and youth through digital and financial literacy training, the distribution of more than 400 mobile phones and the disbursement of more than 3 million Nigerian naira (over US\$ 2,000) in 70 small business loans with 100% loan repayment rate. The impact has been remarkable – 57% average increase in income for rural female farmers and traders, 86 new bank accounts opened and an increase in savings among the women with bank accounts.

This is to say thank you for the invaluable support we received in 2023 and the pivotal role the 2022 eTrade for Women Masterclass played in shaping my mindset and adding a layer to my resilience, inspiring me to be better. We have achieved significant milestones [...]. Thank you for the support eTrade for Women has provided. This engagement has had a snowball impact. I remain grateful.

– Ms. Imade Bibowei-Osuobeni, founder of Techherfrica, Nigeria



In 2024, capacity-building efforts will be strengthened with the launch of the eTrade for Women Academy, which will provide online courses dedicated to the

members of Communities. The platform will kick off during two foundational courses centered on design thinking and customer experience.

### Partnerships and outreach to raise more awareness

In 2023, eTrade for Women significantly amplified its visibility and saw a remarkable growth on social media, gathering more than 1,800 followers across Twitter/X and LinkedIn and over 30,000 content views. It also witnessed a surge in interest from potential beneficiaries, with 150 candidates expressing their interest in joining the eTrade for Women Communities through the online application form.

The initiative also forged successful partnerships with key organizations, including:

- A Community Gathering in Kenya with the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT).

- A dedicated session on Intellectual Property with WIPO during the Masterclasses in Ecuador and Malaysia, as well as a special workshop during the UNCTAD eWeek 2023 in Geneva.
- The Masterclass for Southeast Asia and the Pacific and the Community gathering in Jakarta with the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) – an *eTrade for all* partner.
- The collaboration with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) to enable the Community Leaders' in-person participation in the UNCTAD eWeek.

### Box 6: eTrade for Women at the UNCTAD eWeek 2023

eTrade for Women took an active part in the UNCTAD eWeek 2023, to encourage policy dialogue and elevate the profile of women digital entrepreneurs. The 4 Advocates representing French-speaking Africa, English-speaking Africa, the Arab region and Southeast Asia, 14 Community Leaders, and one community member from the Pacific were present at the event, thanks to the dedicated financial support of our core donors and earmarked support from Afreximbank, the FES foundation and UNCDF. They took full advantage of the learning, advocacy and networking opportunities available throughout the event. Key highlights included a High-level session entitled 'Boosting women digital entrepreneurship: Bridging the gender financing gap' and a Thematic session on 'Unlocking the power of e-commerce for SMEs'. These sessions spotlighted the pivotal role of women entrepreneurs in the digital economy while calling for more support from both the public and private sectors. A special lunch in honour of the Advocates was hosted by the Delegation of the European Union and the Permanent Mission of Namibia to the United Nations in Geneva, where the Advocates had the opportunity to engage with a group of over 30 women ambassadors and heads of international organizations and call for more gender-inclusive digital ecosystems.



eTrade for Women's High-level Session at the UNCTAD eWeek 2023

Finally, eTrade for Women harnessed the expertise of private sector entities with local knowledge, to provide tailored training and capacity building for its beneficiaries.

## Enhanced visibility of the contribution of women digital entrepreneurs

Beyond enhancing the visibility of the initiative, eTrade for Women has played a role in providing opportunities for its members to amplify their voices and gain increased leadership recognition. Several achievements include:

- Imade Bibowei-Osuobeni, founder of Techherfrica in Nigeria, was awarded the [SDG Digital GameChangers Award](#).
- Fernanda Luica, co-founder of Databits in Ecuador, secured US\$ 600,000 during pre-seed round. The accomplishment was featured in [Forbes Ecuador](#).
- Millicent Abila, a member based in Kenya and Pauline Kariuki, Community Leader for Anglophone Africa, were invited to speak in Nairobi at the first event in Africa organized by the [eCommerce Institute](#), contributing to showcasing the leadership within the eTrade for Women community.
- Carolina Huertas Garcés, the founder of AgroDataí (Colombia), gained substantial media attention and was featured in [Forbes' list of the 100 most powerful women in Colombia for 2023](#).



eTradeForWomen reposted this



**Millie Abila, MCIPR**

Digital Communication & PR | Top Woman in Business 2019 KE | Co-Founder Pacecode Digital | M...  
Smo · Edited

✍️ Exciting day at the E-Commerce Day Africa event!

I had the honor of speaking on the Digital Commerce pillar, diving deep into the world of marketing and commercial strategies that drive online success.

From harnessing the power of social media to leveraging data-driven insights, we explored the cutting-edge techniques reshaping the e-commerce landscape. 📈

Grateful for the opportunity to share knowledge and insights with such a dynamic audience and panelists! 🙌

Thank you eTradeForWomen, eCommerce Institute, eTrade Alliance, & USAID for the opportunity.

#ECommerceDay #DigitalCommerce #ECommerceDayAfrica #DigitalCommunications

ost important event on **Digital Commerce** aims to **accelerate** and **make online business** more professional.



UNCTAD's eTrade for Women initiative is changing the lives of women worldwide. By supporting women digital entrepreneurs in developing countries, this initiative amplifies their voices and positively impacts their ecosystems, fostering a more inclusive digital economy. The remarkable impact speaks for itself. The Netherlands is proud to continue supporting this transformative program.

– Ms. Isabelle van Tol, Head Trade for Development, Department for Sustainable Economic Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands



# BUILDING CONSENSUS



## Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy

The 6<sup>th</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGE) on E-commerce and the Digital Economy took place on 10-12 May in a hybrid format that attracted 300 registered participants, including representatives of the governments of 75 member States, 19 IOs, 10 NGOs as well as several representatives of the private sector and academia.<sup>36</sup> 39% of all registered participants identified as women. Written contributions were received from the Philippines and the United Kingdom as well as three organizations. Statements were delivered by Brazil, the Kingdom of Cambodia,

Tunisia, the Group of 77 and China, ITU and the Chair of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy (see next section).

The session delivered as a main outcome a set of agreed policy recommendations on how to make data work for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agreed policy recommendations constitute one of the first negotiated texts on how to make data work for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

*The Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy,*

*[...]*

- *Stresses that digitalization can be harnessed to achieve sustainable progress and build a more resilient, inclusive, environmentally sound and sustainable world, which will require increased global dialogue and international cooperation to broaden and strengthen the meaningful participation of developing countries in relevant processes and equitable opportunities for inclusive economic growth;*
- *Calls on Governments and other stakeholders to collaborate on inclusive global governance of data, using contributions from international organizations, including the United Nations, and to find common ground for data to work for people and the planet, ensuring no one is left behind, considering both economic and non-economic implications, and noting the ongoing consultations on the global digital compact;*

*[...]*

The IGE also agreed that UNCTAD should coordinate a task group of interested Working Group participants, to support the development of guidelines on measuring the value of e-commerce.

36 See <https://unctad.org/meeting/intergovernmental-group-experts-e-commerce-and-digital-economy-sixth-session>





**Mario Chacon** @mchmac · May 12

...

Shaping data governance to maximize development potential of data: Multi-stakeholder perspectives, addressing the need for globally coordinated solutions to harness opportunities and mitigate risks of data for development. Great panel ! @ECDEatUNCTAD @lorraynebp @UNCTAD

**Mario Chacon** @mchmac · May 12

...

Great week @UNCTAD : "UN Trade Forum 2023" & "IGE on E-commerce and the Digital Economy" a superb group of speakers on matters like Gender gaps and digital solutions or Prerequisites for more equitable distribution of gains from digital economy & data governance @CeciliaRikap.

– Quote by Mr. Mario Chacón, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, and Chair of the UNCTAD Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance, eighty-sixth session, October 2023

## Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy

The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group (WG) on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy took place on 30 November-1 December 2023.

The Working Group discussed progress in e-commerce and digital economy measurement by international organizations, the measurement of e-commerce value, non-survey-based measurement of e-commerce and the digital economy, and building capacities for measurement. The meeting confirmed that all the agenda items merit continued discussion, with the measurement of e-commerce value receiving particular

attention (see below). National statistical offices from developing countries were encouraged to apply a digital supply-use tables framework to measure the digital economy. UNCTAD was also asked to support the dissemination of knowledge resources in using non-survey-based sources of data for official digital economy statistics, including by setting up an online repository of such resources that could be accessed by all countries. UNCTAD continues to seek increased support from the donor community for methodological development, capacity-building and technical assistance.



## Task Group on Measuring E-commerce Value (TG-eCOM)

The inaugural meetings of the TG-eCOM took place in November (online) and December (in-person) with representatives from around 25 member States and international organizations participating. Its establishment acts upon the recommendation made by the WG-ECDE at its 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting in November 2022 and endorsement by the IGE in May 2023.

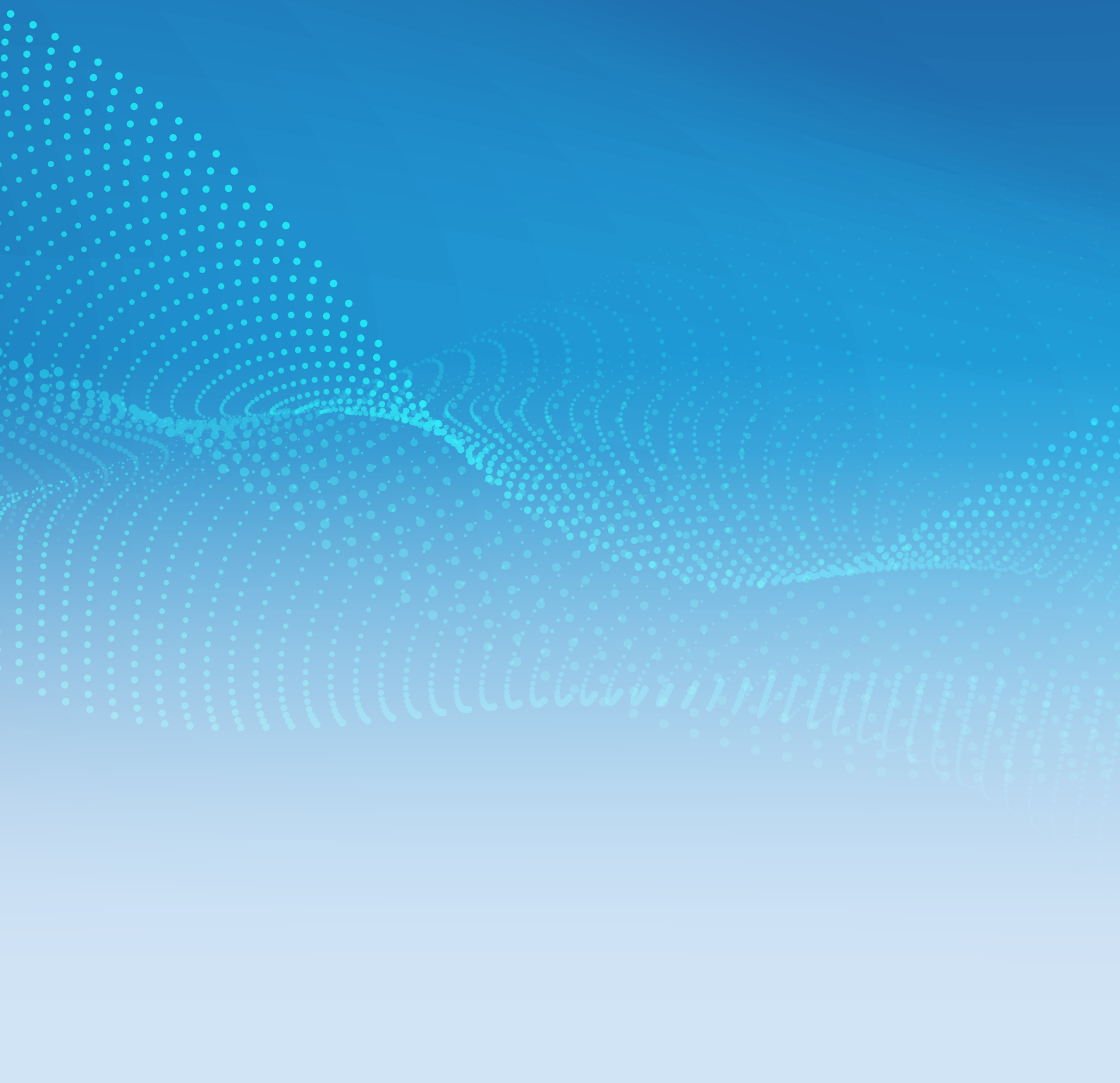
The central objective of the TG-eCOM is to develop internationally agreed guidelines and recommendations on measuring the value of e-commerce transactions involving businesses (both sales and purchases) and thereby to support the development of internationally comparable statistics on e-commerce value (and the related concept of digitally ordered trade). To that end, the TG-eCOM provides a forum for detailed discussion amongst those with hands-on experience of measuring e-commerce value, as well as those actively working to develop measurement in this area.

The group resolved to meet quarterly in 2024, including up to twice in-person, to deliver steady progress toward the objectives. This progress will be reported to the WG-ECDE and IGE.

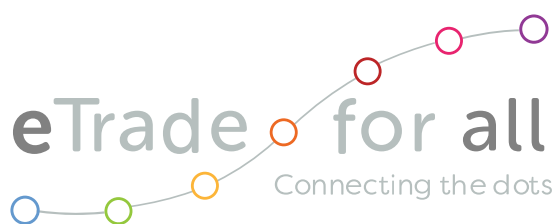


First in-person meeting of the Task Group on Measuring E-commerce Value (TG-eCOM), Geneva, Switzerland, December 2023

# FOSTERING COLLABORATION



## eTrade for all: connecting the dots



The speed at which technologies are evolving, and the complexity of the issues involved call for a more effective international cooperation.

In this context, the *eTrade for all* initiative, with its focus on information sharing and the ability to leverage the strengths of different partners, continued to enhance opportunities for synergies and strive to ensure that collective efforts and priority actions are geared towards shaping a digital future that brings inclusive and sustainable development gains for all.

In 2023 partners continued to support and contribute to ongoing capacity-building activities in the context of the implementation of UNCTAD's eTrade Readiness Assessments and the eTrade for Women initiative.

The partnership furthermore enabled collaboration with UNECLAC for the development of a new Core Course on E-Commerce for policymakers in Latin America and the Caribbean, based on the global and regional studies on the impact of COVID-19 on e-commerce published in 2021.<sup>37</sup> The course, developed with TrainForTrade, was delivered from 30 October to 3 December to some 370 participants (over 50% women) from more than 20 countries.<sup>38</sup>

Last but not least, 28 of the currently 35 *eTrade for all* partners actively contributed to the UNCTAD eWeek 2023 at the highest level, ensuring an impact-oriented event. The commitment of partners was particularly visible in the two *eTrade for all* leadership roundtables that took place on the second day of the eWeek, where 15 heads or deputy heads of agencies shared their vision for the future of digital trade and enhanced digital cooperation opportunities.

The *eTrade for all* online platform continued to serve as a privileged information hub, providing up-to-date information and resources on e-commerce and the digital economy for development in three languages (English, French, and Spanish). The platform maintained a robust performance, welcoming over 50,000 visitors, more than half of whom originating from developing countries.<sup>39</sup> It recorded 1,000+ new uploads, consolidating news, events, courses, podcasts, and publications in the various policy areas covered by partners.

In 2023, a dedicated page on training courses was introduced to the platform, enhancing access to self-paced learning and capacity-building resources offered by partners. The initiative also released 10 newsletters and witnessed an expansion of its readership to more than 5,500 subscribers (55% increase from 2022).

<sup>37</sup> See <https://unctad.org/publication/covid-19-and-e-commerce-global-review>.

<sup>38</sup> 154 participants completed the 2 month-long course and its 6 modules and obtained a certificate.

<sup>39</sup> Eleven out of the top 20 countries with the most visitors were developing countries (India, China, Nigeria, the Philippines, Malaysia, Kenya, Ecuador, Mexico, Colombia, Ethiopia, and Indonesia).

## UNCTAD eWeek 2023

The process of digitalization is happening against the backdrop of multiple global crises, including climate change and environmental degradation, rising poverty and inequality, food insecurity, increased risks of debt distress, geopolitical conflicts, and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, more than ever, the world faces critical decisions on what trajectories to take to shape the future role of digitalization for development.

In response to these challenges, UNCTAD convened the eWeek 2023 on 4-8 December, under the theme “Shaping the future of the Digital Economy”. The event gathered more than 3,500 registered participants from 159 countries across all developing regions and country groups, making it the most attended and inclusive eWeek thus far and reinforcing its position as the leading forum to discuss the development opportunities and challenges associated with the digital economy.

Featuring over 150 sessions, the event brought together government leaders, CEOs, heads of international organizations, civil society representatives and other key stakeholders to address critical issues such as governing digital platforms and AI, promoting eco-friendly digital practices, empowering women in the digital economy and enhancing developing countries' digital readiness.

By outlining actions and steps needed to turn digital opportunities into shared and sustainable development gains, the eWeek outcome document, entitled “The Geneva Vision on the Future of the Digital Economy”, is expected to send a strong message to the UN-convened Summit of the Future in September 2024.

Lastly, the eWeek pilot-tested an AI-generated reporting tool developed by the DiploFoundation, an active *eTrade for all* partner, showcasing the shared commitment to foster meaningful partnerships and be at the forefront of global innovation.



Photo from the UNCTAD eWeek 2023.

I have been following discussions on digital policies right since the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and I found in this eWeek the kind of serious discussions that I have only seen during WSIS and a few years later. In this eWeek I have seen much more mature and nuanced discussions. I am pleased to see maturity and a keen-minded attitude return to digital policy discussions, which are among the most important for the world today. I congratulate the UNCTAD team for making this possible. It makes me look forward to the future editions of UNCTAD eWeek.

– Mr. Parminder Jeet Singh, former Executive Director of IT for Change, India



## UNCTAD eWeek 2023 by the numbers



# eWeek



Geneva, 4–8 December 2023

Shaping the future  
of the digital economy

### 150+ sessions were held, including:

**18**  
high-level  
sessions



**Over 60 sessions**  
held online or in a hybrid  
format through the  
eWeek virtual  
conference centre to  
ensure inclusivity,  
allowing interested  
stakeholders who could  
not travel to Geneva to  
actively participate in  
the discussions

**“In  
conversation  
with”  
series**  
of fireside chats  
with inspiring  
women in the  
digital economy



**A number of  
side events**  
(e.g., the first  
UPU TradePost  
Forum, ICC’s  
Global Digital  
Economy  
Commission  
Meeting)



**The launch  
of over  
10  
reports and  
publications**

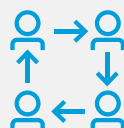


### 3,500+ registered participants

**Gender parity in  
participation**



**Balanced representation of  
the main stakeholder groups**  
(governments, private sector,  
intergovernmental  
organizations,  
civil society and  
academia)



**More than 720  
speakers and  
moderators**

from all corners of the  
globe and sides of the  
stakeholder spectrum



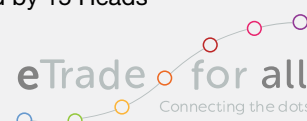
**159 countries**  
represented  
including many  
LDCs



**94% of respondents** to  
the post-event survey rated the  
content of discussions as  
“relevant” or “highly relevant”  
to the future of the  
digital economy



**28 (out of 35) eTrade for all  
partners actively contributing;**  
represented by 15 Heads  
of Deputy  
Heads of  
agencies



## Digital cooperation for development



Like every year, UNCTAD was co-organizer and active participant in the WSIS Forum 2023, including as co-facilitator with ITC and the Universal Postal Union (UPU) of the WSIS action line on e-business.



UNCTAD co-authored a joint report on [Digital Trade for Development](#), prepared together with staff of the IMF, the OECD, the World Bank, and the WTO. The report explores opportunities and challenges for developing economies arising from digital

trade and discusses the role of international cooperation in tackling these opportunities and challenges. It considers policy actions in the areas of digital infrastructure, skills, international support for capacity development, and the regulatory and policy environment. Specific policy issues include the WTO e-commerce moratorium, regulation of cross-border data flows, competition policies and consumer protection.

UNCTAD collaborated with the Joint SDG Fund and other entities in the UN Development System on the incubation of a new investment Window on Digital Transformation for development, to support joint programmes at the country level coordinated through UN RCOs. It contributed to the development of the concept note and investment strategy for the Window, in particular for thematic offering #3 under the investment strategy, namely “e-commerce, market

access and trade enablement”. As a member of the Technical Support Group, UNCTAD will contribute to ensuring the development and implementation of high-quality joint programmes under the Window, which was launched in September.



UNCTAD participated in the LDC5 Civil Society Forum “From Commitments to Action” held in Doha in March, the WTO Public Forum in September, and the OECD Global Forum on Trade in October. It also contributed to discussions in the context of the WTO Work Programme on e-commerce, which helped inform a communication to the WTO from the Kingdom of Cambodia.<sup>40</sup>

As part of the UNCTAD eWeek 2023, a high-level session was dedicated to a briefing on the process leading up to the Global Digital Compact. An internal GDC briefing of G77 and China was also organized in November.

Other engagements included a presentation on the opportunities and challenges to digital trade for development to the EU Trade Policy Committee subgroup on Services and Investment under the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU. Support on e-commerce policy was also provided to the Eurasian Economic Commission.

<sup>40</sup> See WT/GC/W/900 from 14 August 2023.



# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2024 AND BEYOND



The Digital Economy Report 2024, which is devoted to the topic of Environmentally sustainable digitalization, trade and development, will be launched in the spring in the six official UN languages. It will be followed by a wider dissemination and outreach campaign, including to member States, *eTrade for all* partners, and other stakeholders interested in this complex topic from the perspective of the main stages of the ICT sector lifecycle and the environmental aspects of e-commerce in particular.

New technical notes will be released, exploring the rise of digital trade in international agreements as well as measuring the value of e-commerce and the role of platforms. Planned statistics database updates include statistics on ICT use by businesses and the ICT sector, trade in ICT goods and services, and trade in digitally deliverable services.

The Programme's main goals and objectives in the capacity-building domain include new *eTrade* Readiness Assessments (e.g., for Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago and Zimbabwe) and E-commerce Strategies (e.g., for Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Timor-Leste and Mongolia), as well as sustained support for their implementation, including through the deployment of the newly developed *eTrade* Reform Tracker in several partner countries.

As part of the second phase of the Pacific Digital Economy Programme, UNCTAD will also release a second edition of the Digital Economy Report for the Pacific as well as a regional comparative review of e-commerce legislation.

The *eTrade for Women* initiative will continue to pursue its objective of building more gender-inclusive digital economies through its advocacy, empowerment, community building and policy dialogue pillars. The initiative will organize three Masterclasses (for Francophone Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean) and continue fostering opportunities for its members to engage in policy dialogue, including through the *eT* Readies and their implementation in selected countries. *eTrade for Women* will also expand its geographical reach to South Asia. A first Advocate will be appointed in 2024 and a Masterclass will be organized, to be followed by the establishment of an *eTrade for Women* regional Community for that region. Emphasis will also be placed on the growth and nurturing

of the existing Communities, through the increased involvement and support of the Community Leaders. The *eTrade for Women* Academy, the online digital community and learning hub, will also be launched and consolidated with a view to offering an additional channel for self-learning and interactions with peers and experts. Finally, a new cohort of Advocates will assume their tenure, with the Advocates Induction Week expected to take place during the first semester of 2024.

In the area of measuring the digital economy, the Programme will provide technical assistance for the production of statistics in response to country requests. Work on the development of training materials on measuring digital trade will continue, and the training course on producing digital economy statistics will be translated into two additional languages (French and Arabic).

The 7<sup>th</sup> session of Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy will be held on 6-8 May 2024 on the topic "Building digital readiness: From assessments to implementation". The Programme will organize the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy, as well as meetings of the Task Group on measuring the value of e-commerce. It will also contribute to the discussions on digital governance envisaged as part of the events on occasion of UNCTAD's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration – UNCTAD@60, in June 2024.

Reflecting the critical and ever-growing importance of the governance of digital platforms and data for e-commerce and a digital economy that work for development, the Programme will continue to work with other parts of the UN, the G20, the BRICS and beyond to explore ways forward towards harnessing data and data flows for sustainable development.

The Programme will seek to further leverage synergies with its partners in joint programmes, including in the framework of the new Digital Transformation Window of the Joint SDG Fund. It will work with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology in the implementation of the Roadmap on Digital Cooperation. Finally, it will contribute to the preparations for the UN Summit of the Future in 2024 and lend support for the forging of a Global Digital Compact and Pact for the Future, to foster safe and responsible use of data for development and to strengthen digital cooperation.

# PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT



## Human resources

In 2023, the Programme was implemented by a team of 33 staff members originating from 11 developing and 13 developed countries across 5 continents and speaking at least 15 different languages. These include 9 staff members funded through UNCTAD's regular budget (RB), 1 staff member on secondment, and 23 staff members funded through extra-budgetary (XB) funding (including junior professional officers) with

contracts of various length, as well as 1 intern. Women represent 70% of all staff.

The Programme drew on the specific skills and expertise of 28 consultants and 17 individual contractors, 44% of whom are women, 53% represent developing countries and 82% have more than 10 years' experience in their respective fields.

## Financial information

A new partnership arrangement with the Netherlands signed in January 2023 resulted in US\$ 6 million committed in support of e-commerce and the digital economy for development over 2023-26. In a new partnership with UNCTAD, Australia committed AU\$ 3 million to the ECDE Programme for the 2023-26 period, with a special focus on South and Southeast Asia and supporting countries in the Indo-Pacific

Economic Framework (IPEF). Germany extended its support into 2024, while New Zealand and the European Union joined Australia in financially supporting the PDEP. The UNCTAD eWeek 2023 marked the beginning of a new collaboration with the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) which will be further expanded in 2024. A new project on the development of an eT Ready (self-funded) will also begin in 2024 in Trinidad and Tobago.



Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations Office at Geneva Ms. Katharina Stasch and UNCTAD Secretary-General Ms. Rebeca Grynspan signing an agreement in support of the ECDE Programme for 2024



The UN's Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) in 2023 covered an estimated US\$ 81,600 of staff personnel costs.

ECDE Programme interventions were funded by 13 different funding partners, for close to US\$ 6.3 million in extra-budgetary funding.<sup>41</sup> More than two-thirds of the Programme's extra-budgetary resources were provided by 5 core donors – namely

Australia, Germany (including both BMZ and GIZ), the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland. Contributions were also received from Australia, New Zealand, and the European Union through UNCDF, the Republic of Korea, Afreximbank, and four other organizations (see Figure 5). Financial and in-kind support was also provided by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and Omidyar Network.



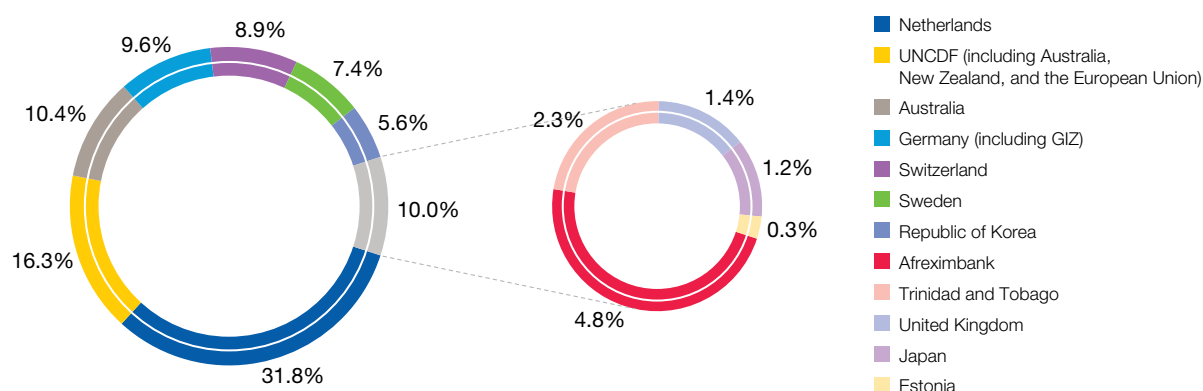
Australian Ambassador Mr. George Mina and UNCTAD Secretary-General Ms. Rebeca Grynspan at the UNCTAD eWeek 2023



Mr. Marchel Germann, Ambassador for Business and Development and Director Sustainable Economic Development Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and UNCTAD Secretary-General Ms. Rebeca Grynspan at the UNCTAD eWeek 2023

41 Not reflecting Swiss contribution received in 2021 to be spent also in 2022 and 2023. Includes funds to be spent also in 2024.

**Figure 5: ECDE Programme funding partners, 2023**



The Programme's total extra-budgetary expenditures in 2023 amounted to close to US\$ 5.8 million. A breakdown of obligated extra-budgetary expenditures by programme component and type is provided in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. ECDE Programme obligated extra-budgetary expenditures by programme component and type, 2023**

2023	Staff person- nel (including consultants)	Travel	Contractual services	Operating other costs	Equipment	Grant to IP	Programme support costs	Grand Total
eTrade Readiness	14.36%	0.86%	1.37%	1.02%				17.61%
Pacific Digital Economy Programme	11.06%	0.73%	0.98%	0.89%	0.09%			13.76%
eTrade for Women	8.96%	1.58%	0.33%	0.36%				11.24%
UNCTAD eWeek	5.69%	2.97%	0.93%					9.58%
E-Commerce Strategies	7.39%	1.47%	0.08%	0.16%				9.10%
eTrade for all	6.80%	0.73%	1.44%	0.03%	0.02%			9.02%
Research	7.56%	0.64%	0.37%			0.35%		8.91%
Measurement	3.72%	0.35%	0.80%					4.86%
Management (including M&E)	3.13%	0.08%	0.08%	0.01%				3.30%
E-commerce and Law Reform	1.38%		0.23%					1.61%
Intergovernmental Group of Experts		0.05%						0.05%
Programme support costs							10.95%	10.95%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>70.06%</b>	<b>9.46%</b>	<b>6.59%</b>	<b>2.48%</b>	<b>0.11%</b>	<b>0.35%</b>	<b>10.95%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: UNCTAD; ECDE Programme's own analysis.

The Programme continues to seek additional extra-budgetary funding to diversify its funding base and ensure its financial sustainability. To that end, discussions are ongoing with other potential donors, including multilateral development banks.



## Monitoring, evaluation and lessons learned

2023 marked the end of the first five-year Work Plan of the ECDE Programme. Almost all targets set against key performance indicators in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan for that period were achieved or exceeded (see Annex 1).

In the area of measuring the digital economy, although progress has been made, there is an ongoing need to increase the availability in developing countries of statistics on ICT usage in business and on trade in digitally delivered services as well as on the monetary value of e-commerce sales by businesses. The importance of this need was further emphasized by member States' decision to include a dedicated planned result in UNCTAD's Programme Plan for 2025 and beyond.

As the achievement of this result relies on action by national statistical authorities to collect and compile the relevant statistics, progress has been limited by factors including the availability of financial and skilled human resources and political support for developing digital economy statistics. UNCTAD works with partners, including the IMF, OECD, WTO, UNSD and the UN regional commissions, among others, to deliver capacity building and technical assistance to countries looking to develop statistics on the digital economy, e-commerce, and digital trade. Nevertheless, there

is a need to step up such assistance, with resources being a key constraining factor.

A new Work Plan for the ECDE Programme covering the 2024-27 period has been developed in consultation with representatives of the Programme's Core Donor Advisory Board, building on the experience and lessons learned during its first phase. The new Work Plan features an updated Programme design, including problem analysis and Results Framework (see Annex 2), and it highlights activities carried over from the first phase that have been strengthened, adapted, or consolidated for the second phase.

The Programme's M&E plan until 2023 worked well overall and provided a useful baseline for the monitoring of results set to be achieved over the next Work Plan period. The updated M&E plan, while striving for continuity, includes several improvements such as the prioritization of outcome-focused indicators, discontinuation of indicators that were found not sensitive or reliable enough, and the inclusion of more qualitative indicators where relevant and appropriate. The revised M&E plan furthermore aims to make better use of UNCTAD's database of statistics related to e-commerce and the digital economy, to better capture results at the impact level in particular.

## Risk analysis

In 2023 political developments in certain partner countries continued to pose a risk to the timely implementation of Programme activities in those countries and regions.

As the possibility of a protracted war in Ukraine prompts donors of development and humanitarian assistance to reassess their priorities, the potential risk to the Programme's ability to raise extra-budgetary resources owing to a reduction in development funding in donor countries continues to be monitored. The same holds true for the UN liquidity crisis, which has prevented the Programme from filling newly allocated regular budget-funded posts.

In terms of risks to sustainability of the Programme's results beyond the duration of its interventions, many developing countries, and LDCs in particular, are disproportionately affected by shocks and stressors such as climate change and environmental degradation, economic and financial volatility, food insecurity, and the longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These crises have occurred amid a swift tightening of global financial conditions that may, in turn, hinder developing countries' abilities to pursue long-term sustainable development.

2024 will present a complex mix of risks and opportunities for digital policy, as close to 4 billion people across dozens of countries worldwide,

including 7 of the world's 10 most populous countries, are due to head to the polls in what promises to be an unprecedented year for elections.

## Core Donor Advisory Board

Australia became the fifth member of the Programme's Core Donor Advisory Board (CDAB), joining Germany, the Netherlands Switzerland and Sweden in the objective of providing advice on the Programme's resources and priorities with a view to ensuring the predictability and continuity of its interventions and the sustainability of its results.

The third meeting of the CDAB was held in May and provided an opportunity to discuss the draft Programme Work Plan 2024-27 and updated M&E Framework among other things. The fourth CDAB meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place in the second quarter of 2024.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,  
Education and Research EAER  
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Australia is proud to be partnering with UNCTAD, including to strengthen e-trade readiness in our region. We look forward to supporting UNCTAD's engagement with our Indo-Pacific development partners, including Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) members, to build capacity in digital trade, help empower women digital entrepreneurs and more.

– Mr. David Yardley, Assistant Secretary, Digital Trade and Multilateral Economic Cooperation Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia



# ANNEXES



## Annex 1. ECDE Programme results indicators, 2023

**Table A**

Indicators	Baseline year	Baseline data	Actual data 2023	Target 2023
<b>IMPACT</b> - Enhanced inclusive and sustainable development gains from e-commerce and the digital economy for people and businesses in developing countries, particularly LDCs				
<b>0.a) Variation of UNCTAD B2C E-commerce index on a yearly basis (disaggregated by region and development status (developed/developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs))</b>				
World	2019	55	no update <sup>42</sup>	not applicable
Developed economies	2019	83		not applicable
Developing - Africa	2019	31		not applicable
Developing - Asia and Oceania	2019	54		not applicable
Developing - Latin America and the Caribbean	2019	48		not applicable
LDCs	2019	24		not applicable
SIDS	2019	54		not applicable
LLDCs	2019	36		not applicable
<b>0.b) Proportion of individuals using the Internet for purchasing or ordering goods or services (latest available year, disaggregated by region and development status (developed/developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs))<sup>43</sup></b>				
World	2017	24%	39%	not applicable
Developed economies	2017	55%	62%	not applicable
Developing - Africa	2017	4%	7%	not applicable
Developing - Asia and Oceania	2017	21%	38%	not applicable
Developing - Latin America and the Caribbean	2017	12%	27%	not applicable
LDCs	2017	2%	6%	not applicable
SIDS	2017	23%	27%	not applicable
LLDCs	2017	4%	8%	not applicable
<b>0. c) Share of enterprises in developing countries that receive orders online</b>	Varies <sup>44</sup>	See Table B below	See Table B below	

42 The UNCTAD B2C E-commerce index has been discontinued.

43 2023 figures are based on the World Bank's Global Findex Database, 2021 release (latest available data). For comparability purposes, the calculation of the values by country group (i.e., developed/developing and special country categories) only includes countries for which data were available both in both 2017 and 2021. In the SIDS group in particular, results are only based on 3 countries for which data were available in both years; results are therefore only indicative of the situation in that group.

44 Data are only available for a handful of developing countries. Based on UNCTAD's Survey to National Statistical Offices, 2018, 2021 and 2023. If a country reported data in more than one data collection round, only the latest available data are shown. Reference years vary and so does coverage; data are therefore not directly comparable. Only data not older than 5 years (according to the reference year) are shown.

Indicators	Baseline year	Baseline data	Actual data 2023	Target 2023
<b>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 1:</b> Improved policy formulation at the national, regional and global level on e-commerce and digital economy for development, in a gender sensitive manner				
<b>1. a) Share (%) of countries that have adopted laws and regulations related to e-commerce (disaggregated by law area, region and development status (developed/developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs))</b>				
<b>Developing economies</b>				
e-transaction	2018	73%	86%	80%
Protection of consumers online	2018	43%	75%	57%
Privacy and data protection	2018	43%	72%	65%
Cybercrime	2018	63%	83%	81%
<b>LDCs</b>				
e-transaction	2018	51%	78% <sup>45</sup>	69%
Protection of consumers online	2018	30%	67%	45%
Privacy and data protection	2018	34%	53%	48%
Cybercrime	2018	38%	69%	73%
<b>World</b>				
e-transaction	2018	78%	89%	
Protection of consumers online	2018	52%	80%	
Privacy and data protection	2018	58%	79%	
Cybercrime	2018	72%	87%	
<b>1. b) Number of countries having reported progress in implementing recommendations of eTrade Readiness Assessments and/or e-commerce strategies (disaggregated by developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs))</b>				
Developing economies	2020	13	25	
LDCs	2020	12	22 <sup>46</sup>	
SIDS	2020	2	11	
LLDCs	2020	5	11	
<b>Total</b>	2020	13 out of 18	25 out of 36	

<sup>45</sup> LDC figures reflect the graduation of Vanuatu and Bhutan from LDC status in December 2020 and December 2023 respectively. Changes over time may also be partially due to the revised methodology that incorporated an expanded scope of data legislation and excluded draft legislation from the analysis.

<sup>46</sup> Reflects the graduation of Bhutan from LDC status in December 2023.

Indicators	Baseline year	Baseline data	Actual data 2023	Target 2023
<b>1. c) Number of developing countries and LDCs with a strategy on e-commerce and/or digital economy, disaggregated by UNCTAD-supported vs non UNCTAD-supported strategies, and by strategies that address gender vs. that do not</b>				
<b>UNCTAD supported countries</b>	2020	2	8	
Strategies that address gender	2020	1	5	
Strategies that do not explicitly address gender	2020	1	3	
<b>non-UNCTAD supported countries</b>	2020	9	20	
Strategies that address gender	2020	1	5	
Strategies that do not explicitly address gender	2020	8	15 <sup>47</sup>	
<b>Total</b>	2020	11	28 (cumulative)	20 (cumulative)
<b>1. d) Number and % of countries that supply UNCTAD with data related to e-commerce and the digital economy for inclusion within UNCTAD's statistical database (disaggregated by developed/developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs))<sup>48</sup></b>				
Developed economies	2017	32 (74%)	40 (77%) <sup>49</sup>	
Developing economies	2017	9 (6.7%)	26 (18%)	25
LDCs	2017	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	
SIDS	2017	0 (0%)	3 (9%)	
LLDC	2017	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	
<b>1. e) Number of countries measuring international trade in ICT-enabled services (developed/developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs))</b>				
Developed economies	2020	0	0	
Developing economies	2020	2	2	4
LDCs	2020	0	0	
SIDS	2020	0	0	
LLDCs	2020	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	2020	2	2 (cumulative)	4 (cumulative)
<b>1. f) Number of specific actions taken by developing countries to enhance gender inclusivity in relation to e-commerce and the digital economy with UNCTAD support</b>	2020	7	22 (cumulative)	20 (cumulative)

47 Due to the fact that not all strategy documents are publicly available, it was not always possible to ascertain whether a particular strategy addressed gender issues or not.

48 Countries include both those that responded to UNCTAD's Survey to National Statistical Offices (2018, 2021 and 2023) and those for which data are provided by Eurostat and/or the OECD. Countries providing data older than 5 years (according to the reference year) are excluded.

49 Reflects the change in status of the Republic of Korea as a developed economy.



Indicators	Baseline year	Baseline data	Actual data 2023	Target 2023
<b>1. g) Number of specific actions taken by countries to implement programmes aimed at enhancing country readiness regarding e-commerce and digital economy, with the assistance of UNCTAD</b>	2021		22 (cumulative)	20 (cumulative)
<b>IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 1.1:</b> Enhanced understanding of policy makers about policy options to benefit from e-commerce and the digital economy				
<b>1.1 a) Number of media mentions of UNCTAD's research work on e-commerce and the digital economy per year</b>	2021		Numerous	
<b>1.1 b) Number and reach of news items on UNCTAD's work on e-commerce and the digital economy per year</b>	2020	27 news items for a total of 96K unique page views	94 news items for a total of 748K unique page views (cumulative)	117 news items for a total of 800,000 unique page views (cumulative)
<b>1.1 c) Number of publication downloads per year (disaggregated by publication category)</b>				
Digital Economy Report 2019, 2021, 2022 Pacific Edition	2019	160,859	947k (cumulative)	
Technical notes on ICT for development (2017-2023)	2019	52,793	254k (cumulative)	
Policy Briefs (2017-2023)	2019	6,849	29k (cumulative)	
ICT Policy Reviews & E-commerce strategies (2017-2023)	2019	3,964	28k (cumulative)	
eTrade Readiness Assessments (2017-2023)	2019	35,290	175k (cumulative)	150k (cumulative)
Other	2020	27,100	174k (cumulative)	
<b>1.1 d) Number of stakeholders attending launch events/presentation of UNCTAD research work (disaggregated by activity, sex)</b>				
Digital Economy Report 2021: launch and presentations	2021	1,199	1,347 (cumulative)	
Of whom female	2021	423	min 460	
eTrade Readiness Assessments	2021	390	965 (cumulative)	
E-commerce Strategies and Action Plans	2021	185	332 (cumulative)	
eTrade for all: COVID-19 research presentations	2021	1,094	1,094	

Indicators	Baseline year	Baseline data	Actual data 2023	Target 2023
<b>IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 1.2:</b> Improved capacity of policy makers to integrate e-commerce and the digital economy in the national and regional development agenda in dialogue with other stakeholders				
<b>1.2 a) Number and type of technical assistance requests formally received by UNCTAD related to e-commerce and the digital economy (disaggregated by developing / LDC / SIDS / LLDCs, ECDE sub-component)</b>				
Developing economies	2019	13	44	
LDCs	2019	5	14	
SIDS	2019	4	10	
LLDCs	2019	2	12	
eTrade Readiness Assessments	2019	6	17	
E-commerce Strategies and Action Plans	2019	6	19	
E-commerce and Law Reform	2019	0	2	
Measuring e-commerce and the digital economy	2019	1	6	
<b>Total</b>	2019	13	44 (cumulative)	30 (cumulative)
<b>1.2 b) Number of countries that benefitted from capacity-building activities by ECDE and its sub-components (disaggregated by region and development status (developed/developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs))</b>				
Developed	2021	1	2	
Developing - Africa	2020	9	30	
Developing - Asia and Oceania	2020	3	47	
Developing - Latin America and the Caribbean	2020	1	30	
LDCs	2020	6	30	
SIDS	2020	0	28	
LLDCs	2020	1	19	
<b>Total</b>	2020	13	109 (cumulative <sup>50</sup> )	50 (cumulative)
<b>1.2 c) Share (%) of project beneficiaries rating UNCTAD's technical assistance and other activities as "useful" or "very useful" (disaggregated by UNCTAD activity)</b>				
eTrade for Women Masterclasses	2020	90%	95-100%	90%
E-commerce and Law Reform	2021	100%	90%	90%
Core Course on e-commerce for LAC	n/a	n/a	90%	90%
Measuring e-commerce and the digital economy	2021	96%	n/a	90%
eTrade Readiness Assessments	2021	88%	100%	90%

50 Includes countries that benefited from joint capacity-building activities in collaboration with various partners (e.g., IMF, OECD, the World Bank, WTO, UNSD and UN regional commissions). Does not include most overseas territories.

Indicators	Baseline year	Baseline data	Actual data 2023	Target 2023
eTrade Readiness Assessments- implementation support	2021	91%	n/a	90%
E-commerce Strategies	2021	96%	n/a	90%
<b>1.2 d) Number of empowerment and skill-building activities engaging the eTrade for Women network (Masterclasses, workshops, and other training sessions)</b>	2019	1	23 (cumulative)	19 (cumulative)
<b>1.2 e) Number of communities established in the region (hubs, associations) to foster women digital entrepreneurship resulting from eTrade for Women empowerment activities</b>	2020	3	6 (cumulative)	6 (cumulative)
<b>1.2 f) Number of partnerships / actions created / collaborations aimed at increasing business opportunities for the eTrade for Women network</b>	2020	4	32 (cumulative)	30 (cumulative)
<b>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 2:</b> Improved coordination of governments, together with development partners, civil society and the private sector, to implement policies on e-commerce and the digital economy that work for development, in a gender sensitive manner				
<b>2. a) Number of development partners / donors that incorporate e-commerce and digital economy in their development assistance plans</b>	2018	21	28 (cumulative)	30 (cumulative)
<b>2. b) Share (%) of resources to support Aid for Trade per year dedicated to ICT or e-commerce and the digital economy (disaggregated by developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs)</b>				
<b>Bilateral commitments</b>	2017	1.2%	3.4%	
Developing economies	2017	1.2%	3.5%	
LDCs	2017	2.2%	4.8%	
SIDS	2017	4.9%	2.3%	
LLDCs	2017	2.8%	5.9%	
<b>Regional commitments</b>	2017	1.7%	7.2%	
<b>Unallocated commitments</b>	2017	0.8%	5.5%	
<b>Total (bilateral, regional, unallocated)</b>	2017	1.2%	4.1% <sup>51</sup>	3.5%
<b>2. c) Number of partnerships / actions created / implemented with the support of eTrade for all partners to enhance e-trade readiness of developing and LDC countries</b>	2020	10	24 (cumulative)	18 (cumulative)
<b>2. d) Number of advocacy actions (participation in high-level events, policy dialogues) undertaken by women digital entrepreneurs from the eTrade for Women network, to change perceptions and raise awareness of gender equality in the digital economy at the global level</b>	2020	9	81 (cumulative)	40 (cumulative)

51 2023 data (covering 2022) not yet available. 2022 data reported here covers 2021; 2023 target is for 2022 data, given the natural time lag in data collection, processing and reporting.

Indicators	Baseline year	Baseline data	Actual data 2023	Target 2023
<b>IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 2.1:</b> Increased dialogue and exchange of good practices among policy makers as well as research institutions, academic centres, public and private entities at the national, subregional, regional and international levels in the areas of e-commerce and the digital economy, and agreed conclusions as appropriate				
<b>2.1 a) Number and satisfaction of participants in UNCTAD eCommerce Week(s) (disaggregated by region and development status (developed/developing/LDC), sex)</b>	2020	2,034	3,500 in 2023; over 8,000 cumulative	6,000 (cumulative)
Total number of participants				
Female	2020	44%	48%	
Male	2020	56%	52%	
Developed economies	2020	46%	43%	
Developing - Africa	2020	31%	25%	
Developing - Asia and Oceania	2020	19%	24%	
Developing - Latin America and the Caribbean	2020	5%	8%	
LDCs	2020	14%	11%	
SIDS	2020	3%	4%	
LLDCs	2020	11%	9%	
Average satisfaction rate (%)	2020	94%	94%	90%
<b>2.1 b) Number of Development Solutions per policy area promoted on the platform by eTrade for all partners in three languages (En, Fr, Es)</b>	2019	24	36 in EN 35 in FR 34 in ES (cumulative)	40 in EN (cumulative)
<b>2.1 c) Number of requests for information or support channeled through eTrade for all</b>	2019	82	260 (cumulative)	400 (cumulative)
<b>2.1 d) Number of users on the eTrade for all platform per year (disaggregated by returning/new)</b>	2017	11,964	50,337 <sup>52</sup>	100,000
Returning	2017	1,670 (14%)	40,149	
New	2017	10,294 (86%)	6,766	
<b>2.1 e) Number of subscribers to the eTrade for all newsletter</b>	2017	326	5,513 (cumulative)	5,000 (cumulative)

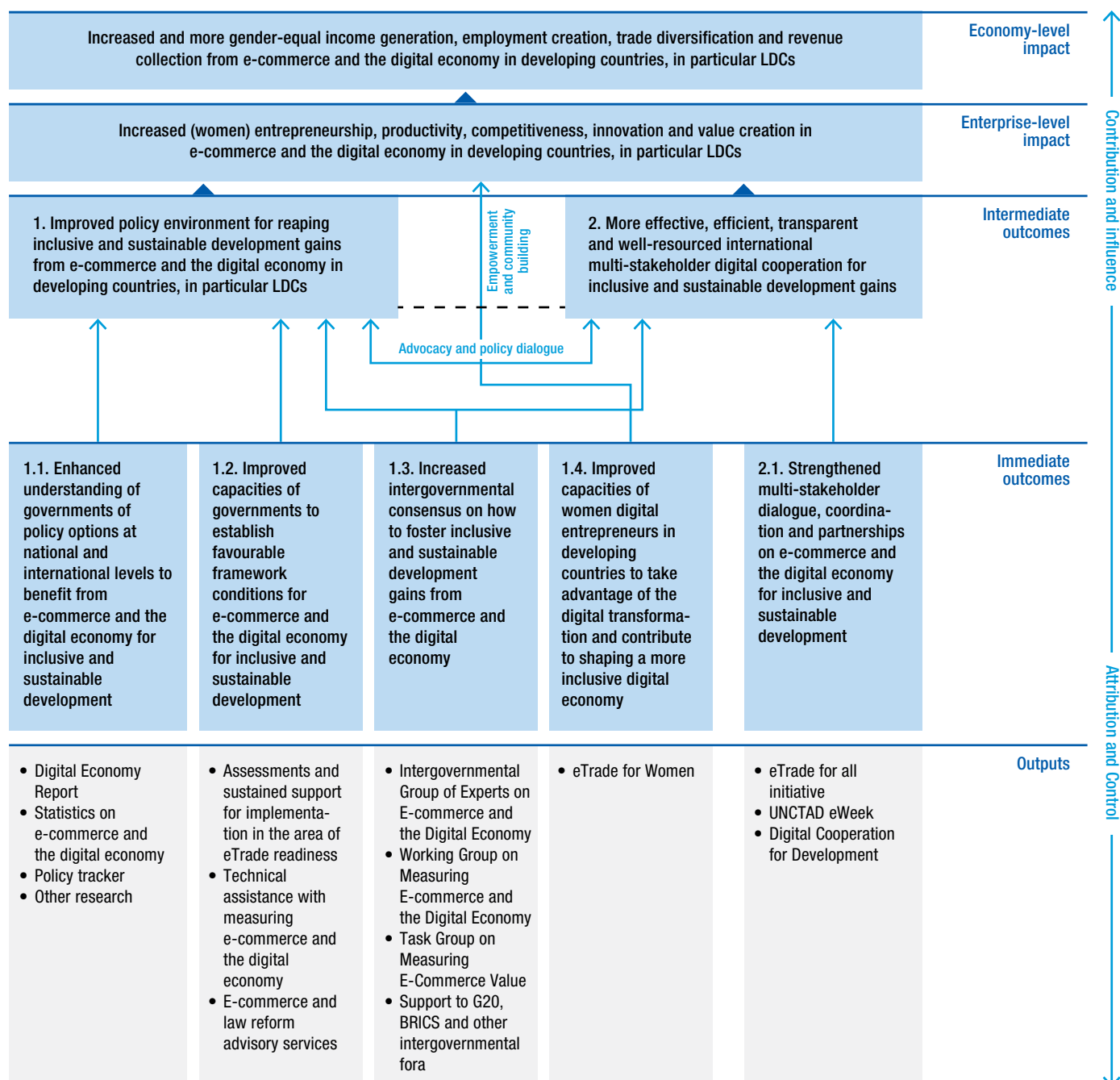
52 In 2023 UNCTAD upgraded to Google Analytics 4 (GA4). GA4 records a user's first session on a website as a 'new' user, while subsequent sessions receive a 'returning' label. The number of total users exceeds the sum of new and returning users because some users have both labels.

**Table B.** Share of enterprises in developing countries that receive orders online, for countries where data are available

Country	Reference year	Share of enterprises that receive orders online (%)	Notes
Brazil	2021	28.5	10+ employees
Chile	2018	9.46	
China	2021	9.2	
Colombia	2020	30.05	10+ employees
Dominican Republic	2020	25.84	
Ecuador	2019	28.37	
Georgia	2022	3.1	
India	2018	47.37	Only manufacturing industries
Mauritius	2022	55.6	
Peru	2018	8.84	
Philippines	2019	4.7	
Qatar	2018	33.3	
State of Palestine	2021	32.2	
Thailand	2022	22.2	
Tunisia	2019	46.43	Businesses with 6+ employees. All public companies, companies with 200+ employees and companies with a turnover above 1 billion dinars are covered
Türkiye	2022	18.18	10+ employees
United Arab Emirates	2019	15.45	

Source: UNCTAD, based on UNCTAD Digital Economy database (<https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/shared-report/45fb812b-9be8-4cab-986a-bbc04595f26e>) and OECD ICT Access and Usage by Businesses (<https://oe.cd/ds/3aF>)

## Annex 2. Updated ECDE Programme Results Framework





## Annex 3. List of outstanding requests for assistance, as of February 2024

Country or organization	Title	Request Date	Requesting Institution
Barbados	eTrade Readiness Assessment and a national E-commerce Strategy	21/02/2018	Ministry of Industry, International Business, Commerce & Small Business Development of Barbados
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	eTrade Readiness Assessment	28/05/2018	Ministry of Foreign Trade
Belarus	Analysis of electronic trade regulatory procedures, including electronic transactions & documents exchange, cyber security, customer rights protection in the Net, etc.	27/08/2018	Ministry of Communications and Informatization of the Republic of Belarus
Guinea	eTrade Readiness Assessment	28/12/2018	Ministry of Commerce
Comoros	eTrade Readiness Assessment	07/02/2019	Ministry of Economy, Investments, in charge of Economic Integration
Djibouti	eTrade Readiness Assessment	07/02/2019	Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, en charge de l'Industrie, Djibouti
Sierra Leone	eTrade Readiness Assessment	12/04/2019	Ministry of Trade & Industry
Paraguay	E-commerce Strategy	05/07/2019	Ministry of Industry & Commerce, through the Permanent Mission of Paraguay
Jamaica	eTrade Readiness Assessment and a national E-commerce Strategy	23/08/2019	Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade of Jamaica
Kenya	Measuring e-commerce & ICT Satellite Account	29/06/2021	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Permanent Mission
South Sudan	eTrade Readiness Assessment	24/09/2021	Ministry of Trade and Industry
Panama	Development of the project "Use of ICTs and measuring of electronic commerce as an element of economic statistics"	07/02/2022	Ministry of Commerce and Industry, through the Permanent Mission
Cambodia	Production of sets of data and statistics on digital economy and e-commerce	10/02/2022	Ministry of Commerce through the Permanent Mission
SACU	Regional E-commerce Framework	20/09/2022	Executive Secretary, SACU
Samoa	Technical assistance for the production of digital economy statistics	27/10/2022	Samoa Bureau of Statistics
Mauritania	E-commerce Strategy and implementation support	28/02/2023	Ministry of Digital Transformation, Innovation and Modernization of Administration
Kenya	E-commerce Strategy implementation support	14/08/2023	Ministry of Investments, Trade & Industry, State Department for Trade, Republic of Kenya

Country or organization	Title	Request Date	Requesting Institution
Mongolia	E-commerce Strategy and implementation support	17/11/2023	Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia
Tunisia	E-Commerce Strategy of Tunisia	25/01/2024	Ministère du Commerce et Développement des Exportations

## Annex 4. List of ECDE Programme key contacts

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