



Informal working group on consumer protection in e- commerce: Draft work plan 2026-2027

I. Background

The ninth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy (IGE), in its agreed conclusions:

10. *Decides* to renew the mandate of the informal working group on consumer protection in e-commerce to continue addressing the challenges faced by consumers in digital markets, particularly in relation to e-commerce platforms including those posed by emerging technologies in consumer protection; to develop and disseminate outputs and capacity-building materials; to organize webinars and meetings to exchange national and regional experiences; to promote cooperation and synergies with other international organizations and networks, and to report to the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy;

II. WGE organization and working methods

The informal Working Group on Consumer Protection in E-commerce (WGE) provides an informal forum for member States and relevant stakeholders to exchange experiences, identify emerging consumer protection challenges in digital markets, share good practices and enforcement experience, and strengthen international cooperation.

Professor Christine Riefa will continue to serve as Academic Coordinator of the WGE. Valentina Rivas, from the UNCTAD secretariat will coordinate the activities of the Working Group and remain the primary point of contact for member States and participating stakeholders.

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III. Proposed workplan

Based on the work carried out in the past by the WGE,¹ and the final meeting of the WGE on [26 April 2026](#), where possible future activities were discussed, the proposed workplan for the WGE for 2026-2027 until the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGE) on Consumer Protection Law and Policy, to be held from 5 to 7 July 2027, is as follows:

1. Artificial intelligence and enforcement technologies for consumer protection

Building on the Checklist for Consumer Protection Agencies Deploying Artificial Intelligence and the discussions held during the previous work cycle, the WGE will continue its work on artificial intelligence with a focus on its practical use by consumer protection authorities.

¹ <https://unctad.org/Topic/Competition-and-Consumer-Protection/working-group-on-consumer-protection-in-e-commerce>.



The work will explore how AI and other digital tools can support consumer protection authorities in carrying out their functions more effectively, including market monitoring, detection of potentially harmful or non-compliant practices and products, analysis of complaints and other enforcement activities. It will also provide opportunities to exchange experiences on the practical challenges associated with the development, procurement and deployment of such tools.



The workstream will include two main activities:

a. Webinar on AI tools for consumer protection enforcement

The WGE and the informal working group of consumer product safety will jointly organize a webinar to explore how digital tools and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, can support consumer protection authorities in carrying out their enforcement functions more effectively. The webinar will provide an opportunity to share experiences and good practices in the use of such tools to monitor digital markets, identify potentially harmful or non-compliant practices and products, including unsafe products offered online, and support market surveillance and other enforcement activities, as well as timely

and effective corrective measures.

This activity will be led by the Competition and Consumer Protection Agency of Poland (UOKiK) and the UNCTAD Secretariat.

Required actions from the WGE participants: share examples of AI and digital tools currently used or being developed by their authorities; propose practical cases for presentation; and volunteer to speak at or contribute to the webinar.

b. Online self-paced course on AI and enforcement technologies

Building on the *Checklist for Consumer Protection Agencies Deploying Artificial Intelligence*, the WGE will support the development of an online self-paced course for consumer protection authorities on artificial intelligence and enforcement technologies.

The course will be developed jointly by UNCTAD and the University of Reading, with the support of the WGE and contributions from participating consumer protection authorities and experts. It will aim to translate the guidance of the Checklist into practical capacity-building materials for enforcement officials.

The course could include modules, videos, written materials, practical examples, quizzes and assessments, drawing on national experiences and existing tools. Particular attention will be given to the needs of new officials and authorities facing capacity constraints, including in developing countries.



This activity will be led by the Academic coordinator and the UNCTAD Secretariat.

Required action from WGE participants: comment on the proposed curriculum; contribute national examples, tools and case studies; and express interest in contributing to individual modules or reviewing course materials.

2. Vulnerable consumers in digital markets

Building on the WGE's previous work on vulnerable consumers, the Working Group will continue to examine how digital markets and commercial practices may create or amplify consumer vulnerabilities.

Particular attention could be given to children and young consumers, older persons and consumers with limited digital literacy. The activity could consider issues such as child-appropriate platform design, platform accountability, advertising and other commercial practices affecting vulnerable consumers, and the role of consumer protection authorities in preventing and addressing digital harms.

The activity will promote the exchange of national enforcement experiences, concrete cases and good practices and identify areas where further guidance, cooperation or research may be useful.

This activity will be led by Portugal and the UNCTAD Secretariat. The Secretariat will prepare and circulate an event report with main points of discussion and discussions highlights.

Required actions from the WGE participants: take the lead to co-organize the activity, and actively participate and disseminate the event.

3. Other activities

Participants of the WGE are invited to propose additional activities relevant to the mandate of the Working Group and emerging developments in digital consumer protection. Such activities may include research, collection of national practices and enforcement cases, or collaboration with other international organizations and networks.

Required actions from the WGE participants: propose additional activities and indicate willingness to contribute to their development. The Secretariat will collect participants' views and proposals by e-mail.



IV. Regularity of the meetings/webinars

The WGE will meet three times by July 2027, as follows:

12 November 2026 – Organizational/closed meeting; presentation and discussion of the proposed curriculum for the self-paced course.

6 April 2027 – Joint webinar on consumer product safety in digital environments, with the informal Working Group on Consumer Product Safety.

April/May 2027 – Webinar/meeting on vulnerable consumers in digital markets: concrete enforcement experiences and cases, with the precise focus to be agreed with members.

V. Outcomes

The WGE is expected to produce the following outcomes during the 2026–2027 work cycle:

- A joint webinar with the informal Working Group on Consumer Product Safety on consumer product safety in digital environments;
- Progress towards the development of a self-paced course for consumer protection authorities on artificial intelligence and enforcement technologies, including a curriculum and contributions from participating authorities and experts;
- A webinar/meeting and summary of experiences and good practices concerning vulnerable consumers in digital markets;
- An informal written report on the work and discussions of the WGE for submission to the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy.

Any substantive output developed and agreed upon by WGE participants will be submitted to the tenth session of the IGE for consideration.

All minutes, reports, and documentation of the WGE will be made available on the dedicated UNCTAD [webpage](#).

