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UNCTAD Support for E-commerce related Policy Development

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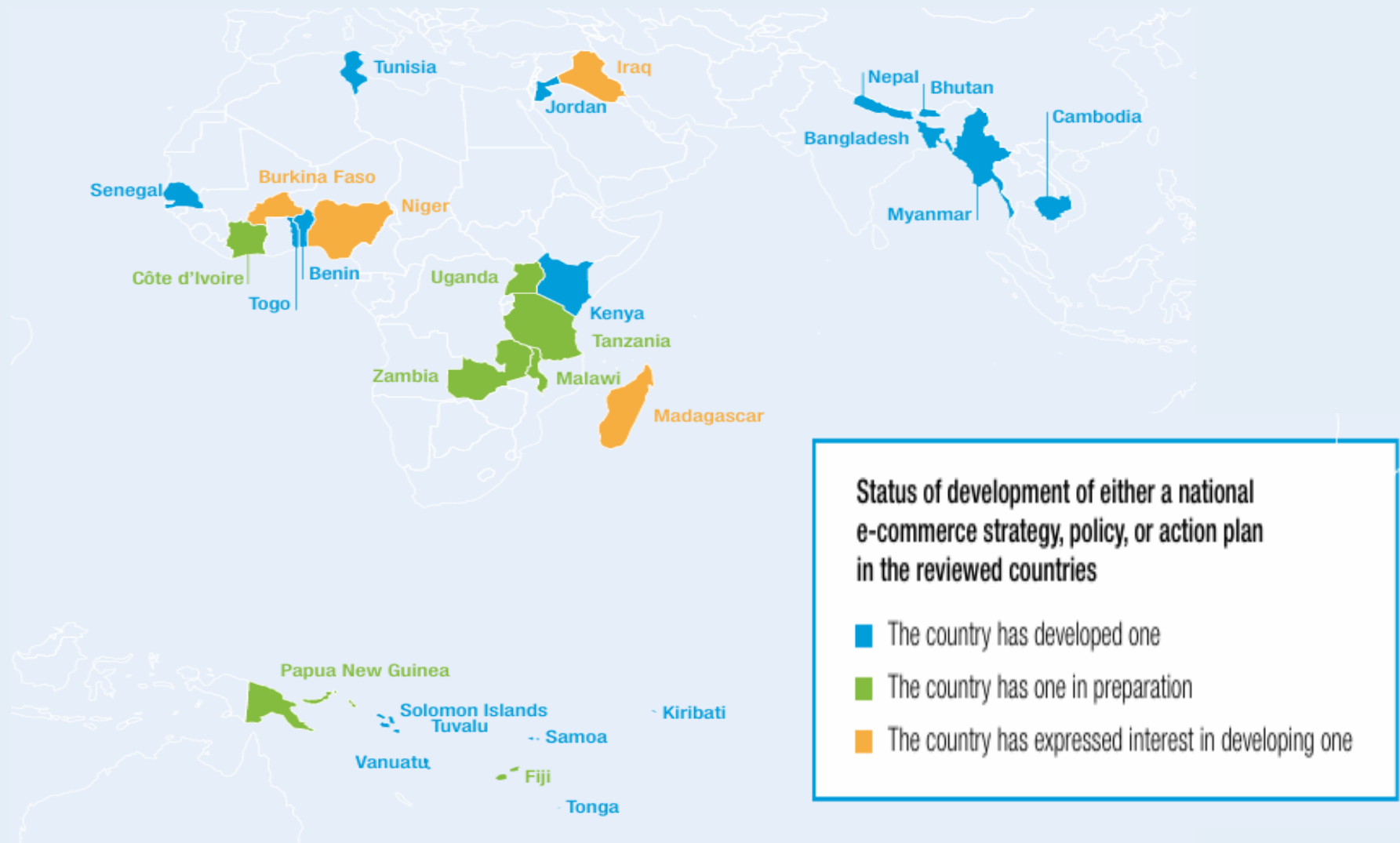UNCTAD

From assessment to policy development

- Countries increasingly recognize the importance of developing nationally owned approaches to enhance their e-commerce readiness

- As a result, e-commerce is gaining prominence in policymaking

- Policy tools include national or regional e-commerce, digital economy, digital trade strategies, policies or plans

- There is significant scope to make processes more inclusive and to foster robust whole-of-government/society approaches to mainstreaming e-commerce in national development agendas

28 out 36 countries with eT Readies or similar assessments have developed/plan to develop, a national e-commerce strategy, policy or action plan.

3rd Implementation Review

UNCTAD assessments have led to policy developments


Status of development of either a national e-commerce strategy, policy, or action plan in the reviewed countries

- ■ The country has developed one
- ■ The country has one in preparation
- ■ The country has expressed interest in developing one

Mapping of digital and e-commerce strategies
(as of April 2024)

Strategies, policies and action plans by status and region
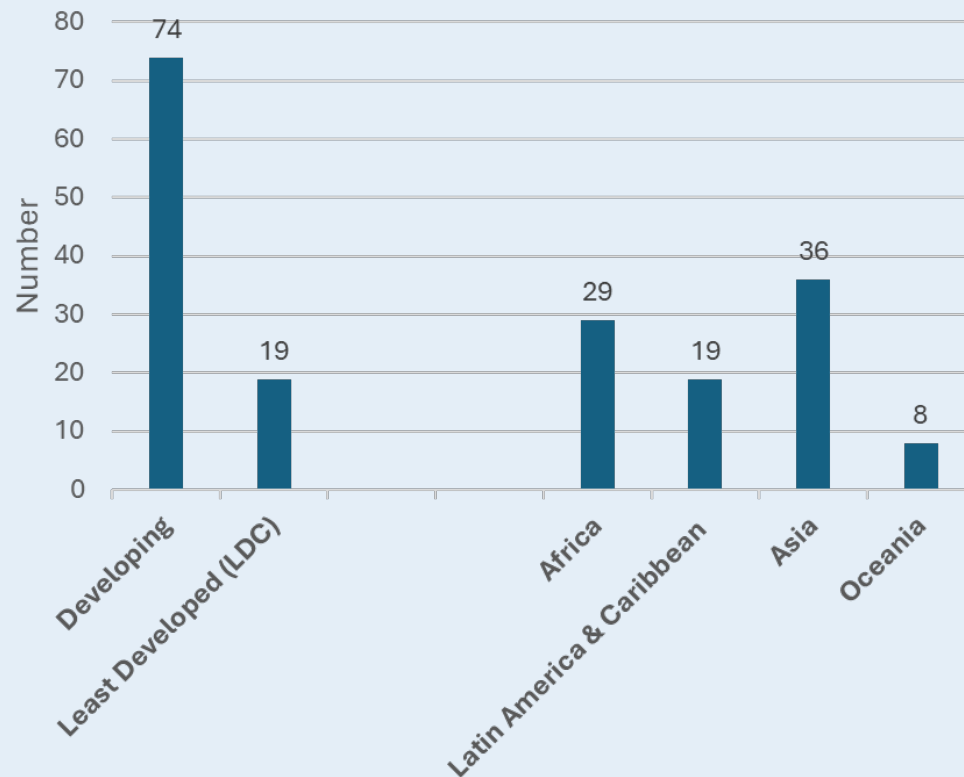
Is there a gender component?

30%

70%

■ Present ■ Not Present
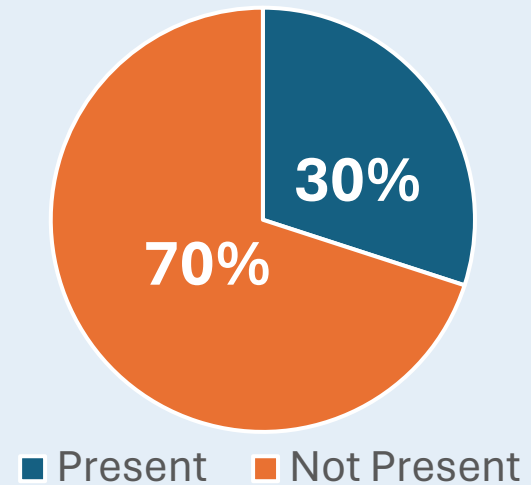
Support by other organizations and partners

- *E-commerce policies and strategies* supported by:

  Australia, Canada, Commonwealth, EIF, ITC, UNDP, etc.

- *Digital strategies* supported by:

  UNCDF, UNDP, UNECA, World Bank, etc.

Countries/regions supported by UNCTAD

America
- Barbados
- Jamaica
- Paraguay
- Trinidad and Tobago

Asia
- Afghanistan
- Jordan
- Mongolia
- Myanmar
- Oman

Oceania
- Fiji
- Solomon Islands
- Timor-Leste

Africa
- Benin
- Botswana
- Côte d'Ivoire
- ECOWAS
- Egypt
- Kenya
- Mauritania
- Rwanda

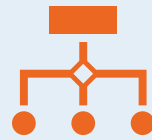10 Finalized   4 In Progress   6 Requested

Main elements of UNCTAD-supported e-commerce strategies

Situational analysis

Vision & Overall objectives

Pillars & strategic measures

Governance Framework

Implementation Plan

M&E

EGYPT
ECS 2017-2020

BOTSWANA
ECS 2021-2026

SOLOMON ISLANDS
ECS 2022-2027

KENYA
ECS 2023-2028

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Challenges identified in the 3rd Implementation Review

In addition to various exogenous factors that disproportionately affect DCs, there are endogenous challenges related to:

Level of government leadership to gain, maintain and sustain political commitment for e-commerce enabling reforms

Pace of institutional development (influenced by issues such as staff turnover, limited expertise in results-based management and multi-stakeholder coordination)

Quality of policy development (with competing priorities and funding gaps leading to implementation delays)

Challenges in policy development

National experiences highlight that sequencing and choice
of policy tools depend on several factors: e.g.,

- countries' policymaking traditions
- administrative requirements and mandates, and
- Government sectoral priorities

Integrating the specific needs and rights of vulnerable groups in society
(incl. women and girls, the youth and elderly, people with disabilities)
requires their involvement throughout the policy development process

Governance structures - getting the right actors involved

- Political commitment and leadership to promote e-commerce are at times discontinuous

- Insufficient availability of staff in lead implementation agencies as well as knowledge transfer and capacity development

- Government ministries, departments and agencies often work in silos and are disconnected from private sector and other stakeholders

- Maintaining regular engagement with stakeholders is a recurrent challenge

- Many countries express an interest in making use of governance structures

- Strong momentum is observed in various regions (EAC, ECOWAS, Pacific)

70 % of countries have established / plan to establish, governance structures for e-commerce policies and initiatives.

3rd Implementation Review

Moving beyond policy formulation to endorsement and implementation

🔨 Requirements for formal endorsement vary from country to country and can be lengthy

👥 Involvement of many actors required for implementation (coordination needs remain)

🪙 Insufficient funding/capacities for implementation a common challenge

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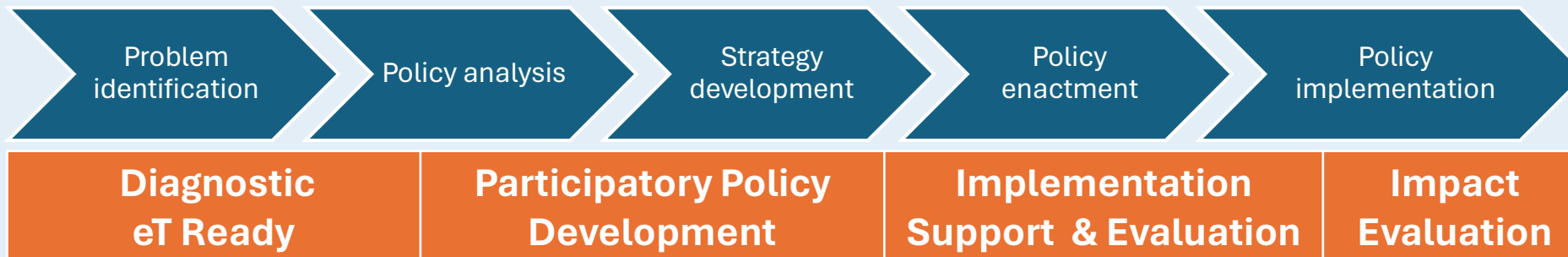& development

Support gaps that have been identified

- Strong need for capacity-building for governance entities and lead ministries in charge of e-commerce reforms

- Insufficient statistical data on e-commerce and the digital economy for the implementation and monitoring of policy reforms

- Need for a better understanding on the nexus between trade agreements and other policy documents (and their potential impacts on domestic reforms)

Possible next steps

- Stocktaking of experiences to date (partners invited to participate)

- Enhanced collaboration on the implementation of specific issues included in strategies will be explored (e.g., legal review)

- Building on implementation support, impact measurement will be explored

Problem identification	Policy analysis	Strategy development	Policy enactment	Policy implementation
Diagnostic eT Ready	**Participatory Policy Development**		**Implementation Support & Evaluation**	**Impact Evaluation**

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Thank you for your attention