

IGE on E-commerce and the Digital Economy  
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# Building digital readiness: From assessment to implementation

Shamika N. Sirimanne  
Director  
Division on Technology and Logistics



# Main challenges to engage in and benefit from e-commerce and the digital economy

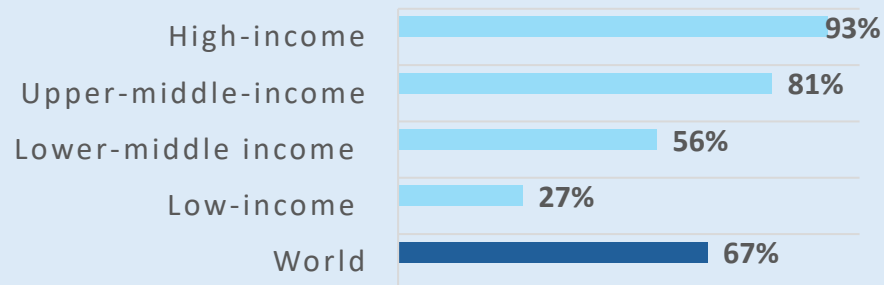


# The imperative of building digital readiness

- In 2022, around \$27 trillion of e-commerce sales by businesses in developed and major developing economies - representing 70 % of global GDP.
- Not all countries and regions are benefiting from growth in e-commerce and digital trade.
- Widening digital divides threaten to leave many countries further behind, especially LDCs and countries with low level of digital readiness, with a risk of increasing economic and social inequalities.

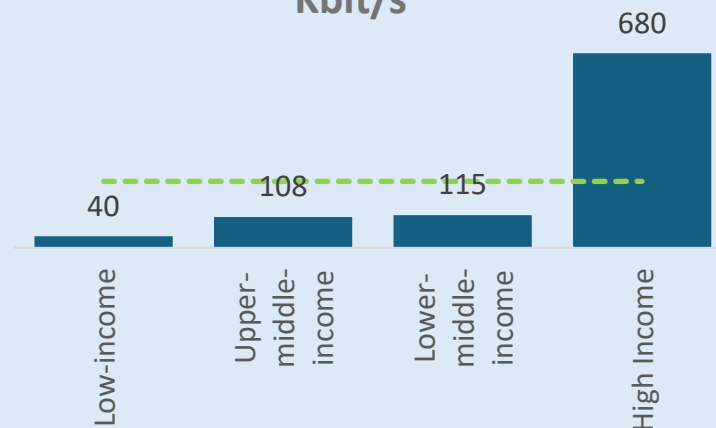
# ICT infrastructure and connectivity form the backbone of engaging in digital activities

Share of individuals using the Internet, by region and income level, 2023



Source: ITU (2023).

Bandwidth per Internet user, Kbit/s



Source: ITU (2022).

...yet in 2023, 33 percent of the global population was still offline, and with huge differences in the average bandwidth of Internet users across the world



# Benefits from digitalization exist, but are not automatic

## Opportunities

- Foster productivity and innovation
- Generate efficiencies at scale
- Reduce barriers to global markets
- Create new jobs

vs

## Risks

- Cheap imports; domestic industries at risk
- Market disruption and trade imbalances
- Increased cyberthreats and data breaches

# Building digital readiness is complex and multi-faceted

Challenges are interconnected, and often affected by additional cross-cutting issues, such as gender inequality, environmental impact of e-commerce and measurement issues



# Good practices and tools for addressing digital challenges





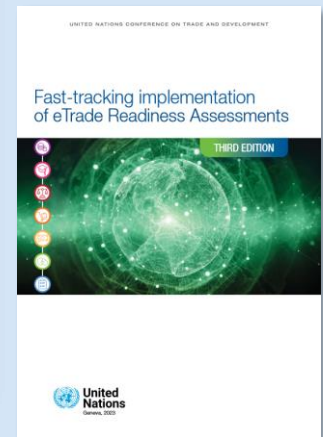
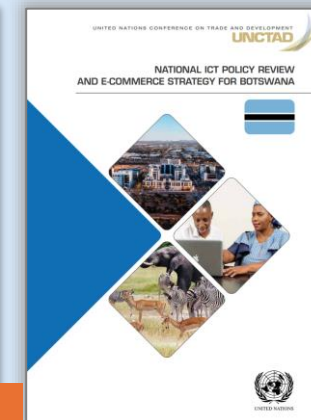
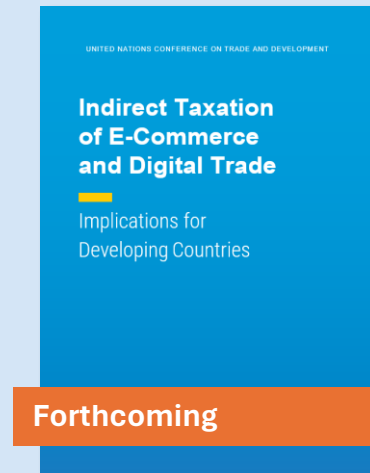
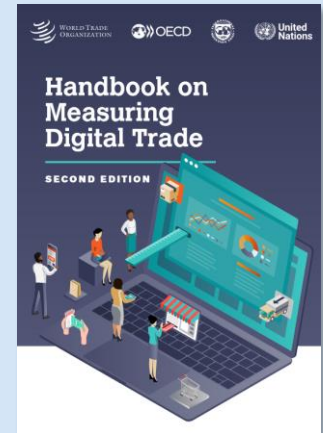
# UNCTAD support to enhance digital readiness in developing countries

*“UNCTAD should strengthen the work on assisting developing countries to systematically assess their state of play, readiness to engage and integrate into the digital economy, thus contributing to close the digital divide.”*

***Bridgetown Covenant, UNCTAD 15***

- eTrade Readiness Assessments
- E-commerce Strategies and implementation support
- Measuring e-commerce and the digital economy
- E-commerce and law reform
- Empowering women digital entrepreneurs
- Customs automation and Trade facilitation

**...in collaboration with eTrade for all partners**



ECDE core donors : Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland



# UNCTAD eTrade Readiness Assessments since 2017 (by region)



eT Readies and other diagnostic analyses are an essential to understand e-commerce challenges and recommend suitable policy actions

# Assessments can help countries navigate their digital transformation journeys

## Strong political leadership

Increased understanding of e-commerce opportunities

Stronger public-public sector dialogue and inter-ministerial coordination

Laid the basis for e-commerce strategy formulation

Mainstreamed e-commerce in national development programmes

Provided guidance to development partners for digital assistance

# Moving from assessments to implementation



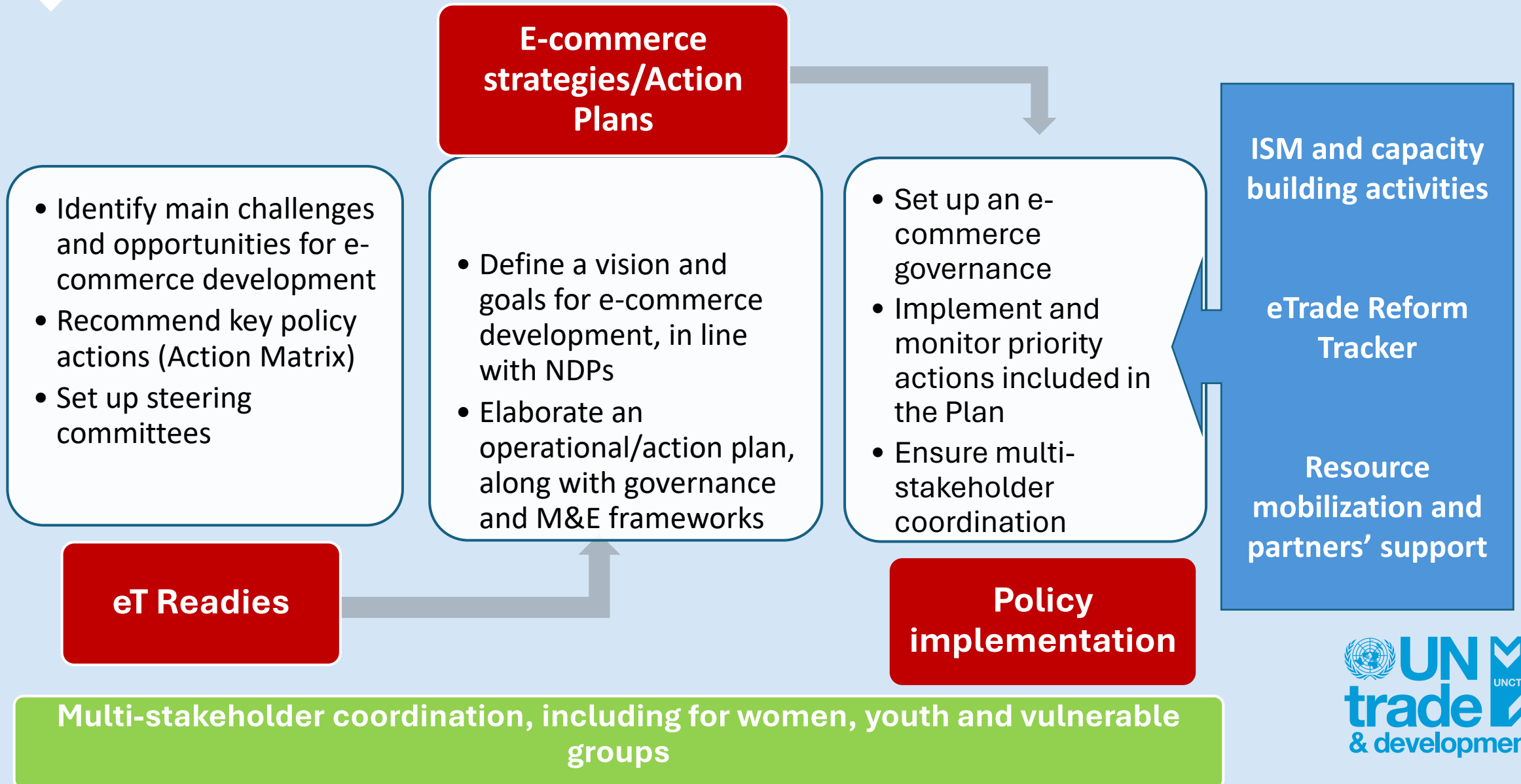


# Initiatives supporting the implementation of digital and e-commerce strategies

Several international organizations and partners provide policy and technical support to developing countries for the implementation of digital-related strategies. These include (but are not limited to):

- UNDP support to digital economy/digital transformation strategies
- ITC technical support to e-commerce strategies and national export strategies
- UNCDF supporting regional e-commerce strategies and financial inclusion strategies
- Development Banks (WB, IADB, ADB) assisting in the implementation of digital transformation strategies including e-commerce components
- The assistance provided by regional commissions (ECLAC, ESCAP, ECA...) to implement e-commerce measures in the context of regional trade agreements

# UNCTAD's end to end process





# Making implementation work





# Conditions to make implementation work



Establish solid national e-commerce governance



Involve the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders



Encourage knowledge sharing and build institutional capacities



Ensure regular monitoring and evaluation of implemented policies



# Leveraging cooperation to accelerate digital readiness

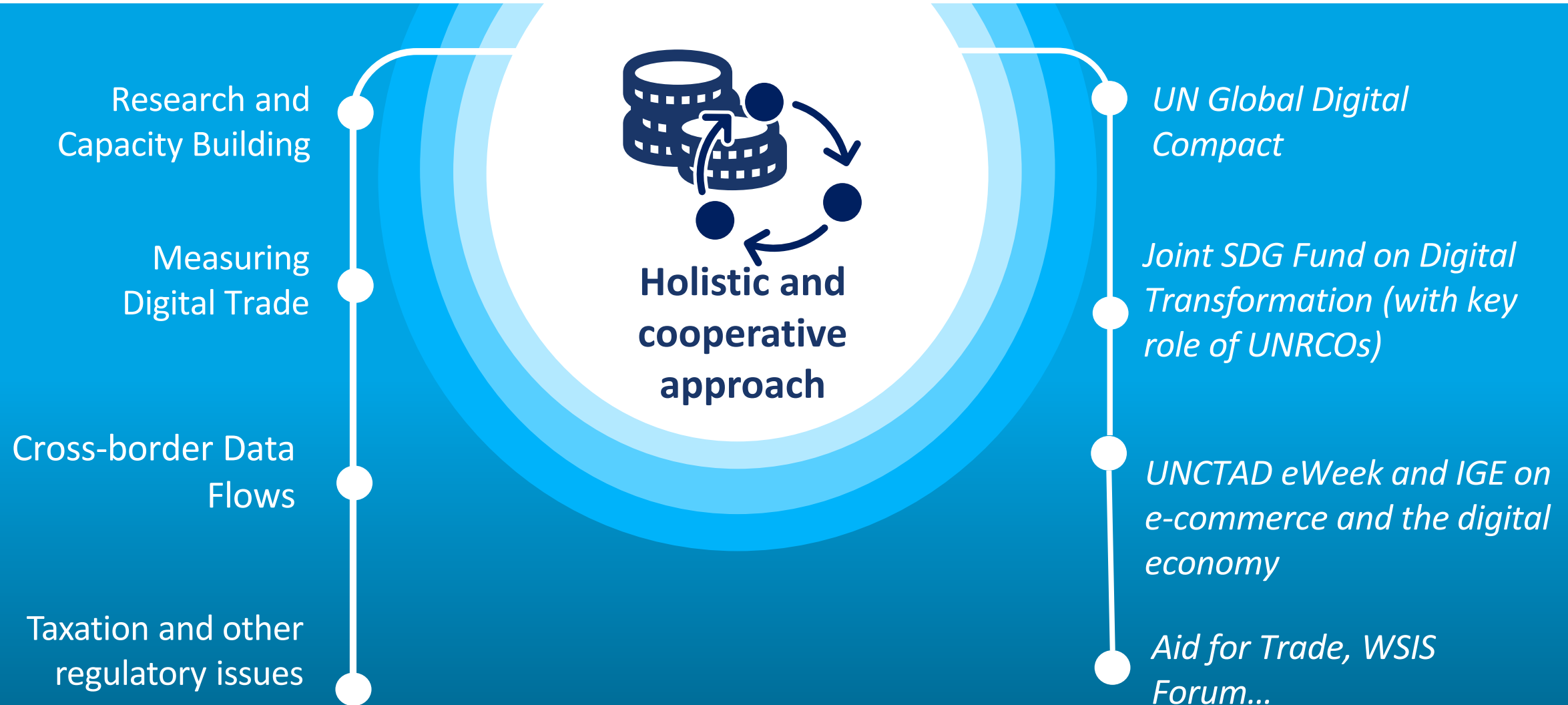




# 35 partners sharing a common vision



# Cooperation for building an inclusive digital future has never been more pressing



# Guiding questions

1. What are the main challenges for developing countries to engage in and benefit from e-commerce and the digital economy?
2. What are good practices and tools for effective implementation of policy measures at the national level to overcome the main challenges? What is the role of national governments, agencies, UN Resident Coordinator Offices and others in this process?
3. How can international cooperation help enable greater benefits from e-commerce and digital trade?
4. How can international partnerships and coordination for digital cooperation help to accelerate progress in building the readiness for e-commerce and the digital economy?

**Thank you!**

