



DIVISION ON INVESTMENT AND ENTERPRISE - PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

| INVESTING IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT |

Investment and a dynamic private sector are the building blocks of economic development and social progress. They are also increasingly important as the global community seeks to eradicate poverty over the next generation, as well as combat pressing challenges such as climate change.

The UNCTAD Investment and Enterprise Division is the focal point within the United Nations system for all issues related to investment and enterprise development. As investment currently does not have any global institutional arrangement to oversee its governance, unlike trade or finance, the Division plays a valuable role supporting the international investment community.

A global centre of excellence, the Division conducts leading-edge policy analysis, provides technical assistance and builds international consensus among the 195 member States, as well as promoting their contribution to the goal of sustainable and inclusive development.

To meet the needs of the growing global community of investment stakeholders, the Division's work is structured across two flagship products and seven core services.

TWO FLAGSHIP PRODUCTS

World Investment Forum: The Forum is a high-level, multi-stakeholder event designed to facilitate dialogue and action on the world's key and emerging investment-related challenges. Established in 2008, the Forum shapes the future agenda for policymaking on investment for development and serves as a launchpad for major international initiatives in this field. It is recognized by governments and business leaders as one of the most important events for the international investment community, providing an opportunity and platform to interact with global leaders, senior policy makers, CEOs, investors, sovereign wealth fund executives, parliamentarians, capital market executives, investment treaty negotiators, investment promotion agencies, academia and civil society representatives from countries around the world. The 2018 Forum in Geneva, Switzerland brought together 6,600 investment stakeholders, including 11 Heads of State, 85 ministerial officers and 102 business leaders to participate in 75 events, organized in collaboration with 88 partner organizations.

World Investment Report: The Report provides leading-edge research and policy analysis on investment for development. A flagship Report in its field, it includes comprehensive data on investment and the activities of multinational enterprises (MNEs), an assessment of global and regional investment trends and policy developments, a thematic section on key emerging investment for development issues and dispenses extensive analysis on investment in sustainable development. Offering policy recommendations to address investment for development challenges, the Report is recognized, over the past three decades, as the authoritative reference for policy makers, including Heads of States and ministers, as well as business and academia. The World Investment Report generates extensive global media coverage with thousands of articles published in over 100 countries. It records average annual downloads of over 850,000 in 190 countries.

SEVEN CORE SERVICES

Global investment information and research - an authoritative data source

Core data products and services: UNCTAD addresses countries' data needs through its analysis and dissemination of foreign direct investment (FDI) statistics and by enhancing the capacity of government agencies to collect and report FDI and MNE data. The organization maintains the largest global databases on FDI and MNE activities, containing information on 200 economies covering a period of 50 years and has acquired a reputation as the most authoritative source on FDI data. The system also comprises other analytical and statistical tools, including the bilateral FDI database on flows and stocks, and the FDI Country Profiles and Regional and Country Fact Sheets (available for 193 economies) that feature data on mergers and acquisitions, largest MNEs and regulatory changes. UNCTAD also plays a central role in international efforts to improve methodological standards on FDI statistics.

Global Investment Monitors: To help policymakers formulate development-oriented investment policies, UNCTAD regularly monitors the level, structure and evolution of global investment flows and investment policies. The online product has from the outset, been recognized as a valuable resource by the investment-development community and global media, generating an average of 400 media articles per issue. UNCTAD also prepares regular monitoring reports for specific regional groupings and global summits, such as the Report on G20 Investment Measures. Moreover, since 2019, UNCTAD's SDG Investment Monitors analyse investment trends and monitoring capacities across all SDG-investment sectors.

Investment policies and treaties - improving the investment climate

Investment Policy Reviews (IPRs): These reviews assess the investment policies and strategies of developing countries and economies in transition to help them attract higher levels of FDI while ensuring greater development benefits. All reviews are conducted using UNCTAD's Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development (IPFSD), which ensures that all recommendations are in line with sustainable development principles. Reviews are followed up with technical assistance to facilitate the implementation of recommendations. Among the 40 beneficiary countries, many have seen improvements of their investment climate. Moreover, a positive correlation is observed between an increase in FDI flows in beneficiary countries and the rate of implementation of IPR recommendations.

International Investment Agreements (IIAs): UNCTAD is the global focal point for all matters related to the international investment treaty regime and the business and development implications. This work includes analysing latest trends and key emerging issues in IIAs, building the capacity of developing countries to negotiate and implement investment treaties that can foster sustainable investment, and providing a platform for universal, inclusive and transparent engagement on these issues. The ongoing process of IIA reform, including the area of Investors State Dispute Settlement is directly assisted by UNCTAD.

Investment promotion and facilitation - strengthening local institutions

Investment Promotion: UNCTAD strengthens the capacity of developing countries to attract investment by identifying, targeting and facilitating strategic investment projects. This is done through direct engagement with investment promotion agencies (IPAs) and other institutions at the regional, national and subnational levels. We provide advisory services, training and capacity-building on the ground, while high-level international meetings and strategic publications are used to share trends and best practices. In particular, the UNCTAD annual Investment Promotion Awards recognize outstanding achievements in promoting FDI in sustainable development. The work programme is closely aligned with sustainable development objectives to amplify its contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

Business Facilitation: UNCTAD has developed a series of web-based e-government systems to help countries improve their investment, trade and business climate through transparency, simplification and the automation of rules and procedures relating to enterprise creation and operations. The eRegulation system is a turnkey solution allowing administrations to publish their procedures online. Trade portals are information portals showing detailed information on import, export and transit procedures and allowing countries to comply with article 1 of the WTO Bali agreement. The eRegistrations system builds online single windows for business and investors. The Global Enterprise Registration Portal benchmarks countries' company creation and registration processes and provides direct access to online platforms. These e-government digital platforms help countries promote good governance.

Institutional Investor Partnerships for Sustainable Development: The initiative is a global platform fostering a mutually beneficial partnerships between institutional investors, governments, international organizations and other stakeholders, to support and facilitate investment that can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in developing countries.

Investment Guides: The online iGuides provide up-to-date information on the business and investment climate in countries with often unfamiliar investment environments and under-reported opportunities for investment. iGuide installations are key capacity-building projects for developing country investment authorities, enabling them to autonomously monitor changes in their investment climate and reflect them in their investor communications.

Responsible investment – mainstreaming sustainable and inclusive principles

Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative: The UN Sustainable Stock Exchange initiative examines how stock exchanges can work together with investors, regulators and companies to enhance corporate transparency -and ultimately performance – on environmental, social and corporate governance issues and encourage sustainable investment. The initiative was named by Forbes Magazine as one of the “World’s best sustainability ideas”. Established in 2009, the initiative has grown into what is now a global partnership platform comprising most of the world’s stock exchanges, including all the largest ones.

Family Business for Sustainable Development: The initiative aims at providing family businesses worldwide with the ways and means to integrate sustainability into their conventional business models, therefore contributing to global sustainable development and inclusive growth, as well as the prosperity of the family business. Key deliverables include the Family Business Sustainability Pledge, the Sustainability Contribution Indicators, a jointly developed platform and a capacity-building programme.

Principles for responsible agricultural investment: The principles on agricultural investment seek to promote sustainable development in agriculture through economically, socially and environmentally responsible investment. The principles have been endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations and subsequently have received widespread support and encouragement from the G20, G8 and African Union, as well as governments and business.

Intellectual property for development: UNCTAD's Intellectual Property Programme helps developing countries to participate effectively in international discussions and policy setting on international property rights and to help to ensure that their intellectual property policies are in line with development objectives. Operating synergistically with the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Health Organization, the programme focuses on the development of domestic technological capacities and promotion of foreign direct investment and on the promotion of coherence between intellectual property policy and related law and policies, including investment and health.

Enterprise development – inspiring entrepreneurship and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises

The leading role of UNCTAD was recognized by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/73/225), both in the area of entrepreneurship education and dissemination of entrepreneurial thinking, through the Empretec programme, and in the area of support and assistance to member States on entrepreneurship policy and MSME promotion.

Entrepreneurship Policies: UNCTAD promotes entrepreneurship in developing countries and countries in transition through its entrepreneurship policy frameworks and implementation guidance. This provides the basis for a comprehensive, coordinated and inclusive approach to promote entrepreneurship and the formulation and implementation of national entrepreneurship and policies.

Empretec and Business Linkages technical assistance programmes: Empretec is a capacity-building programme to promote entrepreneurship and micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) to facilitate sustainable development and inclusive growth. This is done through entrepreneurship training workshops, which aims to foster the motivation and self-confidence of participants who have chosen to start or expand their businesses and the establishment of self-sustained, local market-driven entrepreneurship development centres (Empretec national centres). The Business Linkages programme assists local suppliers to partner with large enterprises operating in the country, ensuring that value chains benefit the development of local productive capacities and a competitive small and medium-sized enterprise sector.

Accounting and reporting – promoting high-quality reporting and corporate transparency

UNCTAD is the United Nations focal point on accounting and reporting issues, which are both critical for attracting investment and promoting financial stability. It conducts research and policy analysis on related issues, as well as servicing ISAR, an intergovernmental working group devoted to improving quality and international comparability of financial reporting and non-financial disclosure, such as environmental issues, corporate governance and corporate social responsibility. Technical assistance is also provided by UNCTAD on capacity-building in the area based on its Accounting Development Tool.

The World Investment Network

Connecting with the global investment-for-development community – UNCTAD strives to create an inclusive community of investment-for-development stakeholders. Through the main World Investment Network and 20 affiliated networks, the Division maintains contact and disseminates its work to a community of more than 20,000 investment professionals. It also promotes discussion and engagement through its investment policy hub website. In addition, UNCTAD has in recent years built links to new stakeholders through the creation of academic networks, and partnerships with new constituencies such as capital market regulators and regional groups such as the G20, ASEAN, COMESA, SADC, D8 and APEC.

In 2020, the Division received the Academy of International Business Presidential Recognition Award in recognition of the 30th year of the World Investment Report, noting the significance of the Report and its contribution to the field of international business.

Mainstreaming a gender perspective into the Division's work

UNCTAD systematically integrates a gender lens into its work. The Division undertakes research and analytical work on investment, the activities of MNEs and gender to strengthen gender-sensitive data collection, policy analysis and recommendations in support of inclusive development. It promotes women's entrepreneurship through its dedicated policy framework and implementation, the formalization of women-owned businesses and the promotion of better reporting and disclosure on gender equality. The UNCTAD Women in Business Awards and the SSE initiative "Ring the Bell for Gender Equality" in support of gender equality and women empowerment are well established initiatives.

Investing in the sustainable development goals

Faced with common global economic, social and environmental challenges, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals require a significant scaling-up of investment. UNCTAD's Strategic Framework for Private Investment in the SDGs addresses key policy challenges and options related to (i) guiding principles and global leadership to galvanize action for private investment, (ii) the mobilization of funds for investment in sustainable development, (iii) the channeling of funds into investment in SDG sectors, and (iv) maximizing the sustainable development impact of private investment while minimizing risks or drawbacks involved. UNCTAD, based on its ongoing research, informs the General Assembly "on gaps and challenges faced and the progress made on promoting investments for sustainable development as well as concrete recommendations for the advancement of investment for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda" (A/Res/74/199).

FIVE GLOBAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Division's frameworks facilitate policymaking in the area of investment and enterprise development at the global, regional and national levels.

Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development: The framework consists of an overarching set of Core Principles for Investment Policymaking that serve as design criteria for three sets of operational guidelines or action menus: guidelines for national investment policies; guidance for the design and use of international investment agreements (IIAs); and an action menu for the promotion of investment in sectors related to the sustainable development goals. The Framework has been used by over 130 countries and regional groupings in formulating a new generation of investment policy at national and international levels.

Reform Package for the International Investment Regime: The package is a coherent, sequenced and user-friendly set of options for countries engaging in International Investment Agreement reform. It has provided a road map for modernizing international investment treaty regimes worldwide.

Global Action Menu for Investment Facilitation: To date, national and international investment policies have paid relatively little attention to investment facilitation. UNCTAD's Global Action Menu for Investment Facilitation provides options for national and international policy needs. Any investment facilitation initiative cannot be considered in isolation from the broader investment for development agenda. The UNCTAD menu also proposes measures to support investment facilitation in low income countries.

Entrepreneurship Policy Framework: The Framework and Implementation Guidance aims to support developing country policymakers in the design of initiatives, measures and institutions to promote entrepreneurship. It identifies policy objectives and options in the form of recommended actions, and proposes checklists, case studies and good practices. It also offers a user guide and methods for policy monitoring and evaluation, suggesting a set of indicators to measure progress.

Accounting Development Tool: The tool assists member States in assessing and benchmarking their accounting and reporting infrastructure with a view to identifying gaps and priorities on further capacity building towards high quality and internationally comparable enterprise reporting, and in monitoring the progress over the years in a consistent manner.

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