



E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme

Year in Review 2025



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Geneva, 2026

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Note: The term “dollars” (\$) refers to United States dollars, unless otherwise indicated.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIBO	Academy for International Business Officials of the People's Republic of China
CDAB	Core Donor Advisory Board
CSTD	Commission on Science and Technology for Development
DER	Digital Economy Report
ECDE	E-commerce and Digital Economy
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ERIA	Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia
GDC	Global Digital Compact
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
G20	Group of Twenty
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IGE	Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITC	International Trade Centre
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
ODET	Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
RPTC	Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TG-eCOM	Task Group on Measuring E-commerce Value
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCITRAL	United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
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
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UPU	Universal Postal Union
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society
WTO	World Trade Organization

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



In several respects, 2025 was a special year for the E-commerce and Digital Economy (ECDE) Programme of United Nations

Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

In December, the 20-year review of outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was concluded with member States adopting by consensus a resolution that underscores the importance of our work. It recognizes that “the digital economy is an important and growing part of the global economy and has become increasingly central to global trade and economic development”. It also notes that “without the appropriate and adequate provision of means of implementation, the rapid pace and scale of digitalization may outpace the ability and readiness of some countries to adapt to digital transformation and its subsequent social and economic challenges”.

Two months earlier, UNCTAD member States met for the 16th Ministerial Conference, and adopted the *Geneva Consensus*. It gives due attention to the role of e-commerce and the digital economy, and calls on UNCTAD to further enhance our work in this domain. And in July, UNCTAD assumed the role as chair of the United Nations Group on the Information Society.

The independent evaluation of the ECDE Programme concluded that our activities and products are highly relevant to the needs and priorities of member States. It recognized that the Programme adds value by bringing together member States’ voices and experiences from the ground through a focus on multi-stakeholder engagement and collaborative exchange.

In view of the challenging times for the development community, we were honoured to receive the renewed commitment from Switzerland for another four years and we welcomed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a new development partner. Meanwhile, the International Institute for Sustainable Development joined the *eTrade for all* initiative as its 36th member.

In terms of technical cooperation and capacity building, we continued to deliver new eTrade Readiness Assessments and place greater emphasis on supporting the implementation of relevant reforms. The eTrade Reform Tracker is in growing demand, and more partner countries are seeking to strengthen their ability to measure e-commerce and the digital economy. Under the chairmanship of Thailand, the Task Group on Measuring E-commerce Value made great progress towards new international guidelines and recommendations in this domain.

The eTrade for Women initiative saw its network of women digital entrepreneurs expand around the Global South and published its first research study to provide a stronger evidence base to

formulate policy recommendations on how to empower these entrepreneurs.

Looking ahead, 2026 will see some management changes. After 25 years with UNCTAD, I have decided to take early retirement. I leave behind a highly competent team that will ensure that the ECDE Programme will continue to deliver effectively in an evolving context.

On behalf of the entire team, I am grateful for the trust that member States and our development partners continue to place in our work. Close interaction with our partners has become more essential than ever for moving the needle towards more favourable development outcomes in a transformative era for the digital economy.

Torbjörn Fredriksson

Summary

The E-commerce and Digital Economy (ECDE) Programme provides policymakers and other key stakeholders, notably women digital entrepreneurs, with the knowledge, capacities, and dialogue avenues to take development-led actions towards an inclusive and sustainable digital future for all. Through the Programme, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) works with government officials and development partners, representatives of civil society and the private sector, to strengthen the readiness of developing countries to harness the opportunities and address the risks presented by digitalization and the rise of e-commerce and digital trade in particular.

UNCTAD16: ECDE mandate reaffirmed

The 16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development took place in Geneva between 20 and 23 October 2025, under the theme “Shaping the future: Driving economic transformation for equitable, inclusive and sustainable development”. As a main outcome of the Conference, member States delivered an agreement called “The Geneva Consensus for a Just and Sustainable Economic Order”. The Consensus, which sets the basis for UNCTAD’s work for the next four years, underscores that technological advances are creating opportunities as well as divides, and reaffirms and expands UNCTAD’s mandate for the ECDE Programme.

Enhancing understanding

The Digital Economy Report Pacific Edition 2024: Promoting digital entrepreneurship and trade was launched in April, casting light on recent progress, challenges and opportunities in digital connectivity, entrepreneurship and trade in the region. A

study on [Breaking down barriers for women digital entrepreneurs: Insights from Africa](#) offered new evidence on the challenges and opportunities facing women digital entrepreneurs involved in the eTrade for Women initiative, and outlined actionable policy recommendations to enable them to participate fully in the digital economy¹.

A new global database on e-commerce sales² and digitally ordered exports³ provided data insights on the value generated through them and offered a tool for better understanding differences in the definitions and methods underpinning e-commerce statistics produced around the world. The latest UNCTAD biennial collection of statistics on information and communications technology (ICT) usage in businesses and the ICT sector enabled comparison among 69 economies representing 60 per cent of global GDP and 74 per cent of worldwide exports of goods and services. Updated information from UNCTAD’s Cyberlaw Tracker captured global legislative developments across five key areas: e-transactions, data protection and privacy, cybercrime, online consumer protection, and indirect taxation of e-commerce.

1 The study was conducted by UNCTAD in partnership with the ESCP Business School and the Gordon Institute of Business Science.

2 <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.ECommerceTotal>

3 <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.ECommerceInternational>

Map 1 Where we worked in 2025



Legend:

- eT Ready or JSI assessment
- E-Commerce Strategy or Action Plan
- eTrade Reform Tracker
- Measurement (regional)*
- eTrade for Women (regional)

Source: UNCTAD 2025.

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

*Includes capacity-building activities on measurement jointly organized with the IMF, OECD, WTO, the Caribbean Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Pacific Community and UNECLAC.

Strengthening capacities

The Programme completed the 41st eTrade Readiness Assessment (eT Ready) and continued to support developing countries in building their preparedness to benefit from the digital economy through new e-commerce strategies and assistance for their implementation.

Three eT Readies were completed - for Algeria, Zimbabwe, and Indonesia – the first G20 country to benefit from UNCTAD assistance in this area. Ghana, Mauritania, Samoa, Timor-Leste, and Trinidad and Tobago were supported to develop national e-commerce strategies/policies, in most cases as a follow-up to an eT Ready. In the Gambia, a compliance assessment was conducted against the “stabilized text” of the Joint Statement Initiative on e-commerce. In Solomon Islands, UNCTAD contributed to strengthening data governance through the drafting of a Data Privacy and Protection Bill.

The 4th [eTrade Implementation Review](#) highlighted notable advances in establishing e-commerce strategies and governance frameworks, strengthening coordination mechanisms and enhancing monitoring capacities, based on inputs from 23 countries and 3 regional organizations.⁴ To further advance implementation, UNCTAD expanded its support to partner countries adopting the eTrade Reform Tracker to better coordinate and monitor e-commerce and digital economy reforms. License agreements were signed with Fiji, Kenya, Mauritania, Peru, Samoa, and Solomon Islands, while new expressions of interest were received from Algeria, Ghana, Jordan, Indonesia, Trinidad and Tobago, Zimbabwe and the ECOWAS Commission.

In the area of e-commerce and digital

economy measurement, working closely with the IMF, OECD, WTO, and other parts of the UN and beyond, UNCTAD delivered in-person training to 131 participants (including 76 women) from National Statistical Offices, Central Banks and other relevant agencies of 56 countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean.⁵

A new cooperation agreement with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia marked the start of a three-year project to enhance statistics on e-commerce in the country and support UNCTAD's work to develop internationally agreed guidelines and recommendations in the Task Group on Measuring E-commerce Value (TG-eCOM). UNCTAD also provided initial technical assistance with the measurement of e-commerce and the digital economy in Fiji, triggering a request for further support in 2026.

Throughout all technical cooperation and capacity-building activities, the Programme benefited from collaboration with various parts of UNCTAD, eTrade for all partners and other organizations.⁶

Empowering women digital entrepreneurs

The *eTrade for Women* initiative strengthened its role as a platform elevating women's voices in national, regional and global digital development processes.

Two in-person Masterclasses brought together a total of 46 women entrepreneurs from 16 countries across Latin America and the Caribbean (Bogotá, April) and Southeast Asia and the Pacific (Manila, November). Topics included investment readiness, digital marketing and artificial intelligence among others, complemented by practical

4 See <https://unctad.org/news/mind-gap-getting-digital-ready-shared-prosperity>.

5 Partners outside the UN system included the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and Pacific Community (SPC). Valued contributors included Statistics Canada, China Customs, the Central Bank of Costa Rica, Banque de France, Reserve Bank of India, Bank of Namibia, and the Electronic Transactions Development Authority of Thailand.

6 Intra-institutional collaboration took place with TrainForTrade, the Statistics Service, and colleagues working on the topics of trade facilitation and logistics, investment, competition and consumer protection. Close collaboration with colleagues in UNCTAD's offices in New York and Addis Ababa is also acknowledged.

exercises and leadership dialogues with more experienced entrepreneurs, including eTrade for Women Advocates.

The eTrade for Women Communities welcomed 100 new members, bringing the total number to over 400, and expanded opportunities for regional collaboration and collective empowerment across 65 countries. Throughout the year, Community Leaders facilitated 20 regional online sessions, providing trusted spaces where entrepreneurs could share practical insights, exchange solutions to business challenges, and learn from one another's experiences.

At the regional and global level, eTrade for Women Advocates, Community Leaders and members brought the perspectives of women digital entrepreneurs to numerous policy dialogue events, including a meeting of the WSIS Focus Group on the Digital Economy, the WTO Public Forum, UNCTAD16, and an ECOWAS e-commerce meeting and eTrade for Women joint workshop.

Delivered in close collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) of the People's Republic of China and the

Academy for International Business Officials (AIBO), a second Study Tour for women digital entrepreneurs from the Global South enabled 31 participants from 12 countries to benefit from direct exposure to Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou's leading digital players and to participate in the 4th Global Digital Trade Expo.

Building consensus

The 8th session of the IGE on E-commerce and the Digital Economy was held in May, highlighting the need for stronger governance of the environmental impacts of digital technologies across their entire life cycle, the uneven value capture in transition mineral supply chains, and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The session delivered as a main outcome a set of agreed policy recommendations that aim to reverse the current trend of developing countries facing disproportionate burdens as the most affected by environmental degradation, yet the least in a position to fully harness digital technologies to mitigate negative environmental impacts.

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

[...]

- *Encourages Governments and relevant stakeholders to explore policies and environmental, social and governance-related standards for the development of data centres to become more energy and water efficient, as well as environmentally sustainable, especially in view of the growing use of compute-intensive technologies, such as artificial intelligence, and other related frontier technologies;*
- *Encourages Governments and relevant stakeholders to promote responsible and sustainable production and consumption and strengthen circularity in the digital economy;*

[...]

Excerpted from the set of policy recommendations agreed at the 8th session of the IGE

A new Task Group was established under the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy to update the core indicators on ICT business and the ICT sector, to ensure their continued policy relevance. Thanks to the support of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a two-day in-person meeting of the TG-eCOM reviewed the draft Guidelines and Recommendations on Measuring E-commerce Value before they are finalized and published as a first edition in 2026.⁷

Fostering collaboration

The *eTrade for all* initiative welcomed the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) as its 36th member. The online platform was upgraded with dynamic Country Profiles, providing easy-to-navigate, data-driven insights on the state of e-commerce and digital readiness of 193 economies.⁸ A total of 21 *eTrade for all* partners engaged in various UNCTAD-led activities throughout the year, including 14 partners supporting eTrade Readiness Assessments, e-commerce strategies and their implementation, 6 contributing to *eTrade for Women* activities, 5 involved in research, analysis and statistics, and 8 engaging in various digital for development cooperation processes.

As part of its support for the implementation of the GDC, UNCTAD contributed to the development and launch of the United Nations Digital Cooperation Portal, in close collaboration with the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.⁹ Under UNCTAD's leadership, the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) played an active role in the 20-year review of outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which reaffirmed the continued relevance of UNGIS.

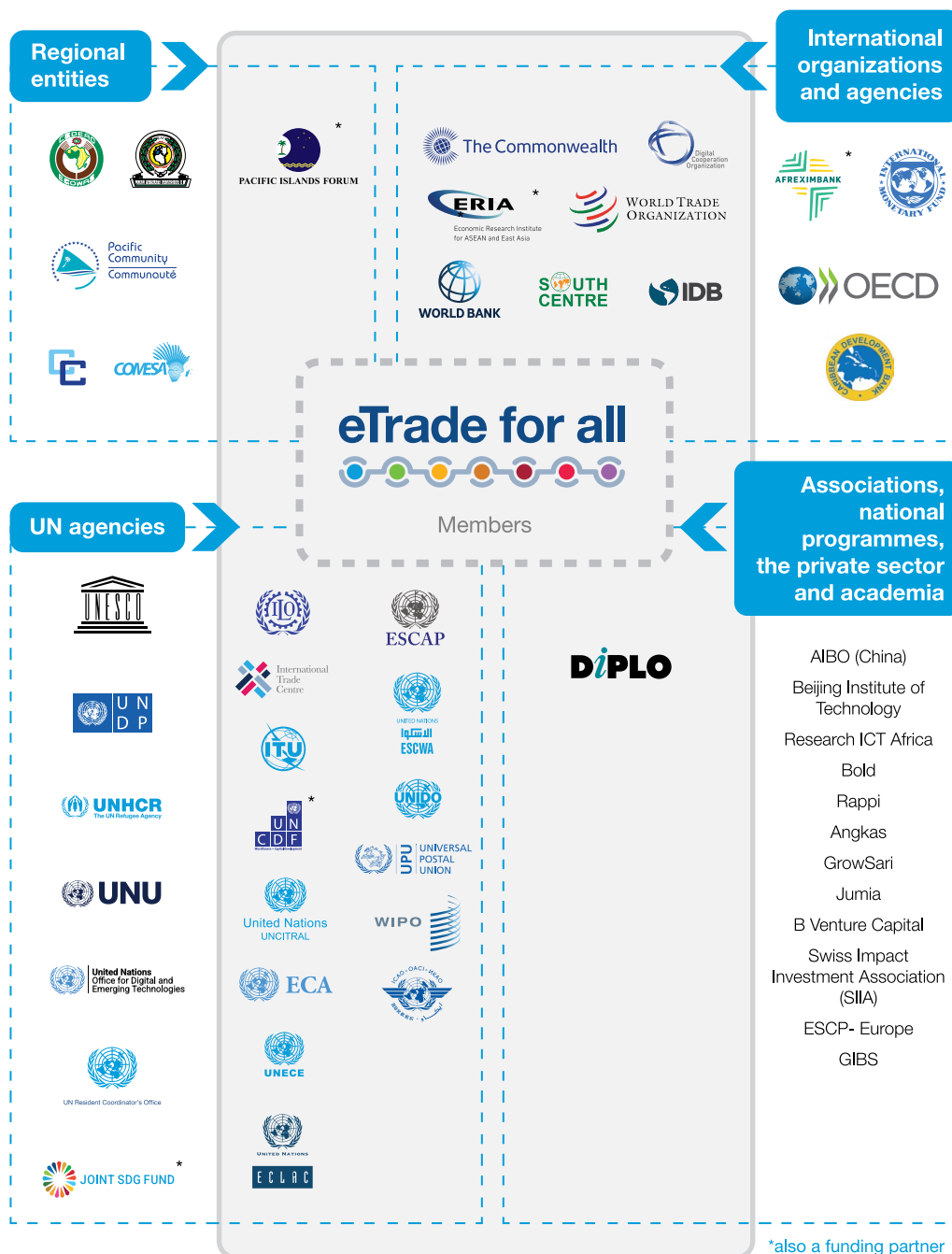
7 See <https://unctad.org/news/stronger-statistics-measure-e-commerce-and-digital-economy>.

8 See <https://etradeforall.org/country-profiles>.

9 See <https://unctad.org/news/un-launches-new-portal-digital-cooperation>.

ECDE Partners in 2025

Funding partners



Evaluation and transparency

The second independent evaluation of the ECDE Programme found it increasingly relevant to the needs and priorities of developing countries, noting a high level of satisfaction from beneficiaries and other stakeholders with the support provided and the quality of products delivered. There was also recognition of progress made since the previous evaluation in terms of enhanced coherence, outcomes across UNCTAD's three pillars, and cross-cutting issues.

To enhance transparency of activities and results, the Programme published a full set of data in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) data standard. The data reference activities published by the Programme's funding partners, thereby enhancing network transparency and strengthening mutual accountability.

Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond

In line with UNCTAD's co-leadership role of GDC Objective 2, which focuses on expanding inclusion in and equitable benefits from the digital economy for all, work is underway on the Digital Economy and Innovation Report (DEIR) 2026/27. It aims to identify key barriers to advancing digital inclusion in the context of economic participation, especially from a developing country perspective, and provide evidence-based policy recommendations toward a digital economy that fosters equitable participation and benefits congruent with development outcomes.

In the area of e-trade readiness, the Programme's main objectives include new eT Readies and e-commerce strategies (e.g., for Tunisia) as well as sustained implementation support, including capacity building and coordination support for advancing digital trade reforms (e.g., for Côte d'Ivoire), dedicated workshops for the eTrade focal points and stakeholders in partner countries and scaling up deployment of the eTrade Reform Tracker. The Programme also aims to expand its work on digital trade readiness in addition to e-commerce.

The eTrade for Women initiative will appoint five new Advocates and organize three regional Masterclasses. A customized pilot investment-readiness support programme will be launched in South Asia and community-building activities will be sustained across all regions, with two in-person community gatherings planned. The initiative will build on its policy research on the challenges of women digital entrepreneurs, with a focus on their lived experiences across Asia.

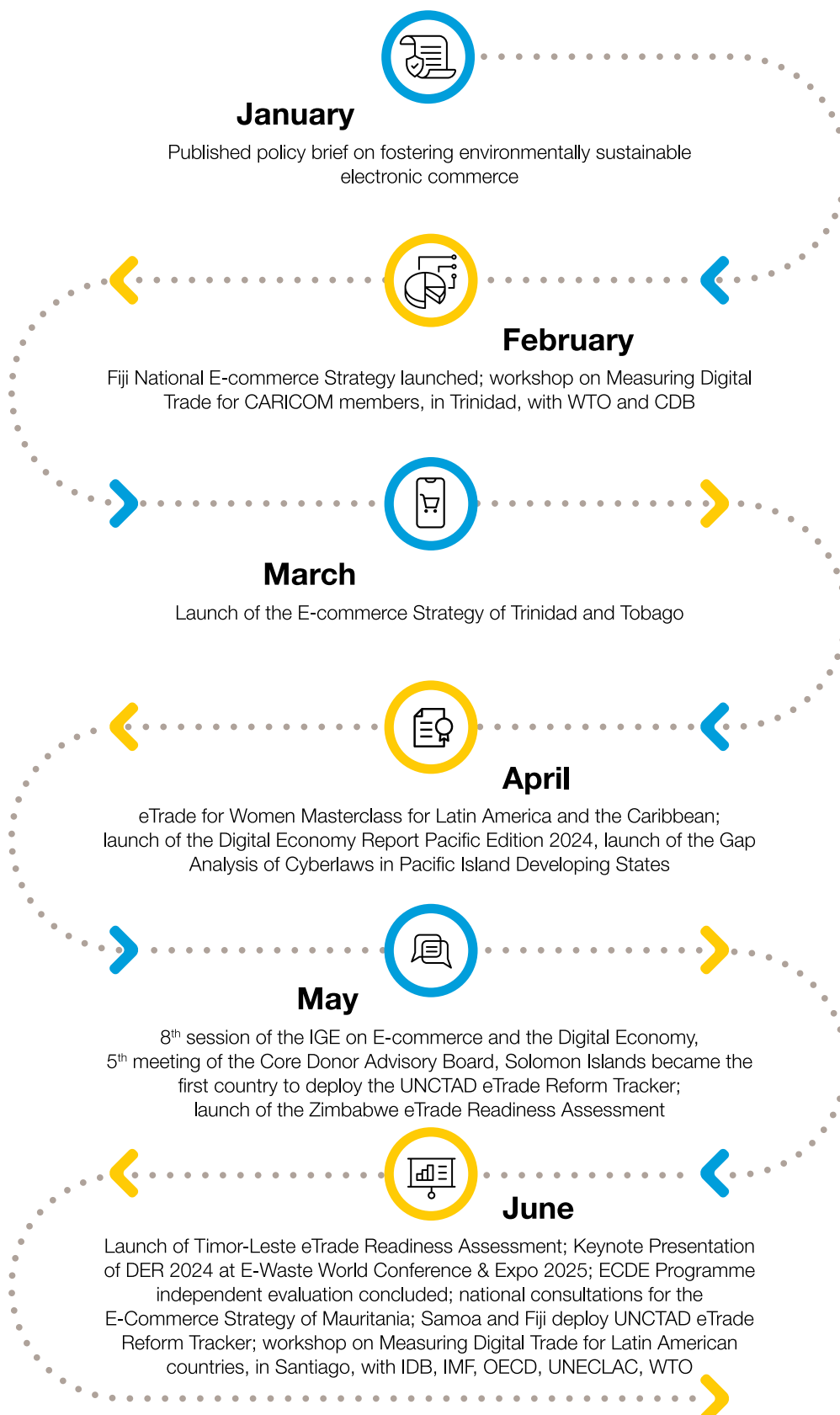
The 9th session of the IGE on E-commerce and the Digital Economy will be held on 11-13 May 2026 on the topic "Strengthening fiscal revenues in developing countries in the context of e-commerce and digital trade". The TG-eCOM will launch the new Guidelines and Recommendations on measuring e-commerce value, ahead of their planned endorsement by the UN Statistical Commission in 2027. Technical assistance work will continue on the measurement of e-commerce in Saudi Arabia and on the production of digital economy statistics in Fiji, among others.

This work is expected to take place during challenging times of reduced budgetary and human resources in the wake of reforms implemented as part of the broader UN80 initiative. Navigating this new context will require ensuring the effective handover of Programme management as well as sustaining existing and forging new partnerships.

The Programme will continue to seek synergies with *eTrade for all* and other partners for joint activities and greater impact. The eTrade for all initiative will mark its 10th anniversary and continue to act as a bridge builder for promoting positive development outcomes from the digital economy.

Lastly, as chair of UNGIS until June 2026, UNCTAD through the ECDE Programme will lead follow-up actions related to the outcome of the WSIS+20 Review.

ECDE Programme highlights in 2025





July

WSIS+20 high-level event; UNCTAD assumes UNGIS chairmanship; ECOWAS e-commerce meeting and eTrade for Women joint workshop; launch of biennial collection of indicators on ICT usage in enterprises and the ICT sector.



August

Breaking down barriers for women digital entrepreneurs: Insights from Africa published; workshop on Measuring Digital Trade for Pacific Island States, in Suva; technical assistance mission on measuring the digital economy in Fiji; launch of the Algeria eTrade Readiness Assessment



September

2nd China Study Tour for women digital entrepreneurs



October

UNCTAD16 in Geneva; launch of 4th eTrade Implementation Review



November

eTrade for Women Masterclass for Southeast Asia and the Pacific; first in-person mission to KSA on measuring e-commerce; advanced eTrade Reform Tracker training for the ECOWAS Commission



December

6th meeting of the Working Group on measuring e-commerce and the digital economy; in-person meeting of TG-eCOM; WSIS+20 Review in NY; workshop on Measuring Digital Trade for COMESA members, in Nairobi, with WTO and COMESA Secretariat; launch of new international database on e-commerce and digitally ordered trade

Communications and outreach

11 
publications
were released in
2025

Steady growth in *eTrade for Women*'s
social media outreach
and engagement, with

1,700
new followers



 **15%**
and a
increase in
average post
engagement
rate in 2025

 **10**
web articles

related to **e-commerce and
the digital economy** for
development were published
on the UNCTAD website

The *eTrade for all*
platform attracted more than

105,000

visitors
with approximately
half originating
from developing
countries.



 **x2**
This
is a
increase
since 2024.

The Programme's handle,
@UNCTAD_ECDE, now the
largest account at UNCTAD, with **3rd**

8,200+
followers
as of December
2025.



The *eTrade for all*
platform's new feature
Country Profiles
provides data on the
digital readiness of



193
countries

and comparisons for up
to **4 countries**

11 
issues of the
eTrade for all
newsletter were
released

>270,000
downloads



of ECDE publications
in 2025, marking a

50%
increase since
2024 

Introduction

The E-commerce and Digital Economy (ECDE) Programme provides policymakers and other key stakeholders, notably women digital entrepreneurs, with the knowledge, capacities, and dialogue avenues to take development-led actions towards an inclusive and sustainable digital future for all. Through the Programme, UNCTAD works with government officials and development partners, representatives of other international organizations, civil society and the private sector, to strengthen the readiness of developing countries to harness the opportunities and address the risks presented by digitalization and the rise of e-commerce and digital trade in particular.

This work in 2025 was made possible notably by support from four core donors, namely Australia (through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including for the Pacific Digital Economy Programme, jointly implemented with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), the Netherlands (through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Cooperation), Sweden (through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs), and Switzerland (through the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs). Other funding partners included the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Korea, Finland, the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) of China, the China

International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

Our work benefited from cross-divisional collaboration within UNCTAD. Key contributors included TrainForTrade, the Statistics Service, and colleagues working on the topics of trade facilitation and logistics, investment, competition and consumer protection. Close collaboration with colleagues in UNCTAD's offices in New York and Addis Ababa is also acknowledged.

UNCTAD16: ECDE mandate reaffirmed

The 16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) took place in Geneva between 20 and 23 October 2025, under the theme “Shaping the future: Driving economic transformation for equitable, inclusive and sustainable development”.

The Conference convened at a critical juncture for the global economy and international cooperation. At a time of subdued economic growth marked by persistent inequalities between and among countries, it offered an opportunity for a renewed commitment to multilateral efforts to place development back at the heart of the global economic agenda.

As a main outcome of the Conference, member States delivered an agreement called “The Geneva Consensus for a

Just and Sustainable Economic Order”, recommitting to sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social, and environmental - and reaffirming UNCTAD’s central role in advancing multilateral cooperation for shared prosperity.

The Consensus, which sets the basis for UNCTAD’s work for the next four years, underscores that technological advances are creating opportunities as well as divides, and it calls on UNCTAD to enhance support to develop countries’ capacity for electronic commerce, support the development of an enabling environment for digital infrastructure, skills and frameworks necessary to harness the digital economy and digital trade, and assist countries in building circular approaches to the digital economy.

This consensus on digital economy is a testament to our shared commitment to meaningfully closing the digital divide, advancing digital transformation and establishing robust digital public infrastructure with essential safeguards [...]. These efforts are especially vital for least developed countries, developing island States, Africa and the global South broadly where digital inclusion and equity can unlock transformative opportunities.

— from the statement of the Gambia at the closing plenary of UNCTAD16, 23 October 2025





UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan with panellists in the Ministerial Roundtable on “Making the Digital Economy Inclusive and Sustainable through Cooperation” during UNCTAD16, Geneva, Switzerland, 21 October 2025

Ministerial roundtable: Making the digital economy inclusive and sustainable through cooperation

At UNCTAD16, the Ministerial Roundtable on “Making the Digital Economy Inclusive and Sustainable through Cooperation” brought together ministers and senior leaders from across regions to discuss how digital transformation can become a driver of inclusive growth. Participants stressed that bridging widening digital divides requires investment in affordable connectivity, digital skills and trusted governance frameworks. They underscored the importance of building interoperable regulatory systems for data, e-commerce and digital trade; fostering digital literacy as a foundation for inclusion; and ensuring that policies support both equity and environmental sustainability.

Speakers also emphasized that international cooperation remains indispensable to achieving these goals. Many highlighted successful partnerships with UNCTAD—

such as [eTrade Readiness Assessments](#), the [eTrade for Women initiative](#) and [digital economy measurement](#) — as effective tools to guide reforms and investment. Ministers called for enhanced collaboration among Governments, the private sector and international organizations to align national and global digital trade agendas, strengthen public digital infrastructure and empower local entrepreneurs, particularly women and SMEs, to compete in global markets.

Digital for Development Forum

The session spotlighted two key themes: empowering women in the digital economy and advancing regional digital integration. In the first segment, speakers stressed the urgent need to close financing gaps for women entrepreneurs through gender-responsive policies, stronger partnerships with financial institutions, and greater private sector engagement—highlighting UNCTAD's eTrade for Women initiative as a model for inclusive digital entrepreneurship. The second segment showcased how digital transformation can strengthen regional cooperation, with examples from the Commonwealth, CARICOM, the Pacific, ASEAN, and Africa, calling for aligned strategies, improved connectivity, and public-private collaboration.

The message was clear: collaboration, investment, and shared vision are essential to build a digital future that leaves no one behind. A vision championed by UNCTAD in driving an inclusive digital economy worldwide.

UNCTAD also organized with the Ministry of the Interior and Safety of the Republic of Korea a side event on “*Artificial Intelligence for Better Government, Inclusive and Sustainable Development: Global Experiences and Cooperation*”. Experts from the Republic of Korea, UN organizations and the private sector highlighted the need to secure financial resources for strengthening AI capabilities, improve data governance and to enhance collaboration on the use of AI.



Ms. Angeline Tham, Founder and CEO of Angkas and eTrade for Women Advocate for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, speaking at the UNCTAD16 Ministerial Roundtable on “Making the Digital Economy Inclusive and Sustainable through Cooperation”, Geneva, Switzerland, 21 October 2025



Ms. Vena Arielle Ahouansou, Founder and CEO of Kea Medicals and eTrade for Women Advocate for Francophone Africa, speaking at the UNCTAD16 Digital for Development Forum, Geneva, Switzerland, 21 October 2025

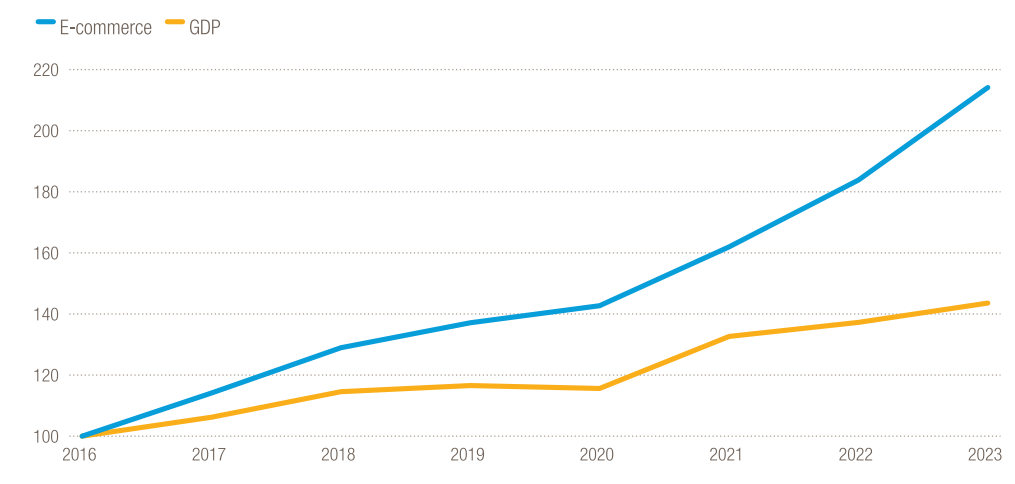
Enhancing understanding

New statistics on e-commerce and the digital economy

A new global database collates statistics on the value of e-commerce sales¹⁰ and digitally ordered exports¹¹ published by National Statistical Offices or other competent authorities. Although there are important limitations associated with these

figures, this analytical database addresses the pressing need for insights in this area ahead of Guidelines and Recommendations being finalized by the [Task Group on Measuring E-commerce Value \(TG-eCOM\)](#) and implemented by countries. As well as providing initial insights (Figure 1), the database also offers a tool for better understanding differences in the definitions and methods underpinning e-commerce statistics produced in different economies.

Figure 1
Business e-commerce sales value and GDP, in current prices (indices, 2016=100)



Source: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) based on UNCTADstat, 2025.

Note: Indices represent the same 36 developed and developing economies which account for two thirds of global GDP.

The latest UNCTAD statistics, updated in 2025, showed that worldwide exports of ICT goods, which underpin the ongoing digital transformation, increased by 10 per cent in 2024¹², reaching a new high of almost \$ 3 trillion. Northern America, driven by the United States, recorded a strong increase in

imports of ICT goods of 15 per cent. Figures for 2025 might be anticipated to show further increases amongst strong investment in data processing capacity to power the development of artificial intelligence.

Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean also saw strong growth of 13 per cent.

10 <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.ECommerceTotal>

11 <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.ECommerceInternational>

12 <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.IctGoodsValue>

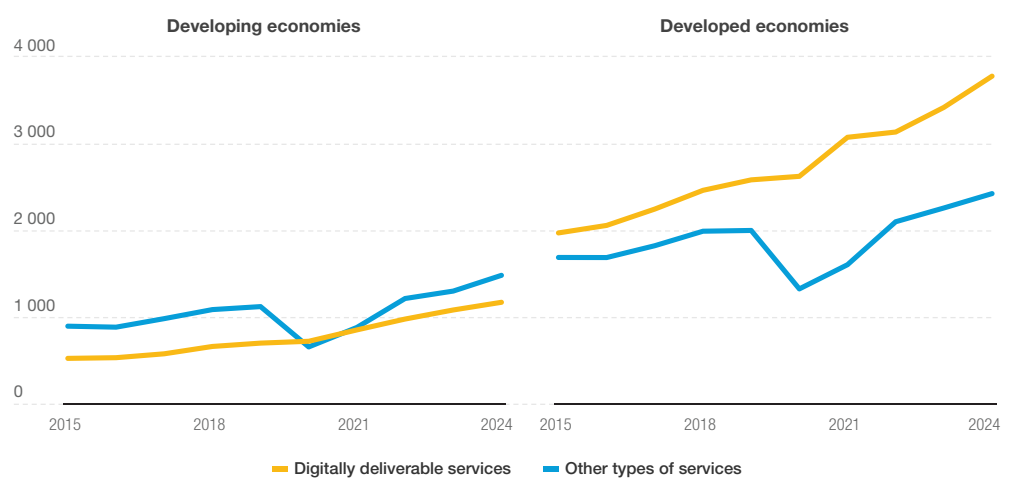
E-commerce sales by businesses are growing rapidly

Meanwhile, Europe registered only 1 percent growth in ICT goods imports and Africa saw a 1 per cent decline, suggesting the continent risks being left behind in a rapidly digitalizing world.

The availability of digital hardware and infrastructure, while contributing to a growing [environmental footprint](#), is crucial for the ability to engage in the global marketplace for digital services. Having

passed \$ 1 trillion for the first time in 2023, developing economies' exports of digitally deliverable services (those which can be delivered remotely over computer networks) climbed eight per cent to reach \$ 1.17 trillion in 2024 (Figure 2). However, developed economies are growing their exports even more rapidly (11 per cent from 2023-24) and account for over three quarters of digitally deliverable exports worldwide.

Figure 2
Exports of digitally deliverable and other services, billions of dollars



Source: UN Trade and Development, UNCTADstat, 2025.
Note: Digitally deliverable products include: insurance and financial services, telecommunications, computer and information services, intellectual property charges, research-and-development services, trade-related, technical, managerial, consultancy, engineering, scientific and architectural services, audiovisual services, as well as health and education personal services, and cultural heritage and recreation services.

Exports of digitally deliverable services growing faster in developed than in developing countries

In 2025, UNCTAD also conducted its biennial collection of statistics on ICT usage in businesses and the ICT sector. This combines figures submitted by Member States' National Statistical Offices or other competent agencies with those compiled annually by Eurostat and the OECD to produce tables that are global in scope.¹³ In the latest collection, 18 economies made submissions, taking the number of economies for which recent (2020 or later) figures are available to 69. While

these economies represent 60 per cent of global GDP and 74 per cent of worldwide exports of goods and services, **no LDC is represented in the available statistics.** Not only does the number of indicators available vary widely across economies, but many economies are completely uncovered. This severely limits the extent to which the experiences of businesses in economies at different levels of development are represented and can be drawn upon in analysis and policy recommendations.

13 <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.IctUseEnterprSize>,
https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.IctUseEconActivity_Isic4,
<https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.IctUseLocation>,
<https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.IctProductionSector>.

Often, this is because no such statistics are available and support is needed for their development. However, where member States produce these statistics, greater engagement is needed to ensure that they respond to the collection request which is sent to country missions to the UN Office at Geneva, senior statistical focal points indicated by Member States to the UN Statistics Division, and to participants in the [Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy](#), to make the collection as comprehensive as possible.¹⁴

Updated data from UNCTAD's Cyberlaw Tracker was released in July, capturing global legislative developments across five key areas: e-transactions, data protection and privacy, cybercrime, online consumer protection, and indirect taxation of e-commerce.

.....

¹⁴ Excluding economies which provide data to Eurostat, these statistics are incorporated in the UNCTAD tables. Countries which participate in the OECD collection are asked only to submit indicators on employment and value added of the ICT sector, as these are not collected by the OECD.



Research grounded in lived experiences

The [Digital Economy Report Pacific Edition 2024: Promoting digital entrepreneurship and trade](#) was launched in April at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) in Suva, Fiji.¹⁵ Building on the Pacific Digital Economy Report 2022, the 2024 edition

examines recent progress, challenges and opportunities in digital infrastructure and connectivity, entrepreneurship, and trade. The event served as a platform to engage regional and global stakeholders, highlighting the report's findings and fostering collaboration toward advancing the Pacific's digital transformation.



Launch of the Digital Economy Report Pacific Edition 2024, in the presence of (from left to right) Mr. Dirk Wagner, UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Desna Solofa, Deputy Secretary General of PIFS, H.E Ms. Barbara Plinkert, Ambassador of the European Union to the Pacific, and Mr. Chad Morris, UNCTAD. Suva, Fiji, 15 April 2025

The European Union is proud to support the Digital Economy Report: Pacific Edition 2024, a comprehensive report that highlights the significant progress made in digital connectivity across the Pacific region. At the same time, the report emphasizes the need for targeted policy interventions to address challenges in areas such as digital literacy, access to finance, and the affordability of digital services. The European Union is committed to promoting a global, open, stable, and secure cyberspace, based on the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democratic values. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Pacific region to advance their digital transformation journey, including cybersecurity, and achieve inclusive and sustainable development.

— H.E Barbara Plinkert, European Union Ambassador to the Pacific



¹⁵ The report was prepared in the framework of the Pacific Digital Economy Programme implemented jointly by UNCTAD, UNCTAD and UNDP, with the financial support of the European Union.



In August, UNCTAD released [Breaking down barriers for women digital entrepreneurs: Insights from Africa](#), a study offering new evidence on the challenges and opportunities facing

women digital entrepreneurs.¹⁶ Based on surveys of 94 entrepreneurs across 33 developing countries and 33 interviews with women founders from 13 sub-Saharan African countries, the report builds on the eTrade for Women initiative's experience of building more inclusive digital economies over the past year.

The findings highlight persistent barriers: over 80 per cent of the women rely on personal savings due to limited access to formal finance; digital infrastructure gaps and gender bias in fundraising limit growth; and in sub-Saharan Africa, high operational costs, uneven connectivity and large care responsibilities further impede scaling. Yet women entrepreneurs defy these challenges, successfully leading impactful digital ventures in areas such as e-commerce and digital trade, often driven by strong community-building motivations. The report outlines actionable policy recommendations to enable women digital entrepreneurs to participate fully in the digital economy.

Digitalization is reshaping trade and entrepreneurship worldwide, yet its benefits are not automatically shared. Our challenge is to ensure that digitalization and new technologies create value for all, especially for women. By addressing barriers faced by women entrepreneurs, UNCTAD's eTrade for Women initiative advances equality while unlocking untapped economic potential. The Netherlands is proud to support this initiative because we believe that female entrepreneurship is essential to inclusive and sustainable growth.

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



¹⁶ The study was conducted by UNCTAD in partnership with the ESCP Business School and the Gordon Institute of Business Science.



Box 1

Policy uptake of the Digital Economy Report 2024

The 2024 edition of the Digital Economy Report (DER), titled “[Shaping an environmentally sustainable and inclusive digital future](#)”, underscored the pressing need for sustainable strategies throughout the lifecycle of digitalization. Since its launch in July 2024, the DER has gained traction across policy, academic, and media circles.

The Geneva Consensus – the outcome document of UNCTAD’s 16th Ministerial Conference adopted in October 2025 – reiterated that technological advances are creating opportunities as well as divides and mandated UNCTAD to “continue to assist countries in building circular approaches to the digital economy” (paragraph 80.48).

At the 8th 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 digitalization work for inclusive and sustainable development. Policy actions put forward by the DER 2024 were also reflected in the OECD’s 2025 Recommendation of the Council on Digital Technologies and the Environment – a legal instrument representing a political commitment to implementation, which recommends that adherents adopt a whole-of-government and multi-stakeholder approach, by “co-ordinating digital, environmental, energy and other related policies [...] to harness the potential of digital technologies to advance environmental sustainability goals while mitigating their environmental footprint”.

The DER 2024 further informed multi-stakeholder policy dialogue, as evidenced by the WSIS+20 Review outcome document, and was referenced in publications by other international organizations (e.g., ITU), regional governments (Generalitat de Catalunya), the private sector (World Economic Forum, DHL Trade Atlas) and non-profits (FI Institute), as well as in academic literature. The DER 2024 was also cited in a study by the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development for its 12th session (A/HRC/EMRTD/12/CRP.2).

Source: UNCTAD, 2025.





Strengthening capacities

Building eTrade Readiness

UNCTAD supports developing and least developed countries, as well as regional groups, in assessing their national and regional e-commerce ecosystems through its eTrade Readiness Assessments (eT Readies). These assessments help governments evaluate the strength of their enabling environments, identify key gaps and opportunities, and foster dialogue between and among public- and private-sector stakeholders.

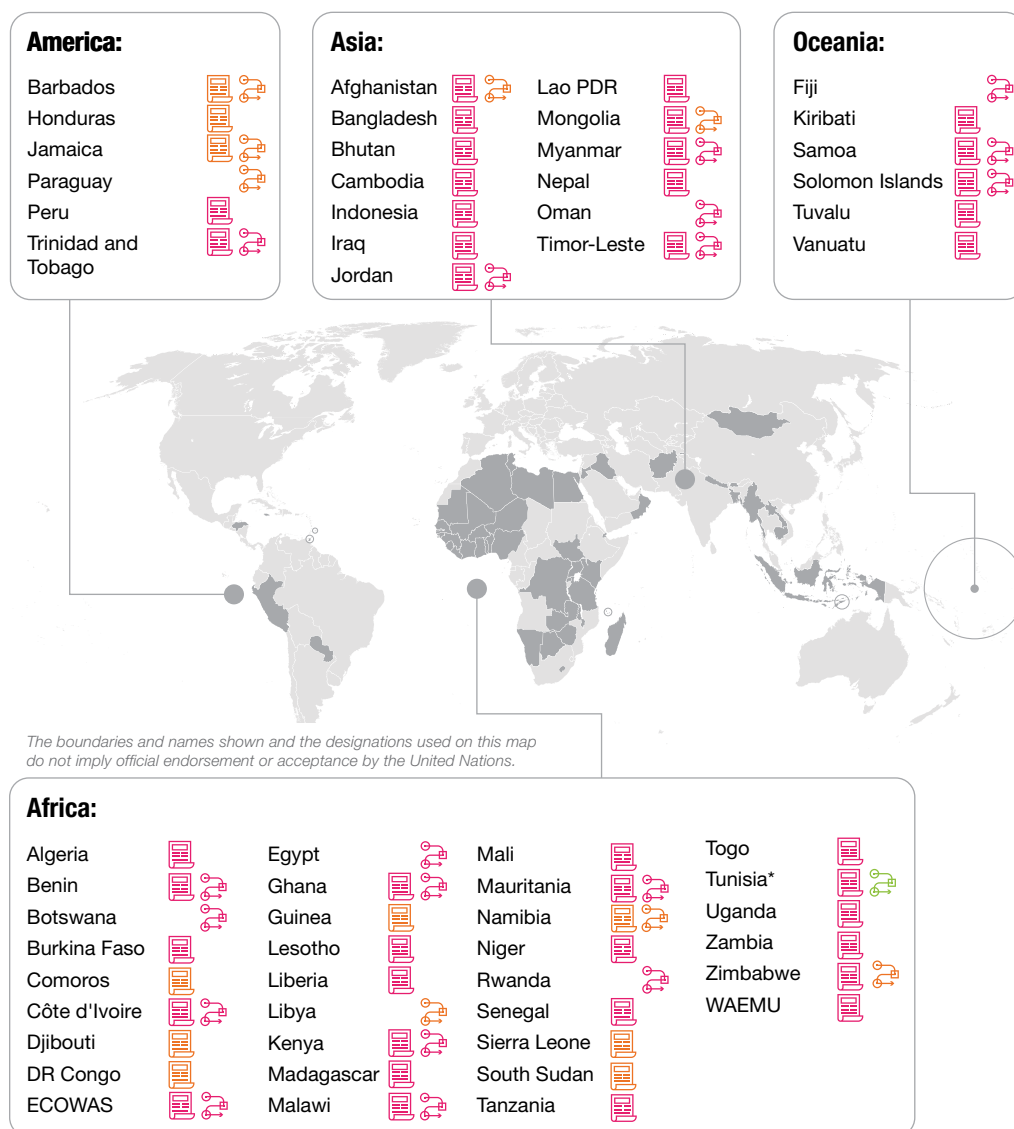
Implementation support is provided through multiple channels. This includes assisting countries and regions in designing and implementing coherent e-commerce strategies and policies to guide reforms, strengthening coordination and monitoring of implementation efforts, building capacities for statistical measurement of the digital economy and trade, and providing support in harmonizing legal and regulatory frameworks with regional digital trade agreements.

Two eT Readies were launched in 2025 - for Algeria and Zimbabwe. The eT Ready of Indonesia, the first G20 country to benefit from UNCTAD assistance in this area, was released in the first quarter of 2026. In terms of implementation support, Ghana, Mauritania, Samoa, Timor-Leste, and Trinidad and Tobago were supported to develop national e-commerce strategies/policies, a draft Data Privacy and Protection Bill was prepared for Solomon Islands, and a compliance assessment against the stabilized text of the WTO Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on E-Commerce was conducted for the Gambia. The eTrade Reform Tracker was officially deployed in Fiji, Kenya, Mauritania, Peru, Samoa and Solomon Islands.



Map 2

UNCTAD eT Readies and e-commerce strategies/action plans/policies (as of February 2026)



*An Action Plan has been developed; an E-Commerce Strategy is in progress.

Legend:



eT Ready



E-commerce Strategy/
Action Plan/Policy

Finalized

41

In progress

0

Requested

10

19

1

8

Source: UNCTAD 2026.



UNCTAD's support in 2024–2025 helped strengthen **Algeria's** national capacity to accelerate e-commerce development.¹⁷ The validation workshop for the **eT Ready**, developed under the

strong leadership of the Ministry of Domestic Trade and National Market Regulation, brought together more than 50 national actors and development partners. The assessment generated a shared evidence base on the rapid growth of Algeria's e-commerce sector, including a 92 per cent annual rise in registered e-commerce businesses since 2020 and a tripling of online payments. These data points helped policymakers recognize the sector's untapped economic potential (B2C e-commerce accounting for 0.8 per cent of GDP in 2023) and the need to expand beyond a predominantly domestic market. A key impact of the process was national consensus around the need for a comprehensive e-commerce strategy and improved inter-institutional coordination. By validating priority actions through a multi-stakeholder workshop and launch event, UNCTAD helped build political ownership for reforms that underpin Algeria's economic diversification agenda.



The development of the **eT Ready** of **Indonesia** advanced significantly during 2025, underpinned by effective collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with engagement of over 300 participants

from Government, private sector, academia, civil society, and representatives of women, including from the eTrade for Women initiative, youth, and persons with disabilities.¹⁸ The assessment is the first led by UNCTAD in a G20 member and reflects business perspectives on opportunities and challenges for advancing e-commerce and digital trade, while also integrating considerations for environmental sustainability. The report highlights that while Indonesia's e-commerce and digital trade are growing rapidly, supported by strong political commitment, improved infrastructure, and increasing fintech innovation, there is scope for progress regarding interinstitutional coordination, uneven technology access, limited digital skills, as well as challenges in the areas of logistics and financial inclusion. During the preparation of the eT Ready, UNCTAD maintained close coordination with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), the UN country team, as well as other key eTrade for all partners, and sought complementarities with development partners on the ground, including the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Development.

The eTrade Readiness Assessment identifies policy gaps, capacity needs, and investment priorities, and helps guide the reform process. I think it is important for such a blueprint to be available to other countries.

— H.E. Arrmanatha Christiawan Nasir, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, during the Ministerial Roundtable on Making the Digital Economy Inclusive and Sustainable through Cooperation at UNCTAD16



17 The eT Ready of Algeria is conducted with the financial support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

18 The eT Ready of Indonesia is conducted with the financial support of the Australian Government.



H.E. Armanatha Christiawan Nasir, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan meet on the sidelines of UNCTAD16 in Geneva, Switzerland, 21 October 2025



In **Zimbabwe**, the **eT Ready** launched in May 2025 was recognized as a guiding document for the development of the country's National E-commerce Strategy.¹⁹ Its launch was organized in

cooperation with the UNCTAD Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, jointly with the launch of the National Productive Capacities Gap Assessment and Holistic Productive Capacities Development Programme.

The event, attended by 85 participants, boosted visibility of the Government's efforts to drive trade diversification and digital industrialization, and was supported by extensive media and communication outreach. A development partners' roundtable created momentum for implementation, with partners exchanging on ongoing support and identifying areas for collaboration. Importantly, the Government requested UNCTAD's assistance to develop a National E-commerce Strategy and adopt the eTrade Reform Tracker, demonstrating strong commitment to translating recommendations into action.

These reports aim to assist the industrial and commercial sectors regain their position as the primary drivers of economic growth and development in our country. They particularly symbolize a significant step forward in our collective pursuit of digital transformation, industrialization and economic growth.

— H.E. Hon. N. M. Ndhlovu, Minister of Industry and Commerce of Zimbabwe

19 The eT Ready of Zimbabwe is conducted with the financial support of the Republic of Korea.

In collaboration with Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MOTIE) of the **Gambia**, UNCTAD conducted a compliance assessment against the text of the Joint Statement Initiative on e-commerce, building on previous experience in Kazakhstan in 2022.²⁰ The assessment reviews the extent

to which the legislation of the Gambia aligns with the “stabilized text” of 26 July 2024 and makes recommendations for consideration by the Government. Bilateral meetings and public and private sector consultative workshops were held in Banjul in November 2025 to validate findings.



Preparatory meeting with the MOTIE in advance of the consultative meetings to discuss the findings of the compliance assessment of Gambian legislation against the text of WTO Joint Statement Initiative on E-Commerce, Banjul, November 2025.

Advancing eTrade reforms through policy and implementation

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the National E-commerce Strategy 2025-2030 was officially launched in March, involving a wide range of stakeholders.²¹ The launch was followed by a development partners’ roundtable facilitated by UNCTAD to support an active start of the implementation process and enhance synergies with the UN country team and donor community in the country. The strategy focuses on fostering and maintaining a legal and regulatory framework, developing

e-commerce awareness and skills, enabling business growth and competitiveness, and streamlining trade and logistics. With a focus on women, youth, people in rural areas and persons with disabilities through specific measures, the strategy has the potential to effectively support inclusion in e-commerce development. UNCTAD has also helped strengthen inter-ministerial coordination and public-private dialogue on e-commerce. The updated National E-commerce Committee was officially inaugurated in March 2025, further enhancing its role and mandate for the implementation of the strategy.

20 The assessment of the Gambia’s legal and regulatory framework against the text of the JSI on e-commerce is conducted with the financial support of the Australian Government.

21 The E-commerce Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago was developed with funding from the Government. It builds on the findings of an eTrade Readiness Assessment conducted in 2024, see <https://unctad.org/publication/trinidad-and-tobago-etradereadiness-assessment>.

We expect that the Strategy will fuel a wave of entrepreneurship and business innovation across Trinidad and Tobago and open doors for small and medium-sized enterprises to create new revenue streams and scale their businesses in both the local and global market.

— H.E. Ms. Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry



The inauguration of the E-commerce Steering Committee of Trinidad and Tobago during the launch of the National E-commerce Strategy 2025-2030, in the presence of the Minister of Trade and Industry Paula Gopee-Scoon, March 2025

In **Ghana**, the National E-commerce Strategy 2025-2029 was successfully validated in June, constituting a milestone in the Government's efforts to drive inclusive and sustainable digital transformation across the country.²² The validation workshop was attended by 90 key stakeholders and benefited from the contributions of MSME and fintech representatives, as well as an eTrade for Women community member. While the strategy was awaiting Cabinet approval, the E-commerce Committee, comprising 26 members from the public, private sectors and academia,

met for the first time in November 2025 to discuss the implementation plan. Regular discussions are held to secure support from development partners in view of its implementation, including the Overseas Development Institute and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) among others. To strengthen the coordination and monitoring of the strategy, the Ministry of Trade, Agribusiness and Industry also recruited an M&E Officer at the end of 2025, who will support the roll-out of the UNCTAD eTrade Reform Tracker.

22 The National E-commerce Strategy of Ghana was developed with the financial support of the European Union and member States through the Joint SDG Fund's Window on Digital Transformation. See more at <https://jointdsgfund.org/article/driving-growth-ghanas-msmes-comprehensive-approach-digital-transformation>. The strategy builds on the findings of an eTrade Readiness Assessment conducted in 2023, see <https://unctad.org/publication/ghana-etradereadinessassessment>.

In **Mauritania**, a National E-commerce Strategy 2026-2030 was developed in partnership with the Ministry of Digital Transformation and Modernization of the Administration.²³ It is aligned with the country's National Development Strategy 2030, providing a roadmap to unlock the potential of e-commerce for the nation's sustainable growth. Following a series of bilateral meetings and national

multi-stakeholder consultations held in April and June in Nouakchott, the strategy and its implementation plan were validated in October 2025 during a national workshop that brought together representatives from public and private sectors, civil society, academia, in addition to development partners. The strategy will be officially launched following its endorsement by the Cabinet.



Participants in the kick-off meeting for the validation workshop for the Mauritania E-commerce Strategy, including Mr. Khaled Abidine Sidi, Secretary General of the Ministry of Digital Transformation and Modernization of the Administration, Mr. Guéye Amadou El-Hadj, Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade and Tourism, Ms. Aurélie Fabry, Head of UN Resident Coordinator's office in Mauritania, Ms. Magali Mander, Country Director of GIZ Mauritania, and Ms. Sibylle Albrecht, Head of Digital-Y Project, GIZ Mauritania. Nouakchott, 28 October 2025

The vision of Mauritania's National E-commerce Strategy (2026-2030) is to position e-commerce as a major driver for sustainable and inclusive economic development. It reflects the country's commitment to fostering a more formal, digitally enabled economic ecosystem capable of generating greater value-added, strengthening the resilience of the Mauritanian economy, and enhancing its competitiveness both nationally and internationally.

— **Mr. Khaled Abidine Sidi, Secretary General of the Ministry of Digital Transformation and Modernization of the Administration, Mauritania**



²³ The National E-commerce Strategy of Mauritania was developed with the financial support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). It builds on the findings of the eTrade Readiness Assessment conducted in 2023, see <https://unctad.org/publication/mauritania-etradereadinessassessment>.

In **Samoa**, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, with support from UNCTAD, advanced work on the National E-commerce Policy, a key recommendation of the National E-commerce Strategy.²⁴ While the Strategy outlines the framework and strategic actions to strengthen Samoa's e-commerce ecosystem, the Policy will establish the regulatory foundations needed to support a secure and trustworthy digital marketplace for businesses and consumers. Building on earlier multi-stakeholder engagement and the first consultation workshop held in November 2024, a two-day validation workshop was convened on 5–6 February 2025 to review and validate the policy. The workshop brought together policymakers, industry representatives, and civil society to ensure the Policy is inclusive, relevant, and aligned with Samoa's national priorities and global e-commerce developments. The final document was submitted to the Government in March 2025; however, due to the August election and subsequent change of Government, the Policy is still pending endorsement.

In **Solomon Islands**, UNCTAD contributed to strengthening data governance through support for the drafting of a Data Privacy and Protection Bill.²⁵ This legislation will operationalize the National Data Privacy and Protection Policy developed by UNCDF and is a core action under the National E-commerce Strategy. The Bill is intended to provide a clear legal framework for the protection of personal and enterprise data, including rules for domestic and cross-border data transfers. Although approval of the Policy has been delayed, UNCTAD has prepared a preliminary draft to maintain momentum and ensure the Government can move quickly once the Policy is endorsed. This early work positions Solomon Islands to take an important step toward a safer and more enabling digital environment. Its development responds to the gap identified

in UNCTAD's [Gap Analysis of Cyberlaws in Pacific Small Island Developing States](#) regarding the absence of data protection legislation, and supports a key measure in the Solomon Islands National E-commerce Strategy, which calls for the adoption of a Data Privacy and Protection law as a foundational element of digital economy development.

In **Timor-Leste**, a National E-commerce Strategy 2025–2029 was developed to guide policy and investment in the digital economy, with a focus on creating an enabling environment for digital trade.²⁶ It identifies priority areas with the potential for economic growth, job creation and increased trade, and proposes activities to undertake in the short, medium and long term. A governance structure is proposed to monitor the implementation and impact of the strategy. It will align with relevant national development strategies, policies and programmes, including the Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 and the recently endorsed Timor Digital 2032: National Strategic Plan for Digital and ICT Development. The final Strategy was submitted to the Council of Ministers for endorsement in November.

Taking stock of implementation progress: 4th eTrade Implementation Review



In 2025, UNCTAD completed a [4th eTrade Implementation Review - Fast-tracking implementation of reforms enabling e-commerce and digital trade](#) - assessing progress made by

developing countries and regions in advancing the reforms recommended in their eTrade Readiness Assessments and E-commerce

24 The National E-commerce Policy of Samoa was developed with the financial support of the Australian Government.

25 Work on the Data Privacy and Protection Bill of Solomon Islands was carried out with the financial support of the Australian Government.

26 The National E-commerce Strategy of Timor-Leste was developed with the financial support of the European Union. It builds on the findings of an eTrade Readiness Assessment conducted in 2024, see <https://unctad.org/publication/timor-leste-etrade-readiness-assessment>.

Strategies. This edition highlights notable advances in establishing e-commerce strategies and governance frameworks, strengthening coordination mechanisms and enhancing monitoring capacities.²⁷ The review covers 23 countries and 3 regional organizations (the East African Community, Economic Community of West African States and Pacific Islands Forum). It documents recent e-commerce strategy adoptions in Fiji, Kenya, Trinidad and Tobago and Zambia, as well as growing efforts in Peru, Rwanda and Senegal to embed e-commerce priorities into broader national development plans. The report also

underscores persistent challenges – including limited political prioritization, institutional fragmentation, statistical gaps and resource constraints – while presenting concrete examples of progress in areas such as digital payments, trust frameworks, skills development and connectivity. Featuring case studies from Cambodia, Kenya and Vanuatu (see Box 2), the report highlights diverse reform pathways and underscores the importance of UNCTAD's support to member States to accelerate reforms and harness e-commerce and digital trade for inclusive and sustainable development.

The 4th eTrade implementation review highlighted notable advances in establishing e-commerce strategies and governance frameworks, strengthening coordination mechanisms and enhancing monitoring capacities



Box 2

National leadership driving e-commerce outcomes: translating e-commerce priorities into results

Recent developments in Cambodia, Kenya and Vanuatu highlight how sustained national ownership and coordinated can translate e-commerce priorities into concrete outcomes. In Cambodia, rapid government-led digitalization is reshaping economic participation. Nationwide QR-code payments now reach hundreds of millions of transactions, and the Bakong instant payment system has expanded its cross-border functionality, helping reduce transfer costs and improve financial inclusion for small traders and consumers. Government-backed digital platforms, such as the national data exchange platform (CamDX) and the national single window, are streamlining administrative processes, accelerating formalization and opening new channels for MSMEs to engage in domestic and international markets.

In Kenya, rapid growth of mobile connectivity and fintech innovation is now matched with strengthened governance for e-commerce. The National E-commerce Strategy launched in 2023 has helped shape a more inclusive ecosystem, with measures being implemented in relation to new coordination structures enabling faster implementation of digital reforms, accessibility guidelines for ICT applications, and consumer protection. Improved accessibility and targeted skills initiatives are expanding opportunities for women, youth and persons with disabilities to participate in online trade. Alongside these government-backed initiatives, Kenya's strong private sector engagement continues to generate new solutions for MSMEs, from affordable digital shops to expanded mobile-money services.

In Vanuatu, strong institutions, local innovation and effective regional partnerships have enabled the country to emerge as a regional leader in digital transformation. The E-commerce Unit established within the Ministry of Trade and Commerce and the National E-commerce Committee are ensuring coherent implementation of strategic priorities, while local initiatives – such as V-Lab's incubator programmes and V-IDEA's technical training – are equipping entrepreneurs with practical digital skills. Annual national digital events involving both the public and private sector, including the E-commerce Symposium and the expanded Digital Week, are helping to sustain momentum, broaden stakeholder engagement and foster a culture of innovation.

Source: UNCTAD, 2025.

27 See <https://unctad.org/news/mind-gap-getting-digital-ready-shared-prosperity>.

Rollout of the eTrade Reform Tracker

In 2025, UNCTAD significantly expanded its support to partner countries adopting the eTrade Reform Tracker (eTRT) to coordinate, monitor and accelerate the implementation of e-commerce and digital economy reforms. License agreements were signed with Fiji, Kenya, Mauritania, Peru, Samoa, and Solomon Islands, with Fiji, Peru, Samoa and Solomon Islands advancing substantially in its deployment. Technical training activities have enabled national focal points to begin cascading training to line ministries and agencies responsible for individual measures, strengthening whole-of-government understanding, ownership and accountability. As the four

most advanced countries in using the tool, Fiji, Peru, Samoa and Solomon Islands participated in a joint Pacific–Peru online workshop in December, bringing together key national administrators/focal points and M&E experts for experience sharing, exchange on good practices as well as challenges, and sharing of lessons learned in deploying the tool at national level.

Other countries and organizations that have expressed interest in adopting the tool include Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Indonesia, Jordan, Trinidad and Tobago, Zimbabwe and the ECOWAS Commission. Sensitization workshops were organized for the E-Commerce Committees of several of these countries (or organizations) throughout the year.



ECOWAS e-commerce meeting and eTrade for Women joint workshop organized with the financial support of Afreximbank and ECDE Programme core donors. Lagos, Nigeria, 15 July 2025

These activities deepened institutional capacities, fostered peer learning, and contributed to the uptake of the Tracker

as a shared framework for advancing implementation, monitoring progress and reinforcing transparency and accountability.

Technical cooperation on digital economy measurement

Working closely with partners including other international organizations and parts of the United Nations, the ECDE Programme conducts technical cooperation activities across three key areas of measurement: e-commerce, digital trade, and the digital economy (including ICT usage in enterprises). Cross-country (e.g. regional) **capacity building** is most common, consisting of in-person regional workshops with a relatively standardized format and content. Tailored **technical assistance** and focused on the specific needs of individual beneficiaries is also

offered. This is usually delivered on a bilateral basis and can include stakeholder workshops, training, conducting situational assessments and proposing actions, support with implementing action plans, etc.

Capacity building workshops

In 2025, the Programme led or contributed to the delivery of four regional workshops introducing key concepts and measurement guidance set out in the IMF-OECD-UNCTAD-WTO Handbook on Measuring Digital Trade (Table 1). The workshops primarily targeted statistical practitioners from National Statistical Offices and Central Banks, with some participants from other relevant ministries or agencies.

Table 1:
Overview of regional workshops on measuring digital trade in 2025

When	Where	Target audience	Participants (women)	Countries	Partners
February	Trinidad	CARICOM members	37 (24)	15	Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), WTO
July	Chile	Latin America	37 (19)	15	IDB, IMF, OECD, UNECLAC, WTO
August	Fiji	Pacific Island Countries	27 (17)	10	IMF, UNSD, The Pacific Community (SPC)
December	Kenya	COMESA members	30 (16)	16	COMESA Secretariat, WTO
Total			131 (76)	56	

Remote contributions by expert practitioners allowed participants to learn from the real-world experiences of those actively working on digital trade statistics. Valued contributors included Statistics Canada, China Customs, the Central Bank of Costa Rica, Banque de France, Reserve Bank of India, Bank of

Namibia, and the Electronic Transactions Development Authority of Thailand.

Feedback showed that participants found these workshops engaging and relevant but also highlighted the need for further support to turn learning into action.



Workshop on Measuring Digital Trade for Pacific Island Countries, Suva, Fiji, August 2025



Workshop on Measuring Digital Trade for COMESA members, Nairobi, Kenya, December 2025

Bilateral technical assistance

In May 2025, UNCTAD and National Competitiveness Center (NCC) of the **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** signed a cooperation agreement to enhance statistics on e-commerce.²⁸ As well as support for UNCTAD's methodology development work in the **TG-eCOM**, this includes a “domestic track” with the aim of developing robust and comprehensive statistics on e-commerce in Saudi Arabia. In November, a first mission to Riyadh took place to raise awareness of the initiative among stakeholders across government, assess existing statistical infrastructure, and allow discussions on user needs and data sources for measuring e-commerce. The project is expected to take around two to three years to deliver in full.

Following a request from the **Fiji** Bureau

of Statistics (FBOS), UNCTAD provided technical assistance to support the measurement of e-commerce and the digital economy in Fiji. This multi-phase initiative aims to develop a robust set of indicators, aligned with global best practice, to track key aspects of digital economy development. Phase 1 commenced with an in-person consultation and workshop during August, which assessed the current situation, established a set of priority indicators, and outlined a work plan for the next stages of implementation. The Phase I report was submitted to FBOS in October, and FBOS subsequently submitted an official request for Phase 2 support to implement its recommendations.

28 <https://unctad.org/news/measuring-e-commerce-unctad-work-gets-funding-boost-saudi-arabia>



Meeting of the National E-commerce Council of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 1 February 2026

The ECDE Programme also contributed to an online course on Statistics on the Digital Economy, E-Commerce, and Digital Trade for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This was delivered by the

UNCTAD TrainForTrade Programme to 261 participants (including 159 women) from 37 countries or territories.²⁹

For Small Island Developing States like mine - Jamaica - digital trade offers tremendous opportunities to enhance our economic resilience, diversify our markets and deepen our integration into the global trading system. Doing so requires robust and timely data. This course offered not only an introduction to the theoretical framework needed to better understand what statistics can be used to support our policymaking but allowed for knowledge exchanges among other officials working in the subject matter(...)

— Ms. Roshelle Henry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and Foreign Trade of Jamaica

”

²⁹ 131 participants (including 75 women) from 27 countries received a certificate of course completion.



eTrade for Women: scaling women's leadership in the digital economy to shift ecosystems

When women digital entrepreneurs gain access to knowledge, networks, and visibility, the entire ecosystem shifts. Among eTrade for Women beneficiaries,

women who once faced structural barriers to growth are now scaling beyond their borders, creating jobs, and contributing to the digital transformation of their regions.

Through [the support provided by] eTrade for Women, we almost doubled our revenue within a year, reaching 250,000 USD at the end of 2024. This year we started expanding our operations from Colombia to Peru and strengthened our impact to reach one million students.

— Ms. Luceny Montañez, Founder of DataSchool, Colombia

Shaping more inclusive digital ecosystems

In 2025, eTrade for Women strengthened its role as a platform for elevating women's voices in national, regional and global digital policy processes. Through the engagement of its Advocates, Community Leaders, and

members, the initiative informed high-level dialogue, contributed to policy debates and advanced evidence-based approaches to more inclusive digital economies.

The eTrade for Women Advocates brought the perspectives of women digital entrepreneurs to major multilateral forums. Their contributions spanned across

the WSIS Focus Group on the Digital Economy (January), the MERCOSUR SME Digital Transformation Webinar (August), the WTO Public Forum (September), and the WIPO Cross-Regional Women Entrepreneurship Forum as well as UNCTAD's 16th Ministerial Conference

(October). Across these platforms, Advocates highlighted the transformative potential of digital technologies for women-led businesses, while underscoring persistent barriers and calling for more enabling and resilient ecosystems.



Community Leaders and members also enriched policy dialogues throughout the year, contributing to the inaugural Trade Union Trade Talks (February), the EpiASEAN Women in Public Affairs

Exhibition in Jakarta (March), and the eTrade for Women–ECOWAS Joint Workshop in Lagos (July). Their interventions reinforced the importance of integrating women entrepreneurs' lived experiences into national and regional policymaking.



Building the digital economies of tomorrow begins with unlocking the full potential of women entrepreneurs today. We are helping digital businesses thrive, removing barriers, sparking innovation, and widening the path for inclusive growth. A more equitable digital future is not just imaginable: it's already taking shape.

— Ms. Hilda Moraa, Founder of Pezesha, Kenya, and eTrade for Women Advocate for English-speaking Africa

Nurturing the next generation of digital leaders

Two in-person Masterclasses were organized for women entrepreneurs at key stages of business growth: one

for Latin America and the Caribbean in Bogotá (April) and one for Southeast Asia and the Pacific in Manila (November). Together, they convened 46 digital entrepreneurs from 16 countries, fostering

dynamic learning environments rooted in peer exchange and regional insight.

Participants engaged in sessions on investment readiness, digital marketing, artificial intelligence, and other strategic topics, complemented by practical exercises and leadership dialogues with more experienced entrepreneurs,

including eTrade for Women Advocates. Each Masterclass also featured an in-person Community gathering, enabling participants to connect with Community Leaders and network members to share good practices and strengthen regional entrepreneurial networks.



Participants in the Masterclass with H.E. Ms. Reina Buijs, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and members of the Latin America and Caribbean Community, Bogotá, Colombia, April 2025

The eTrade for Women Masterclass was a transformative experience, deepening my understanding of digital transformation, branding, customer analytics, and leadership. Connecting with brilliant women founders across South-East Asia and the Pacific was inspiring, opening real pathways for collaboration as Timor-Leste enters the ASEAN and Pacific digital economy. I return ready to apply these insights to grow TimorGetaway and to help strengthen a regional community of women entrepreneurs who uplift and learn from one another.

– Ms. Flora Brytes, Founder & CEO, TimorGetaway, Timor-Leste





Participants in the Masterclass and members of the Southeast Asia and the Pacific Community, Manila, Philippines, November 2025

Australia is pleased to continue its partnership with UNCTAD as a core donor of the E-Commerce and Digital Economy Programme. The programme aligns strongly with Australia's trade and development priorities of inclusive and sustainable development in our region and the widespread implementation of global e-commerce rules. We are especially proud to support eTrade for Women and its Masterclasses for women entrepreneurs from South and Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Other highlights of Australia's partnership with UNCTAD include our support for Indonesia's recent eTrade Readiness Assessment and for an e-commerce needs assessment for The Gambia, relevant to its consideration of the WTO E-Commerce Agreement. These activities are vital to unlocking and optimising the benefits of digital trade and e-commerce globally, and especially to enhancing women's economic equality and opening up new markets for MSMEs.

— **Mr. James Baxter PSM, Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the WTO, UNCTAD and WIPO**



Participating in the SIIA Summit gave me the opportunity to pitch my company before international investors. I gained visibility and built connections that could accelerate our growth beyond Indonesia.

— Ms. Violy Purnamasari, Founder of Sirsak, Indonesia



The initiative also strengthened pathways to international visibility and investment. With support from ERIA, two community members — Violy Purnamasari (Sirsak, Indonesia) and Chigozie Bashua (The Nut Place, Nigeria) — took part in the Swiss Impact Investment Association (SIIA) Summit in Lausanne on 3 October 2025.³⁰

They pitched their businesses to global investors, explored new partnerships, and accessed mentoring and visibility opportunities that expanded their professional networks.

The eTrade for Women Academy continued to grow with the launch of two new self-paced online courses focused on enhancing customer experience and refining business pitching strategies. The courses were tailored to the needs of community members through highly customized content.

Strengthening Communities for greater collective impact

In 2025, the eTrade for Women Communities welcomed 100 new members, bringing the total number to over 400, and expanded opportunities for regional collaboration and collective empowerment across 65 countries. Throughout the year, Community Leaders facilitated 20 regional online sessions, providing trusted spaces where entrepreneurs shared practical insights, exchanged solutions to business challenges, and learned from one another's experiences. To strengthen national-level engagement, the Latin America and Caribbean Community piloted national gatherings in Buenos Aires, Bogotá, and Quito. Led by Community Leaders, these in-person meetings deepened relationships, welcomed prospective members, and demonstrated the value of community-driven support for women digital entrepreneurs.

30 See more at <https://siia.ch/siia-summit-lausanne-2025.html>.



Box 3 Impact of the 2024 China Study Tour

In November 2024, UNCTAD's eTrade for Women initiative brought together 31 women digital entrepreneurs from 12 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Balkans for a 10-day Study Tour of Beijing and Shanghai's leading digital players. Organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) of the People's Republic of China and the Academy for International Business Officials (AIBO), the tour enabled hands-on exposure to some of China's most dynamic digital businesses and one of the world's most advanced innovation ecosystems.

A follow-up survey of participants in July 2025 highlighted the tour's transformative effect. All respondents had reportedly implemented concrete actions - ranging from AI integration to launching a digital content distribution platform - while 95% reported measurable improvement in their business performance, such as reduced operational costs (up to 50%), expanded customer base, and increased revenue.

The tour also sparked cross-border collaboration: 7 participants forged partnerships with Chinese companies while 14 strengthened business ties with peers from the cohort. All participants said they would recommend the tour, citing it as a turning point for scaling their businesses and leadership impact.

Source: UNCTAD, 2025.

Building on these results, UNCTAD, in collaboration with MOFCOM and AIBO, delivered a second edition of the Study Tour from 15 to 28 September 2025, taking 31 women digital entrepreneurs from 12 developing countries on a 14-day learning journey across Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou.

Through knowledge sessions, site visits, leadership talks – including with female senior leaders - and participation in the 4th Global Digital Trade Expo, participants gained first-hand insights into China's fast-evolving digital and AI landscape. Sessions with leading enterprises such as Tencent, Alibaba, and JD Logistics deepened understanding of e-commerce innovation, AI applications, and business scalability.

The programme yet again emphasized South-South cooperation, linking entrepreneurs across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Balkans to foster collaboration and learning. All participants rated the tour as very or extremely useful, with 100% planning concrete follow-up actions — from AI

adoption to new business partnerships with China and fellow participants.

The China Study Tour empowered women entrepreneurs to turn digital innovation into global opportunities - expand market access, forge new partnerships, and shape a more inclusive digital economy.

The study tour was a truly enriching experience. What I liked the most was seeing how technology is used in every aspect of life in China from digital payments to advanced e-commerce and logistics systems. The company visits [...] showed how innovation and technology can make businesses more efficient and scalable. I also enjoyed the knowledge exchange sessions, especially those focused on AI and women's entrepreneurship, which gave me practical ideas I can apply back home... The best part was the combination of learning, networking, and cultural exchange.

— participant in the 2025 China Study Tour



Watch the highlight [video](#).



Participants in the 2025 China Study Tour with Mr. Chen Runyan, Vice President of China's Academy for International Business Officials (AIBO), and the UNCTAD team, Beijing, China, September 2025

Looking Ahead

Entering 2026, eTrade for Women will continue amplifying women's voices in global digital policymaking and supporting women-led businesses in building more inclusive digital ecosystems. The initiative will expand tailored support for business scaling, strengthen the Academy with more personalized learning pathways, and deepen its evidence-based policy work, particularly

in Asia and the Pacific, while continuing to foster stronger entrepreneurial communities across the Global South.



Building consensus

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

The 8th session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGE) on E-commerce and the Digital Economy took place on 12–14 May, focussing on making digitalization work for inclusive and sustainable development. Chaired by Kenya, the session underscored that, while digital technologies can accelerate growth and inclusion, the environmental footprint of their entire life cycle – from growing transition mineral demand, energy and water use to digital-related waste and emissions – must be addressed. This is especially the case for developing countries that face disproportionate burdens as the most affected by environmental degradation, yet the least in a position to fully harness digital tools for their development.

Discussions highlighted the uneven value capture in transition mineral supply chains,

the need for stronger governance of environmental impacts and better access to technology and financing, and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Panellists examined the fast-growing impacts of AI and data centres and pointed to the importance of sustainability by design, transparent and verifiable data on multidimensional environmental impacts, and technological alternatives. Further, speakers explored digitalization-related waste challenges and circular economy solutions, including extended producer responsibility, formalization of informal sectors, tighter cross-border controls and stronger incentives for repair, reuse and recycling.

Member States and panellists called for coherent national digital strategies that take the environmental dimension fully into account, strengthened regulatory and institutional frameworks, sustained stakeholder engagement, capacity building and robust monitoring of the ICT sector. Scaled-up international

support and cooperation remain essential to close digital divides, curb environmental risks and ensure that the

digital transformation advances equity, resilience and sustainable development.

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

- *Invites Governments and the international community to promote international cooperation, including through financial resources mobilizations, capacity-building and technology innovation, and to develop and implement policies that can help countries better face the challenges posed by digital transformation and environmental sustainability, while balancing them with benefits;*
- *Encourages Governments, in consultation with other stakeholders, to consider environmental objectives in digitalization policies, and digital dimensions in environmental policies;*
- *Encourages Governments and relevant stakeholders to promote responsible and sustainable production and consumption and strengthen circularity in the digital economy;*

[...]

Excerpted from the set of policy recommendations agreed at the 8th session of the IGE

Rapid digitalization, booming digital trade, chronic data and digital divides, and the commitments emanating from the Summit of the Future have added urgency to building a solid base of evidence from developing countries

Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy (WG-ECDE)

The 6th meeting of the WG-ECDE (4-5 December 2025, Geneva) once more gathered experts to discuss progress in e-commerce and digital economy measurement by international organizations, the measurement of e-commerce value, related capacity building experiences, needs, and offers, and also launched the review process for the core indicators on the use of ICT by businesses and on the ICT sector. A total of 111 participants from 42 countries and 15 international and non-governmental organizations registered for the meeting, 46% of whom were women. The meeting, chaired by Costa Rica,

recommended that UNCTAD continue efforts to improve the measurement of e-commerce and the digital economy by engaging with other international organizations and national statistical offices in future meetings of the WG-ECDE.³¹ A new Task Group was established and a widespread consultation launched to update the core indicators on ICT business and the ICT sector. Finally, the WG-ECDE recognized the pressure that developing countries face to improve the measurement of the digital economy and the availability of relevant statistics to guide digital policy making. The development of statistical methodology and related capacity building and technical assistance requires stronger support from the international community.

31 See <https://unctad.org/news/stronger-statistics-measure-e-commerce-and-digital-economy>.

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

The TG-eCOM comprises over 80 participants with hands-on expertise of e-commerce measurement from 33 Member States and International Organizations. It is convened and facilitated by UNCTAD as a forum for detailed technical discussions and experience sharing on e-commerce measurement and for the development of international guidelines and recommendations on measuring e-commerce value.

The Task Group continued its work throughout 2025, holding online discussions on social media and selling online, digitally ordered trade, business e-commerce purchasing, and electronic data interchange (EDI) e-commerce.

In December, a two-day in-person meeting was held in Geneva, hosted by the WTO. Discussions focused on the analysis, contextualization, and dissemination of e-commerce statistics, and the issue of online orders not meeting the definition of e-commerce. Also highlighted were the importance of developing guidance on measuring the value of e-commerce and the crucial role of financial support from Saudi Arabia in enabling the meeting to take place and resourcing UNCTAD to facilitate the Task Group.³²

The Group reviewed the draft Guidelines and Recommendations on Measuring E-commerce Value, providing extensive feedback and proposals for further additions to be incorporated before they are finalized and published as a first edition in 2026. The meeting benefited from 15 presentations from participants and active engagement throughout.



In-person meeting of the TG-eCOM, Geneva, Switzerland, 2-3 December 2025.

32 <https://unctad.org/news/measuring-e-commerce-unctad-work-gets-funding-boost-saudi-arabia>



Fostering collaboration

eTrade for all: connecting the dots for inclusive digital economies



The *eTrade for all* initiative remains a key global

partnership dedicated to empowering developing countries to harness digital transformation for sustainable and inclusive development. Since its launch in 2016 at UNCTAD14 with 15 founding members, the initiative has grown steadily to include 36 partners - international organizations, regional development banks, civil society, and national agencies, all united by the shared vision that concerted global efforts and enhanced cooperation are required to achieve an inclusive digital economy. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) became the newest member in late 2025.

Aligned with the [Global Digital Compact \(GDC\)](#), particularly principles (f) and (l), *eTrade for all* continued to expand knowledge through its dedicated [information hub](#), and

to offer opportunities to leverage partners' expertise in joint projects and activities.

The online platform underwent a full redesign, with a new interface and updated content reflecting current developments in the digital economy. This ensures that developing countries continue to have access to reliable, timely information and resources in their digital transformation journey.



2,000+
New Uploads

News, events, courses, podcasts, publications



11 Newsletters

Reaching
5,100 subscribers

Regularly updated news, events and publications from various partners are complemented by revised partner profiles that facilitate understanding of each partner's mandate, main activities, and projects in e-commerce and the digital economy. Information continues to be available in English, French and Spanish.

Key new feature: Country Profiles

A major feature in the platform's upgrade in 2025 was Country Profiles, which provide easy-to-navigate, data-driven insights on the

state of e-commerce and digital readiness of 193 countries, with the possibility to compare up to four countries at once.



Each profile offers:

- Dynamic and visually accessible indicators across the [key policy areas of the initiative](#)
- Downloadable, easily sharable factsheets
- Consolidated resources from partners

The partnership in action

The initiative continued to foster dialogue and collaboration among its partners through both in-person and online engagements. An in-person gathering in Geneva in February brought together 14 Switzerland-based partner organizations to reconnect and identify ways to further strengthen cooperation, while four online thematic briefings enabled interactive exchanges on new publications and platform updates. Beyond presenting new knowledge resources, these briefings fostered direct engagement among partners and served as a practical platform to share experiences, identify synergies between

ongoing initiatives, and explore possible collaborations in areas of mutual interest.

As a result, 21 *eTrade for all* partners contributed to UNCTAD-led technical cooperation and capacity-building projects, research, and support for intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder dialogue throughout the year, according to their respective mandates. This included 14 partners supporting eTrade Readiness Assessments, e-commerce strategies and their implementation, 6 contributing to eTrade for Women activities, 5 involved in research, analysis and statistics, and 8 engaging in various digital for development cooperation processes (Table 2).

Since their launch in June 2025, the Country Profiles have become one of the platform's most consulted features



Table 2:
eTrade for all partners' contributions to UNCTAD-led activities
in 2025

Partner	eTrade Readiness (assessments, strategies and implementation, including legal assistance)	eTrade for Women	Research, analysis and measurement	Digital for Development (GDC, WSIS, G20, BRICS)
Commonwealth Secretariat	X			
DCO	X			X
ERIA	X	X		
ICAO	X			
IDB	X			
ILO			X	X
ITC	X	X		X
ITU			X	X
PIF	X	X	X	
South Centre	X			
UNCDF	X			
UNCITRAL	X		X	
UNECA		X		
UNECLAC	X	X		
UNESCAP	X			
UNESCWA				X
UNIDO				X
UPU	X			X
WBG	X			
WIPO		X		
WTO			X	X



The eTrade for all partnership is highly valued by its members, as an expert-level networking and information sharing hub which creates interesting collaboration opportunities.

— from the report on the independent evaluation of UNCTAD's ECDE Programme³³



Implementation of the Global Digital Compact



Following the adoption of the GDC in September 2024, UNCTAD

contributed actively to its early implementation. In 2025, UNCTAD served as Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Digital Technologies (WGDT) and is co-leading two substantive workstreams: Objective 2, on expanding inclusion in and benefits from the digital economy (together with UNIDO), and Objective 4, on advancing responsible, equitable and interoperable data governance (together with UNU).

The ECDE Programme focused in particular on Objective 2, an inclusive digital economy. As co-lead of this sub-group, UNCTAD coordinated the preparation of a detailed workplan that set out milestones, deliverables, and modalities for supporting countries in building an inclusive digital economy. Together with UNIDO, UNCTAD co-organized a Global Call for Solutions for an Inclusive Digital Economy, aimed at identifying and scaling up innovative approaches from across sectors. During the UN General Assembly High-Level Week, UNCTAD also co-organized two multi-stakeholder side events – one with ODET and one with UNIDO – to promote dialogue on practical pathways for implementing GDC commitments in developing countries.

As part of this work, UNCTAD supported the development and launch of the United



Nations Digital Cooperation Portal, in close collaboration with the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies and UNIDO.³⁴ The Portal, launched in December 2025, provides a global overview of digital cooperation initiatives and supports the implementation of the GDC by improving transparency, coordination and alignment across the United Nations system and beyond. UNCTAD contributed to the design of the initiative-mapping methodology and, together with UNIDO co-led the development of the thematic framework for Objective 2 on the inclusive digital economy. Through AI-enabled tools, the Portal helps stakeholders identify relevant initiatives, connect across sectors and align activities with globally agreed frameworks, including the Pact for the Future, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society.

WSIS+20 Review and high-level events



In an address to the General Assembly during the WSIS+20

High-Level Event, 16-17 December, Torbjörn Fredriksson, Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD's Division on Technology and Logistics, highlighted the organization's commitment to an inclusive and sustainable digital economy. He underscored the need to adopt policies

³³ Independent programme evaluation: UNCTAD's E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme (2025)

³⁴ See <https://unctad.org/news/un-launches-new-portal-digital-cooperation>.

Developing countries need to adopt policies and strategies in the short term to help secure both inclusive and sustainable development outcomes in the long term

and strategies in the short term to help secure both inclusive and sustainable development outcomes in the long term.

The outcome document on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS (A/RES/80/173) was adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly. The resolution

recognizes that “without the appropriate and adequate provision of means of implementation, the rapid pace and scale of digitalization may outpace the ability and readiness of some countries to adapt to digital transformation and its subsequent social and economic challenges”.



Mr. Torbjörn Fredriksson, Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD's Division on Technology and Logistics, addressing the UN General Assembly during the WSIS+20 High-Level Event, New York, United States of America, 16-17 December 2025.

UNCTAD actively contributed to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20 High-level event in July, including as co-facilitator with ITC and the UPU of the WSIS action line on e-business. ITC, UNCTAD, and UPU jointly organized a session on e-business that discussed how UN agencies can improve digital cooperation and the alignment of implementation of the WSIS action lines and GDC commitments related to e-business, e-commerce and

the digital economy. Such cooperation should also support progress towards the SDGs and digital inclusion. UNCTAD also co-organized with the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development a session on the importance of improving the evidence base on digital development to support the implementation and monitoring of progress of WSIS action lines and the outcomes of the Summit of the Future.



WSIS+20 High-level event session on Building an inclusive digital economy: The role of the WSIS e-business action line and the Global Digital Compact (ITC/UNCTAD/UPU), 8 July 2025. Photo credit: ITU.

As part of the 2025 ECOSOC Partnership Forum, UNCTAD also contributed to a WSIS+20 side event on Building a Digital Future for All, which underscored the critical role of the WSIS process in fostering inclusive digital transformation and advancing digital governance and global cooperation.

United Nations Group on the Information Society

The United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) is the primary inter-agency mechanism within the UN system for promoting policy coherence and coordination on digital issues. It comprises 31 member organizations and 17 observers. In July 2025, UNCTAD

assumed the Chairmanship of the Group for the 2025–2026 period.

Under UNCTAD's leadership, UNGIS played an active role in the [WSIS+20 Review process](#), including contributing to inter-agency coordination. The outcome document on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS (A/RES/80/173) reaffirmed the continued relevance of UNGIS and called for the strengthening of its role in supporting digital cooperation across the UN system: *"121. We call for the continuation and strengthening of the work of the United Nations Group on the Information Society [...] We invite the Group to enhance its agility, efficiency and effectiveness and expand its membership with further United Nations entities, with*

The WSIS+20 Outcome reaffirmed the continued relevance of UNGIS and invited it to expand its membership

a view to fostering multistakeholder dialogue, partnership-building and review of progress on digital cooperation.”

The resolution also welcomed the mapping matrix prepared by UNGIS linking the GDC to the WSIS architecture, and requested UNGIS - together with Action Line Facilitators and consistent with ECOSOC guidance - to develop a joint implementation roadmap for submission to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) in 2026.

In response, and to strengthen its future role, UNCTAD launched a Chair-led review of UNGIS to mark its 20th anniversary in 2026. The UNGIS@20 review will assess the Group’s coordination function and identify options to enhance its contribution in the context of both the WSIS+20 outcomes and GDC implementation. As part of this effort, a structured member survey and report will be prepared during the Chairmanship, with findings to be finalized ahead of the handover in mid-2026.

Digital cooperation for development



Under the
South African
Presidency of the
G20, UNCTAD

provided inputs to the Digital Economy Working Group and the Task Force on Artificial Intelligence, Data Governance and Innovation for Sustainable Development. The support focused on shaping the background documents in areas connected to UNCTAD’s work, especially on the inclusive digital economy and work linked to CSTD Working group on data governance at all levels. Furthermore, UNCTAD contributed to a high-level workshop on data governance and artificial intelligence, co-organized by the Presidency, the African Union and Research ICT Africa. It offered G20 members and invited guests the opportunity to discuss the role of data governance in promoting equitable access to quality inputs for AI development, while respecting national

priorities, an issue that was also reflected in the Chair’s summary of the Task Force.

In the framework of its cooperation with the WTO, UNCTAD contributed to a Committee on Trade and Development dedicated session on small economies (March), a roundtable on E-Commerce: Key insights for least developed countries and Small Island Developing States (June), the WTO Public Forum, which in 2025 focused on digital trade, the Enhanced Integrated Framework High-Level Platform for LDC Partnerships (September), and the first Trade in Services for Development Global Conference (December).

A side event to the 8th session of the [Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and Digital Economy](#) was organized together with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in May. Featuring the UNCTAD Secretary-General, the Vice-Minister of Commerce of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN in Geneva and a vice-President of Alibaba, the event allowed for an exchange of views on issues related to policymaking for e-commerce, including with respect to inclusive economic growth and environmental sustainability. It also highlighted the need to improve global governance on e-commerce and to strengthen measurement in this area.

From a regional perspective, UNCTAD, under the Pacific Digital Economy Programme, continued its engagement with the Pacific Regional E-commerce Alliance (PacificEcom) and Pacific E-commerce Committee. PacificEcom brings together organizations involved in delivering projects aligned with the Pacific Regional E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap, while the Committee provides strategic oversight, coordination and monitoring of their implementation.

In Africa, UNCTAD contributed to a capacity building workshop on the use of digital technologies under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to foster intra-African trade and regional

value chains, co-organized by UNECA and TradeMark Africa. UNCTAD also participated in a meeting on the ECOWAS E-commerce Strategy – one of five topical meetings on *Regional interventions towards*

economic integration in West Africa convened in November by the ECOWAS Commission through its Department of Economic Affairs and Agriculture.



Participants in the capacity building workshop on the use of digital technologies under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to foster intra-African trade and regional value chains, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, 25-27 November 2025



Meeting on the ECOWAS E-commerce Strategy, ECOWAS Parliament, Abuja, Nigeria, 26 November 2025

Lastly, UNCTAD contributed to the work of the OECD Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT) on measuring

development finance for digitalization, from a digital trade perspective.

Goals and objectives for 2026 and beyond

In line with UNCTAD's co-leadership [role of Objective 2 of the GDC](#), work is underway on the Digital Economy and Innovation Report 2026/27. It aims to identify key barriers to advancing digital inclusion in the context of economic participation, especially from a developing country perspective, and provide evidence-based policy recommendations toward a digital economy that fosters equitable participation and benefits congruent with development outcomes.

In the area of e-trade readiness, the Programme's main objectives include new eT Readies and e-commerce strategies (e.g., for Tunisia) as well as sustained implementation support. This concerns capacity building and coordination support for advancing digital trade reforms (e.g., for Côte d'Ivoire), dedicated workshops for the eTrade focal points and stakeholders in partner countries and scaling up deployment of the eTrade Reform Tracker. The Programme also aims to expand its work on digital trade readiness in addition to e-commerce.

eTrade for Women will continue acting as a global initiative advancing inclusive digital economies, by strengthening its work across advocacy and policy dialogue, community building, and empowerment activities and by expanding tailored business-level support to help women-led digital enterprises grow, access investment and new markets. The initiative will appoint new Advocates across French- and English-speaking Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. With their support, three regional Masterclasses will be organized, and a pilot customized investment-readiness programme will be launched in South Asia. Preparatory research work into the barriers to women digital entrepreneurs will be carried out in Asia. The initiative will continue leveraging strategic partnerships to enhance the visibility, outreach and impact of its core activities.

The 9th session of the IGE on E-commerce

and the Digital Economy will be held on 11-13 May 2026 on the topic "Strengthening fiscal revenues in developing countries in the context of e-commerce and digital trade". The Programme will organize the 7th meeting of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy as well as meetings of the TG-eCOM, which is expected to launch the new Guidelines and Recommendations on measuring e-commerce value, ahead of their planned endorsement by the UN Statistical Commission in 2027. A new Task Group on Core Indicators (TGCi) on ICT use by businesses and on the ICT sector will begin work on updating the core indicators to ensure their continued policy relevance.

Also in the area of statistics, technical assistance will continue on the measurement of e-commerce in Saudi Arabia and on the production of digital economy statistics in Fiji. A Development Account project for better statistics on digital services trade for gender-responsive trade policies in Asia and the Pacific is also underway jointly with the Statistics Service and other parts of UNCTAD.

This work is expected to take place during challenging times of reduced budgetary and human resources in the wake of reforms implemented as part of the broader [UN80](#) initiative. Navigating this new context will require ensuring the effective handover of Programme management as well as sustaining existing and forging new partnerships.

The Programme will continue to seek synergies with eTrade for all and other partners for joint activities and greater impact. The *eTrade for all* initiative will mark its 10th anniversary and continue to act as a bridge builder for greater development impact from the digital economy.

Lastly, as chair of UNGIS until June 2026, UNCTAD through the ECDE Programme will lead follow-up actions related to the outcome of the WSIS+20 Review.

Programme management

Human resources

In 2025, the Programme was implemented by a team of 27 staff members, originating from 5 developing and 14 developed countries across all regions. These include 10 staff members funded through UNCTAD's regular budget (RB), 1 on secondment, and 16 funded through extra-budgetary (XB) contributions with contracts of various lengths, as well as 3 interns. Two-thirds of all staff members are women.

The Programme drew on the specific

skills and expertise of 15 consultants and 17 individual contractors, 47% of whom are women, 31% represent developing countries and 75% have more than 10 years' experience in their respective fields.

Financial information

A renewed partnership agreement with Switzerland signed during UNCTAD16 resulted in CHF 4 million committed in support of UNCTAD's work on e-commerce and the digital economy for development over 2025-29.³⁵



Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan (pictured right) and Monica Rubiolo, head of trade promotion at Switzerland's State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, take part in a signing ceremony held during UNCTAD16, Geneva, Switzerland, 21 October 2025.

Switzerland underscores its support to an environmentally sustainable digital economy and to strengthening the multilateral digital trading system.

— Ms. Monica Rubiolo, Head of Trade Promotion, Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

35 See <https://unctad.org/news/new-funding-switzerland-boost-inclusive-digital-economy>.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia committed \$ 1.4 million to improve measurement of e-commerce in the Kingdom and to help other countries bolster official e-commerce statistics and digital economy policymaking over the next three years.³⁶ Additional

funding from Australia enabled work on a pilot Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on e-commerce implementation assessment for the Gambia. A Junior Professional Officer sponsored by Finland joined the Programme team in September.

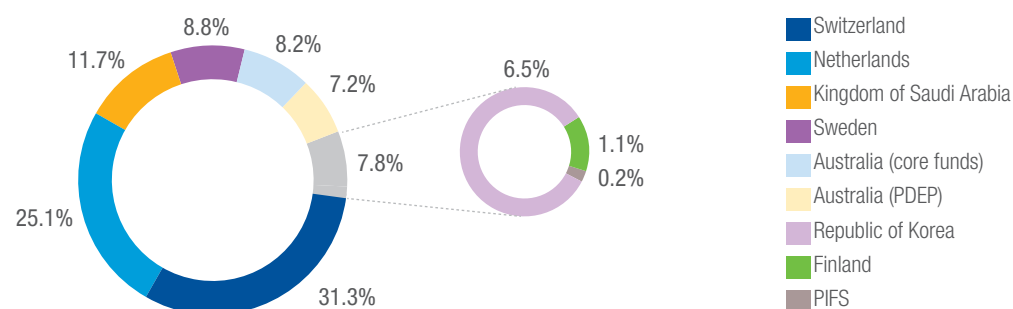


H.E. Dr. Eiman Al-Mutairi, Vice-Minister of Commerce and CEO of National Competitiveness Center of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan sign a cooperation agreement, Geneva Switzerland, 12 May 2025.

ECDE Programme interventions were funded by 8 different partners, for close to \$ 6 million in extra-budgetary funding. About two-thirds of these resources were provided by four core donors – namely Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. Contributions were also received from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Korea, Finland

and the PIFS (Figure 3). Financial and in-kind support was provided by the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) of China, China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA).

Figure 3
ECDE Programme funding partners, 2025



Source: UNCTAD. Includes funds committed by Switzerland in 2025 to be used also after 2025. Does not include funds committed by Afreximbank before 2025 and used in 2025.

³⁶ See <https://unctad.org/news/measuring-e-commerce-unctad-work-gets-funding-boost-saudi-arabia>.

The UN's Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC) in 2025 covered the equivalent of six months of staff personnel costs at the P3 level. The Programme's

total obligated extra-budgetary expenditure in 2025 amounted to approx. \$ 4.8 million. A breakdown by programme component and type is provided in Table 3 below.

 **Table 3:**
ECDE Programme obligated extra-budgetary expenditure by programme component and type, 2025

2025	Staff and other personnel costs (including consultants)	Travel	Contractual Services	Operating and Other Direct Costs	Transfers and Grants Issued to Implement	UN-PSC	Grand Total
eTrade for Women	16.44%	1.94%	0.67%	0.44%			19.49%
Pacific Digital Economy Programme	10.92%	0.65%	1.87%	0.40%	0.38%		14.22%
eTrade Readiness	10.00%	1.92%	1.19%	0.68%			13.79%
E-Commerce Strategies	10.46%	0.44%	0.33%	0.15%			11.38%
Measurement	7.40%	1.54%		0.01%			8.95%
Management (including M&E)	7.53%	0.51%	0.47%	0.01%			8.52%
eTrade for all	7.30%		0.17%				7.47%
Research	2.75%	0.01%	0.003%				2.77%
Multistakeholder dialogue	1.14%	0.47%	0.003%	0.04%			1.65%
IGE	0.28%	0.53%					0.80%
Programme support costs						10.96%	10.96%
Grand Total	74.21%	8.03%	4.70%	1.72%	0.38%	10.96%	100.00%

Source: UNCTAD; ECDE Programme's own analysis.

Monitoring, evaluation and transparency

A second independent evaluation of the ECDE Programme concluded in 2025. The evaluation covered the three-year period from 2022 to 2024 and included an assessment of progress since the previous evaluation as well as strategic recommendations for programme development.³⁷

The evaluation adopted a mixed-method approach that included close to 70 virtual and face-to-face individual interviews with representatives of governments (in capital as well as member State delegates from Permanent Missions in Geneva), the private sector (including members of the eTrade for Women network), civil society, donors, partners (*eTrade for all* and others), and UNCTAD management, split evenly between men and women; a 10-days field visit to Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal; and a survey of participants in intergovernmental meetings over the relevant period. Primary data was complemented by monitoring data collected over the period and direct observation of activities to enable better triangulation of findings.

The evaluation found the programme increasingly relevant to the needs and priorities of developing countries, noting a high level of satisfaction from beneficiaries and other stakeholders with the support provided and the quality of products delivered. There was also recognition of progress made since the previous evaluation in terms of enhanced coherence, outcomes across UNCTAD's three pillars, and cross-cutting issues. More concretely:

- The flagship Digital Economy Report was found to have been widely used and to have influenced policy developments, as evidenced by the strong focus on data governance in the GDC adopted in 2024, and by the

creation of a Multi-stakeholder Working Group on Data Governance at All Levels under the CSTD.

- eTrade Readiness Assessments have emerged as proven blueprints and have been instrumental in advancing the e-commerce and digital economy agenda within beneficiary countries.
- Methodological guides, technical assistance and capacity building on the production of statistics on the digital economy and trade have made important contributions to narrowing the gap in digital economy statistics.
- eTrade for Women Masterclasses have contributed to increased self-confidence, professional networks, and business growth among women digital entrepreneurs in developing countries.
- The IGE on E-commerce and the Digital Economy and Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy have been effective in generating new knowledge, fostering inclusive and interactive deliberations, and reaching agreement among member States on policy recommendations.

The evaluation report made several recommendations that were welcomed by Programme management, and a management response was prepared. The report will also feed into a broader evaluation of UNCTAD's subprogramme 4, to be conducted in 2026. A final evaluation of the Pacific Digital Economy Programme implemented jointly by UNCDF, UNCTAD and UNDP in the 2021-25 period is also planned for 2026.



To enhance transparency of activities and results, the Programme published a full set of data in the International Aid

37 See <https://unctad.org/publication/independent-programme-evaluation-unctads-e-commerce-and-digital-economy-programme>.

Transparency Initiative (IATI) data standard. The data reference activities published by the Programme's funding partners, thereby enhancing network transparency and strengthening mutual accountability.

Core Donor Advisory Board

The fifth meeting of the CDAB was held in May and provided an opportunity to discuss key findings and recommendations of the ECDE Programme evaluation, among other things. The sixth CDAB meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place in the second quarter of 2026.



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



REGERINGSKANSLIET

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Sweden**



**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands**



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

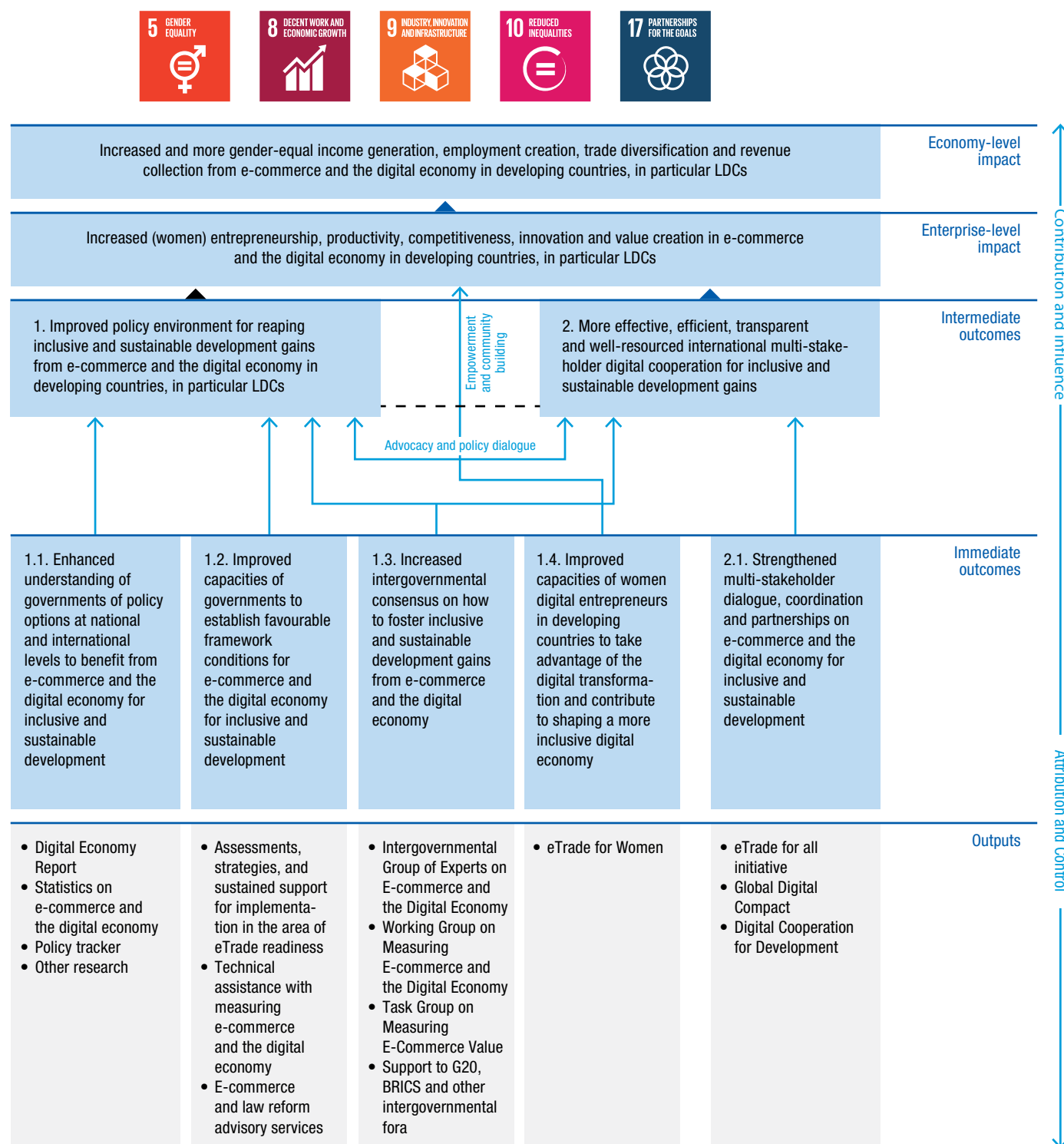
Swiss Confederation

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



Annexes

Annex 1. ECDE Programme Results Framework



Annex 2. ECDE Programme results indicators, 2025

Expected results	Indicators	Quantitative/ qualitative	Baseline 2024	Actual 2025	Target 2027
IMPACT (economy-level) Increased and more gender-equal income generation, employment creation, trade diversification and revenue collection from e-commerce and the digital economy in developing countries, in particular LDCs	Share (%) of digitally deliverable services in total services exports (disaggregated by development status (developed/developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs))	Quant	See table A below	See table A below	N/A
	Proportion of individuals (age 15+) using a mobile phone or the Internet to buy something online (latest available year, disaggregated by development status (developed/developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs), sex)		See Table B below	See tables B and B.1 below ³⁸	N/A
	[ICT 1] Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector (disaggregated by country)	Quant	See Table C below for developing countries	See Table C below for developing countries ³⁹	N/A
	[ICT 2] Value added in the ICT sector as a percentage of total business sector value added (disaggregated by country)	Quant	See Table C below for developing countries	See Table C below for developing countries ⁴⁰	N/A
IMPACT (enterprise-level) Increased (women) entrepreneurship, productivity, competitiveness, innovation and value creation in e-commerce and the digital economy in developing countries, in particular LDCs	[B7] Proportion (%) of businesses receiving orders over the internet (disaggregated by country)	Quant	See Table D below for developing countries	See Table D below for developing countries ⁴¹	N/A
	[B12_idel] Proportion (%) of businesses using the internet for delivering products online (disaggregated by country)	Quant	See Table D below for developing countries	See Table D below for developing countries ⁴²	N/A
	Revenue growth (in %) reported by women-led digital businesses supported by eTrade for Women within 12 months of the end of an activity	Qual	0	10-35% ⁴³	N/A

³⁸ Based on data from the World Bank's Global Findex Database, 2025 release (latest available).

³⁹ Data are only available for a handful of developing countries. Based on UNCTAD's Survey to National Statistical Offices 2021, 2023, 2024 and 2025. 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.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Range of the increase in revenue (in % terms) reported by 12 out of 20 participants in the 2024 China Study Tour for women digital entrepreneurs who responded to the questionnaire.

Expected results	Indicators	Quantitative/ qualitative	Baseline 2024	Actual 2025	Target 2027
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 1: Improved policy environment for reaping inclusive and sustainable development gains from e-commerce and the digital economy in developing countries, in particular LDCs	Share (%) of countries that have adopted laws and regulations related to e-commerce (disaggregated by law area and development status (developing/LDC) ⁴⁴	Quant			
	Developing economies				
	E-transaction		86%	90%	N/A
	Protection of consumers online		75%	61%	N/A
	Privacy and data protection		72%	79%	N/A
	Cybercrime		83%	90%	N/A
	Indirect taxation		N/A	50%	N/A
	LDCs				
	E-transaction		78%	80%	N/A
	Protection of consumers online		67%	39%	N/A
	Privacy and data protection		53%	57%	N/A
	Cybercrime		69%	73%	N/A
	Indirect taxation		N/A	23%	N/A
	Number of countries reporting progress in implementing measures recommended by eTrade Readiness Assessments and/or e-commerce strategies and action plans (disaggregated by developing/LDC) and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs)	Quant	25 ⁴⁵	31 ⁴⁶	30 (cumulative)
	Developing economies		25	31	
	LDCs		16	19	
	SIDS		6	6	
	LLDCs		9	11	
	Evidence of mainstreaming cross-cutting issues (e.g., gender equality, disability inclusion, environmental sustainability) in the implementation of e-trade policy recommendations	Qual	N/A	Yes	N/A

⁴⁴ Based on data from the UNCTAD Global Cyberlaw Tracker. Baseline shows 2023 figures. Figures released in 2025 are based on a narrower scope of legislation related to consumer protection online, which refers specifically to e-commerce. Figures in the consumer protection online category are therefore not directly comparable across years.

⁴⁵ Based on the findings of the Fast-tracking implementation of eTrade Readiness Assessments - Third edition.

⁴⁶ Based on the findings of the Fast-tracking implementation of reforms enabling e-commerce and digital trade (report of the 4th eTrade Implementation Review).

Expected results	Indicators	Quantitative/ qualitative	Baseline 2024	Actual 2025	Target 2027
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 1: Improved policy environment for reaping inclusive and sustainable development gains from e-commerce and the digital economy in developing countries, in particular LDCs	Number and share (%) of countries that make data related to e-commerce and the digital economy available for inclusion in UNCTAD's statistical database ⁴⁷ (disaggregated by developed /developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs)	Quant			
	<i>Developed economies</i>		44 (85%)	40 (77%)	44 (cumulative)
	<i>Developing economies</i>		19 (13%)	23 (16%)	25 (cumulative)
	<i>LDCs</i>		1 (2%)	0 (0%)	3 (cumulative)
	<i>SIDS</i>		3 (8%)	3 (8%)	6 (cumulative)
	<i>LLDCs</i>		2 (6%)	1 (3%)	4 (cumulative)
IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 1.1: Enhanced understanding of governments of policy options at national and international levels to benefit from e-commerce and the digital economy for inclusive and sustainable development	Number of publication downloads per year (disaggregated by publication category) ⁴⁸	Quant	44K	136K	150K
	Digital Economy Report 2024		38K	88K	
	Policy briefs		0	14K	
	Technical notes		3K	10K	
	eTrade Readiness Assessments		2K	14K	
	Other		2K	10K	
	Evidence of uptake of ECDE research and analysis by member States, international policy fora (e.g., G20, BRICS, etc.) and academia	Qual	N/A	Yes	N/A
	Evidence of UNCTAD's work on e-commerce and the digital economy being accorded media (including traditional and social media) coverage in countries at different levels of development	Qual	N/A	Yes	N/A

⁴⁷ Countries include both those that responded to UNCTAD's Survey to National Statistical Offices (2021, 2023 and 2024) 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.

⁴⁸ Covers publications released in 2024 or after.

Expected results	Indicators	Quantitative/ qualitative	Baseline 2024	Actual 2025	Target 2027
IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 1.2: Improved capacities of governments to establish favorable framework conditions for e-commerce and the digital economy for inclusive and sustainable development	Number of countries engaging in technical cooperation and/or capacity-building activities delivered or co-organized by UNCTAD per year (disaggregated by development status (developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs))	Quant	87 ⁴⁹ (cumulative)	131	100 (cumulative)
	<i>Developed economies</i>		6	7	N/A
	<i>Developing - Africa</i>		37	42	42 (cumulative)
	<i>Developing - Asia and Oceania</i>		42	47	45 (cumulative)
	<i>Developing - Latin America and the Caribbean</i>		2	30	7 (cumulative)
	<i>LDCs</i>		28	32	30 (cumulative)
	<i>SIDS</i>		11	33	14 (cumulative)
	<i>LLDCs</i>		19	23	23 (cumulative)
	Evidence of countries engaging in technical cooperation rating UNCTAD's assistance as useful to enhance the government's capacities	Qual	N/A	Yes	N/A
	Number of participants benefiting from capacity-building activities delivered or co-organized by UNCTAD per year (disaggregated by activity, sex)	Quant	489 (227 women)	916 (at least 415 women)	800 (cumulative)
	eTrade Readiness ⁵⁰		28 (8 women)	236 (at least 61 women)	100 (cumulative)
	Measurement (including joint activities with partners, in-person as well as online delivery)		418 (203 women)	680 (354 women)	700 (cumulative)

⁴⁹ Includes countries and territories 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).

⁵⁰ Includes eTrade Readiness Assessments, E-commerce Strategies/Action Plans/Policies, and sustained support for their implementation.

Expected results	Indicators	Quantitative/ qualitative	Baseline 2024	Actual 2025	Target 2027
IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 1.2: Improved capacities of governments to establish favorable framework conditions for e-commerce and the digital economy for inclusive and sustainable development	Share (%) of participants benefiting from capacity building activities delivered or co-organized by UNCTAD reporting improved capacities per year (disaggregated by activity, sex)	Quant			
	eTrade Readiness ⁵¹		100%	91%	90%
	Measurement (including joint activities with partners, in-person as well as online delivery)		97%	84%	90%
IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 1.3: Increased intergovernmental consensus on how to foster inclusive and sustainable development gains from e-commerce and the digital economy	Number of member States participating in IGE sessions	Quant	77	54	N/A
	Share (%) of member State respondents who agree that the deliberations enabled consensus to be reached on policy recommendations	Quant	95%	100%	90%
	Number of member States participating in WG meetings	Quant	38	42	N/A
	Share (%) of member State respondents who agree that the meeting provided useful information on the latest methodological guidance	Quant	100%	88%	90%
IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 1.4: Improved capacities of women digital entrepreneurs in developing countries to take advantage of the digital transformation and contribute to shaping a more inclusive digital economy	Number of women digital entrepreneurs participating in eTrade for Women empowerment, community-building and policy-related activities (Masterclasses, workshops, and other training sessions)	Quant	100	259 (cumulative)	400 (cumulative)
	Share (%) of women digital entrepreneurs benefiting from eTrade for Women empowerment and community building activities reporting improved capacities to lead, grow their business and/or engage in policy dialogue	Quant and qual	80%	100%	80%
	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 the need for greater gender equality in the digital economy	Quant and qual	20	36 (cumulative)	70 (cumulative)

⁵¹ Ibid

Expected results	Indicators	Quantitative/ qualitative	Baseline 2024	Actual 2025	Target 2027
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 2: More effective, efficient, transparent and well-resourced international multi-stakeholder digital cooperation for inclusive and sustainable development gains	Share (%) of Aid for Trade commitments per year dedicated to the ICT sector (disaggregated by developing/LDC), and/or special categories (SIDS/LLDCs))	Quant	3.5% ⁵²	No update	N/A
	<i>Bilateral commitments</i>		3.3%		
	<i>Developing economies</i>		3.3%		
	<i>LDCs</i>		5.5%		
	<i>SIDS</i>		7.7%		
	<i>LLDCs</i>		6.0%		
	<i>Regional commitments</i>		5.5%		
	<i>Unallocated commitments</i>		3.3%		
	Number of UNCTs that report providing support to governments on e-commerce and/or the digital economy	Quant	95 ⁵³	No update ⁵⁴	N/A
IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 2.1: Strengthened multi-stakeholder dialogue, coordination and partnerships on e-commerce and the digital economy for inclusive and sustainable development	Number of eTrade for all partners engaging in joint activities to produce research and analysis, enhance the e-trade readiness of developing countries, empower women in the digital economy per year	Quant	22 (out of 35 partners in 2024)	21 (out of 36 partners in 2025)	75% of partners over the period
	Number of visitors on the <i>eTrade for all</i> platform per year	Quant	50,000	105,000	Baseline + 30%
	Number of subscribers to the <i>eTrade for all</i> newsletter	Quant	5,360	5,070	6,000
	<i>eTrade for all</i> newsletter 'open' rate	Quant	29%	27%	30%

⁵² Based on data provided by the OECD in March 2025, covering 2023.

⁵³ Based on 2024 data from the United Nations Development Cooperation Office, obtained via IMS C.5.2 – Data & Digital Strategy; C.5.2.1 – Select the areas where the UNCT works [QCPR.2.4.13].

⁵⁴ At the time of data compilation (January 2026), the IMS surveys were undergoing quality assurance and no update was available.

Table A: Percentage (%) of digitally deliverable services in total services exports

	2023 baseline (%)	2024 (%)
Developing economies	45.42	44.13
Developed economies	60.22	60.92
LDCs (Least developed countries)	15.54	15.63
SIDS (Small Island Developing States)	53.05	52.16
LLDCs (Landlocked developing countries)	20.58	22.71

Source: UNCTADstat 2026

Table B: Proportion of individuals (age 15+) using a mobile phone or the Internet to buy something online (latest available year)

	2021	2021 - women	2021 - men
World	39.0%	38.1%	39.9%
Developed economies	61.6%	61.1%	62.1%
Developing - Africa	6.6%	5.8%	7.5%
Developing - Asia and Oceania	38.1%	38.3%	38.1%
Developing - Latin America and the Caribbean	27.1%	21.7%	32.3%
LDCs	5.8%	5.2%	6.4%
SIDS	26.7%	24.7%	28.8%
LLDCs	7.9%	7.3%	8.6%

Source: World Bank Global Findex Database

In 2025, an updated Global Findex Database was released, but coverage limitations make it difficult to produce aggregates at the regional/development status level and to make meaningful comparisons

with 2021 data. The comparative coverage of the indicator on the proportion (%) of respondents who used a mobile phone or the internet to buy something online (% , age 15+) is summarized in Table B.1 below:

Table B1: Comparative coverage of Global Findex 2025 indicator fin26b (number of countries)

Development status	Surveyed in 2021/22	Surveyed in 2024	Surveyed in both rounds (comparison possible)	Total number of countries (UNCTAD member States) in group
Developed	45*	12	11**	52
Developing	94***	86	83****	143
World	139	98	94	195

Based on the available data and taking into account the coverage limitations outlined above and the fact that Global Findex data is nationally representative survey data, which includes a margin of error, the following can be observed for the share of individuals who used a mobile phone or the internet to buy something online (% , age 15+) in the 94 countries for which a comparison is possible:⁵⁵

- Significant increase: 23 developing and 1 developed country

- Significant decrease: 8 developing and 4 developed countries
- No significant change: 52 developing and 6 developed countries

In more than half of developing countries surveyed in 2024, the share of individuals who used a mobile phone or the internet to buy something online (% , age 15+) stood at less than 10%. In only four developing countries was that share higher than 50%: China, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Mongolia (in descending order).

Table C: ICT sector core indicators ICT1 and ICT2 (latest available year)

Economy	Variable	Reference year	Value (%)	Note
Armenia	ICT 1: Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector	2023	9.43	Data refers to employees only.
Armenia	ICT 2: Value added in the ICT sector as a percentage of total business sector value added	2023	7.89	Calculated at the three-digit level.
Brazil	ICT 1: Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector	2021	3.72	Data exclude G4651 and G4652.
Brazil	ICT 2: Value added in the ICT sector as a percentage of total business sector value added	2021	6.06	Data exclude G4651 and G4652.
Brunei Darussalam	ICT 1: Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector	2022	3.18	

* All surveyed in 2021.

** No baseline data for Montenegro.

*** Of which, 78 surveyed in 2021 and 16 surveyed in 2022 (no overlap).

**** No baseline data for Montenegro.

⁵⁵ Given that Global Findex data is nationally representative survey data, which includes a margin of error, change below 4 percentage points (be it positive or negative) is not statistically significant. Significant increase is marked by a positive change > 4 percentage points, and significant decrease by a negative change > 4 percentage points.

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Economy	Variable	Reference year	Value (%)	Note
Costa Rica	ICT 1: Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector	2022	6.06	Data exclude C262, C264 and C268.
Ecuador	ICT 1: Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector	2023	5.13	
Ecuador	ICT 2: Value added in the ICT sector as a percentage of total business sector value added	2023	6.09	
Kenya	ICT 1: Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector	2024	4.73	Data include both public and private ICT Sector.
Kenya	ICT 2: Value added in the ICT sector as a percentage of total business sector value added	2024	2.44	
Malaysia	ICT 1: Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector	2021	8	
Malaysia	ICT 2: Value added in the ICT sector as a percentage of total business sector value added	2021	13.65	
Mauritius	ICT 1: Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector	2024	8.9	
Mauritius	ICT 2: Value added in the ICT sector as a percentage of total business sector value added	2024	7.57	
Mexico	ICT 1: Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector	2022	3.06	Data not available for all the requested breakdowns.
Mexico	ICT 2: Value added in the ICT sector as a percentage of total business sector value added	2022	4.03	Base year: 2018. Value added at constant prices.
Singapore	ICT 2: Value added in the ICT sector as a percentage of total business sector value added	2023	21.53	
South Africa	ICT 1: Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector	2020	1.8	
South Africa	ICT 2: Value added in the ICT sector as a percentage of total business sector value added	2020	7.84	
State of Palestine	ICT 1: Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector	2024	1.83	
State of Palestine	ICT 2: Value added in the ICT sector as a percentage of total business sector value added	2023	5.58	
State of Palestine	ICT 2: Value added in the ICT sector as a percentage of total business sector value added	2021	0	

Source: UNCTADstat 2026

Table D: Core indicators on ICT use in business, all enterprises/all activities (latest available year)

Economy	Variable	Reference year	Value (%)	Note
Armenia	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2023	10.79	
Belarus	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2024	44.25	
Belarus	B12_idel: Proportion of businesses using the Internet for delivering products online	2024	17.77	
China	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2021	9.15	
Dominican Re-public	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2020	25.84	
Dominican Re-public	B12_idel: Proportion of businesses using the Internet for delivering products online	2020	6.61	Data refer to 16+ employees.
Ecuador	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2023	36.32	Data refer to online sales of goods and services.
Ecuador	B12_idel: Proportion of businesses using the Internet for delivering products online	2023	36.81	
Georgia	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2024	3.83	
Indonesia	B12_idel: Proportion of businesses using the Internet for delivering products online	2021	0.79	
Malaysia	B12_idel: Proportion of businesses using the Internet for delivering products online	2023	35.59	
Mauritius	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2024	57.38	
Peru	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2021	11.05	
Philippines	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2021	19.06	
Philippines	B12_idel: Proportion of businesses using the Internet for delivering products online	2021	15.06	
South Africa	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2021	31.25	
South Africa	B12_idel: Proportion of businesses using the Internet for delivering products online	2021	8.35	
State of Palestine	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2021	32.22	

Economy	Variable	Reference year	Value (%)	Note
State of Palestine	B12_idel: Proportion of businesses using the Internet for delivering products online	2021	5.73	
Thailand	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2022	22.25	Data refer to establishments with 11+ employees.
Thailand	B12_idel: Proportion of businesses using the Internet for delivering products online	2022	3.44	Data refer to establishments with 11+ employees.
Ukraine	B7: Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	2024	6.93	Data exclude hard-to-reach territories.

Source: UNCTADstat 2026

Annex 3. List of outstanding requests for assistance, as of March 2026

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
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

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Country or organization	Title	Request Date	Requesting Institution
Samoa	Technical assistance for the production of digital economy statistics	27/10/2022	Samoa Bureau of Statistics
Kenya	E-commerce Strategy implementation support	14/08/2023	Ministry of Investments, Trade & Industry, State Department for Trade, Republic of Kenya
Mongolia	E-commerce Strategy and implementation support	17/11/2023	Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia
State of Libya	E-commerce Strategy	04/03/2025	Permanent Mission of the State of Libya
Namibia	eTrade Readiness Assessment and a national E-commerce Strategy	31/03/2025	Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade of the Republic of Namibia
Togo	Technical assistance to strengthen Togo's measurement of the digital economy	20/09/2023	Ministère de l'Economie Numérique et de la Transformation Digitale de la République togolaise
Zimbabwe	E-commerce Strategy	26/06/2025	Ministry of Industry & Commerce of the Republic of Zimbabwe
Sierra Leone	eTrade Readiness Assessment	10/07/2025	Ministry of Trade & Industry of the Republic of Sierra Leone
Honduras	eTrade Readiness Assessment	21/07/2025	Government of the Republic of Honduras
Zambia	Study on the size and characteristics of the digital economy in Zambia	19/11/2025	Zambia Information & Communications Authority (ZICTA), through the Permanent Mission
Fiji	To measure Fiji's e-commerce and digital economy - Phase II	25/11/2025	Fiji Bureau of Statistics
Togo	eTrade for Women Masterclass	04/02/2026	Ministère de l'Économie et de la Veille stratégique de la République togolaise

Annex 4. List of ECDE Programme key contacts

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