

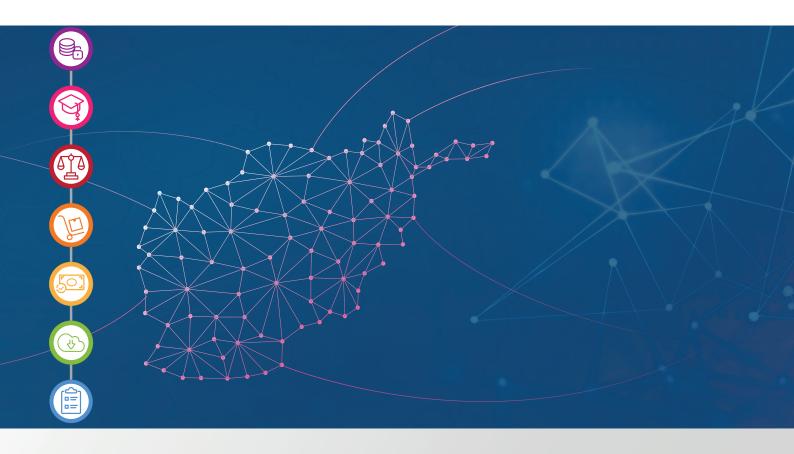
Afghanistan Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessment







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NOTE

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Within the UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics, the ICT Policy Section carries out policy-oriented analytical work on the development implications of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and e-commerce. It is responsible for the preparation of the Information Economy Report (IER) as well as thematic studies on ICT for Development.

The ICT Policy Section promotes international dialogue on issues related to ICTs for development and contributes to building developing countries' capacities to measure the information economy and to design and implement relevant policies and legal frameworks. It also monitors the global state of e-commerce legislation (unctad.org/cyberlawtracker). Since 2016, the section has coordinated a multi-stakeholders' initiative entitled eTrade for all (etradeforall.org), which aims to improve the ability of developing countries, particularly least developed countries (LDCs), to use and benefit from e-commerce.

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The following symbols have been used in the tables:

Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available or are not separately reported. Rows in tables have been omitted in those cases where no data are available for any of the elements in the row;

A dash (-) indicates that the item is equal to zero or its value is negligible;

Reference to "dollars" (US\$) means United States of America dollars, unless otherwise indicated;

Reference to "AFN" means Afghanistan Afghani, unless otherwise indicated; 1 AFN = 0.13 US\$ (October 26, 2018).

Details and percentages in tables do not necessarily add up to the totals because of rounding.



PREFACE

The eTrade for all Initiative, launched at the fourteenth Ministerial Conference of UNCTAD in July 2016, is a practical example of how to harness the digital economy in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5, 8, 9, and 17. The initiative seeks to raise awareness, enhance synergies, and increase the scale of existing and new efforts by the development community to strengthen the ability of developing countries to engage in and benefit from e-commerce by addressing seven relevant policy areas:

- E-commerce readiness assessment and strategy formulation
- ICT infrastructure and services
- Trade logistics and trade facilitation
- Payment solutions
- Legal and regulatory frameworks
- E-commerce skills development
- Access to financing

As part of the initiative, demand-driven assessments are envisaged to provide a basic analysis of the current e-commerce situation in the countries concerned, and to identify opportunities and barriers. The resulting reports will serve as a valuable input to these countries' involvement in various discussions related to e-commerce and digital trade, such as in the context of the UNCTAD Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy. It may furthermore help LDCs to identify areas in which they could benefit from assistance by partners of eTrade for all.

The Afghanistan Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessment is the sixteenth such assessment conducted by UNCTAD since the launch of the Programme in 2017.

The country's development trajectory continues to face significant risks and volatility. The Government's efforts to promote economic growth, and to develop the public sector infrastructure to adequately cater to the needs of citizens and businesses, are still hampered by the uncertain security climate.

Despite a challenging environment, the digital economy has demonstrated important signs of growth. The ICT sector is maturing rapidly, and e-commerce activity has ramped up. This assessment comes at an opportune time for the country to take stock of the e-commerce ecosystem and implement the recommendations to help support the ecosystem.

With the eTrade for all partners, UNCTAD is committed to continue supporting Afghanistan in its resolve to harness the potential of e-commerce for its development.

Shamika N. Sirimanne

Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD



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