

Independent evaluation of the project

eTrade for all

Evaluation and Monitoring Unit
September 2019

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UNCTAD/OSG/INF/2019/3

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Acronyms and abbreviatons

| | |
|--------|---|
| DHL | Dalsey, Hillblom and Lynn |
| e | Electronic |
| E | English |
| F | French |
| G | Goal |
| ICAI | Independent Commission for Aid Impact |
| ICT | Information and Communication and Technology |
| LDC | Least Developed Country |
| m | Million |
| M&E | Monitoring and evaluation |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| n | Number |
| OC | Outcome |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OP | Output |
| PSAC | Private Sector Advisory Council |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SEK | Swedish Krona |
| SMART | Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound |
| SP | Spanish |
| SWOT | Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USD | United States Dollar |
| WEF | World Economic Forum |
| % | Percentage |

Executive summary

1. **Introduction:** This document constitutes the evaluation report for the “eTrade for all project.” The independent evaluation was included as part of the agreement between UNCTAD and the Government of Finland, which contributed EURO 500,000 to the project for 24 months between 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018. During this time, the project also received EURO 500.000 from the Netherlands in 2018¹, USD 264.000 from the UK in 2016 and EURO 50.000 from Estonia in 2017. The evaluation results pertain to all contributions from 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2018 and are not limited to the contribution of the Government of Finland. UNCTAD’s Information and Communication and Technology (ICT) Analysis section in UNCTAD’s Division on Technology and Logistics implements this on-going project.
2. According to the project proposal, e-commerce can become a powerful driver of economic growth, inclusive trade, and job creation in the developing world. Moreover, better connectivity, new e-commerce platforms, and solutions are allowing more countries to participate in e-commerce. However, the e-commerce divide between developed and developing countries is still wide. While numerous development partners, foundations, and private sector actors are working from different angles to unlock the potential of e-commerce for development, current efforts are fragmented, non-transparent, and of insufficient scale.
3. Accelerating the uptake of e-commerce in developing countries, and associated benefits require a more concerted approach. The “*eTrade for all*” initiative is a demand-driven mechanism for leading development partners, in partnership with the private sector, to make their actions more coherent and efficient by pooling capabilities and resources. *eTrade for all* seeks synergies with other international initiatives and mechanisms, such as the WTO Aid for Trade and the Enhanced Integrated Framework, as well as with projects implemented by individual partner agencies.
4. The evaluation systematically and objectively assessed project design, project management, and project performance. The evaluation provides assessments that are credible and useful, and also includes practical and constructive recommendations to enhance the work of UNCTAD in this area. The evaluation provides accountability to intended evaluation users, including UNCTAD management, the Government of Finland, project stakeholders, as well as UNCTAD’s member States with whom the final evaluation report will be shared.
5. The evaluator used a theory-based evaluation approach to address the time-lag between the project results and change in e-commerce to materialize at the partner and country level. The **evaluation methodology** builds on the evaluation matrix presented in the inception report and includes a mixed-methods approach based on triangulation.

¹ Includes funds for eTrade for Women.

6. **Main evaluation findings:** According to the project proposal and to stakeholder consultation, the main tool of the eTrade for all initiative is a web-based platform to assist in capacity building and knowledge development. Its aim is to provide developing countries/donors/partners with an additional resource to explore, synthesize, and learn about e-commerce and digital related issues and opportunities at multiple levels of details. In particular, stakeholders can find:

- Development Solutions, that are concrete capacity building programmes offered in the seven policy areas by the eTrade for all partners (currently 30)
- Up-to-date news, events, publications and data on e-commerce providing comprehensive information on different topics related to e-commerce policies and initiatives to support developing countries' national development plans and sustainable development objectives in this area.
- A private collaborative space with preferential access to e-commerce resources and possible partnerships.

7. The eTrade for all initiative, beyond the knowledge sharing platform, acts also a catalyser of partnerships among its 30 members, which actively collaborate in the UNCTAD eCommerce Weeks- the main global forum to discuss challenges and opportunities associated with the digital economy- and contribute to its major spin-off: the Rapid eTrade Assessment programme and the eTrade for Women initiative.

8. The evaluation finds that eTrade for all is a highly relevant project, providing unique value added to ecommerce stakeholders. To date the project has largely met its objectives based on stakeholder perception and also generated positive spin off effects. Most stakeholders highly appreciate the project team's role as a neutral facilitator and its multi-stakeholder approach. The latter shows a contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The sustainability of eTrade for all is mostly given concerning knowledge creation and capacity building, while the financial sustainability of the project, is its "Achilles Heel". Gender and human rights do not figure high on the trade agendas of many member States and most partners consulted. Hence this situation is also reflected in the project, despite concrete efforts of the project team to incorporate these cross-cutting issues. The evaluation finds that the spin-off project eTrade for Women is the most definite link of the project to the women economic empowerment. Good results show in advancing partnership, while the engagement with the private sector faces challenges.

9. The main evaluation findings are grouped hereafter by the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, gender and human rights, and partnerships. The evaluation criterion of impact was not included in the Terms of Reference (ToR), as it is too soon to assess long term expected results.

10. **Relevance: The project is doing the right thing with high to very high relevance for all four sub-criteria.** The 2016 UNCTAD Quadrennial Conference Outcome document, the Nairobi Maafikiano, mandates the project. 62% of project stakeholders that responded to the evaluation survey rated the project relevance as "high" or "very high", 23% of

stakeholders find the relevance of the project as medium and 4% as low. Overall, the project's reconstructed Theory of Change is valid.

11. **Effectiveness:** The project largely achieved its objectives. Logframe outputs, outcomes, and goals are assessed to have been mainly achieved. A contribution to SDG 8.11 and 17.9 is given. Stakeholder satisfaction with UNCTAD's leading role in the project is significant. 54% of project stakeholders that responded to the evaluation survey rating this as "high" and 34% as "very high".

12. The evaluation showed the following specific results along the project's logframe:

- Goal: "Increased national action to boost e-commerce" and "duplication of work avoided" reach highest stakeholder perception ratings: a perceived results achievement of 73% each, followed by "enhanced aid efficiency" (72%) and strengthened partners' synergies (71%).
- Outcome: "Increased collaboration among partners" reaches 74% stakeholder perception ratings, followed by "enhanced resources available for e-commerce development assistance" (67%).
- Outputs: Progress in achieving a "transparent, functional and up-to-date web platform" gets stakeholder perception ratings of 74% together with "increased awareness of how to access e-commerce assistance (both 74%). The output concerning "a matching mechanism for e-commerce related assistance" is less advanced with 50% stakeholder perception ratings.

The project has generated positive spin off effects, including two spin-off projects with separate funding sources: eT.Readies (rapid e-readiness assessments) and eTrade for Women.

13. **Efficiency: The project used resources appropriately.** The multi-stakeholder approach is highly appropriate for the implementation of this project with a substantial partnership element as its cornerstone. Internal UNCTAD resources actively enrich the project and vice versa, including eCommerce Weeks, e-Trade Readiness assessments, and the eTrade for women network. 60% of stakeholders participating in the evaluation rated the project's facilitation function as high to very high. For 28% of stakeholders, the efficiency of the project is medium concerning its facilitation function and for 4% low.

14. The quality of monitoring modalities is high; it is linked to UNCTAD's E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme, which contains a fully-fledged M&E framework of outstanding comprehensiveness and quality. However, time-bound milestones and targets are missing and the M&E framework is not yet being systematically used due to a lack of resources.

15. **Sustainability: Most project results are likely to last.** The sustainability of knowledge created by the project reaches 52% high to very high ratings, followed by 44% high to very high ratings for the sustainability of capacities fostered by the project. Stakeholder commitment to cooperation, mainly financially, reaches only 31% high to very high ratings and 41% medium ratings. The latter includes project stakeholders and donors,

while ratings from project partners reach 37% high to very high ratings and 31% medium ratings.

16. For five of the six project donors consulted, there is a perceived long-term mistrust in UNCTAD due to some of its traditionally more radical views. This affects the financial sustainability of the project. While donors appreciate programmatic approaches in UNCTAD, they are reluctant to provide unearmarked, more flexible funding. They nonetheless support, together with other UNCTAD member States, the e-trade for all initiative, including at the latest session of UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board².

17. **Gender and human rights:** Gender is treated as a cross-cutting element, and human rights figure implicitly in the project design. Along with the seven policy areas, the project team treats gender and statistics as cross-cutting elements. Conceptually, eTrade for Women is the most definite link of the project to the women economic empowerment. About half of project stakeholders were unsure to what extent gender is conceptually or practically figuring in the project with 27% of stakeholders providing low ratings. The project team considers human rights under the right to privacy in the context of a broader, legal and regulatory dimension. Besides reference is made to the right to development by making digital development more inclusive. Project stakeholders were hesitant to comment on the rights dimension of the project, as this figures to a lesser extent in the project. Only three out of 27 stakeholders that were consulted on this topic shared their views.

18. **Partnerships:** the project's partnership model is advancing. Very satisfactory results show in advancing partnership with international organizations including the Geneva-based UN agencies. A new partnership model for engagement with the private sector should be explored and pursued following the collapse of the counterpart association outside the project.

19. **Conclusions:** Based on the above key findings, the evaluation comes to the following conclusions:

- **Relevance:** The project shows high to very high relevance for all four sub-criteria. eTrade for all is doing the right thing and meets partners and stakeholders needs with some room for improvements.
- **Effectiveness:** Interestingly, stakeholder perception of short-term achievements to date is similar to mid- and longer-term achievements, despite significantly less control of eTrade for all about accomplishing its longer-term goals. There appears to be scope for the eTrade for all platform to be better leveraged as a full-fledged matching mechanism for eCommerce related assistance.
- Three interrelated projects have developed out of eTrade for all, which constitutes a significant spin off effect of the project. While the spin-off projects generated

² See for example TD/B/66/7, paragraph 55,

https://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/tdb66_d7_en.pdf




more activities to combat the growing digital divides among countries they are not yet large enough to expand the critical mass of the team in the long run.

- Project partners from other UN agencies and international organizations appreciated the hard work of the UNCTAD project team effectively leading eTrade for all. Most project partners from other UN agencies and international organizations appreciated the project team's practice of shared ownership of the project and the highly consultative approach taken by UNCTAD in managing the project to underline that all partners have a stake in it.
- **Efficiency:** Though very time-intensive due to continued coordination efforts, the multi-stakeholder approach proved appropriate for the project. UNCTAD's neutral role is paramount for the approach to work and to efficiently facilitate project processes. However, based on stakeholder perceptions the size of project staffing seems currently more suitable for traditional technical assistance projects (a single actor delivering services) than for a complex multi-stakeholder approach. This will require significant additional resources for such coordination efforts (see also sustainability conclusions).
- While the project team invested in developing a comprehensive M&E framework for UNCTAD's E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme, they are not yet able to fully implement the framework due to a lack of resources.
- While the project benefits from internal UNCTAD resources and processes, core budget activities take precedence on the time of the regular budget staff of the project team. As a result, small project resources get stretched to their limit.
- **Sustainability:** After two years, the perceived sustainability of main project components advances well. Partners' commitment is affected to some extent, given the uncertain funding situation of the project and some growing expectations from project partners about implementation activities in the member States, in particular on the follow-up phase of the Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessments for LDCs.
- Donors' expectations of working with a reformed UNCTAD on a larger programmatic scale are very high. However, there is disagreement among UNCTAD member States themselves on the direction of UNCTAD reform and type of engagement required at country level. This continued disagreement hampers the financial outlook of the project and is beyond the remit of the project team.
- **Gender and human rights:** While the project uses a gender lens and conceptually started including eTrade for Women as a spin-off of eTrade for all, the gender focus is less prominent in the perception of stakeholders.
- The project has room for improvement to underpin and communicate its rights-perspective to partners and stakeholders.
- **Partnerships:** The project advances in the creation of the partnership at varying velocities. Very satisfactory results show in advancing partnership with international organizations with e-commerce and digital issues high on their agenda. Progress

is made with civil society organisations and regional development banks, as reflected by the nature of the partnership. Overall, progress depends on the type and commitment of partner organization with the private sector lagging behind, following the collapse of the private sectors counterpart association.



20. The following page presents the evaluation's recommendations in the summary matrix of findings, evidence, and recommendations.


SUMMARY MATRIX OF FINDINGS, EVIDENCE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

| Findings ³ : problems and issues identified | Evidence (sources that substantiate findings) | ⁴ Recommendations |
|--|--|---|
|  <p>Relevance: The 2016 Nairobi Maafikiano mandates the project. The relevance for the member States needs is high with room for improvements in reaching member States capitals beyond the Geneva missions. Relevance for project stakeholders reached 62% high to very high ratings. The project's Theory of Change is valid.</p> | <p>Document review; Theory of Change validation with project team; On-line survey; Interviews.</p> | <p>R 1: Donors should continue funding eTrade for all since it provides unique value added to ecommerce stakeholders <i>Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months</i></p> <p>R2: The project manager should expand outreach and make use of regional opportunities to reach out to more and relevant stakeholders in the member States. <i>Prioritization: medium: next 6 – 12 months</i></p> |
|  <p>Effectiveness: Logframe outputs, outcomes, and goals have been largely achieved. A contribution to SDG 8.11 and 17.9 is given. Goal: "Increased national action to boost e-commerce" and "duplication of work avoided" reach highest stakeholder perception ratings: 73%, followed by "enhanced aid efficiency" (72%) and strengthened partners' synergies (71%). Outcome: "Increased collaboration among partners" reaches 74% stakeholder perception ratings, followed by "enhanced resources available for e-commerce development assistance" (67%). Outputs: "Transparent, functional and up-to-date web platform" gets the highest stakeholder perception ratings together with "increased awareness of how to access e-commerce assistance (both 74%). The output concerning "a matching mechanism for e-commerce related assistance" is less advanced with 50% stakeholder perception ratings. The project has generated positive effects, including two spin-off projects with separate funding sources: eT.Readies (rapid e-readiness assessments) and eTrade for women. Stakeholder satisfaction with UNCTAD's leading role in the project is significant, with 54% very high and 34% high ratings.</p> | <p>Document review; On-line survey; Interviews.</p> | <p>R 3: The project team should develop a strategy, together with project partners, for advancing on the output "a matching mechanism for e-commerce related assistance." More than one approach could be tested on a pilot basis. <i>Prioritization: high: next 6 months</i></p> <p>R 4: The Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics should share the results of this evaluation at Directors' level across UNCTAD with emphasis on the project's implementation approach (neutral, multi-stakeholder approach) <i>Prioritization: medium: next 6 – 12 months</i></p> |
|  <p>Efficiency: The multi-stakeholder approach seems highly appropriate for the implementation of this project with a solid partnership element as its cornerstone. The quality of monitoring modalities is high; it is linked to UNCTAD's E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme, which contains a fully-fledged M&E framework of outstanding comprehensiveness and quality. However, time-</p> | <p>Document review; On-line survey, Interviews.</p> | <p>R5: The project manager should revise the project budget so that funding proposals to donors more realistically reflect the resource requirements to meet the demands of such a project. <i>Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months</i></p> <p>R6: The project manager should establish SMART milestones and targets for eTrade for all.</p> |

³ A finding uses evidence from data collection to allow for a factual statement.

⁴Recommendations are proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of a project/programme; at redesigning the objectives; and/or at the reallocation of resources. For accuracy and credibility, recommendations should be the logical implications of the findings and conclusions.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>bound milestones and targets seem missing and the M&E framework not yet fully used due to underfunding of the programme.</p> <p>Internal UNCTAD resources actively enrich the project, including eCommerce Weeks, e-Trade Readiness assessments, and the eTrade for women network.</p> <p>Use of external cooperation: 60% of stakeholders participating in the evaluation rated the project's facilitation function as high to very high.</p> | | <p>Consultations with the partners might enhance the quality of that target-setting process.</p> <p><i>Prioritization: medium: next 6 – 12 months</i></p> |
|  <p>Sustainability:</p> <p>The sustainability of knowledge created by the project reaches 52% high to very high ratings, followed by 44% high to very high ratings for the sustainability of capacities fostered by the project.</p> <p>Stakeholder commitment (donors and project partners) to cooperation reaches with 31% significantly fewer high to very high ratings and 41% medium ratings while partner ratings (exclusion donors) reach 37% high to very high ratings and 31% medium ratings.</p> <p>The financial sustainability of the project suffers from a long-term mistrust of many donors, mainly due to UNCTAD's messaging on trade and lack of reform. Though much appreciated by donors, programmatic approaches in UNCTAD seem hardly fully fundable.</p> | <p>Document review, On-line survey, Interviews.</p> | <p>R 7a. The Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics should establish a trust fund for the Ecommerce and Digital Economy Programme, comprising eTrade for all and its spin off projects, and encourage donors to contribute to this joint trust fund.</p> <p>Till the establishment of that trust fund an “overhead” budget line could be added to all spin off projects of eTrade for all as a means to contribute to the funding of the platform.</p> <p><i>Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months</i></p> <p>R 7b: The Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics should share the results of this evaluation and the mutual advantages of a more programmatic funding approach through a donor round table meeting building on the convening power and credibility build by the project.</p> <p><i>Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months</i></p> <p>R 8. The project team should address the project's funding pipeline with partner's during the next scheduled project event. Expectations about implementation activities should be carefully managed and further synergies explored.</p> <p><i>Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months</i></p> |
|  <p>Gender and human rights:</p> <p>Along with the seven policy areas, the project team treats gender and statistics as cross-cutting elements. Conceptually, eTrade for Women is the strongest link of the project to the women economic empowerment.</p> <p>The project's engagement on gender seems to be, to some extent supply-driven, given the topic's absence from the e-commerce agendas of many member States.</p> <p>About half of project stakeholders were unsure to what extent gender is conceptually or practically figuring in the project with 27% low ratings.</p> <p>The project team considers human rights under the right to privacy in the context of a broader, legal, and regulatory dimension. Besides reference is made to the right to development by making digital development more inclusive.</p> <p>Project stakeholders were hesitant to comment on the rights dimension of the project, as this figures to a lesser extent in the</p> | <p>Document review, On-line survey, Interviews.</p> | <p>R 9. The project team should include at least one gender indicator and one human rights indicator in the project logframe (complemented by SMART milestones and targets) and communicate this logframe revision to all project partners.</p> <p><i>Prioritization: medium: next 6 – 12 months</i></p> |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>project. Only three out of 27 stakeholders covered in the evaluation shared their views.</p> | | |
|  <p>Partnerships: Very satisfactory results show in advancing partnership with international organizations with e-commerce and digital issues high on the agenda. Progress is made with civil society organisations and (regional) development banks. Partnerships with national agencies so far comprise one agency (Estonia); Partnership engagement model with the private sector failed following the collapse of the counterpart association.</p> | <p>Document review, On-line survey, Interviews.</p> | <p>R 10: The project team should seek and establish formal partnerships with the private sector through a business association model rather than individual companies to maintain the project's neutrality. <i>Prioritization: high: next 6 months</i></p> |

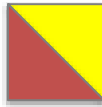
Key: colour coding⁵



Green: Strong achievement across the board. Stands out as an area of good practice where UNCTAD is making a significant positive contribution.
Score 76 to 100 out of 100.



Green/amber: Satisfactory achievement in most areas, but partial achievement in others. An area where UNCTAD is making a positive contribution but could do more.
Score 51 to 75 out of 100.



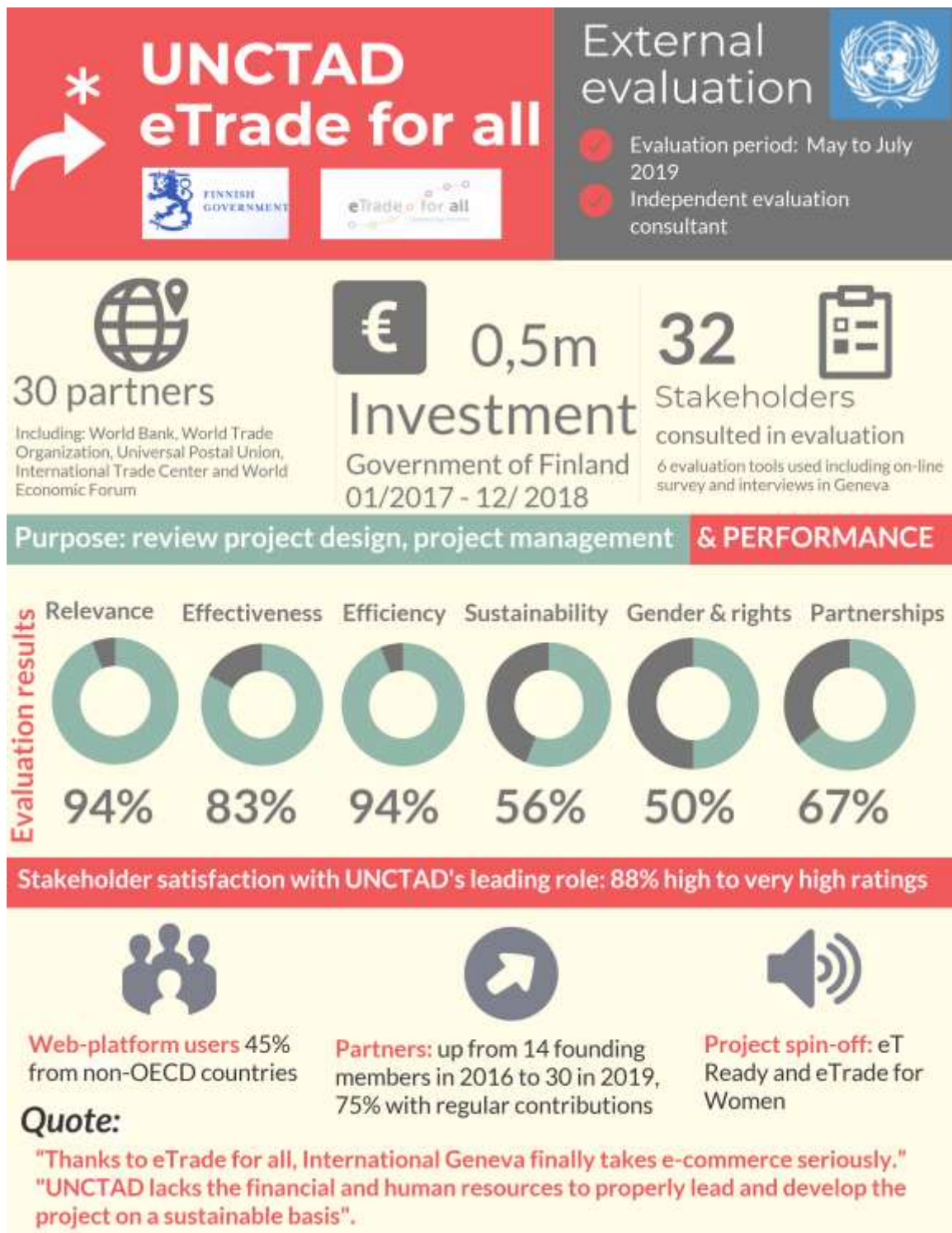
Amber/red: Unsatisfactory achievement in most areas, with some positive elements. An area where improvements are required for UNCTAD to make a positive contribution. Score 26-50 out of 100



Red: Poor achievement across most areas, with urgent remedial action required in some. An area where UNCTAD is failing to make a positive contribution. Score: 0-25 out of 100

⁵ Colour coding applied by the UK's Independent Commission for Aid Impact, see for example <http://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/ICAI-Review-UK-aids-contribution-to-tackling-tax-avoidance-and-evasion.pdf>

Figure I. Infographic: Overview of the project and main evaluation results



I. Introduction

21. This document constitutes the evaluation report for the "eTrade for all project," funded between 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018 by the Government of Finland, among other donors. After the end of the funding from the Government of Finland, an external evaluation was undertaken as per the agreement between UNCTAD and the Government of Finland.

22. UNCTAD's ICT Policy Section in UNCTAD's Division on Technology and Logistics implements this on-going project. The Government of Finland financially supported the project with a budget of EURO 500,000 with a duration of 24 months. During this time, the project also received EURO 500.000 from the Netherlands in 2018⁶, USD 264.000 from the UK in 2016 and EURO 50.000-from Estonia in 2017. The evaluation results pertain to all contributions from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018 and are not limited to the contribution of the Government of Finland.

1.1 Project Background

23. According to the project proposal:

- "E-commerce can become a powerful driver of economic growth, inclusive trade, and job creation in the developing world. Moreover, better connectivity, new e-commerce platforms, and solutions are allowing more countries to participate in e-commerce. However, the e-commerce divide is still wide. While numerous development partners, foundations, and private sector actors are working from different angles to unlock the potential of e-commerce for development, current efforts are fragmented, non-transparent, and of insufficient scale.
- Accelerating the uptake of e-commerce in developing countries, and associated benefits requires a more concerted approach. The "*eTrade for all*" initiative is a demand-driven⁷ mechanism for leading development partners, in partnership with the private sector, to make their actions more coherent and efficient by pooling capabilities and resources. *eTrade for all* will seek synergies with other international initiatives and mechanisms, such as the WTO Aid for Trade and the Enhanced Integrated Framework, as well as with projects implemented by individual partner agencies.
- The initiative will help developing countries to navigate more easily the supply of capacity building from the international community while at the same time provide donors a clearer picture of technical assistance programmes to potentially fund. The overall effect should be more transparency and greater aid efficiency"⁸.

24. The initiative focuses on **seven policy areas** of relevance to e-commerce development, as presented below:

- **E-commerce readiness assessment and strategy formulation** — National assessments are essential to identify strengths and weaknesses in e-commerce readiness, as a basis for formulating

⁶ Includes funds for eTrade for Women.

⁷ From member States

⁸ UNCTAD Trust Fund, 2016: e-Trade for All. Project proposal to Finland, page 5.

relevant policies to harness the power of e-commerce for economic growth and social development.

- **ICT infrastructure and services** — Affordable and reliable ICT infrastructure is of paramount importance to e-commerce. In particular, universal coverage of high-speed broadband, regular upgrading of infrastructures and reduced artificial regulatory barriers should be pursued.
- **Trade logistics and trade facilitation** — An effective and competitive national and international trade environment is vital for achieving effective e-commerce. Effective trade logistics and cross-border facilitation measures are key to the fulfilment of goods-related e-commerce.
- **Payment solutions** — Payment systems are rapidly evolving, opening up new possibilities for consumers and corporate buyers. However, in several countries, cash on delivery remains the preferred option. E-commerce users benefit from an environment where payments can be made safely and easily, using effective solutions involving banking and non-banking operators, with greater interoperability and universal connectivity.
- **Legal and regulatory frameworks** — Security and trust are fundamental for an environment conducive to e-commerce, creating certainty for consumers and businesses alike. Ideally, legal and regulatory frameworks facilitating online trade should strike a balance between trade development and compliance with domestic, regional, and international legal instruments. In today's online activities, laws, and regulations related to consumer protection, data protection, and cybercrime are essential.
- **E-commerce skills development** — In many countries, enterprises, as well as policymakers, lack capacities and technical skills to harness e-commerce, hampering the uptake of online commerce.
- **Access to financing** — Several economies do not yet provide reliable financing solutions for early-stage start-ups and growth-oriented businesses in the e-commerce ecosystem. To facilitate the growth of e-commerce and e-trade in developing countries, it is crucial to facilitate the evolution of a robust financial architecture that funds innovation and entrepreneurship at all points across the e-commerce value chain.

25. Work on those priority areas aims to contribute to the **project objective**: “to help developing countries to navigate more easily the supply of technical and financial cooperation from the international community while at the same time giving donors a clear picture of technical assistance programmes to fund and help them evaluate the results they deliver. The overall effect includes greater transparency and aid efficiency as well as increased impact”⁹.

26. Planned project activities included the following:

- Establishing and managing a dedicated online platform for available e-commerce assistance. This platform is not only a website but a dynamic database with restricted areas for every partner to update their projects. There will be a need for additional work overtime to maintain the platform and improve its functionalities;

⁹ UNCTAD Trust Fund, 2016: e-Trade for All. Project proposal to Finland, page 6.

- Convening (virtual and face-to-face) meetings among development partners, private sector actors, and developing countries;
- Assessing the demand for assistance among developing countries and countries with economies in transition concerning e-commerce-related activities;
- Identifying projects and programmes of Partners that can support e-commerce development in relevant policy areas;
- Helping countries find assistance from partners, when appropriate.

27. The following goals, outcomes, and outputs of the project are specified in the project's results framework:

- Project goal:
 - Increased national actions (policies and programmes) aimed at boosting e-commerce;
 - Strengthened coherence and synergies among partners' activities with a view to avoiding duplication of work and enhancing aid efficiency as well as increased impact;
- Outcomes:
 - Enhanced resources available for assistance for e-commerce development;
 - Increased collaboration among partners;
- Outputs:
 - Transparent, functional and up-to-date website;
 - A matching mechanism for the demand for and supply of e-commerce related assistance;
 - Increased awareness among target countries of how to access assistance related to e-commerce.

28. The contribution to **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, as stated in the results framework, was assessed to the extent possible. The project proposal identified the indirect contribution to six SDG targets¹⁰ and *direct* project contribution to the following SDG targets:

¹⁰ 5.b. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

8.2. Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading, and innovation, including through a focus on high-value-added and labour-intensive sectors.

8.3. Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

9.3. Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets.

9.8. Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries by 2020.

17.11. Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020.

- 8.11. Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular, least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries.
- 17.9. Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation.

29. Partnerships: The project proposal highlighted the importance of partnerships for the project: "Effective promotion of e-commerce requires holistic, cross-sectoral, and cross-institutional approaches, making collaboration essential. Therefore eTrade for all partners include international organizations, regional development banks, and national agencies."

30. Current partnering institutions include the African Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, International Trade Center, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Universal Postal Union, World Bank Group, World Economic Forum, World Intellectual Property Organization, and World Trade Organization, among others. Annex 6 contains the full list of partner organizations.

31. In addition, e-commerce development is conducive to public-private partnerships. To ensure effective public-private dialogue, eTrade for all worked in close cooperation with the Business for eTrade Development council, established and managed independently by the private sector.

32. The Business for eTrade Development council has been discontinued in its current form. eTrade for all continues to work with private sector representatives through a multi-stakeholder approach for an inclusive dialogue on e-commerce.

1.2 Evaluation Purpose and Scope

33. The evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR)¹¹ outline the background of this evaluation:

- "This evaluation exercise is meant to ensure ownership, result-based orientation, cost-effectiveness, and quality of UNCTAD assistance. By carrying out this evaluation, UNCTAD plans to assess its work, to learn lessons, to receive feedback, appraisal, and recognition, as well as to mobilize resources by showing the possible attribution of achievements to the programme.
- The evaluation will systematically and objectively assess project design, project management, and project performance. The evaluation will provide assessments that are credible and useful, and also include practical and constructive recommendations in order to enhance the work of UNCTAD in this area. The evaluation will provide accountability to UNCTAD management, the Government of Finland, project stakeholders, as well as UNCTAD's member States with whom the final evaluation report will be shared."
- The evaluation scope includes the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, gender and human rights, and partnerships. The latter criterion is of particular relevance, given the coordination orientation of the project. The evaluation does not consider the criterion of impact. The time-lag is too short between the current stage of the project implementation and for example, the number of countries adopting e-commerce and digital trade policies and laws or regulatory frameworks. The evaluation scope is further defined in the specific

¹¹ Ibid, page 1.

evaluation questions related to each evaluation criterion, as systematically presented in the evaluation matrix in Annex IV.

34. The temporal scope of the evaluation is from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018, according to the ToR.

35. The UNCTAD Evaluation and Monitoring Unit (EMU), in close collaboration with the Division on Technology and Logistics, undertook this evaluation, which was conducted by an independent external evaluator¹².

1.3 Evaluation Methodology

36. The evaluator used a theory-based evaluation approach to address the time-lag between the project results and change in e-commerce to materialize at the partner and ultimately at the country level. Besides, the project benefits from a theory of change as part of a broader programmatic approach, which is a good starting point for a theory-based evaluation.

37. Recent evaluations for international organizations successfully used the theory-based evaluation approach, including UNCTAD¹³. A theory-based evaluation specifies the intervention logic, also called "theory of change" that is tested in the evaluation process. The theory of change is built on a set of assumptions around how the project designers think a change will happen. Logically it is linked to the project logframe.

38. The added value of theory-based evaluation is that it further elaborates the assumptions behind the project, as well as linkages between outputs, outcomes, and impact. The approach includes analyzing the projects' response (activities and outputs) to the problem followed by a results analysis.

39. The goal, outcomes, and outputs and related indicators stated in the project's results framework were used for assessing the effectiveness of the project.

40. The following selection of tailored evaluation tools and processes were agreed in the inception report for this evaluation to ensure rigorous triangulation of data. The full evaluation matrix is presented in Annex IV.

41. The evaluator contacted stakeholders from the 30 organizations constituting the partnership, complemented by seven private sector partners and eight donors.

42. 22 stakeholder representatives (project partners and donors) participated in interviews, and ten project partners completed the on-line survey, adding up to a total of 32 persons consulted in the evaluation process.

- Seven donors representatives (representing six out of the eight donors);

¹² Dr Achim Engelhardt, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, managing the Lotus M&E Group since 2006, based in Geneva who has repeatedly supported UNCTAD in evaluations over the past seven years.

¹³ Engelhardt, A. 2016: External Terminal Evaluation of UNCTAD's Development Account Project: Business schools for impact

Engelhardt, A. 2019: Independent Project evaluation of the UN Development Account project "Strengthening the capacity of developing country policymakers, investment promotion officials and academia in two priority sectors to attract investment for sustainable and inclusive development."

- 10 out of 41 project partners (other than donors) invited to participate in the on-line survey completed the questionnaire, with a response rate of 24%;
- 15 individuals from 10 out of 15 project partner organizations invited for face-to-face interviews in Geneva or telephone interviews participated in the evaluation, including the Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

43. The evaluation took the following process, as presented in the box below.

44. The evaluation matrix in Annex IV specifies which data collection methods are used for the specific evaluation questions and shows the approach to triangulation for each question.

- **Desk review** of project documents and relevant materials, among them: the project proposal, the results framework used for the design and implementation of the project, indicators, and evidence of results achieved; monitoring and other progress reports;
- **Briefing meeting in person** with the Division on Technology and Logistics/ICT Policy Section's project team and with the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit (EMU) in Geneva;
- **Theory of Change validation meeting** with the Division on Technology and Logistics/ICT Policy Section's project team in Geneva;
- **Face-to-face interviews** with relevant UNCTAD staff and primary partners in Geneva complemented by telephone interviews with primary partners outside Geneva;
- **Statistical analysis of platform users**, including from developing countries using available Google analytics data;
- **An online survey** of secondary partners stakeholders outside Geneva;
- **Telephone/ Skype interviews** with key project stakeholders outside Geneva using a semi-structured questionnaire;
- **Presentation of emerging evaluation findings** to Division on Technology and Logistics/ICT Policy Section and EMU following data analysis;
- **Draft report** for feedback to Division on Technology and Logistics/ICT Policy Section (factual validation) and EMU (quality assurance);
- **Finalization of the evaluation report.**

1.4 Limitations

45. The evaluation did not experience any significant limitations, with exception of an uneven representation of partners. Less active members of the partnership did respond to the invitation to participate in the evaluation to a lesser extent than the more active members, because e-commerce and digitalization issues seem less high on their agenda/mandate than in other more active partners.

1.5 Reconstructed Theory of Change

46. The project's Theory of Change contains the following elements, as presented in Figure II:

- Formulation of the main problems

- Outputs (short-term results) and related assumptions
- Policy areas covered by the project
- Outcomes
- Goals
- Impact statement (long-term results) contributing to SDGs
- Linkages to external drivers of change catalyzing the achievement of the impact

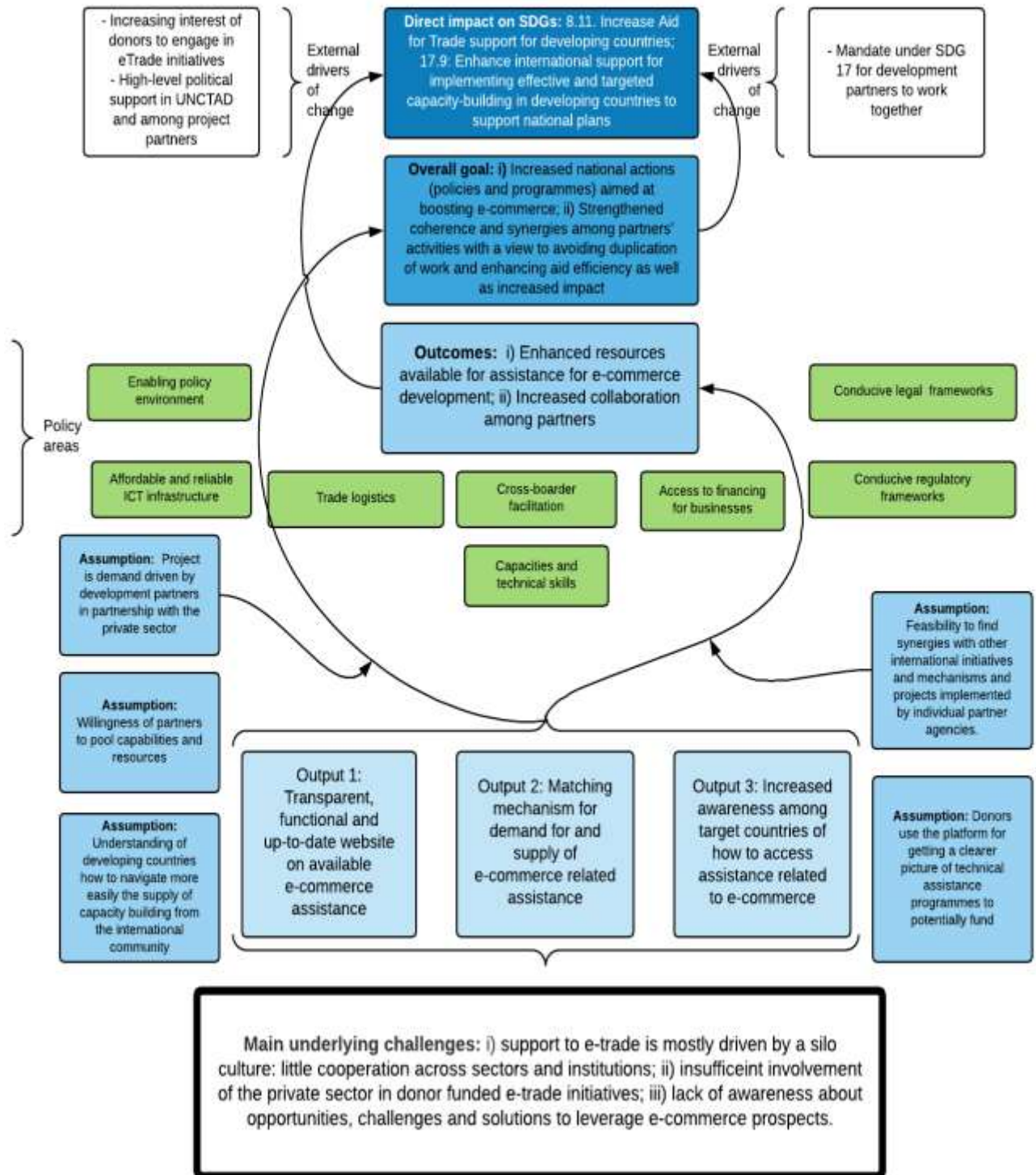
47. The **main underlying challenges** comprise the following: i) the silo culture of support to e-trade; ii) insufficient involvement of the private sector in donor-funded e-trade initiatives; and iii) the lack of awareness how to leverage e-commerce prospects.

48. The project builds on **assumptions** around its demand-driven nature, the willingness to pool resources and the feasibility to find synergies between partners, as well as the use of the web-based platform by developing countries and donors.

49. Section 2.4 assesses the validity of the Theory of Change of the project.

Figure II. Reconstruction of the project's Theory of Change

Theory of change: eTrade for all




II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

2. Relevance: was the project doing the right thing?

50. This section addresses the evaluation criteria of relevance. The sub-criteria agreed in the inception report's evaluation matrix comprise: i) the alignment of the project to UNCTAD mandates; ii) relevance for the needs of member States and UNCTAD's comparative advantage; iii) relevance for project implementation partners; and iv) the validity of the project's Theory of Change.

51. The principal sources of evidence for this section are the document review, interviews, the online survey, and the Theory of Change validation meeting with the project team.



Key findings: The project shows very high relevance and is doing the right thing.

- The 2016 Nairobi Maafikiano mandates the project;
- The relevance for the member States needs is high;
- Relevance for project stakeholders reached 62% high to very high ratings;
- The project's Theory of Change is valid.

52. The evaluation finds that the relevance of the project is very high. In all four sub-criteria, the project shows strong to very strong performance. Based on the evaluations' scoring methodology¹⁴, the relevance score of the project is "green" (94 out of 100)¹⁵.

Alignment to UNCTAD mandates

53. UNCTAD's Secretary-General specified in the evaluation interview the contribution of the project to integrating Member States in the digital economy as a means to address the agenda 2030.

"Many organizations, including UNCTAD, are already contributing to increased e-commerce uptake. However, current efforts are highly fragmented and of insufficient scale," Dr. Kituyi said when he unveiled the initiative. "Seizing the opportunities of e-commerce requires a much more concerted approach."

Source: <https://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=1738>

54. The 2016 Nairobi Maafikiano clearly outlines UNCTAD's mandate for the eTrade for all project, as shown in the following box:

¹⁴ Applied by the UK's Independent Commission for Aid Impact, see for example

<http://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/ICAI-Review-UK-aids-contribution-to-tackling-tax-avoidance-and-evasion.pdf>

¹⁵ Alignment to UNCTAD mandates: 4 out of 4; relevance for the member States needs : 3 out of 4; relevance for project stakeholders: 4 out of 4; relevance of project design: 4 out of 4. Total: 15 out of 16 = 94%

The work programme as mandated by the Nairobi Azimio (NA) and Nairobi Maafikiano (NM):

NA§14 *We welcome the formal unveiling of the eTrade for All initiative at UNCTAD XIV. It provides a new approach to trade development through electronic exchanges by allowing developing countries to more easily navigate the supply of technical assistance for building capacity in e-commerce readiness and for donors to get a clear picture of programmes that they could fund.*

NM §55: UNCTAD should:

(u) "Strengthen its work on enhancing development gains from the digital economy and e-commerce through policy analysis, national information and communications technology policy reviews, capacity-building in the area of e-commerce legislation and improving access to data and statistics on the information economy to assess policies and measure impact, including through the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communications Technology for Development;

(v) Assist developing countries, in particular, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States address the challenges and opportunities in relation to the use of the Internet and e-commerce, to develop their international trade capacities. It should, in cooperation where appropriate with other relevant international organizations, facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue on how to expand the benefits from e-commerce and digital trade in developing countries, including through the development of eTrade for All."

NM §101:

(r) In line with the structure of the intergovernmental machinery as laid out in the Accra Accord, the Trade and Development Board will operationalize the creation of two intergovernmental expert groups. The topics to be considered will include inter alia e-commerce and the digital economy; and financing for development, as reflected in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and within the work of UNCTAD.



2.2 Relevance for member States' needs

55. The evaluation finds that the relevance for the member States needs is high.

56. The following criteria reflect the needs of member states: i) the countries requesting e-commerce assistance, a goal level indicator of the project; ii) countries responding to the mapping of their needs for assistance, an output level indicator; and iii) the number/percentage of visitors from developing countries.

57. The project team reports that 55 requests for additional information have been received by Program Managers of the various partners' organizations that have published their technical assistance offerings (Development Solutions) on the platform over the period 2017-2018.

58. From the pilot assessments conducted in the framework of eTrade for all, a major full-fledged project, the "eT Ready" has been created by UNCTAD. It carried out 17 assessments since its formal launch in 2017. This performance reflects the member States' needs for assistance.

59. Based on the evaluator's analysis, 45.3% of visitors of the projects' website are from non-OECD countries and 6.2% from LDCs, as shown in Figure III¹⁶. The underrepresentation of African member States is evident, with exception of Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, probably reflecting the nature of the actual digital divide.

60. Feedback from e-readiness focal points in three countries indicated the specific needs of member States for e-readiness assessments as an analytical step to better engage with the digital economy.

61. Overall, however, the relevance for the member States is observed to be high.

Figure III. Relevance of the eTrade for all project for stakeholders



2.3 Relevance for project stakeholders and UNCTAD's comparative advantages

62. Figure IV summarizes the relevance of eTrade for all for stakeholders. For 62% of stakeholders, the project's relevance was high to very high. 23% of stakeholders find the relevance of the project as medium and 4% as low¹⁷.

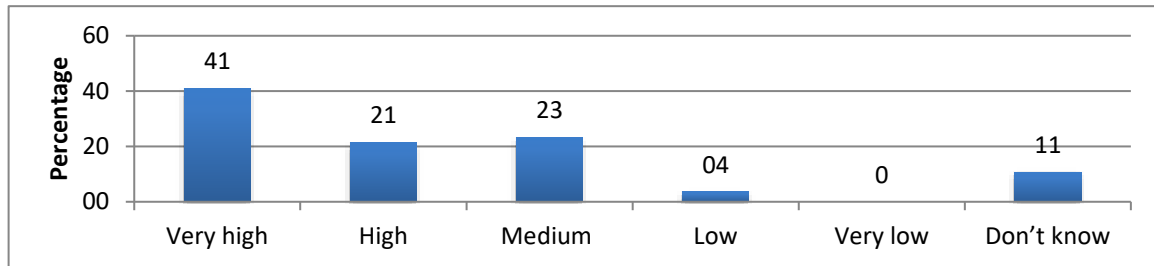
63. Stakeholders appreciated UNCTAD's comparative advantages at various levels, including: i) UNCTAD's global reach; ii) being based in Geneva together with the WTO with access to member States missions; and iii) UNCTAD's capacity as a neutral, development centred bridge builder between international organizations and also between UN member

¹⁶ Status: April 2019

¹⁷ n = 26

States. UNCTAD’s comparative advantage is also reflected in Figure V from a donors perspective. However, some doubts remain, as shown in the section of sustainability.

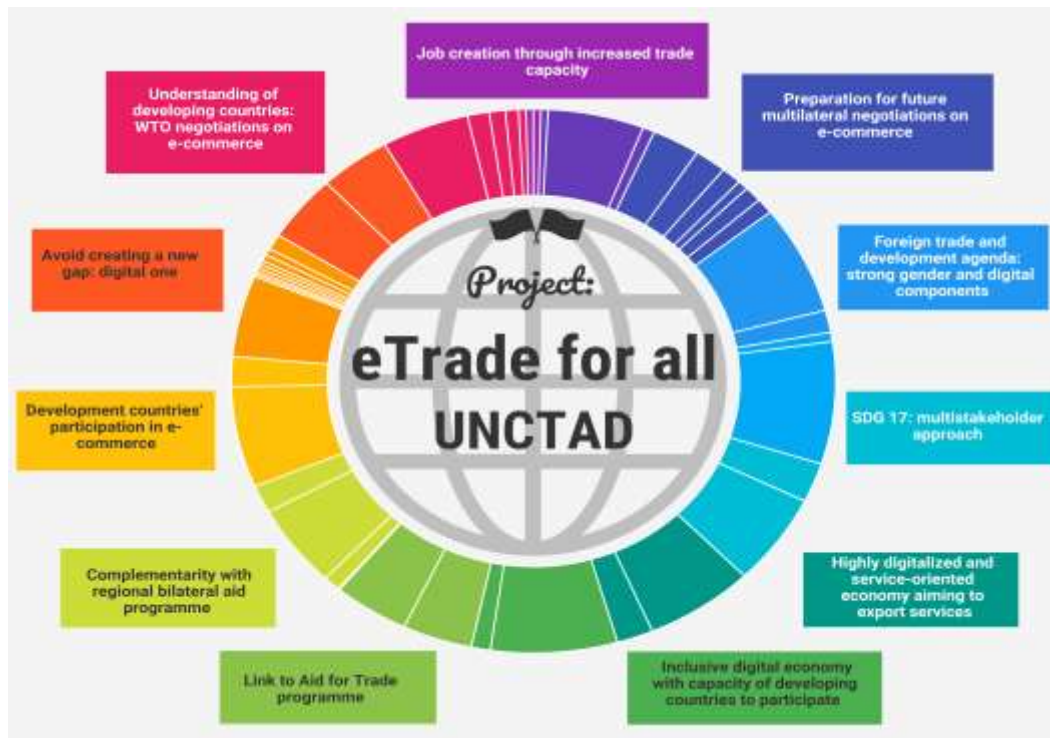
Figure IV. Relevance of the eTrade for all project for stakeholders



Source: Evaluation interview and survey results analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019

64. For the donors of eTrade for all, the relevance of the project is particularly high. The Government of Finland made its strategic investment in the project as seed funding and for UNCTAD to “become ahead of the curve” on eCommerce.

Figure V. Relevance of the eTrade for donors



Source: Evaluation interview and survey results analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019

65. Figure V summarizes the relevance of eTrade for all for project donors and potential donors, including Australia, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

66. The relevance of the project for its partners is closely aligned to their field of expertise along the seven policy areas identified by the project and highlighted in the Theory of Change. The needs of partners reflected in the project are manifold and comprise a broad field. These needs include regulatory reform, legal environment comprising, for example, e-signatures or e-transaction, cross-border commerce of fiscal goods, trade of services, e-business standards and guidelines, trade facilitation, and blockchain, SME funding needs, infrastructure needs, connectivity or small parcel delivery.

67. The evaluation finds that there is not a single stakeholder covering the entire thematic portfolio covered by eTrade for all, with the project serving as a unique entry point to cover the broad scope of e-trade through a multi-stakeholder partnership.

68. The projects facilitation and coordination roles are reflected in the quote below. Though a single quote, the majority of project partners share its message.

"The project team functions as a bridge-builder and honest broker. And they do this well".

Source: project stakeholder



2.4 Relevance of project design: Validity of Theory of Change

69. The evaluation finds that the project's Theory of Change is valid. Though reconstructed, it fits into the broader Theory of Change of UNCTAD's E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme.

70. The project is logically structured and based on a correct problem analysis. Besides, the main assumptions hold.

71. **Problem analysis:** The silo culture of donor support for e-Trade is built around the seven policy areas identified in the project proposal. Even during the on-going project, some donors keep opting for the silo approach, i.e. working specifically in one of the seven policy areas without a holistic approach cutting across those policy areas. At the same time, the involvement of the private sector in development interventions should be strengthened. The project correctly identified this challenge and addressed it conceptually in its design. Interviews showed that the lack of awareness about how to leverage e-commerce prospects was significant before the project launch.

72. **Results pathway from outputs to impact:** The logic along the results pathway to move from outputs to outcomes, the project goals, and ultimately, the impact on SDGs is valid. The functional web-platform containing information about e-commerce assistance combined with awareness-raising on how to access the assistance and a matching mechanism to bring together supply and demand are coherent outputs. The multi-stakeholder partnership approach contributes to moving from the outputs to increased collaboration among partners and enhanced resources being available for e-commerce assistance at the outcome level.

73. As a result, more national actions can be expected in developing countries on e-commerce policies and programming. At the same time, strengthened coherence and synergies should avoid duplication of work and enhance aid efficiency. The latter refers to the project's goal. Ultimately, the project goals will contribute to two SDGs: The increased Aid for Trade support for developing countries (SDG 8.11) and the enhanced international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans (SDG 17.9).

74. **Assumptions:** The evaluation finds that the main assumptions for attaining the project outcome hold. Assumptions comprise: i) The need for the project to be demand-driven, including the partnership with the private sector. While the private sector component of the project, managed by the private sector, collapsed¹⁸, the project conceptually addressed the issue; ii) the willingness of partners to pool capabilities and resources is the basis for a functioning multi-stakeholder approach; iii) given the fragmentation of e-commerce support by partners mostly in silos in the seven policy areas highlighted in the Theory of Change, there is the assumption of a clear need for developing countries to understand how to navigate more easily the supply in e-commerce support, including for capacity building; iv) the fragmentation of support also calls for better synergies between development assistance in e-commerce and the assumptions that it is feasible to find such cooperation proved correct; v) the evaluation clearly showed examples of donors using the platform for information on on-going activities of main stakeholders in e-commerce, with the initial assumption that there was a willingness of donors to use such a platform.

75. **Drivers of change:** The project benefits from drivers which are beyond its direct control such as the increasing donor interest in e-trade or the high-level political support for the project in UNCTAD and among its project partners. Besides, SDG 17 mandates developing partners to work together, which is conducive for the project's multi-stakeholder approach.

¹⁸ The Business for eTrade Development Council established and managed independently by the private sector and acting as the private sector counterpart for eTrade for all ceased to exist due to funding challenges.

3. Effectiveness: were results achieved, and how?

76. This section assesses the results achieved by eTrade for all to date and the rationale for the progress made. More specifically, the section reviews the achievement of project goals, outcomes, and outputs by using appropriate logframe indicators. The assessment continues with reviewing any unintended effects, progress against SDG targets. The section closes with the factors affecting project performance.

77. The principal sources of evidence for the assessment of effectiveness are the document review, interviews, and the online survey.

Key findings: The project achieved its expected results to a high degree

- Overall, project outputs, outcomes, and goals have been largely achieved based on the results framework indicators and project reporting. A more specific assessment of accomplishments is not possible in the absence of time-bound milestones or targets.
- At the goal level, the project's contribution to avoiding duplication of work in the area of e-commerce seems highest (46% high to very high ratings by stakeholders) followed by an increase of national actions to boost e-commerce as a result of the project and strengthened coherence or synergies among partners' e-commerce activities. 30% of stakeholders rated the project's contribution to enhanced aid efficiency in the area of e-commerce as high to very high.
- For outcomes, 55% of project stakeholders reported a high to very high contribution of the project to increased collaboration among partners. 36% of stakeholders experienced a high to very high increase in financial or non-financial resources for e-commerce development assistance.
- At the output level, 64% of stakeholders judge the results in the development and maintenance of a transparent, functional, and up-to-date web-platform as high to very high. Results in increased awareness are high to very high for 50% of stakeholders. Stakeholders perceive less progress in the project's function as a matching mechanism for e-commerce related assistance. 18% of ratings were high, 16% medium and 34% low to very low
- The project has positive spin off effects, including two projects with separate funding sources: eT.Readies (rapid e-readiness assessments) and eTrade for women.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with UNCTAD's leading role in the project is significant, with 54% very high and 34% high ratings.



78. The evaluation finds that the project shows satisfactory to very satisfactory achievement of its objectives in most areas. The score for effectiveness is “green” with 83 out of 100, based on the evaluations scoring methodology¹⁹.



3.1 Overview of achievement of project outputs, outcomes and goals

79. The evaluation’s inception report presented a template to assess progress against logframe indicators in the project’s results framework, as presented in Figure VI.

Figure VI. Level of progress against logframe indicators

| Project logframe indicator | Level of progress |
|---|--|
| 1. Goal | |
| 1.1 Number of countries requesting e-commerce assistance through the platform | Fifty-five requests for additional information have been received by Program Managers of the various partners' organizations that have published their technical assistance offerings (Development Solutions) on the platform over the period 2017-2018 |
| 1.2 Number of e-commerce/ICT strategies developed by countries | <i>Too early to evaluate</i> |
| 1.3 Number of partners joining <i>eTrade for all</i> & PSAC | 30 partners have joined - up from the 14 founding members in 2016 |
| 2. Outcomes | |
| Funds raised for projects mentioned on the <i>eTrade for all</i> platform. | <p>eT.Readies:</p> <p>Sweden: SEK 2 million (2016-17)</p> <p>Germany: 750'000 euros (2018-2019)</p> <p>EIF: 440'000 USD (2017-2019)</p> <p>eTrade for all:</p> <p>UK: 264'000 USD (2016)</p> <p>Finland: 500'000 euros (2017-2018);</p> <p>Estonia: 50'000 euros (2017)</p> <p>eTrade for all/eTrade for Women: Netherlands: 500'000 euros per year over 4 year (2018-2022)</p> |
| 2.2 Number of projects posted on the <i>eTrade for all</i> platform. | Currently 30 (in English, French, and Spanish) |
| 3. Outputs | |

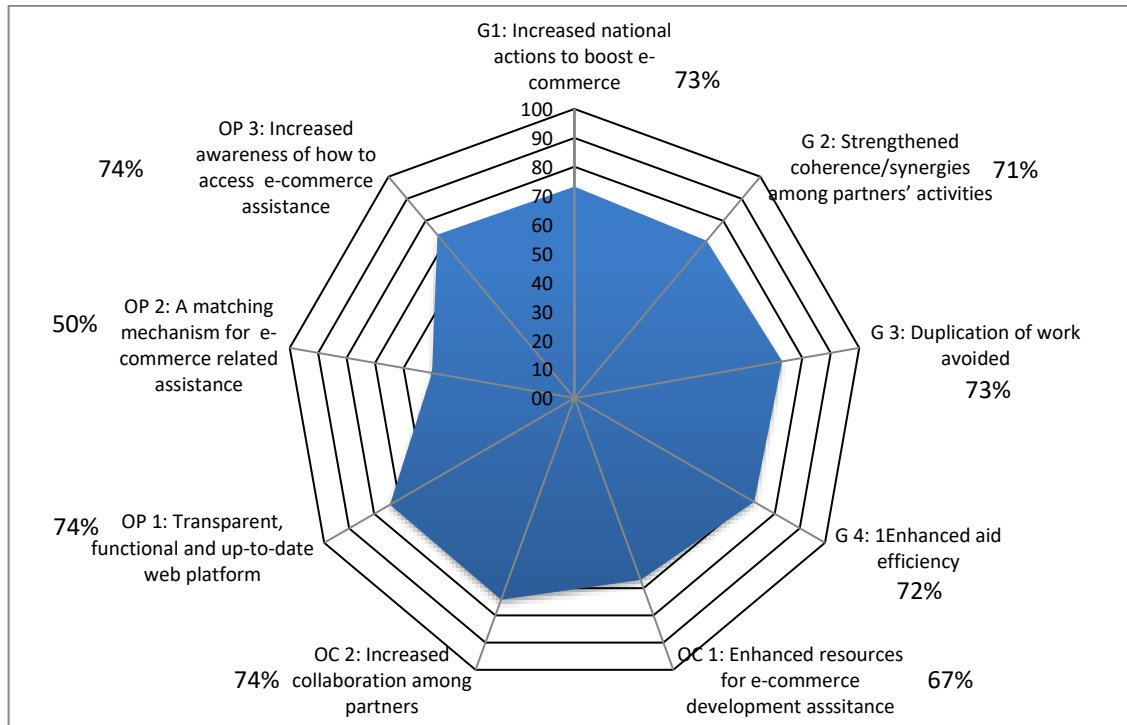
¹⁹ Overview of achievements : 3 out of 4 ; goals : 3 out of 4; outcomes : 3 out of 4; outputs 3 out of 4 ; unintended effects : 4 out of 4 ; stakeholder satisfaction : 4 out of 4. Total: 20 out of 24 = 83%

| | |
|---|--|
| 3.1 Number of target countries responding to the mapping of their needs for assistance. | From the pilot assessments conducted in the framework of eTrade for all, a major full-fledged programme the "eT Ready" has been created by UNCTAD. It carried out 17 assessments since its formal launch in 2017. |
| 3.2 Number of actions/requests by governments of developing countries, donors, private sector | The platform receives 2'000 monthly visitors on average -of which 42% come from developing countries (Visitors from Switzerland also include many missions of developing countries.) |
| 3.3 Number of partners signing the MoU | Thirty partners have joined the initiative since its launch. 23 have decided to share a formal commitment by their leadership. |
| 3.4 Number of partners uploading information on the website | 30 Development Solutions (Technical assistance offerings) have been shared by the partners and are available on the etradeforall.org platform in E/F/SP. 75% of partners regularly contribute to the platform and the initiative in various forms. A core of 8 partners (those for which digital issues are an organizational priority) have become key regular contributors. The monthly newsletter launched in 2017 has reached 2'100 subscribers . |

80. Based on this template, the evaluation finds that project outputs, outcomes, and goals have been largely achieved. In the absence of specific targets or milestones in the project document's results framework, a more specific assessment of accomplishments is not possible and a slightly more cautious rating is given ("amber/green" rather than "green").

81. Figure VII summarizes the results of the project at goal, outcome, and output level based on stakeholder perceptions. Results are further analysed in the following sections.

Figure VII. Achievement of project objectives based on stakeholders perceptions²⁰



Source: Evaluation Survey and interview results²¹ analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019

82. The evaluation triangulated the project team's reporting of project results at the goal, outcome, and output level through stakeholder consultations. The assessment is based on the objectives outlined in the project's results framework.

83. An anonymous eTrade for all user survey administered by team project team in 2018 endorses the largely positive results listed above, with 64% of users rating the experience with the e-Trade for all platform as good to very good.

²⁰ G = goal, OC = outcome; OP = output.

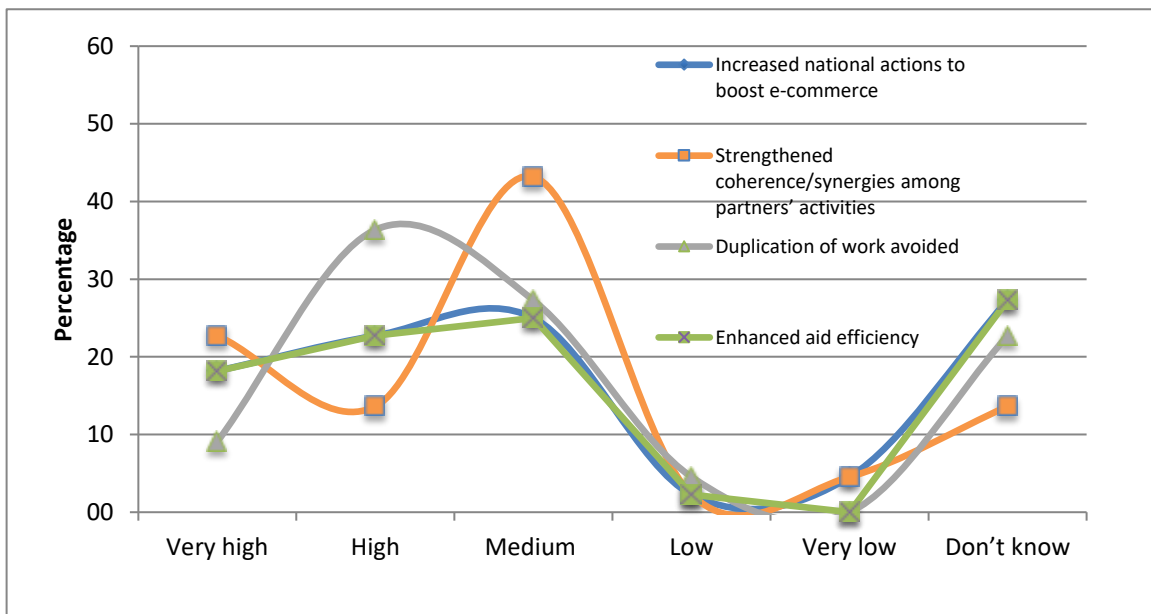
²¹ Interview data was coded and quantified for the overall % score.



3.2 Goals

84. Figure VIII shows that 46% of project stakeholders judged the project's contribution to avoiding duplication of work in the area of e-commerce as high to very high²². Medium ratings reached 27%. 41% of stakeholders experienced a high to very high increase of national actions to boost e-commerce as a result of the project, with 25% medium ratings²³. 36% of stakeholders reported strengthened coherence or synergies among partners' e-commerce activities, with 43% medium ratings²⁴. 30% of stakeholders rated the project's contribution to enhanced aid efficiency in the area of e-commerce as high to very high, followed by 16% medium ratings.

Figure VIII. Perceived achievement of goal level objectives



Source: Evaluation Survey and interview results analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019 (n=22)

85. **Increased national actions to boost e-commerce:** The Rapid e-Trade Readiness Assessments of LDCs contributed to increased national actions, according to some partners, while other partners perceive a lack of action. One donor witnessed increased national action in a developing country recipient, though the involvement of policymakers in the member States is a lengthy process requiring much awareness-raising efforts. An e-readiness focal point in a LDC confirmed the donor's perception.

86. **Strengthened coherence and synergies among partners' activities:** Partners experience the added advantage of "sitting at the same table" and to better understand "who does what." The regular conference calls seem to contribute to that effort. Coherence and synergies start to show, but efforts need to be further strengthened. One donor valued

²² 4% low to very low ratings and 13% «do not know »

²³ 7% low to very low ratings and 27% «do not know.»

²⁴ 7% low to very low ratings and 14% «do not know »

the breadth and depth of expertise brought together by the project beyond international organizations.

87. **Duplication of work avoided:** The neutral forum provided by UNCTAD, one of UNCTAD's comparative advantages, allows partners to interact. While the project cannot stop partners to advance their agendas even in an uncoordinated way, awareness about those agendas continues to raise. One voice from an LDC highlighted the value of the rapid e-readiness assessment to understand the roles, responsibilities, and more importantly, actions of different ministries in the area of e-commerce in the country.

88. **Enhanced aid efficiency:** A critical insight emerges on this topic from one donor. The evaluation revealed that the donor regularly uses the eTrade for all platform for information updates before engaging with counterparts on e-commerce. The evaluation finds that this is a practical example of enhanced aid efficiency.

89. While the results attained two years after the launch of the project are very encouraging, expectations of partners are very high, as highlighted by one stakeholder who noted eTrade for all was heavy with potential, but less on results.

90. Figure VIII specifies stakeholder ratings on the achievement of project goals. Interestingly, ratings for the increase in national actions to boost e-commerce and enhanced aid efficiency are nearly identical along the 5-point rating scale.



3.3 Outcomes

91. Figure IX shows that 55% of project stakeholders reported a high to very high contribution of the project to increased collaboration among partners with 30% medium ratings²⁵. Hence, this is the most successful outcome measure. 36% of stakeholders experienced a high to very high increase in financial or non-financial resources for e-commerce development assistance with 16% medium ratings, followed by 16% low ratings²⁶.

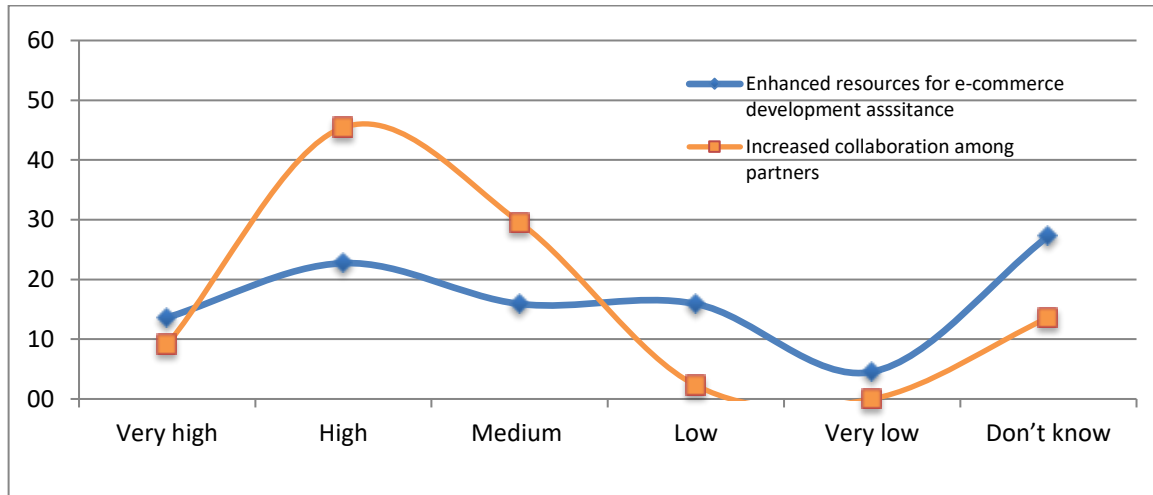
92. **Enhanced resources available for assistance for e-commerce development:** In a competitive funding environment, eTrade for all managed to mobilize resources for 17 rapid eTrade readiness assessments, a spin off that is now separately managed in UNCTAD²⁷. Non-financial resources leveraged include the time spent by global experts in e-commerce as partners in the project, including during eCommerce weeks. In the case of one LDC, donor support for funding the recommendations of the rapid e-readiness assessment is currently being discussed.

²⁵ 2% low to very low ratings and 13% «do not know »

²⁶ 4,5% very low ratings and 27% «do not know.»

²⁷ The evaluation did focus on increased resources for e-commerce work of the project only, not project partners, an important caveat as stressed by the project team.

Figure IX. Perceived results of project outcomes



Source: Evaluation Survey and interview results analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019 (n=22)

93. **Increased collaboration among partners:** Stakeholders see evidence in an increased collaboration through active engagement in eCommerce weeks, regular conference calls, newsletter contributions, and the uploading of information on the web-platform. At the national level, in one LDC increased collaboration is also experienced at the national level thanks to the understanding of roles and activities of the relevant government ministries.



3.4 Outputs

94. The project results framework lists three outputs:

- Transparent, functional and up-to-date website;
- Matching mechanism for demand for and supply of e-commerce related assistance; and
- Increased awareness among target countries of how to access assistance related to e-commerce.

95. Figure X shows the survey and questionnaire results concerning the achievement of project outputs²⁸. 64% of stakeholders judge the results in the development and maintenance of a transparent, functional and up-to-date web-platform as high to very high, followed by 9% medium ratings and 14% low to very low ratings²⁹.

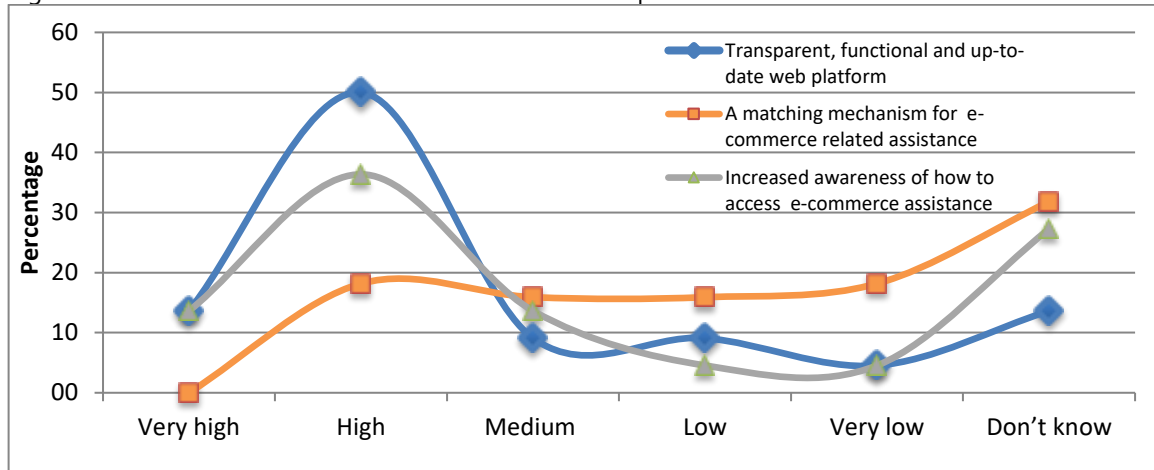
96. Results in increased awareness are high to very high for 50% of stakeholders, with 14% medium ratings and 9% low to very low ratings. The 27% "do not know" ratings mostly relate to the broader group of donors finding often specific activities but with fewer insights into the wider eTrade for all outputs and results. Stakeholders perceive less

²⁸ n=22

²⁹ The remaining ratings are «do not know »

progress in the project's function as a matching mechanism for e-commerce related assistance. 18% of ratings were high, 16% medium and 34% low to very low. 32% of stakeholders did not provide a rating.

Figure X. Perceived achievement of eTrade for all outputs



Source: Evaluation Survey and interview results analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019; n=22

97. The quantitative results are well reflected in the qualitative data collected during the evaluation. Figure XI summarizes some of the feedback on the eTrade for all web-platform.

Figure XI. eTrade for all web-platform: stakeholder feedback



Source: Evaluation Survey and interview results analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019

98. **Transparent, functional, and up-to-date web platform:** The overall feedback from project partners on the web-platform is positive. The user-friendly approach and variety of materials available on the platform are commended. Room for improvements shows, for example, for partners to update materials more frequently with the project team playing a role in putting those issues on the agenda of regular partner meetings. Other improvements would require more human resources for the project team. Those improvements include the following tasks for the content manager: i) encourage partners to provide better quality content, with stricter quality control by the content manager; and ii) customized notification of new contents.

99. **A matching mechanism for the demand for and supply of e-commerce related assistance:** For many partners, this output is highest on the project agenda with high expectations. At least three out of the ten partners consulted on this question are not receiving demand from the platform or demand that is not matching their modus operandi (for example demand for training individual companies on e-commerce related issues). A certain level of impatience contributes to the lower partners' ratings on this output.

100. **Increased awareness among target countries of how to access assistance related to e-commerce:** partners perceive good progress on this output. The eCommerce Weeks are a primary vehicle for awareness raising where participants are also introduced to the web-platform. The experience during an e-eCommerce Week helped, for example, a stakeholder in an LDC to learn about the web-platform and to collect information on e-commerce readiness indicators.



3.5 Contribution to SDGs

101. Questions about the project's contribution to SDGs figured in the evaluation's on-line survey with nine responses. Hence Figure XII below refers to actual response rather than percentages. The project document lists a direct contribution to two SDGs:

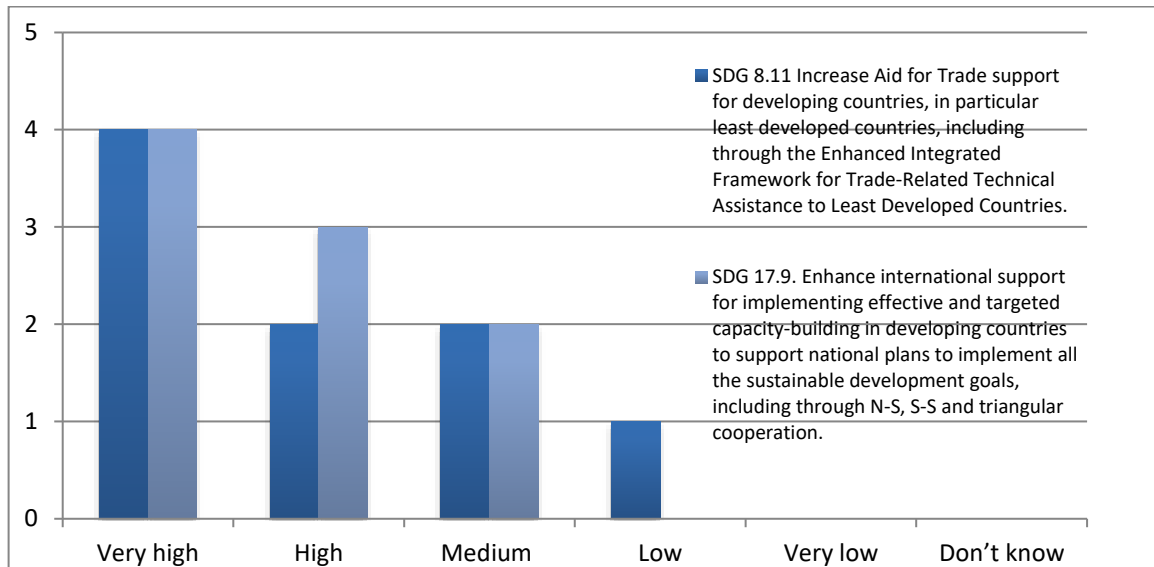
- SDG 17.9. Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation.
- SDG 8.11 Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular, least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries.

102. Six out of nine stakeholders found a high to very high contribution of the project to SDG 8.11. The survey showed three medium to low ratings. The Enhanced Integrated Framework is a core partner of the project, and at the same time, a mechanism to implement rapid e-readiness assessments underpins the project's contribution to SDG 8.11.

103. Seven out of nine stakeholders rated the project's contribution to SDG 17.9 as high to very high, followed by two medium ratings. The project aims to support national plans

through awareness-raising, information sharing, and capacity building, the latter during e-commerce weeks.

Figure XII. Project contribution to the SDGs



Source: Evaluation Survey and interview results analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019; n=9



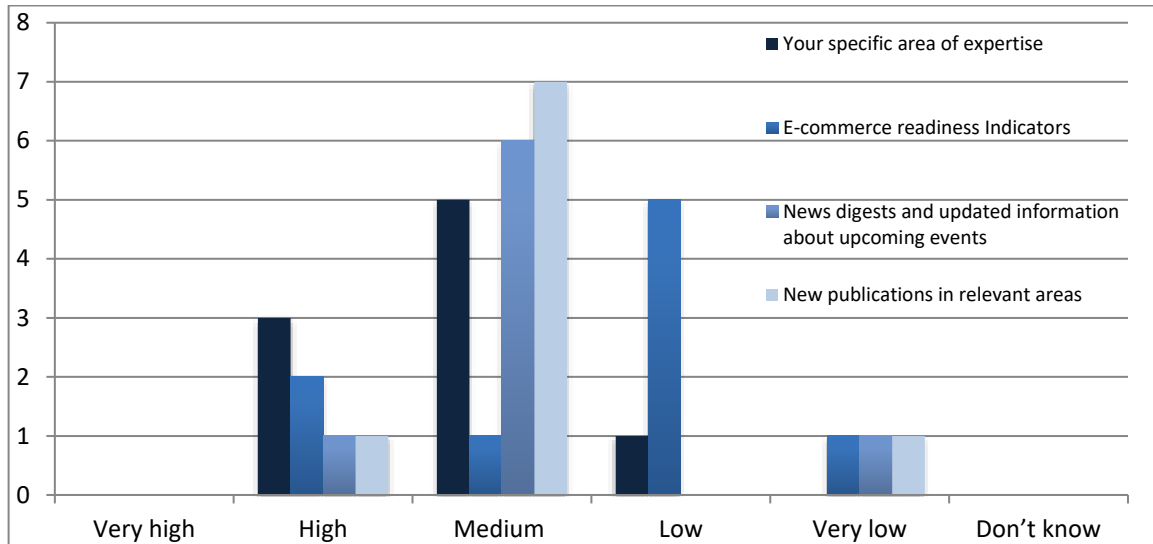
3.6 Counterfactual

104. A counterfactual concerns “what is not, but could or would have been,” according to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy³⁰. The evaluation used a counterfactual question to assess to what extent stakeholders could have received project-related services if the project would not have existed.

105. Figure XII reflects the perception of stakeholders about alternative sources of information provided as compared to eTrade for all. For stakeholders’ specific area of expertise along the seven e-commerce policy areas, three respondents would have alternative sources available to a high extent and five stakeholders to a medium extent. Two stakeholders would have alternative sources available to a low extent. The results reflect that the project’s web-platform is a one-stop-shop of pre-existing materials.

³⁰ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/counterfactuals/>

Figure XII. Counterfactual of eTrade for all: availability of alternative data sources



Source: Evaluation Survey and interview results analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019



3.7 Unintended effects

106. One donor admitted that the project had an unintended effect on how his/her administration viewed UNCTAD. Despite UNCTAD not being the partner of choice in some technical areas because of its history, eTrade for all projected UNCTAD in a new and positive light to that donor's administration. The extent of the project's convening power and credibility was a positive surprise.

107. The same donor representative stressed the side effects of member States becoming more aware of the broader trade agendas being discussed in Geneva, well beyond the scope of the project, with delegations in Geneva becoming more active.

108. For one of the (regional) development banks, the breadth and depth of the partnership with networking opportunities were much more significant than expected while the engagement at the country level was still insufficient.



3.8 Stakeholder satisfaction

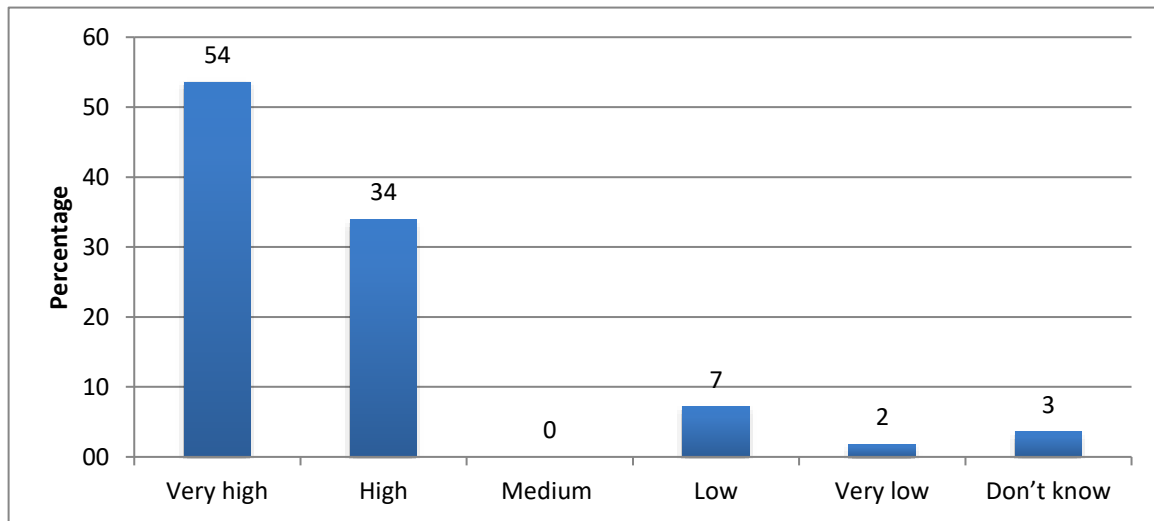
109. Twenty-two stakeholders commented on the satisfaction with UNCTAD's leading role in eTrade for all. The results are highly positive, as presented in Figure XIII. 88% of stakeholder show high to very high satisfaction with UNCTAD's leading role, compared to 9% low to very low ratings.

110. Reasons for the high ratings include the robust and inclusive leadership and relentless work of the project team, including its strong communication skills. UNCTAD's role in looking at the topic from a development perspective is appreciated, hence complementing WTO. In this context, particularly donors interviewed disagreed whether UNCTAD is the right agency to implement eTrade for all. While the project fits into UNCTAD's mandate,

five out of six donors interviewed are concerned by different perspectives and schools of thought concerning trade in UNCTAD. This confusing picture makes UNCTAD "hard to sell" in the capitals where funding decisions are made³¹. The issue is further analyzed in the sustainability section of this report.

111. Two areas where leadership could be improved comprise: i) the follow up of analysis with concrete implementation at the country level; and ii) for the project to truly become a matching mechanism for the demand for and supply of e-commerce related assistance.

Figure XIII. Stakeholder satisfaction with UNCTAD’s leading role



Source: Evaluation Survey and interview results analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019; n=22

112. The box below reflects some of the diverse views concerning UNCTAD’s leadership role.

"They have done a great job, done what we wanted to do five years ago. Now Geneva-based trade organizations are taking e-commerce seriously. The project team facilitates and convenes. That's UNCTAD at its best! Fruits will come about."

"The project is very timely and well-executed. We appreciate that e-commerce is looked at beyond WTO negotiations. I would commend the project team for its efforts".

"UNCTAD lacks the financial and human resources to properly lead and develop the project on a sustainable basis".

Source: project stakeholders

alternative policy options for consideration by developing countries, this has meant on occasion recommending policies that challenge the conventional wisdom and accepted mainstream approaches [of donors] to development, often serving as a compass on contentious issues, where no consensus yet exists" [UNCTAD/2017/1, "Implementation of the Nairobi Maafikiano", paragraph 18]

4. Efficiency: were resources used appropriately to achieve programme results?

113. This section analyses the efficiency of eTrade for all. The following set of sub-criteria is used, as listed in the evaluation matrix: i) appropriateness of implementation modalities; ii) quality of monitoring modalities; iii) use of internal UNCTAD resources for project implementation, and iv) use of external cooperation.

114. The principal sources of evidence for this section are the document review, interviews, and the online survey.

Key findings: The project used resources appropriately.

- The multi-stakeholder approach is highly appropriate for the implementation of this project with a very strong partnership element as its cornerstone;
- The quality of monitoring modalities is high; it is linked to UNCTAD's E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme, which contains a fully-fledged M&E framework of outstanding comprehensiveness and quality. However, time-bound milestones and targets seem missing and the M&E framework not yet fully used due to underfunding of the programme;
- Internal UNCTAD resources actively enrich the project: e-commerce weeks, e-readiness assessments and the eTrade for women network;
- Use of external cooperation: 60% of stakeholders participating in the evaluation rated the project's facilitation function as high to very high.



115. The evaluation finds the efficiency of the project as very high (94 out of 100), with a "green" score, based on the evaluations' scoring methodology.



4.1 Appropriateness of project implementation modalities

116. The multi-stakeholder approach seems highly appropriate for the implementation of this project with a very strong partnership element as its cornerstone. The good integration of internal UNCTAD resources further strengthens the implementation approach, as shown in the next section.

117. The web platform <https://etradeforall.org> is fully functional in English, French, and Spanish. The evaluation finds that the information on the user-friendly web platform is sufficiently up-to-date and appropriate.



4.2 Quality of monitoring modalities

118. For the Government of Finland, the projects results framework and indicators are up to international standards, useful and used for reporting.

119. The evaluation finds that the logframe indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. However, time-bound milestones and targets seem missing.

120. Another comment on the indicators concern goal indicator 1.1 "Number of countries requesting e-commerce assistance" and outputs indicator 3.2 "Number of actions/requests by governments of developing countries, donors, private sector." Both indicators seem similar.

121. UNCTAD's E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme contains a fully-fledged M&E framework. eTrade for all is part of the ICT Branch's programmatic approach and as such, integrated into the M&E framework where it figures under deliverable 2.1.3.

122. The M&E framework is embedded in an 85-page document and very comprehensive. Its quality is outstanding. An M&E framework of such high standards is rarely to be found in the UN system. The significant amount of work invested in the M&E framework clearly shows.

123. However, as the E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme is not fully funded, and given the many demand on scarce resources, the M&E framework is not yet fully used.



4.3 Use of internal UNCTAD resources

124. The eTrade for all project created two spin-off projects, the Rapid e-Trade Readiness Assessments of LDCs and the eTrade for Women initiative. Combined with the eCommerce Weeks, those internal UNCTAD resources related to other extra-budgetary funding, actively enrich the project. However, the eCommerce Weeks, because of the tight connections and regular involvement of eTrade for all partners, draw heavily on the capacities of the project team. While there is a clear cross-fertilization between the project and the eCommerce Weeks, with many joint activities being hosted under that framework, the small project team³² is hugely stretched during those occasions. Bearing in mind the demand for regional eCommerce Week beyond the one held in Kenya, with multiple eCommerce Weeks per year, the evaluation finds the pace and extent of project activities unsustainable unless human resources are significantly increased.



4.4 Use of external cooperation

125. The primary efficiency measure contained in the evaluation matrix is the project's facilitation function, i.e., its role in coordinating the multi-stakeholder platform. 60% of stakeholders participating in the evaluation rated the project's facilitation function as high to very high, as presented in Figure XII³³. For 28% of stakeholders, the efficiency of the project is medium concerning its facilitation function and for 4% low.

³² The project team is not being funded from the project budget but rather by the UN regular budget. Hence, regular budget activities take precedence.

³³ N=24

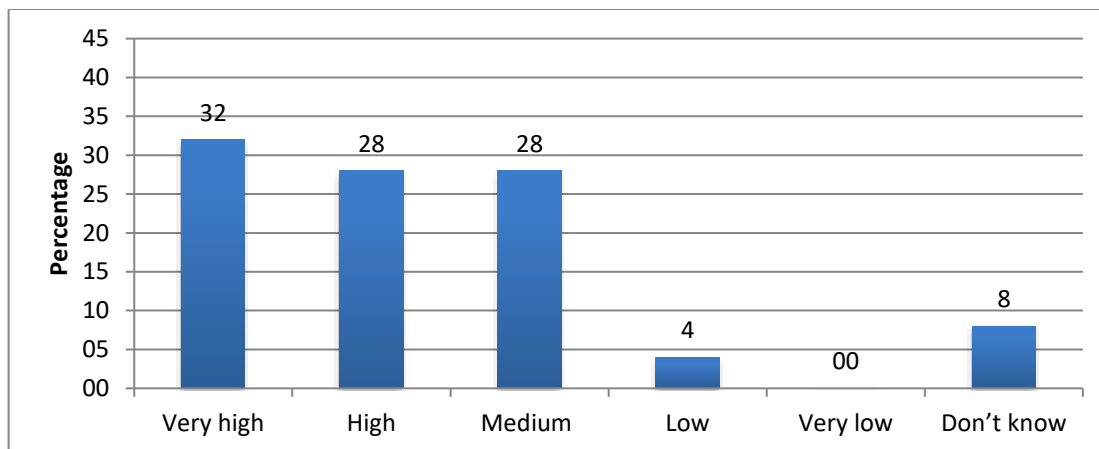
126. Reasons for high to very high ratings include the project's success in creating a community of practice with a vast critical mass and good visibility. Stakeholders note that the partnership keeps growing in number and diversity. The project team's facilitation role shows, for example, in its newsletter, monthly conference calls, and opportunities to upload content on the on-line platform.

127. In one LDC, the rapid e-readiness assessment brought together the national stakeholders to form a national platform, including the private sector to jointly identify quick wins from the UNCTAD action plan.

"eTrade for all has raised the profile of e-commerce. The topic is now firmly on the trade agenda in Geneva."

Source: Project stakeholder

Figure XII. Stakeholders' rating of the project's facilitation function



Source: Evaluation Survey and interview results analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019

128. The project succeeded in establishing an overall agenda embedded in a broader programmatic approach, including the Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessments, the eCommerce Weeks, and the eTrade for Women initiative. The project's facilitation role also reached the internal dynamics of its partners. As a result, the counterpart units of some project partners strengthened their profile and created internal synergies, including among at least one donor.

129. Room for improvement in the project's efficiency shows in the following areas, based on the results of evaluation interviews:

- Partners' capabilities could be even better exploited for example by tapping into their pools of experts and in-house thematic expertise;
- The project's clearinghouse for different kind of capabilities could be strengthened;

- Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessments identify needs but follow up is to be improved, as discussed among project partners;
- The project could move to more substantive cooperation with its partners beyond awareness-raising, giving the facilitation role a new dimension.

130. However, given the fact that the project team is small, stretched and visibly overworked³⁴, the evaluation finds that with its current staffing, the project team will hardly be able to maximise those efficiency gains without jeopardizing the quality of the interventions.

5. Sustainability: are results lasting?

131. This section analyzes the lasting nature or *sustainability* of eTrade for all results. The assessment uses the following sub-criteria: i) knowledge creation; ii) capacities fostered; iii) partner commitment and iv) financial sustainability.

132. Principal data sources used in this section are interviews and the online survey.

Key findings: The evaluation finds uneven results concerning the sustainability of the project with significant risks for its financial sustainability.

- The sustainability of knowledge created by the project reaches 52% high to very high ratings;
- Sustainability of capacities fostered by the project: 44% high to very high ratings;
- Stakeholder commitment to cooperation reaches with 31% significantly fewer high to very high ratings and 41% medium ratings while partner ratings reach 37% high to very high ratings and 31% medium ratings;
- There is a perceived long-term mistrust in UNCTAD due to some of its traditionally more radical views. This affects the financial sustainability of the project. While donors appreciate programmatic approaches in UNCTAD, they are reluctant to provide unearmarked, more flexible funding.



133. The evaluation finds that the sustainability of the project shows quite good progress in some areas, but partial achievement in others with the paramount question emerging about the financial sustainability of the project. The score for sustainability is "amber/green" (56 out of 100).

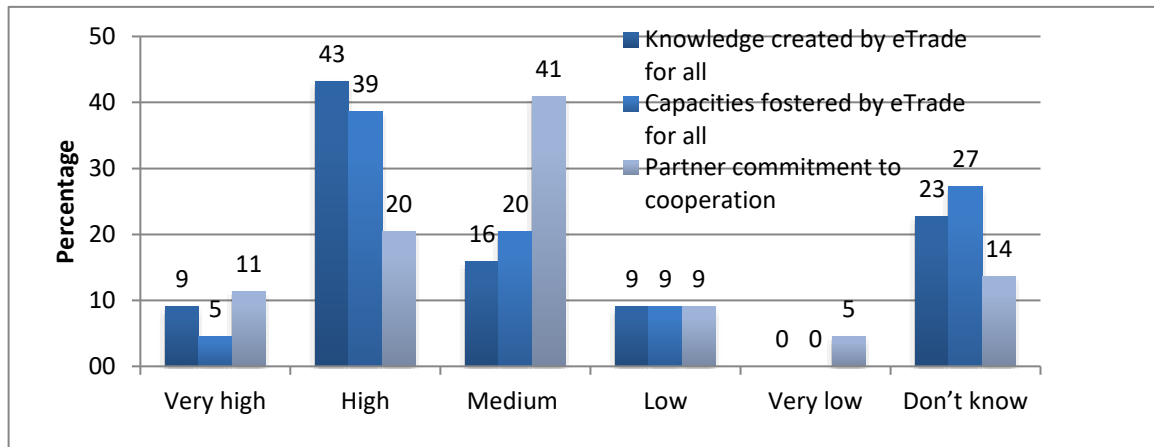
134. The evaluation finds uneven results concerning the sustainability of the project. The sustainability of knowledge created by the project reaches 52% high to very high ratings, compared to 44% high to very high ratings for the capacities fostered by the project. Stakeholder commitment to cooperation reaches with 31% significantly fewer high to very high ratings. 41% of stakeholders find that partners commitment to eTrade for all is

³⁴ As expressed by some partners and observed during the evaluation process.

medium. 9% of respondents provide low ratings for all three sustainability criteria, as presented in Figure XIII.

135. If the donor ratings were excluded from the analysis to reflect project partners views only³⁵, 37% of ratings would be high to very high, with 31% medium ratings and 16% low to very low ratings³⁶.

Figure XIII. Stakeholders’ perception of eTrade for all’s sustainability



Source: Evaluation Survey and interview results analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019, n= 22



5.1 Knowledge created

136. The evaluation finds that the rich and updated information on the platform has enhanced the global knowledge base on e-commerce but requires continued project funding to be sustained. Some partners correctly stated that the knowledge of the platform requires continuous updating. Uncertainty prevails what would happen to the platform once project funded ceased. One donor stressed the importance of predictable funding to ensure the sustainability of the platform.



5.2 Capacities fostered

137. The eCommerce Weeks seem to be the primary vehicle to enhance the capacities of project stakeholders. The feedback collected after eCommerce Weeks provides evidence for this finding. However, more resources seem to be required to sustain such efforts in the long term.

³⁵ n=19

³⁶ 16% «do not know » ratings; sub-criteria of sustainability used are: i) sustainability of knowledge created; ii) sustainability of capacities fostered; and iii) partner commitment to cooperation.



5.3 Partner commitment

138. Partner commitment is the lowest among the three sustainability criteria. This finding comes at some surprise, as the partnership is the backbone of eTrade for all. However, some partners are wary about the financial sustainability of the project, which affects the level of partner commitment. One partner questioned whether financial resources should be built in the project's implementation mechanism at the country level as part of the overall architecture of eTrade for all.

139. Another source pointed to the issue to what extent cooperation between partner organizations is institutionalized or personalized, suggesting therefore the need for deeper involvement of leadership in joint activities to strengthen institutional ties. The project was able to reach positive results in a limited timeframe also because of the comparatively small nature of units dealing with e-commerce and digitalization in the various partner organizations. This facilitated the development of a shared vision in a relatively short period of time. To further sustain this positive trend in the long term, there is a need to further strengthen the institutional ties at the leadership and executive levels.



5.4 Financial sustainability

140. The financial sustainability of the project is the Achilles heel of eTrade for all. According to UNCTAD, it has always been difficult to secure long term funding for the maintenance of web platforms. While project partners are aware of this shortcoming, causing some anxiety, financial sustainability is the primary concern for some project donors. For the government of Finland, the diversification of the project's donors base would be desired given that no further funding from the Government of Finland is possible at this stage.

141. Two other project donors were outspoken about the difficulties in justifying long-term programmatic funding to UNCTAD. The differing messages from UNCTAD about its position on trade confuse policymakers in the respective donor capitals. During the evaluation process, the evaluator had a chance to meet UNCTAD's Secretary-General to discuss this challenge. While measures are being taken to cross-fertilise ideas and theories in UNCTAD, diverging views on trade have a history in the organization, and are seen by many developing country member States as one of its comparative advantages but not by five of the six project donors interviewed.

142. Besides, diverging views on trade are at times delivered through personal views of some staff or presented by external persons but at UNCTAD events. Those distinctions are, however, not immediately visible to external stakeholders such as donors. From a donor perspective, programmatic approaches are desirable, but under the above-described conditions hard to justify. Donors still prefer to earmark funding for individual activities of eTrade for all, causing challenges to the project team by this inefficient funding practice.

143. One option to diversify the donor base is for developing countries to pay, for example, for Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessments and the implementation of recommendations at the country level.

"We do not see an alternative to the project and its platform. It has quite a profile right now. The programmatic approach also makes sense. However, radical changes are required in UNCTAD to make the organization more attractive to donors".

Source: Donor representative.

6. Gender and human rights

144. This section analyzes the equity aspects of eTrade for all. The evaluation assesses i) gender mainstreaming, and ii) equitable development. Principal data sources used in this section are the document review, interviews, and the online survey.

Key findings: Gender aspects and equity considerations are less prominently addressed in the project.

- Along the seven policy areas, the project team treats gender and statistics as cross-cutting elements. Conceptually, the eTrade for Women network is the most definite link of the project to the women economic empowerment.
- The project's engagement on gender seems to be, to some extent supply-driven, given the topic's absence from the e-commerce agendas of many member States.
- About half of project stakeholders were unsure to what extent gender is conceptually or practically figuring in the project with 27% low ratings.
- The project team considers human rights under the right to privacy in the context of a broader, legal, and regulatory dimension. Besides reference is made to the right to development by making digital development more inclusive.
- Project stakeholders were hesitant to comment on the rights dimension of the project, as this figures to a lesser extent in the project. Only three out of 27 stakeholders covered in the evaluation shared their views.



145. The evaluation finds that gender aspects and equity considerations are less prominently addressed in the project. The evaluation score is "amber/red" (50 out of 100).

6.1 Gender mainstreaming

146. About half of the stakeholders responding to gender-related evaluation questions were unsure to what extent gender was conceptually anchored in eTrade for all (55%) or to what extent it is addressed in project activities (45%), as presented in Figure XIV.

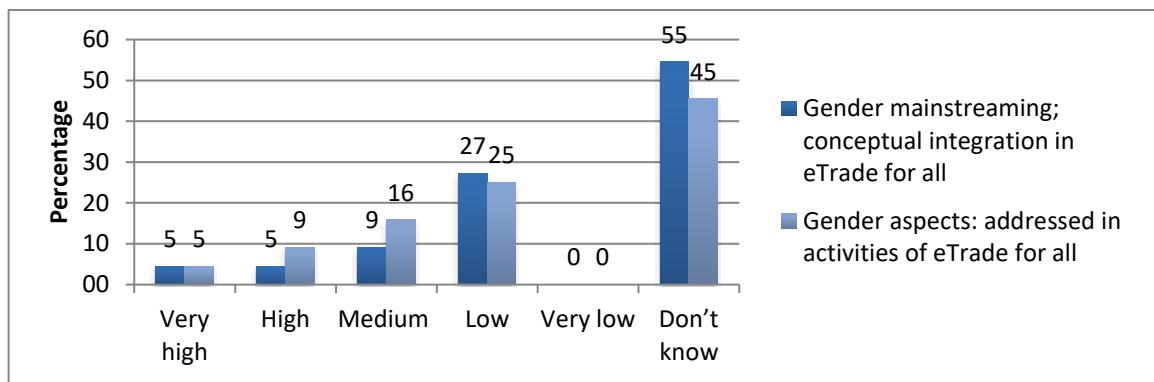
147. While 10% of respondents judge the conceptual integration of gender mainstreaming in the project as high to very high, 36% of respondents provided medium to low ratings. This pattern is also reflected for the inclusion of gender activities in the project with 14% high to very high ratings and 41% medium to low ratings.

148. Among the seven policy areas of the project, gender and statistics are treated as cross-cutting elements. Some stakeholders refer to the e-Trade for Women network as a proof of the conceptual anchoring of gender in the project. The evaluation finds that this is, in fact, the most definite link between eTrade for all and gender mainstreaming.

149. In the rapid e-readiness assessments, gender is included in the questionnaire. However, this falls short of a fully-fledged gender analysis.

150. At the activity level, stakeholders noted that the project team promotes the equal participation of men and women, for example, in e-commerce weeks. However, some stakeholders noted that the consultants' teams for rapid e-readiness assessments are mainly men³⁷.

Figure XIV. Gender aspects of the eTrade for all



Source: Evaluation Survey and interview results analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2019; n= 22

151. The topic of gender seems to be, to some extent, supply-led, as highlighted in the quote below. Most donors underscored the importance of gender in the trade environment, including e-commerce.

"Gender is not on governments' e-commerce agendas. It is the donors pushing the topic."

Source: project stakeholder.

152. The importance of a gender-lens for women economic empowerment through eTrade for all is further reflected in the quote below.

"Women entrepreneurs are doubly disadvantaged in e-Trade. While most possess smartphones, their use is less for productive activities. There is a lack of digital skills competences. We see this as another technological barrier".

Source: project stakeholder.

³⁷ The evaluation was unable to independently verify this fact.

6.2 Equitable development

153. The project team considers human rights under the right to privacy in the context of a broader, legal, and regulatory dimension. Besides, reference is made to the right to development by making digital development more inclusive.

154. Project stakeholders were hesitant to comment on the rights dimension of the project. Only three out of 27 stakeholders covered in the evaluation shared their views, with two stakeholders judging that human rights are only indirectly addressed. Room for improvement seems to show, for example, in including a human rights analysis in value chains.

155. One donor stated the absence of human rights from the trade agenda beyond e-commerce or the eTrade for all project.

“Human rights are not on the trade agenda. Sadly, we avoid human rights collectively. Because human rights would make trade discussions even more difficult”.

Source: Project donor.

7. Cross-cutting themes: partnerships

Key findings: The project advanced well in widening and deepening its partner base

- Very satisfactory results show in advancing partnership with international organizations such as the Geneva-based UN agencies;
- Progress is made with civil society organisations and regional development banks, particularly the WEF and the World Bank;
- Partnerships with national agencies so far comprise one agency (Estonia);
- Partnership engagement model with the private sector failed following the collapse of the counterpart association.



156. This section analyses the contribution of the project to the cross-cutting themes of SDG's and partnerships, given their relevance for organization-wide reporting in UNCTAD. The evaluation finds positive results for those cross-cutting issues. The score for this cross-cutting evaluation criterion is "green" (75 out of 100).

157. The rationale for the positive ratings on partnership building include: i) inclusive leadership from one party; ii) regular involvement in e-commerce week; iii) joint engagement on eTrade for all indicators; iv) the political neutrality of UNCTAD; and v) benefits in widening partners geographic scope and access to a broader group of experts.

158. Shortcomings concern the insufficient involvement of the private sector and the engagement of member States at the country level. The box below showcases some of the partners' voices:

« The project team successfully identified the key players (in e-commerce) and put them on one table. We see that the cooperation is more assertive now. It leads to concrete work with partners of specific projects.»

"Tremendous progress was made. There is more communication, awareness, sharing, consultations, join-up among donors but also among developing partners".

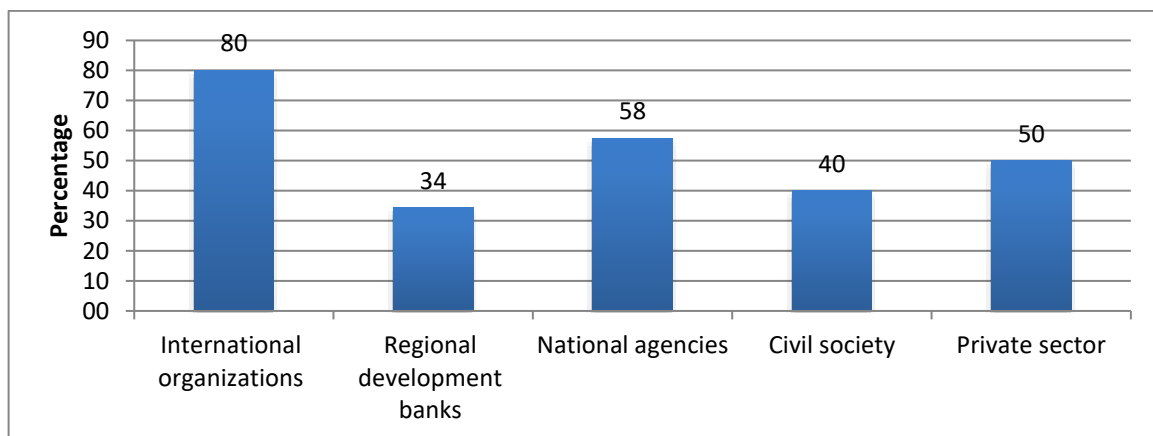
"The partnership is too heavy on international organizations. What about the private sector"?

"We need to get better country involvement. Let this serve as a starting point also for better assessment of the private sector".

Source: project stakeholders

159. Figure XV shows the differences in the advancement of the partnership with the results based on stakeholder perceptions.

Figure XV. Advancement of partnership building



Source: Evaluation analysis, A. Engelhardt, 2018; n=9

160. The need for private sector involvement in the project transpired throughout the evaluation interviews. One interesting option includes a business association approach as an entry point to the private sector. This approach would ensure the project's neutrality while benefitting from a broad membership base of such an association.



7.1 International organizations

161. The evaluation finds that cooperation with international organizations is the backbone of the eTrade for all project. Project partners, included international organizations, show their interests in and attraction by the project, in all interviews. International organizations shared information across all seven policy areas of the web-platform. The feedback of international organisations on the partnership element of eTrade for all, its core, are very encouraging:

"Thanks to eTrade for all, International Geneva finally takes e-commerce seriously."

"We now know what other partners are doing in e-commerce. This increased from zero".

"In the area of e-commerce related activities, (we) can only embrace what UNCTAD has done so far and actively participate in its further development to success."

Source: Project stakeholders from international organizations



7.2 National agencies

162. At the level of national agencies, to date, the Estonian "E-Residency" joined the partnership. "E-Residency" constitutes a programme offering people from developing countries access to the digital infrastructure and legal frameworks of Estonia so they can capitalize on the opportunities of e-commerce.

163. Since the launch of the project, "E-Residency" shared information on the following topics on the eTrade for all platform:

- ICT infrastructure and services;
- Payments;
- Legal and regulatory frameworks; and
- Financing for e-commerce

164. Unfortunately, the organization was unavailable for an interview. Hence the level of advancing the partnership with national agencies could not be independently assessed.



7.3 Civil society

165. Among the partnership of 30 organization, seven civil society organizations figure:

- African Civil Society on the Information Society;
- Consumer Unity & Trust Society International;
- Consumers International;

- DiploFoundation;
- Internet Society
- South Centre; and the
- World Economic Forum (WEF).

166. The WEF, Internet Society and DiploFoundation figure most prominently on the eTrade for all platform, for example, in the areas of skills development and ICT infrastructure and services. While none of the contacted civil society organizations was available for an interview, at least one participated in the anonymous online survey, as communicated to the evaluator.



7.4 Regional development banks

167. eTrade for all benefits from the membership of four (regional) development banks:

- World Bank
- African Development Bank
- InterAmerican Development Bank
- International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation

168. The evaluation interview with one of the above partners showed an appreciation of the projects growing network and the potential to get e-commerce related assistance to the member States.

169. Among the (regional) development banks, the World Bank is the most active partner, providing information on the project's web-platform, for example, on e-commerce assessments or legal and regulatory frameworks.



7.5 Private sector

170. The project document foresaw the cooperation of the project with a Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC) as the primary means to engage with the private sector as part of eTrade for all. However, the PSAC disintegrated and ceased functioning as an interlocutor for eTrade for all. Despite indicial funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), PSAC's secretarial functions failed to properly function. As such, eTrade for all's partnership with the private sector was suboptimal, and the project team is currently considering other mechanisms to engage the private sector in the project.

171. The PSAC was established before the Government of Finland's funding of eTrade for All. The aim of the private-sector managed PSAC was to facilitate the public-private dialogue and seemed a good natural interlocutor for eTrade for all. The PSAC council was meant to comprise e-commerce platform companies, payment providers, logistics firms, IT infrastructure companies, and private foundations from developing and developed economies.

172. Member of the PSAC were both multinational and national enterprises such as King & Spalding, NextTrade, DHL, Burundi Shop, Huawei, SK Associates or Mercado Libre.

8. Factors affecting project performance

173. This section summarizes the reasons for project performance presented in previous sections using an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), as presented in figure XVI.

Figure XVI. SWOT analysis of eTrade for all



174. The **main strengths** comprise the project's implementation approach, combined with a strong project team. Based on UNCTAD's global mandate and the credibility and convening power of the project team, this high visibility project raised awareness and resulted in collaboration and coordination between project partners. Project processes and components are part of the strengths, such as the online platform or e-readiness indicators.

175. The **main weakness** concerns the insufficient project funding and the understaffed project team. Besides, the stream of referrals from the online platform could be improved.

Partners also perceive a lack of executive management support in some of their own partnering organizations.

176. During the evaluation, a vast range of **opportunities** emerged for the project. Probably the primary opportunity, as identified by one donor but also the project team is that the project is not vastly expensive. The total budget for the five-year E-Commerce and Digital Economy programme where eTrade for all is located amounts to USD 4.1 m. Combined with good timing in parallel with e-commerce negotiation at the WTO, eTrade for all has the potential to address the demand created for technical assistance and capacity building. As such, the project could actively connect with WTO discussions. For this role to play well, UNCTAD however, needs to focus on its technical capacities and convening skills without continuously questioning its own work.

177. Other opportunities include the on-going breaking of silos in partner organisations and the much-desired implementation component of the project. While initially not part of the project design, the Rapid e-Trade Readiness assessments provide the ground for partners to support the implementation of national action plans to act upon e-readiness recommendations. Partners seem to be ready to take this step. One interview with a LDC representative indicated on-going engagement with the traditional and non-traditional donor community to fund such an action plan. A sector focus could be one implementation approach of the project.

178. Finally, the opportunity or even necessity shows to engage the private sector. A growing partnership would lead to more match-making opportunities, and the private sector is required to play a role in eTrade for all to make the partnership more comprehensive.

179. The **main threats** for eTrade for all are beyond the remit of the project team and concern the challenges in resource mobilization. Donors are apprehensive in fully funding the E-Commerce and Digital Economy programme, including eTrade for all due to reasons mentioned before:

- The conflicting messages from UNCTAD about its position on trade confuse policymakers in the respective donor capitals;
- Diverging views on trade are at times delivered through personal views of some staff or presented by external persons but at UNCTAD events. Those distinctions are, however, not immediately visible to external stakeholders such as donors;
- Perceived lack of reform in UNCTAD, including a stronger results focus.
- For some donors, UNCTAD does not act consistently which they perceive as an organizational weakness. In this context, the project team's resource mobilization efforts with five out of the six project donors interviewed hit a glass ceiling.
- Another threat is the understaffed project team, which in its current capacities is unlikely to grow the project on a longer-term trajectory keeping the same level of achievements and professionalism.

180. Finally, the project faces a perceived threat that partner commitment remains mostly individualized rather than institutionalized. As previously indicated, the project was able to

reach positive results in a limited timeframe also because of the comparatively small nature of units dealing with e-commerce and digitalization in the various partner organizations. This facilitated the development of a shared vision in a relatively short period of time. To further sustain this positive trend in the long term, there is a need to further strengthen the institutional ties at the leadership and executive levels.

Section III: Conclusions and Recommendations

181. Based on the main findings summarized at the beginning of the findings sections for each evaluation criteria, the following conclusions and recommendations emerge. Figure XVII aims to show the logical flow from key findings to conclusions and recommendations, excluding any bias.

Figure XVII. Summary of key findings, conclusions and recommendations

| | Key findings | Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| Relevance | <p>The project is clearly mandated by the 2016 Nairobi Maafikiano</p> <p>The relevance for member States needs is high</p> <p>Relevance for project stakeholders reached 62% high to very high ratings</p> <p>The project's Theory of Change is valid.</p> | <p>The project shows high to very high relevance for all four sub-criteria. eTrade for all is doing the right thing and meets partners and stakeholders needs with some room for improvement.</p> | <p>R 1: Donors are encouraged to continue funding eTrade for all since it provides unique value added to ecommerce stakeholders.</p> <p><i>Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months</i></p> |
| | <p>Logframe outputs, outcomes and goals have been largely achieved. A contribution to SDG 8.11 and 17.9 is given.</p> <p>Goal: "Increased national action to boost e-commerce" and "duplication of work avoided" reach highest stakeholder perception ratings: 73%, followed by "enhanced aid efficiency" (72%) and strengthened partners' synergies (71%)</p> <p>Outcome: "Increased collaboration among partners" reaches 74% stakeholder perception ratings, followed by "enhanced resources available for e-commerce development assistance" (67%).</p> <p>Outputs: "Transparent, functional and up-to-date web platform" gets the highest stakeholder perception ratings together with "increased awareness of how to access e-commerce assistance (both 74%). The output concerning "a matching mechanism for e-commerce related assistance" is less advanced with 50% stakeholder perception ratings.</p> | <p>Interestingly, the level of goal and outcome achievements to date is similar to output level achievements based on stakeholder perceptions, despite significantly less control of eTrade for all about accomplishing its goals.</p> <p>There appears to be scope for the eTrade for all platform to be better leveraged as a full-fledged matching mechanism for eCommerce related assistance.</p> | <p>R2: The project manager should expand outreach and make use of regional opportunities to reach out to more and relevant stakeholders in the member States.</p> <p><i>Prioritization: medium: next 6 – 12 months</i></p> <p>R 3: The project team should develop a strategy, together with project partners, for advancing on the output "a matching mechanism for e-commerce related assistance." More than one approach could be tested on a pilot basis.</p> <p><i>Prioritization: high: next 6 months</i></p> |
| Effectiveness | <p>The project has unintended positive effects including two spin-off projects with separate funding sources: eT.Readies (rapid e-readiness assessments) and the eTrade for women network.</p> | <p>Three interrelated projects have developed out of eTrade for all, which constitutes a significant spin off effect of the project. While the spin-off projects generated more activities to combat the growing digital divides among countries they are not yet</p> | <p>See R 7a.</p> |

Stakeholder satisfaction with UNCTAD's leading role in the project is significant, with 54% very high and 34% high ratings.

The multi-stakeholder approach seems highly appropriate for the implementation of this project with a very strong partnership element as its cornerstone.

The quality of monitoring modalities is high; it is linked to UNCTAD's E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme which contains a fully-fledged M&E framework of outstanding comprehensiveness and quality. However, time-bound milestones and targets seem missing and the M&E framework not yet fully used due to underfunding of the programme.

large enough to expand the critical mass of the team in the long run.

Project partners from other UN agencies and international organizations appreciated the hard work of the UNCTAD project team effectively leading eTrade for all. Most project partners from other UN agencies and international organizations appreciated the project team's practice of shared ownership of the project and the highly consultative approach taken by UNCTAD in managing the project in the eTrade for all to underline that all partners have a stake in it.

Though very time-intensive due to continued coordination efforts, the multi-stakeholder approach proved appropriate for the project. UNCTAD's neutral role is paramount for the approach to work and to efficiently facilitate project processes. However, based on stakeholder perceptions, the size of project staffing seems currently more suitable for traditional technical assistance projects (a single actor delivering services) than for a complex multi-stakeholder approach. This will require significant additional resources for such coordination efforts (see also sustainability conclusions).

While the project team invested in developing a comprehensive M&E framework for UNCTAD's E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme, they are not yet able to fully implement the framework due to a lack of resources.

R 4: **The Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics** should share the results of this evaluation at Directors' level across UNCTAD with emphasis on the project's implementation approach (neutral, multi-stakeholder approach)

Prioritization: medium: next 6 – 12 months

See R 4

R5: The **project manager** should revise the project budget so that funding proposals to donors more realistically reflect the resource requirements to meet the demands on such a project.

Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months

R6: **The project manager** should establish SMART milestones and targets for eTrade for all. Consultations with the partners might enhance the quality of that target-setting process.

Prioritization: medium: next 6 – 12 months

Internal UNCTAD resources strongly enrich the project, including eCommerce Weeks, e-Trade Readiness assessments, and the eTrade for women network.

Use of external cooperation: 60% of stakeholders participating in the evaluation rated the project's facilitation function as high to very high.

The sustainability of knowledge created by the project reaches 52% high to very high ratings, followed by 44% high to very high ratings for the sustainability of capacities fostered by the project. Stakeholder commitment (project partners and donors) to cooperation reaches with 31% significantly fewer high to very high ratings and 41% medium ratings while partner ratings (excluding donors) reach 37% high to very high ratings and 31% medium ratings.

While the project benefits from internal UNCTAD resources and processes, core budget activities take precedence on the time of the regular budget staff of the project team. As a result, small project resources get stretched to their limit.

See conclusion above on UNCTAD's neutral facilitation role

After two years, the perceived sustainability of main project components advances well. Partners' commitment is affected to some extent, given the uncertain funding situation of the project and some growing expectations from project partners about implementation activities in the member States, in particular on the follow-up phase of the Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessments for LDCs.

See R 7a.

See R 7.b

R 7a. The **Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics** should establish a trust fund for the Ecommerce and Digital Economy Programme, comprising eTrade for all and its spin off projects, and encourage donors to contribute to this joint trust fund.

Till the establishment of that trust fund an "overhead" budget line could be added to all spin off projects of eTrade for all as a means to contribute to the funding the platform.

Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months

R 7b: The **Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics** should share the results of this evaluation and the mutual advantages of a more programmatic funding approach through a donor round table meeting building on the convening power and credibility build by the project

Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months

R 8: The project team should address the project's funding pipeline with partner's during the next scheduled

Partnership
Gender and human rights

The financial sustainability of the project severely suffers from a long-term mistrust of many donors mainly due to UNCTAD's conflicting messaging on trade and lack of reform. Though much appreciated by donors, programmatic approaches in UNCTAD seem hardly fully fundable.

Along the seven policy areas, the project team treats gender and statistics as cross cutting elements. Conceptually, eTrade for Women is the strongest link of the project to the women economic empowerment.

The project's engagement on gender seems to be to some extent supply-driven, given the topic's absence from the e-commerce agendas of many member States.

About half of project stakeholders were unsure to what extent gender is conceptually or practically figuring in the project with 27% low ratings.

The project team considers human rights under the right to privacy in the context of a broader, legal and regulatory dimension. Besides reference is made to the right to development by making digital development more inclusive.

Project stakeholders were hesitant to comment of the rights dimension of the project, as this figures to a lesser extent in the project. Only three out of 27 stakeholders covered in the evaluation shared their views.

Very satisfactory results show in advancing partnership with international organizations such as the Geneva-based UN agencies.

Donors expectations of working with a reformed UNCTAD on a larger programmatic scale are very high. However, there is disagreement among UNCTAD member States themselves on the direction of UNCTAD reform in Geneva and type of engagement required at country level. This continued disagreement hampers the financial outlook of the project and is beyond the remit of the project team.

While the project uses a gender lens and conceptually started including eTrade for Women as a spin-off of eTrade for all, the gender focus is less prominent in the perception of stakeholders.

The project clearly has room for improvement to underpin and communicate its rights-perspective to partners and stakeholders.

The project advances in the creation of the partnership at varying velocities. Very satisfactory results show in

project event. Expectations should be carefully managed and further synergies explored.

Prioritization: very high; next 3- 6 months

No recommendation.

R 9. **The project team** should include at least one gender indicator and one human rights indicator in the project logframe (complemented by SMART milestones and targets) and communicate this logframe revision to all project partners.

Prioritization: medium; next 6 – 12 months

R 10: **The project team** should seek ways to establish formal partnerships with the private sector though a

Progress is made with civil society organisations and (regional) development banks, particularly the WEF and the World Bank. Partnerships with national agencies so far comprise one agency (Estonia); Partnership engagement model with the private sector failed following the collapse of the counterpart association.

advancing partnership with international organizations with e-commerce and digital issues high on their agenda. Progress is made with civil society organisations and regional development banks, as reflected by the nature of the partnership. Overall, progress depends on the type and commitment of partner organization with the private sector lagging behind, following the collapse of the private sectors counterpart association.

business association model rather than individual companies to maintain the project's neutrality.

Prioritization: high: next 6 months

IV. CONCLUSIONS

182. Based on the logical flow of the evaluation analysis presented in Figure XVII the following conclusions emerge.

183. **Relevance:** The project shows high to very high relevance for all four sub-criteria. eTrade for all is doing the right thing and meets partners and stakeholders needs with further room for improvement.

184. **Effectiveness:** Interestingly, the level of goal and outcome achievements to date is similar to output level achievements based on stakeholder perceptions, despite significantly less control of eTrade for all about accomplishing its goals. There appears to be scope for the eTrade for all platform to be better leveraged as a full-fledged matching mechanisms for eCommerce related assistance.

185. Three interrelated projects have developed out of eTrade for all, which constitutes a significant spin off effect of the project. While the spin-off projects generated more activities to combat the growing digital divides among countries, they are not yet large enough to expand the critical mass of the team in the long run.

186. Project partners from other UN agencies and international organizations appreciated the hard work of the UNCTAD project team effectively leading eTrade for all. Most project partners from other UN agencies and international organizations appreciated the project team's practice of shared ownership of the project and the highly consultative approach taken by UNCTAD in managing the project in the eTrade for all to underline that all partners have a stake in it.

187. **Efficiency:** Though very time-intensive due to continued coordination efforts, the multi-stakeholder approach proved appropriate for the project. UNCTAD's neutral role is paramount for the approach to work and to efficiently facilitate project processes. However, based on stakeholder perceptions, the size of project staffing seems currently more suitable for traditional technical assistance projects (i.e a single actor delivering services) than for a complex multi-stakeholder approach. This will require significant additional resources for such coordination efforts (see also sustainability conclusions).

188. While the project team invested in developing a comprehensive M&E framework for UNCTAD's E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme, they are not yet able to fully implement the framework due to a lack of resources.

189. While the project benefits from internal UNCTAD resources and processes, core budget activities take precedence on the time of the regular budget staff of the project team. As a result, small project resources get stretched to their limit.

190. **Sustainability:** After two years, the perceived sustainability of main project components advances well. Partners' commitment is affected to some extent, given the uncertain funding situation of the project and some growing expectations from project partners about implementation activities in the member States, in particular on the follow-up phase of the Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessments for LDCs.

191. Donors expectations of working with a reformed UNCTAD on a larger programmatic scale are very high. However, there is disagreement among UNCTAD member States themselves on the direction of UNCTAD reform and type of engagement required at country level. This continued disagreement hampers the financial outlook of the project and is beyond the remit of the project team.

192. **Gender and human rights mainstreaming:** While the project uses a gender lens and conceptually started including eTrade for Women as a spin off of eTrade for all, the gender focus is less prominent in the perception of stakeholders. The project clearly has room for improvement to underpin and communicate its rights-perspective to partners and stakeholders.

193. **Partnerships:** The project advances in the creation of the partnership at varying velocities. Very satisfactory results show in advancing partnership with international organizations with e-commerce and digital issues high on their agenda. Progress is made with civil society organisations and regional development banks, as reflected by the nature of the partnership. Overall, progress depends on the type and commitment of partner organization with the private sector lagging behind, following the collapse of the private sectors counterpart association.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

194. Based on the logical flow from evaluation key findings to conclusions presented in Figure XVII the following twelve targeted, prioritized, actionable and time-bound recommendations emerge.

Relevance

R 1: **Donors** are encouraged to continue funding eTrade for all since it provides unique value added to ecommerce stakeholders .

Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months

R 2: **The project manager** should expand outreach and make use of regional opportunities to reach out to more and relevant stakeholders in the member states.

Prioritization: medium: next 6 – 12 months

Effectiveness

R 3: **The project team** should develop a strategy, together with project partners, for advancing on the output "a matching mechanism for e-commerce related assistance." More than one approach could be tested on a pilot basis.

Prioritization: high: next 6 months

R 4: **The Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics** should share the results of this evaluation at director's level across UNCTAD with emphasis on the project's implementation approach (neutral stance, multi-stakeholder approach)

Prioritization: medium: next 6 – 12 months.

Efficiency

R5: The **project manager** should revise the project budget so that funding proposals to donors more realistically reflect the resource requirements to meet the demands on such a project.

Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months

R 6: **The project manager** should establish SMART milestones and targets for eTrade for all. Consultations with the partners might enhance the quality of that target-setting process.

Prioritization: medium: next 6 - 12 months

Sustainability

R 7a. The **Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics** should establish a trust fund for the Ecommerce and Digital Economy Programme, comprising eTrade for all and its spin off projects, and encourage donors to contribute to this joint trust fund.

Till the establishment of that trust fund an "overhead" budget line could be added to all spin off projects of eTrade for all as a means to contribute to the funding the platform.

Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months

R 7b: The **Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics should share** the results of this evaluation and the mutual advantages of a more programmatic funding approach through a donor round table meeting building on the convening power and credibility build by the project.

Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months

R 8: **The project team** should address the project's funding pipeline with partner's during the next scheduled project event. Expectations should be carefully managed and further synergies explored

Prioritization: very high: next 3- 6 months

Gender and human rights mainstreaming

R 9. **The project team** should include at least one gender indicator and one human rights indicator in the project logframe (complemented by SMART milestones and targets) and communicate this logframe revision to all project partners.

Prioritization: medium: next 6 - 12 months

Partnerships

R 10: **The project team** should seek ways to establish formal partnerships with the private sector through a business association model rather than individual companies to maintain the project's neutrality.

Prioritization: high: next 6 months

V. LESSONS LEARNED

195. The following lessons learned emerge from this evaluation. Those are the evaluators' lessons and are transferable to other projects in UNCTAD and its partners.

196. Governance issues:

- Project team: For the successful and trustful management of a multi-stakeholder partnership, transparency, openness, and inclusiveness of the coordinating partners are crucial. A discrete visibility of the coordinating partner is beneficial for this purpose.
- Project team: The involvement of comparatively small units in partner organisations facilitates the development of a shared vision in a relatively short period of time. However, the move from individualized cooperation to its institutionalization is a time-consuming process.

197. Ownership and sustainability:

- Project team: It is important to maintain or enhance ownership of the project by closely engaging partners, also the non-Geneva based ones during crucial decision-making processes of the project. The joint delivery of concrete outputs would be beneficial to move beyond the "round table" stage of the project to the implementation of activities.
- For the e-readiness assessments, national multi-stakeholder involvement to enhance ownership and efficient processes is important from the beginning of the initiative, beyond the Geneva missions. Also, the governments' validation of the assessment report is another key step to ensure country ownership and sustainability concerning the follow-up of recommendations.

198. Value for money:

- Donor: From a donor perspective, awareness raising can be successful and value for money even with small scale investments if the partnership is strong and effective outreach mechanisms such as the web platform and events like e-commerce weeks used.
- Donor: An investment in the eTrade for all platform created a better awareness about inclusive e-commerce beyond the donor's unit responsible for the project but more widely across the donor organization.

ANNEX I. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EVALUATION

CONFÉRENCE DES NATIONS UNIES
SUR LE COMMERCE ET LE
DÉVELOPPEMENT



UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE
ON TRADE AND
DEVELOPMENT

Terms of Reference (TOR) Independent Evaluation of UNCTAD Project “e-Trade for all”

1. Introduction and Purpose

This document outlines the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the final independent evaluation of the project entitled “**eTrade for all**” funded by the Government of Finland.

The UNCTAD Evaluation and Monitoring Unit (EMU), in close collaboration with the Division on Technology and Logistics, will undertake this evaluation.

This evaluation exercise is meant to ensure ownership, result-based orientation, cost-effectiveness and quality of UNCTAD assistance. By carrying out this evaluation, UNCTAD plans to assess its work, to learn lessons, to receive feedback, appraisal and recognition, as well as to mobilize resources by showing the possible attribution of achievements to the programme.

The evaluation will systematically and objectively assess project design, project management, and project performance. The evaluation will provide assessments that are credible and useful, and also include practical and constructive recommendations, in order to enhance the work of UNCTAD in this area.

The evaluation will provide accountability to UNCTAD management, the Government of Finland, project stakeholders, as well as UNCTAD's member States with whom the final evaluation report will be shared.

2. Project Background

E-commerce can become a powerful driver of economic growth, inclusive trade and job-creation in the developing world. And better connectivity, new e-commerce platforms and solutions are allowing more countries to participate in e-commerce. However, the e-commerce divide is still wide. While numerous development partners, foundations, and private sector actors are working from different angles to unlock the potential of e-commerce for development, current efforts are fragmented, non-transparent and of insufficient scale.

Accelerating the uptake of e-commerce in developing countries, and associated benefits, requires a more concerted approach. The “eTrade for all” initiative is a demand-driven mechanism for leading development partners, in partnership with the private sector, to make their actions more coherent and efficient by pooling capabilities and resources.

Through its [knowledge sharing platform](#), *eTrade for all* makes it easier for developing countries to navigate the supply of technical and financial assistance from partners. Partnering institutions will work together to raise awareness of opportunities, challenges and potential solutions in their respective activities to leverage e-commerce prospects. This dedicated platform will at the same time present donors with better information on projects and programmes to potentially fund according to their development priorities. The overall effect should be more transparency and greater aid efficiency.

eTrade for all partners include international organizations, regional development banks and national agencies.

The main beneficiaries targeted by the action are policy makers and other government officials responsible for formulating, implementing and supporting e-commerce and related trade policies for development as well as enterprises venturing in online activities. Women entrepreneurs are likely to benefit particularly from increased e-commerce readiness in developing countries as e-commerce can be an effective way to overcome certain barriers to women entrepreneurship (time poverty, mobility constraints).

This project contributes directly to the following SDG targets:

8.11. Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries.

17.9. Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

3. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will cover the duration of the project from **01 January 2017 to 31 December 2018**.

The evaluation is expected to deal with the following questions under the below criteria:

a) Relevance

- Did the project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the primary development needs of participating countries, taking into account UNCTAD's mandates?
- Were the actual activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goals and intended outcomes and how have the different activities complemented each other towards the intended results?
- What is UNCTAD's comparative advantage in this area and to what extent did this project optimize it?

b) Effectiveness

- Have the activities achieved, or are likely to achieve, planned objectives and outcomes as enunciated in the project document?
- Is there evidence of any positive and negative changes produced by the project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended? Are there indications of potential impact, assessed against the SDG targets supported by the project?
- What are the lessons learned or best practices for similar future interventions?

c) *Efficiency*

- Have project implementation modalities, and internal monitoring and control been adequate in ensuring the achievement of the expected outcomes in a timely and cost-effective manner?
- Has the project leveraged in-house expertise, previous research and technical cooperation outcomes, existing databases, and other internal resources of UNCTAD and/or external collaboration from international development partners and mechanisms?

d) *Sustainability*

- Have the activities and outputs have been designed and implemented in such a way to ensure maximum sustainability of the project's results?
- Have efforts been made to sustain the knowledge and capacity gained in the project for future similar interventions to be carried out by UNCTAD?

e) *Gender and human rights*

- To what extent the design and implementation of the project incorporated gender mainstreaming considerations, and can evidence be identified in this regard?
- To what extent does the project advance UNCTAD's efforts to promote equitable development?

f) *Partnerships and synergies*

- How has the project advanced partnerships with international organizations, regional development banks, national agencies, the civil society and the private sector?

4. Deliverables and Expected Outputs

The evaluation, on the basis of its findings and assessments made on the above criteria, should draw conclusions, make recommendations and identify lessons learned from the implementation of the project.

More specifically, the evaluation should:

- Highlight what has been successful and can be replicated elsewhere;
- Indicate shortcomings and constraints in the implementation of the project while, at the same time, identifying the remaining challenges, gaps and needs for future courses of action;
- Make pragmatic recommendations to suggest how UNCTAD's work in this area can be strengthened in order to deliver better results in addressing beneficiaries' needs and create synergies through collaboration with other UNCTAD divisions, international organizations and development partners, and other international forums;
- Draw lessons of wider application for the replication of the experience gained in this project in other projects/countries;

Three deliverables are expected out of this evaluation (following EMU templates):

- 1) An inception report³⁸;

³⁸ Quality of the inception report should meet those set out in UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports:
http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=608

- 2) A draft evaluation report; and
- 3) The final evaluation report³⁹

The inception report should summarize the desk review and specify the evaluation methodology, determining thereby the exact focus and scope of the exercise, including the evaluation questions, the sampling strategy and the data collection instruments.

The final report of the evaluation must be composed of the following key elements:

- 1) Executive summary;
- 2) Introduction of the evaluation, a brief description of the projects, the scope of the evaluation and a clear description of the methodology used;
- 3) Findings and assessments according to the criteria listed in Section 3 of this ToR, with a comparison table of planned and implemented project activities and outputs; and
- 4) Conclusions and recommendations drawn from the assessments.

All the evaluation assessments must be supported by facts and findings, direct or indirect evidence, and well-substantiated logic. It follows that proposed recommendations must be supported by the findings and be relevant, specific, practical, actionable, and time-bound recommendations.

5. Methodology

The evaluation will be undertaken through a triangulation exercise of all available data to draw conclusions and findings. The evaluation methodology includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Desk review of project documents and relevant materials;
- Face-to-face interview and/ or telephone interviews with relevant UNCTAD staff;
- Online surveys of beneficiaries of the project, and other stakeholders, as may be required*; conduct follow-up interviews as may be necessary; and
- Telephone/skype interviews with a balanced sample of project participants, project partners and other relevant stakeholders.

As part of the desk review, which will lead to an Inception Report, the evaluator will use the project document as well as additional documents such as mission reports; progress reports, financial reports, publications, studies - both produced under the project as well as received from national and regional counterparts. An exhaustive list of donors, project beneficiaries as well as other partners and counterparts involved in the project will be provided to the evaluator.

The evaluator will further elaborate on the evaluation methodology in an Inception Report, determining thereby the exact focus and approach for the exercise, including developing tailor-made questions that target different stakeholders (based on a stakeholder analysis), and developing the sampling strategy and identifying the sources and methods for data collection. The methodology should follow the UNCTAD Inception Report Guidelines.

The evaluator is required to submit a separate final list of those interviewed in the Annex of the evaluation report. The evaluator is to ensure a wide representation of stakeholders, bearing in mind the need to include those in a disadvantaged or minority position as appropriate.

³⁹ Quality of the evaluation report should meet those set out in UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/607>

6. Description of Duties

The evaluator reports to the Chief of EMU. S/he will undertake the evaluation exercise under the guidance of the EMU and in coordination with the project manager. The evaluator is responsible for the evaluation design, data collection, analysis and reporting as provided in this TOR. The evaluator will submit a copy-edited final report to UNCTAD.

The evaluator shall act independently, in line with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines and in her/his capacities and not as a representative of any government or organisation that may present a conflict of interest. S/he will have no previous experience of working with the project or of working in any capacity linked with it.

The evaluator should observe the UNEG guidelines, standards⁴⁰, and norms⁴¹ for evaluations in the UN system, as well as UNCTAD's Evaluation Policy⁴², in the conduct of this assignment. The evaluator needs to integrate human rights and gender equality in evaluations to the extent possible.⁴³ The evaluator needs to ensure a complete, fair, engaging, unreserved, and unbiased assessment. In case of difficulties, uncertainties or concern in the conduct of the evaluation, the evaluator needs to report immediately to the Chief of EMU to seek guidance or clarification.

The project team will support the evaluation, by providing desk review documents (following EMU desk review documents guidelines), contact details of project stakeholders as well as any additional documents that the evaluator requests. It is the responsibility of the project manager to ensure senior management engagement throughout the evaluation and timely feedback in the quality assurance and factual clarification process coordinated by the EMU. The project team will review and provide comments on the inception, draft and final reports with a view on quality assurance and factual accuracies.

The EMU acts as clearing entity during the main steps of this evaluation. It endorses the TOR and approves the selection of the proposed evaluator. EMU reviews the evaluation methodology, clears the draft report, performs quality assurance of the final report and participates in disseminating the final report to stakeholders within and outside of UNCTAD. EMU engages the project manager throughout the evaluation process in supporting the evaluation and validating the reports.

7. Timetable

The total duration of the evaluation is equivalent to 26 days of work and will take place from 10 April 2019 to 28 June 2019.

⁴⁰ "Standards for Evaluation in the UN System" by UNEG, UNEG/FN/Standards (2005);

http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=22;

⁴¹ "Norms for Evaluation in the UN System" by UNEG, UNEG/FN/Norms (2005);

http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=21;

⁴² "Evaluation Policy" of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD),

December 2011. December 2011,

http://unctad.org/Sections/edm_dir/docs/osg_EvaluationPolicy2011_en.pdf.

⁴³ "Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations" by UNEG, UNEG Guidance Document (2014): <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>. The UNEG Handbook on "Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations: Towards UNEG Guidance" by UNEG, UNEG Guidance Document (2011): <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>.

| Activity | Days |
|---|--------|
| Desk research and study of relevant documentation | 3 days |
| Preparation of data collection tools, including an online survey and inception report | 5 days |
| Interviews with UNCTAD staff and implementation partners | 3 days |
| Other interviews with project participants, focal points and other stakeholders* | 4 days |
| Data analysis and draft report write-up | 8 days |
| Final report write-up | 3 days |

Note:

The first draft report should be presented to the EMU and relevant stakeholders for quality assurance and factual corrections at least 3 weeks before the deadline for the submission of the final report.

8. Monitoring and Progress Control

The evaluator must keep the EMU informed of the progress made in the evaluation on a regular basis.

The evaluator will submit the inception report on 30 April, 2019.

The evaluator will also present the draft report, first to the EMU and then to the project manager before the final submission, giving sufficient time for the verification of factual findings as well as its compliance with the ToR (approximately 2 weeks). To this end, a draft of the report must be presented by 27 May 2019.

The deadline for submission of the final report will be 28 June 2019.

The contract concludes, and payment issued, upon satisfactory receipt of the final report.

9. Qualifications and Experience⁴⁴

- **Education:** Advanced university degree in economics, trade, development or related field.
- **Experience:** At least 7 years of experience in conducting evaluations, preferably on interventions in the areas of trade and e-commerce. Experience with multi-stakeholder partnerships desirable. Experience in gender and human rights mainstreaming is also desirable.
- **Language:** Fluency in oral and written English. Ability to communicate in French is an advantage.

10. Conditions of Service

The evaluator will serve under a consultancy contract as detailed in the applicable United Nations rules and regulations. The evaluator will not be considered as staff member or official of the United Nations but shall abide by the relevant standards of conduct. The United Nations is entitled to all intellectual property and other proprietary rights deriving from this exercise.

⁴⁴ The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs.

ANNEX II. EVALUATION TOOLS: QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEW GUIDES

Semi-structured Evaluation questionnaire for interviews: UNCTAD primary partners and stakeholders

(A) Relevance

1. a What are your organization's needs concerning e-trade?

1b. To what extent has the eTrade for all project contributed to your organization's needs?

| | Very high | High | Medium | Low | Very low | Don't know |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------|--------|-----|----------|------------|
| Reflection of organizational needs | | | | | | |

Please explain with examples how the project contributed to your organization's needs:

(B) Efficiency: appropriate use of resources

2. To what extent has the eTrade for all project enhanced cooperation opportunities/ increased synergies with national or international partners?

| | Very high | High | Medium | Low | Very low | Don't know |
|--|-----------|------|--------|-----|----------|------------|
| Facilitation of collaboration from national or international development partners? | | | | | | |

Please explain with examples:

(C) Effectiveness: the achievement of project results

3a. To what extent has the eTrade for all initiative achieved the planned results and objectives?

| Achievement of planned results and objectives | Very high | High | Medium | Low | Very low | Don't know |
|---|-----------|------|--------|-----|----------|------------|
| Increased national actions (policies and programmes) aimed at boosting e-commerce | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | |
| Strengthened coherence and synergies among partners' activities | | | | | | |
| Duplication of work avoided | | | | | | |
| Enhanced aid efficiency | | | | | | |
| Enhanced resources available for assistance for e-commerce development | | | | | | |
| Increased collaboration among partners | | | | | | |
| Transparent, functional and up-to-date web platform | | | | | | |
| A matching mechanism for the demand for and supply of e-commerce related assistance | | | | | | |
| Increased awareness among target countries of how to access assistance related to e-commerce | | | | | | |

Please explain with examples:

3b) Unintended project results

Have there been any unintended results (positive or negative)? If yes, what are they?

3c) Are you satisfied with UNCTAD's leading role in this initiative?

| Satisfaction rate | Highly satisfactory | Satisfactory | Neutral | Unsatisfactory | Highly unsatisfactory | Don't know |
|--|---------------------|--------------|---------|----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| o Satisfaction with UNCTAD's leading role in this initiative | | | | | | |

Please explain your rating:

(D) Sustainability: are project results lasting?

| 4. How would you assess the likely sustainability of the following topics: | Very high | High | Medium | Low | Very low | Don't know |
|--|-----------|------|--------|-----|----------|------------|
| ○ Knowledge created by eTrade for all | | | | | | |
| ○ Capacities fostered by eTrade for all | | | | | | |
| ○ Partner commitment to cooperation | | | | | | |

Please explain with examples.

(E) Gender and human rights: are results equitable?

| 5. How would you assess the gender dimensions of the eTrade for all initiative ? | Very high | High | Medium | Low | Very low | Don't know |
|--|-----------|------|--------|-----|----------|------------|
| ○ To what extent does gender mainstreaming conceptually figure in eTrade for all | | | | | | |
| ○ To what extent were gender aspects addressed in the activities of eTrade for all | | | | | | |
| ○ Project's contribution to UNCTAD's efforts to promote equitable development? (question for project team and UNCTAD's staff involved) | | | | | | |

(F) Partnerships

6. How has the project advanced partnerships with your organization and other international organizations, regional development banks, national agencies, the civil society, and the private sector?

7. What are the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the eTrade for all project?

8. What are the lessons learned or best practices for similar future interventions?

Evaluation questionnaire for on-line survey: Secondary partners and stakeholders. also to be used for interview with project team

| | | | |
|------|----------|--------------|------|
| Name | Position | Organization | Date |
| | | | |

(A) Relevance

1a. To what extent has the eTrade for all project contributed to your organization's needs and how would you assess UNCTAD's leading role in the initiative

| | Very high | High | Medium | Low | Very low | Don't know |
|--|-----------|------|--------|-----|----------|------------|
| Reflection of organizational needs | | | | | | |
| Leading role of UNCTAD in the initiative | | | | | | |

Please explain with examples how the project contributed to your organization's needs/ leading role of UNCTAD:

1. b What are your organization's needs concerning e-trade?

(B) Efficiency: appropriate use of resources

2. To what extent has the eTrade for all project enhanced cooperation opportunities/ increased synergies with national or international partners?

| | Very high | High | Medium | Low | Very low | Don't know |
|--|-----------|------|--------|-----|----------|------------|
| Facilitation of collaboration from national or international development partners? | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Please explain with examples:

(C) Effectiveness: the achievement of project results

3a. To what extent has the eTrade for all initiative achieved the planned results and objectives?

| Achievement of planned results and objectives | Very high | High | Medium | Low | Very low | Don't know |
|--|------------------|-------------|---------------|------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Increased national actions (policies and programmes) aimed at boosting e-commerce | | | | | | |
| Strengthened coherence and synergies among partners' activities | | | | | | |
| Duplication of work avoided | | | | | | |
| Enhanced aid efficiency | | | | | | |
| Enhanced resources available for assistance for e-commerce development | | | | | | |
| Increased collaboration among partners | | | | | | |
| Transparent, functional and up-to-date web platform | | | | | | |
| A matching mechanism for the demand for and supply of e-commerce related assistance | | | | | | |
| Increased awareness among target countries of how to access assistance related to e-commerce | | | | | | |

Please explain with examples:

3b) Unintended project results

Have there been any unintended results (positive or negative)? If yes, what are they?

4. To what extent is eTrade for all project likely to contribute to the following SDGs?

| | Very high | High | Medium | Low | Very low | Don't know |
|---|-----------|------|--------|-----|----------|------------|
| SDG 8.11 Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries. | | | | | | |
| SDG 17.9. Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation | | | | | | |

5. If the project with its eTrade for all online platform would not have existed, to what extent are alternative information sources available about the following policy areas for e-commerce?

| Availability of alternative data sources for: | Very strong | Strong | Medium | Weak | Very weak | Don't know |
|---|-------------|--------|--------|------|-----------|------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Your specific area of expertise <input type="radio"/> Please specify the policy area(s) your organization is involved into | | | | | | |
| <input type="radio"/> E-commerce readiness Indicators | | | | | | |
| <input type="radio"/> News digests and updated information about upcoming events | | | | | | |
| <input type="radio"/> New publications in relevant areas | | | | | | |
| <input type="radio"/> Others | | | | | | |

6) Are you satisfied with UNCTAD's leading role in this initiative?

| Satisfaction rate | Highly satisfactory | Satisfactory | Neutral | Unsatisfactory | Highly unsatisfactory | Don't know |
|--|---------------------|--------------|---------|----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Satisfaction with UNCTAD's leading role in this initiative | | | | | | |

Please explain lyour rating:

(D) Sustainability: are project results lasting?

| 7. How would you assess the likely sustainability of the following topics: | Very high | High | Medium | Low | Very low | Don't know |
|--|-----------|------|--------|-----|----------|------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Knowledge created by eTrade for all | | | | | | |
| <input type="radio"/> Capacities fostered by eTrade for all | | | | | | |
| <input type="radio"/> Partner commitment to cooperation | | | | | | |

Please explain with examples:

ANNEX III. DESK REVIEW LIST

Engelhardt, A. 2016: External Terminal Evaluation of UNCTAD's Development Account Project: Business schools for impact

Engelhardt, A. 2019: Independent Project evaluation of the UN Development Account project "Strengthening the capacity of developing country policymakers, investment promotion officials and academia in two priority sectors to attract investment for sustainable and inclusive development"

UNCTAD Trust Fund, 2016: e-Trade for All. Project proposal to Finland,

UNCTAD, 2018: E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme Work Plan 2018-2022

UNCTAD, 2018: E-commerce and Digital Economy Programme. GLOBAL MONITORING & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

UNCTAD, undated: Terms of Reference. Independent Evaluation of UNCTAD project "e-Trade for All".

UNCTAD, undated: Technical Cooperation Trust Fund. Statement of Account 2016

UNCTAD, undated: Technical Cooperation Trust Fund. Statement of Account 2017

UNCTAD, 2018: Africa eCommerce week 2018: feedback survey

UNCTAD, eCommerce Week 2019: From Digitalization to Development. Feedback survey

UNCTAD, 2019: eCommerce week: From Digitalization to Development Summary report

UNCTAD/2017/1, 2017: Implementation of the Nairobi Maafikiano

Web resources

<https://etradeforall.org> (On-line platform of the eTrade of All project)

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/counterfactuals/>

<http://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/ICAI-Review-UK-aids-contribution-to-tackling-tax-avoidance-and-evasion.pdf>

ANNEX IV. Evaluation matrix

| | Evaluation questions/issues | Indicators | Proposed evaluation tools | Data source |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1. Relevance: Is the project doing the right thing? | 1.1 Did the project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the organizational needs of partners, taking into account UNCTAD's mandates? | Programmes and budgets of key partners List of relevant UNCTAD mandates | Document review Interviews with UNCTAD staff (questions 1.1 to 1.4) | Project documentation; project stakeholders. |
| | 1.2 Were the actual activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goals and intended outcomes and how have the different activities complemented each other towards the intended results? | Validation of project's theory of change | Theory of change validation meeting Online survey (for question 1.1) Interviews with stakeholders/users (1.1 and 1.3) | |
| | 1.3 What is UNCTAD's comparative advantage in this area and to what extent did this project optimize it? | Evidence from partner's feedback | | |
| 2. Effectiveness: were project results achieved and how? | 2.1 Have the activities achieved, or are likely to achieve, planned objectives and outcomes as enunciated in the project document? | Logframe indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 | Document review Interviews with UNCTAD staff | Project documentation; project stakeholders. |
| | 2.2 Is there evidence of any positive and negative changes produced by the project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended? Are there indications of potential impact, assessed against the SDG targets supported by the project? | Logframe indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 SDG 8.a.1 Aid for Trade commitments and disbursements (<i>related to e-commerce</i>) SDG 17.9.1 Dollar value of financial and | Online-survey Interviews with stakeholders | |

| | Evaluation questions/issues | Indicators | Proposed evaluation tools | Data source |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| | | technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries (<i>related to e-commerce</i>) | | |
| | 2.3 What are the lessons learned or best practices for similar future interventions? | — | | |
| 3. Efficiency: Were resources used appropriately to achieve results? | | | | |
| | 3.1 Have project implementation modalities, and internal monitoring and control been adequate in ensuring the achievement of the expected outcomes in a timely and cost-effective manner? | Financial utilisation across years and in aggregate Time and budget extensions and reasons thereof Extent to which the management of the project was based on results, including the existence of a RBM policy Extent to which the management structures of the project facilitated the implementation, including evidence of actions taken to improve implementation | Document review Interviews with UNCTAD staff Online-survey (for question 3.2 concerning external collaboration) Interviews with stakeholders (for question 3.2 concerning external collaboration) | Project documentation; project stakeholders. |
| | 3.2 Has the UNCTAD intervention leveraged in-house expertise, previous research and technical cooperation outcomes, existing databases, and other internal resources of UNCTAD and/or external collaboration from national or international development partners and mechanisms? | Extent to which internal resources were used for the project Extent to which external collaboration were used for the project | | |
| 4 | | | | |

| | Evaluation questions/issues | Indicators | Proposed evaluation tools | Data source |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| | 4.1 Is there evidence that partners are committed to continue working towards the objectives of the UNCTAD project also beyond the end of the project? How strong is the ownership? | Logframe indicator 3.1 Extent to which partners would be willing to enter cost sharing arrangements | Document review Interviews with UNCTAD staff Online-survey (questions 4.1 and 4.2) Interviews with stakeholders | Project documentation; project stakeholders; commented by expert opinion |
| | 4.2 Have the activities and outputs have been designed and implemented in such a way to ensure maximum sustainability of the project's results? | Logframe indicator 3.3 | | |
| | 4.3 Have efforts been made to sustain the knowledge and capacity gained in the project for future similar interventions to be carried out by UNCTAD? | Evidence of continued use of knowledge and capacities for example through new partnerships beyond the direct remit of the project | | |
| 5. Gender and human rights: are results equitable? | | | | |
| | 5.1 To what extent the design and implementation of the project incorporated gender mainstreaming considerations, and can evidence be identified in this regard? | Evidence of gender aspects in the project Evidence of the consideration of gender issues during the design and implementation, e.g. existence of a gender analysis that identified the gender dimensions that could be addressed by the project | Document review Interviews with UNCTAD staff Online-survey Interviews with stakeholders | Project documentation; project stakeholders; commented by expert opinion |

| | Evaluation questions/issues | Indicators | Proposed evaluation tools | Data source |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| | 5.2 To what extent does the project advance UNCTAD's efforts to promote equitable development? | Extent to which the project supports actions to bridge the e-commerce divide | | |
| 6. Partnerships and synergies | | | | |
| | 6.1 How has the project advanced partnerships with international organizations, regional development banks, national agencies, the civil society, and the private sector? | Logframe indicator 3.3 | Document review Interviews with UNCTAD staff Online-survey Interviews with stakeholders | Project documentation; project stakeholders; commented by expert opinion |

ANNEX V. List of stakeholders consulted

| | |
|--|---|
| – UNCTAD staff | – African Civil Society on the Information Society |
| – African Development Bank | – Australia (donor representative) |
| – Burundi Shop | – Consumer Unity & Trust Society International |
| – Consumers International | – DHL |
| – DiploFoundation | – Enhanced Integrated Framework |
| – E-Residency Estonia | – Estonia (donor representative) |
| – EU DEVCO (donor representative) | – Finland (donor representative) |
| – Germany (donor representative) | – Huawei |
| – Inter American Development Bank | – International Association of Prosecutors |
| – International Civil Aviation Organization | – International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation |
| – International Telecommunications Union | – International Trade Centre |
| – Internet Society | – King & Spalding |
| – Mercado Libre | – Netherlands (donor representative) |
| – NextTrade | – SK Associates |
| – South Centre | – Sweden (donor representative) |
| – United Kingdom (donor representative) | – United Nations Commission on International Trade Law |
| – United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific | – United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| – United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia | – United Nations Economic Commission for Africa |
| – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe | – United Nations Industrial Development Organization |
| – United Nations Social Impact Fund | – Universal Postal Union |
| – World Bank Group | – World Customs Organization |
| – World Economic Forum | – World Intellectual Property Organization |
| – World Trade Organization | |

Out of the above stakeholder lists, a total of 32 stakeholders participated in the process of primary data collection. To ensure the anonymity of the participants, their names are not published in this report. This is in line with UNEG ethical standards and the assurance given to all participants that their anonymity would be safeguarded by the evaluator.