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## ITC's "e-strategies" at UNCTAD e-commerce week

Digital technologies are rapidly transforming the way we live and work, with Information Communication Technologies (ICT) playing an increasingly important role in the way we produce, consume and trade. This is why ITC has developed a portfolio of solutions on [e-strategies](#) to complement its [traditional portfolio](#) on national and sector strategies. E-strategies help developing countries identify and prioritize growth trajectories and strategic initiatives that support e-trade development and digital transformation. The two-dimensional e-strategies approach covers:

- e-business strategies, which explore online business in priority sectors and value chains through e-commerce.
- ICT strategies, which cover growth strategies for digitally-enabled sectors like IT-enabled services, creative industries and software development.

Following ITC's mandate of helping MSMEs export, e-strategies are development-conscious as they emphasize small firms' participation in local, regional and international markets.

ITC will present its offering e-strategies during the [UNCTAD E-commerce week](#).

## PUBLICATIONS

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### ITC Publication: What Sells in E-commerce: New Evidence from Asian LDCs

On Monday 16 April, the International Trade Centre (ITC) together with AliResearch will launch its new publication **What Sells in E-commerce: New Evidence from Asian LDCs** at [UNCTAD E-commerce Week](#).

This is the ITC's first publication that uses proprietary e-commerce data from Alibaba's international B2B e-commerce platform (Alibaba.com) to address the challenge of lack of market intelligence, examining cross-border e-commerce exports of five LDC countries in South and South-Eastern Asia, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Nepal.

This publication is a pilot example for collaboration between public and private institutions in sharing data and using big data analysis for informed policies. It could encourage more data sharing from the private companies, which are becoming increasingly essential in the digital economy.

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### OECD launched a publication on tax challenges in the digital economy

The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) presented in March its new

publication [“Tax Challenges Arising from Digitalisation – Interim Report 2018”](#). Taxation related to digitalization is at the centre of the debate in the last years and countries have divergent positions on this issue. The report analyses the current situation, with a focus on business models and the value creation. It also examines Base Erosion and Profit Sharing practises and proposes long-term solutions to these challenges. Even though there is no clear consensus on the topic, this OECD publication is setting the framework for the future discussions.

## EVENTS

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### UNCTAD E-commerce Week

The fourth edition of UNCTAD's E-Commerce Week will take place from 16 – 20 April 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland. It offers a unique opportunity for governments, development banks, international organizations, the private sector and civil society to engage in a dialogue that explores the connection between the digital economy and development. Following the theme “Development dimensions of digital platforms”, the forum will explore the evolution of technology in digital platforms and their contribution to sustainable development. The event will include a High-level Dialogue on the Development Dimension of Digital Platforms and two Ministerial Roundtables.

ITC will be present at the E-commerce Week in the [following sessions](#):

- Monday, 16 April: “Enabling Digital Entrepreneurship through better connectivity and skills”, organised by Broadband Commission
- Monday, 16 April: “Platform-based E-commerce: What is at Stake for MSMEs?”, in collaboration with CUTS, Geneva Internet Platform, UNCTAD and DiploFoundation
- Monday, 16 April: “How to overcome barriers to cross-border digital payments”, organised by Graduate Institute / Michael Kende
- Monday, 16 April: “What Sells in E-commerce: New Evidence from Asian LDCs”, in collaboration with AliResearch
- Tuesday, 17 April: “Going Global – Consumer Trust in Cross-border E-commerce”, organised by Consumers International
- Wednesday, 18 April: “Introduction to the Course on Digital Commerce and Emerging Technologies” in collaboration with CUTS, Geneva Internet Platform, UNCTAD and DiploFoundation
- Wednesday, 18 April: “Leveraging Digital Platforms for SME Exports of IT and IT-enabled Services from LDCs: Opportunities and Challenges”
- Wednesday, 18 April: “Building Skills for SMEs”
- Wednesday, 18 April: “Maximizing the Value Added of E-Commerce in Africa”, organised by the African Performance Institute
- Thursday, 19 April: “How to overcome operational constraints that small and medium-sized businesses in developing countries face when setting up trade online”, organised by the Intergovernmental Group of Experts
- Thursday, 19 April: “Fostering Effective Trade Logistics in a Digital World” in collaboration with UNCTAD and UNECE

To register for the UNCTAD E-commerce Week, click [here](#).

## REGULATORY AND TRADE NEWS

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### European Commission unveils two new proposals to tax digital business activities

The European Commission has presented [two new proposals](#) to build a tax system on digital activities in the European Union. The proposals follow the call EU leaders made in October 2017 to the Commission for a new regulatory framework considering that online businesses are currently allowed to pay an effective tax rate on profits of 9.5%, while brick and mortar ones face a 23.2% tax rate. The first proposal consists of reforming the corporate taxes: profits would be registered and taxed where the companies have “significant interaction with users through digital channels”. The second proposal would allow Member States to impose an interim tax to cover activities that are now escaping EU legislation. In the following months, the European Parliament will establish consultations on the proposals and the Council will receive them for adoption.

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## African leaders approved the African Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), boosting services trade

During the extraordinary summit of the African Union held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 17 – 21 March, 44 African leaders [signed an agreement](#) to create the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The agreement represents the biggest free trade agreement in terms of signatories since the creation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The agreement commits countries to remove tariffs on 90% of goods and to further liberalise trade in services. At a later stage, discussions will touch upon the remaining tariff elimination to achieve 100% coverage on trade in goods, as well as on free movement of people and the establishment of a single currency. In the upcoming phase, the countries will start the negotiations on investment, competition policy and intellectual property. Eleven countries of the African Union have decided not to sign the agreement for the moment. Among them, Nigeria represents the biggest market. Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari stated that the decision to pull out from the signing was "to allow time for broader consultations".

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## South Korea and China discuss to expand FTA deal to services and investment

South Korea and China [started discussions](#) in March to expand their existing bilateral free trade agreement (FTA), established in December 2015 and covering trade in goods. The aim of the talks is to include services and investment within the scope of the agreement, following the updated priorities of the two partners. The value of trade in services between China and South Korea grew up consistently in recent years, reaching US\$36.7 billion.

## BUSINESS NEWS

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### France sues tech giants for abusive contracts with local developers

The French Minister of Economy and Finance, Bruno La Maire, [declared](#) to take Google and Apple to the Paris commercial court for abusive contractual practices. The issue behind this declaration has to do with the supposedly imposition of prices onto developers and how their contracts are structured.

The sanctions have been estimated at around \$2.5 million per company. Following the announcement, Google declared that it already collaborates with the French General Directorate for Competition Policy, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control (DGCCRF) and it considers the contractual conditions proposed to the developers in conformity with the French law. Apple, on its side, has stated its availability to collaborate with the French courts and to clear the misunderstanding.

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### Spotify goes public on the New York Stock Exchange

The Swedish music streaming service, founded in 2006, [completed their initial public offering](#) on 3 April. The unusual methodology used for the listing was based on a sale of the existing company shares, increasing the volatility of the investment. "Spotify is not raising capital, and our shareholders and employees have been free to buy and sell our stock for years. So while tomorrow puts us on a bigger stage, it doesn't change who we are, what we are about, or how we operate," declared the company's founder Daniel Ek in a [post](#) on the blog of Spotify. The company expects to expand its subscriber's base, going from the current 153 million to 170 million by the end of the year.



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