



“E-commerce greatly contributes to a transition towards the fourth industrial revolution as it promotes increasing enterprise participation in global value chains; offers faster and wider market access; provides employment opportunities for women & youth; increases operational efficiencies; and reduces transaction costs.”

Li Yong, Director General, UNIDO

UNIDO’s e-commerce engagement in BRICS has led to the organization’s recognition as a key contributor in supporting the global e-commerce development agenda

The global e-commerce revolution has brought about transformative changes and gains in promoting sustainable development. It is forecasted that global retail sales and cross border trade will reach US\$3.4 trillion and US\$1 trillion in 2020, respectively. BRICS countries are significant drivers of this revolution: collectively, they had US\$876.1 billion in online retail transaction volume in 2016 (accounting for 47% of global retail sales) and US\$92 billion in cross-border network retail transaction (accounting for 23% of the global value). BRICS can serve as role models for other countries to start engaging in e-commerce.

UNIDO’S APPROACH

In recognition of the tremendous e-commerce potential in BRICS; UNIDO and China initiated a pilot e-commerce project to develop knowledge products, platforms and recommendations in order to improve SME cooperation on e-commerce. The project also aimed at facilitating the exchange of best practices.

Between 2016 and 2018, UNIDO organized several workshops and forums to bring together e-commerce stakeholders across BRICS to share their experiences, establish new partnerships and find innovative solutions to their challenges. UNIDO and its partners published a report on the latest e-commerce trends with policy recommendation for BRICS and selected additional countries.

UNIDO also created a global e-commerce index to measure the impact of e-commerce on global industrial development. UNIDO developed an online training course (available on the TII Knowledge Hub) to catalyze e-commerce skills development.

A “Good Governance Framework” to guide firms on how to engage as a digital business has also been drafted. A strong partnership network was also built with various e-commerce stakeholders in the BRICS.

IMPACT

UNIDO has gained experience in facilitating e-commerce development in its Member States and has built an effective network of BRICS partners to support future e-commerce interventions. UNIDO has also gained acceptance into UNCTAD’s “E-trade for All Initiative” – an exclusive group dedicated to supporting global e-

commerce development. A MoU was signed with Alibaba to support the adoption of e-commerce in developing countries. UNIDO also prepared the e-commerce chapter for Cambodia’s updated Trade Strategy. A key achievement of this project was the inclusion and recognition of e-commerce in UNIDO’s PCP initiatives (Morocco and Cambodia).

WAY FORWARD

UNIDO will continue its e-commerce interventions through the PCPs and is currently developing project concepts to explore the synergies between Industry 4.0 and E-commerce in Member States.

AT A GLANCE

Project title	Promote the development and co-operation of SMEs between China and other BRICS countries through e-commerce development
Thematic area	Advancing Economic Competitiveness
Donor	China
Project counterpart	China Ministry of Commerce and the Shanghai Academy of Social Science
Budget	US\$ 691,122
Duration	2 years (2016-2018)