



Tuvalu

Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessment



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NOTE

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

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

Reference to companies and their activities should not be construed as an endorsement by UNCTAD of those companies or their activities.

The following symbols have been used in the tables:

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

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

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

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

Tuvalu national currency is the Australian Dollar (AUD\$). For the purpose of this report: US\$1 = AU\$ 1.428 and AU\$ 1 = US\$ 0.70 (September 23, 2019).



PREFACE

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

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

As part of the initiative, demand-driven assessments are envisaged to provide a basic analysis of the current e-commerce situation in the countries concerned, and to identify opportunities and barriers. The resulting reports will serve as a valuable input to these countries' involvement in various discussions related to e-commerce and digital trade, such as in the context of the UNCTAD Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy.

It may furthermore help LDCs to identify areas in which they could benefit from assistance by partners of eTrade for all.

The Tuvalu Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessment is the nineteenth such assessment conducted by UNCTAD and the fourth for a Pacific Islands Nation, after Samoa in July 2017, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in 2018. As part of UNCTAD's efforts to support the development of digital trade in the Pacific Islands, another eTrade Readiness Assessment is underway in Kiribati. With this report, UNCTAD contributes to the recommendations of the joint WTO/UNCTAD/PIFS June 2017 Workshop on e-Commerce for the Pacific to have all Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat members benefit from an eTrade Readiness Assessment as a first step towards developing a coherent regional e-commerce policy. The Tuvalu Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessment and action matrix contributes as well to the Pacific Aid-for-Trade strategy and Trade Policy Framework of Tuvalu.

With the eTrade for all partners, UNCTAD is committed to supporting Tuvalu and other Pacific Islands Nations in their resolve to harness the potential of e-commerce for development.

Shamika N. Sirimanne

Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD



The EIF has continued on the path of assisting the Least Developed Countries (LDC) to better integrate into a global digital economy. The Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessments remain a crucial part of the EIF's efforts in supporting beneficiaries' use of trade for development.

Tuvalu's eTrade Readiness Assessment is one of nine EIF supported assessments. These assessments have provided concrete diagnoses of the digital landscape in the LDCs, as well as policy recommendations for targeted interventions by governments, the private sector and development partners.

The Government of Tuvalu has recognized e-commerce as a priority. This has been made evident in the "Te Kakeega III: National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2020". This is a positive sign for the emergence of a national digital landscape that encourages reforms, innovation and investment.

E-commerce activity in Tuvalu remains nascent, with the bulk of internet-based transactions concentrated in the hospitality industry. This report highlights that the potential for e-commerce uptake equally exists in other sectors, such as retail, services and handicrafts. In addition, Tuvalu stands to benefit from digital technologies in managing the risks of climate change and other environmental threats.

Fixed broadband penetration is currently at 10% – a high percentage, compared to most other South Pacific nations. Improving the information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure is among the top priorities. Tuvalu's landscape of nine inhabited coral atolls has, however, affected mobile subscriber penetration, which currently stands at about 31%. Internet user penetration is at 46%. Investments in the telecommunications sector to complement the services of the Tuvalu Telecommunications Corporation remain essential. Access to affordable and reliable ICT can play a key role in Tuvalu's development in the coming years. Investments to improve internet connectivity by development partners are one of the positive developments highlighted by the report.

Like other Pacific islands LDCs, Tuvalu's assessment has revealed bottlenecks in trade logistics related to inter-island connectivity. This remains a major constraint for investments in e-commerce. Trade facilitation reforms have been recognized as an important area and are now included in Tuvalu's National Strategy for Sustainable Development.

The EIF's support has proven to be fundamental in addressing some of the recommendations identified in eTrade Readiness Assessments conducted in the past. These include support to e-commerce strategy formulation, capacity development and coordination in Bhutan, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Rwanda and Senegal, and a targeted project for women-led small- and medium sized enterprises in the South Asian region.

I would like to express my appreciation to the authors of the report and our colleagues at UNCTAD for bringing forth the state of play of e-trade readiness in Tuvalu, taking stock of recent progress and identifying the necessary actions that will further support digital development. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr Temate Melitiana, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment and Labour; Ms Pulaalofa Saulo Haulagi, Coordinator of the EIF National Implementation Unit in Tuvalu; and the Government of Tuvalu for their commitment in realizing the country's potential in the digital economy.

The EIF stands ready to support Tuvalu's trade-led development efforts, including leveraging technology for better trade, in any way it can.

Ratnakar Adhikari

Executive Director
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ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Asia Broadcast Satellite
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfT	Aid-for-Trade
AML/CTF	Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act
APPU	Asian-Pacific Postal Union
ASYCUDA	UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
ATR	Avions de Transport Régional
AU\$	Australian Dollar
B2C	Business-to-Consumer
CEIT	Centre for Excellence in Information Technology
COD	Cash on Delivery
DBT	Development Bank of Tuvalu
DFS	Digital Financial Services
DOs	Designated postal operators
DP	Development Partner
DtF	Distance to Frontier
DTIS	Diagnostic Trade Integration Study 2016
EFTPOS	Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSP	Financial Service Provider
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOT	Government of Tuvalu
IANA	Internet Assigned Numbers Authority
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	International Development Association
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IP	Internet Protocol
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IT	Information Technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union

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