



Opportunities and challenges for MSMEs in Caribbean cross-border e-commerce

November 8th to December 10th
2021



Background information

The development of transition, low and middle-income countries continues to face both vertical challenges (increasing gaps between individuals) and horizontal ones (reducing the potential of communities and territories). In Latin America and the Caribbean, horizontal inequalities continue to abound and are multi-dimensional in nature, impacting various development aspects. Such inequalities interplay with and affect economic factors such as income, productive capacity, access to financing, access to essential services and connectivity. Countries in region have one of the highest levels of spatial inequality in the world. The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown measures have further worsened this situation. In this context, the United Nations project "Global Initiative for the Recovery of the Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) after Covid-19", seeks to reduce some of these horizontal heterogeneities.

The Covid-19 crisis has altered the way consumers and companies do business, and has shifted operating business models, especially those of MSMEs. Electronic and digital commerce have exhibited unprecedented growth as businesses and consumers turned towards digital channels to maintain their activities, meet their everyday needs and develop new operating models in an effort to stay relevant and profitable. E-commerce has been a vital, and at times, the only means through which some MSMEs were able to sustain their incomes during the crisis. It is in this context, that ECLAC has designed a virtual course to assist policymakers in promoting and facilitating cross-border e-commerce by MSMEs.

E-commerce is critical to the business environment of the 21st century, as it leads to economic growth and can serve to address issues of poverty reduction, healthcare, universal education and good governance; issues that Countries in Latin American and the Caribbean grapple with.

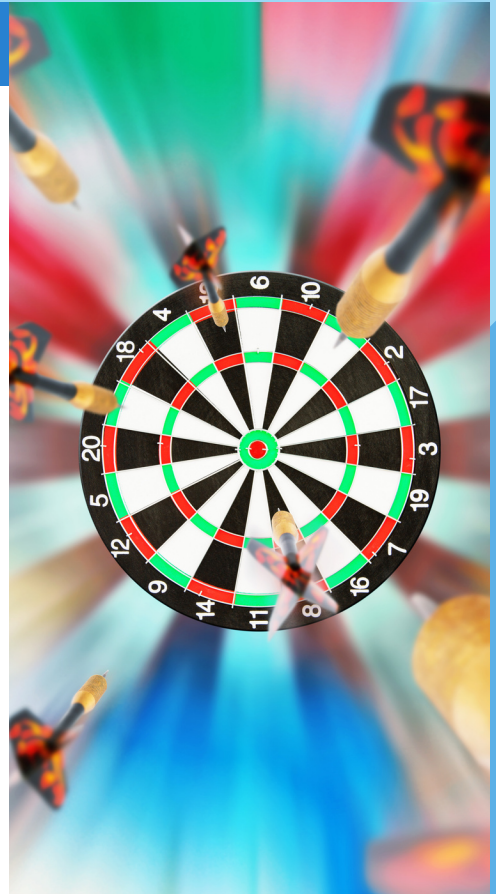
Evidence shows that in 2020, the domestic market has led the growth in e-commerce. By contrast, cross-border e-commerce has not shown the same degree of dynamism. The leveraging of digital platforms and other digital channels to support export activities can contribute to the recovery of MSMEs in the region by allowing them access to new markets, consumers and operational models for doing business. This segment of the business community is confronted with several challenges when venturing into cross-border e-commerce. Therefore, the support of trade promotion agencies is essential to assist MSMEs in this journey. Moreover, complementary assistance and actions are also required from other institutions in an effort to enhance the digital skills of MSMEs, promote greater competition, enhance privacy, facilitate trade logistics, infuse innovation and ensure data protection practices are applied, noting that this is considered the most valued asset in the digital economy.

THE GOAL OF THE COURSE

Training policymakers in good practices to improve the capacities of MSMEs to participate in cross-border e-commerce.

SPECIFIC GOALS

- To learn about recent developments and trends in domestic and cross-border e-commerce particularly since the beginning of the pandemic and to examine the barriers and challenges that MSMEs face in this type of international trade.
- To understand the process of digital transformation and digital capacity-building of MSMEs for the effective implementation of cross-border e-commerce processes, systems and tools, along with the support that governments can offer through public policies aimed at this group of businesses.
- To gain greater awareness of the obstacles that MSMEs face and the best practices in logistics and trade facilitation issues to speed up MSMEs' access to international markets through cross-border e-commerce.
- To understand the role of competition policy and competition laws to facilitate the entry and integration of MSMEs as suppliers in regional and global value chains and identify anti-competitive practices that restrict market access.
- To identify critical regulatory elements for data protection in the use of digital platforms and cyber security.



METHODOLOGY

Five modules will be delivered through distance-learning courses utilising multimedia formats (reading guides, video tutorials, interviews) and interactive forms (virtual classes and discussion forums) to facilitate the understanding and learning of the course material. Each module ends with a small quizz. This course is taught in English.



COURSE CONTENT

Module 1:

Introduction

- Definitions and characterisation of domestic and cross-border e-commerce
- Main global and regional trends
- Participation of regional MSMEs in e-commerce
- The e-commerce institutional and public policy ecosystem

Module 2:

Digital transformation and the role of e-commerce in MSMEs

- Introduction to digital transformation
- Strategies for the implementation of e-commerce in MSMEs
- Roles and processes to implementing cross-border e-commerce in MSMEs
- Digital tools for the implementation of cross-border e-commerce

Module 3:

Logistical practices for agile cross-border e-commerce

- Introduction to cross-border e-commerce logistics
- Last-mile delivery: postal mail and courier companies
- Introduction to e-commerce regulation
- Single Windows (SW) in the development of cross-border e-commerce
- E-commerce in preferential trade agreements in LAC

Module 4:

The strategic importance of data for cross-border e-commerce

- The importance of data for the development of MSMEs for access to digital platforms
- National regulatory frameworks for the storage, use, and transfer of data
- Data protection, privacy, and cybersecurity
- Integration of data as a strategic asset for businesses (marketing, CRM, ERP, ...)

Module 5:

Competition conditions and policy in cross-border e-commerce

- The importance of economic competition in the policy of support for MSMEs, particularly in times of pandemic
- Free-competition normative/regulatory framework
- Competition policy in the digital era
- The role of data, a strategic intangible asset for MSME businesses
- Competition policy, cross-border data flow, digital platforms, and data protection

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

The course is aimed at staff members in charge of MSME support programs including but not limited to: Trade Promotion Organizations, Single Windows, Government Ministries and Agencies in charge of productive development and MSMEs, persons involved in Competition Policy, Data Protection and cybersecurity in the Caribbean.



DURATION OF THE COURSE

This course runs from November 8th, to December 10th, 2021. It has five weekly modules. The total academic load is approximately 25 hours. Each module includes reading materials, viewing tutorials and videos with interviews, participating in a synchronous virtual class, and conducting a brief exam with multiple-choice questions.



FINANCING

This course has no cost for the participants. Public policy staff (including persons operating in regional institutions) in the Caribbean are invited to take advantage of this opportunity.

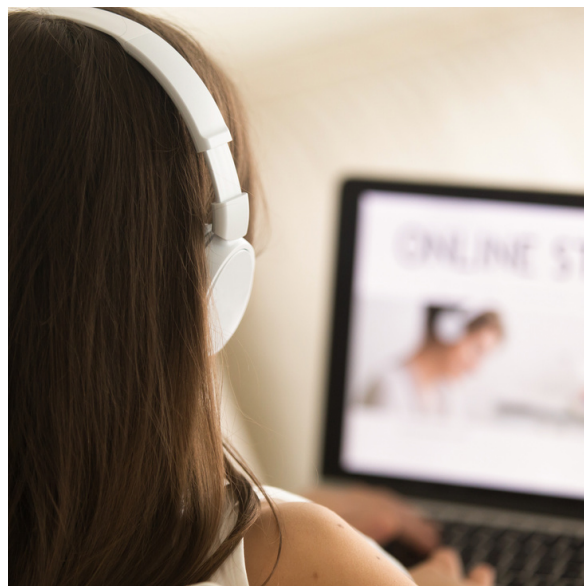


APPLICATIONS

All those interested in applying to the course should:

1. Fill out the registration form available at [Course Registration](#) or on the training section of ECLAC's website: [Training](#)

- **Deadline: 29 October**



TEACHERS OF THE COURSE

NICOLE GARRAWAY



Nicole Garraway is an International Trade Professional and a Legal and Policy Expert. Her areas of expertise include policy formulation, legal and regulatory review and analysis, digital transformation, trade facilitation, e-commerce, e-government and the development of online trade and business portals.

Ms Garraway has worked in the Caribbean and internationally, having participated in several consultancies and assignments in the CARICOM region, OECS region, Melanesian Spearhead Group, Ghana and Kiribati.

Ms Garraway possesses a Masters of Law in International Trade Law, a Postgraduate Certificate in Competition Law and the Economics of Competition and a Bachelor of Science in Economics and Management.

TIRA GREENE



Tira Greene is an Attorney-at-law and Legal Consultant. Her areas of expertise include legal gap analysis, legislative drafting and legal and regulatory reform in the areas of e-commerce, e-government, trade and digital transformation. Ms. Greene has worked in the Caribbean and internationally. She has undertaken and led several regional and national assignments for CARICOM Member States, resulting in reforms in their commercial legal and regulatory frameworks and has provided legal advice and/or legislative drafting services on the laws of numerous countries in Africa, South East Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. In addition to her qualifications as an attorney at law, she has a Master Degree in Telecommunications Policy and Regulation.

SHARLEEN MAHARAJ



Sharlene Maharaj has eight (8) years' experience in focus group research, one-on-one interviews, open public and consumer consultations. She has also enjoyed fourteen (14) years in the Airline, & Aviation Industry where in 21 years ago she implemented one of the 1st true e-Commerce platforms in the Region at BWIA West Indies Airways (now Caribbean Airlines) before many believed that e-Commerce would be a major driver of regional economic transformation. She has undertaken several consultancies in the CARICOM Region in this regard. Sharlene also holds an MSc. and a BSc. Degree in Economics from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad.

CONTACT



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