


Vacancy announcement		
UN JPO Programme		
JPO in Economic Affairs		
<i>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Division on Technology and Logistics, E-commerce and Digital Economy Branch, Digital Economy Policy Research Section</i>		
		Closing date 23 March 2025 6 pm EST
<u>Vacancy Announcement # 24P281</u>		
I General information		
Title:	JPO in Economic Affairs	
Sector of Assignment:	Economic Affairs	
Country:	Switzerland	
Location (City):	Geneva	
Agency:	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Division on Technology and Logistics, E-commerce and Digital Economy (ECDE) Branch, Digital Economy Policy Research Section	
Duration of Assignment:	Initially 1 year (with possible extension for another year)	
Grade:	P2 step 1 in the first year	
Note: This post is opened in the context of the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) scheme sponsored by Finland and is addressed to candidates with Finnish citizens. Candidates must be max. 32 years old at the time of the application/closing date (<i>i.e. born on or after 24/03/1992</i>)		
II Duties, responsibilities and Output Expectations		
Within delegated authority, the Junior Professional Officer will be responsible for the duties set out below. The JPO will be involved in projects and tasks related to the overall ECDE work programme. In particular, the work will be linked to research and analysis on e-commerce and the digital economy for development, including measurement, and to the IGE on E-Commerce and the Digital Economy. In 2025-2026, the JPO will be associated with work related to follow-up associated with the Digital Economy Report 2024: Shaping an Environmentally Sustainable and Inclusive Digital Future, the Global Digital Compact, the WSIS+20 Review and preparations for the next UNCTAD Ministerial Conference.		

In this context, the JPO will be involved in research and analysis, as well as intergovernmental support activities. More concretely, he/she will:

Economic and/or sector analysis:

- Monitor economic developments in the areas of ICT and trade linked to e-commerce, digitalization and development. Growing attention will be given to the interface between the digital economy and environmental sustainability.
- Collect, evaluate, interpret and analyze statistics and qualitative socio-economic information obtained from a variety of sources pertaining to e-commerce and the digital economy for development. Assist in the work on measuring e-commerce and the digital economy.
- Undertake policy-related research and analysis in specific areas regarding e-commerce and the digital economy issues in the field of international trade and sustainable development.
- Monitor developments related to e-commerce and law reform.
- Draft inputs for research and analysis studies and reports.
- Prepare briefing notes, inputs to speeches and similar material on economic or sector issues in a form that is meaningful for non-specialists.
- Contribute to outreach activities related to the Digital Economy Report.
- Contribute to research related to the next Digital Economy Report.

Intergovernmental Support:

- Prepare inputs for reports to intergovernmental bodies, in particular the IGE on e-commerce and the digital economy and UNCTAD 16th Ministerial.
- Assist in the organization and servicing of the IGE on e-commerce and the digital economy.
- Follow intergovernmental meetings on e-commerce and the digital economy for development and prepare summary reports and similar material.
- Support UNCTAD's work in co-leading the Global Digital Compact.
- Assist in the organization of panels, round tables, etc. on e-commerce and digital economy for development issues for intergovernmental processes.

General:

- Perform other related duties as required, including a variety of administrative tasks necessary for the final delivery of the services provided by the Section.
- Undertake on-the-job and other training activities, both internally and externally.

The JPO will get exposure to the way in which intergovernmental processes within the United Nations are handled and experience how the three pillars of UNCTAD – research, intergovernmental support and technical assistance – are interlinked in a dynamic field of work which is growing in importance at the global level, including at other parts of the United Nations, GDC, BRICS, G20, OECD and WTO.

III Training component: Learning elements and expectations

On completion of the assignment, the JPO will be able to:

- Carry out research and analysis for publications in the field of digitalization and development;
- Understand the linkages between international trade, the digital economy and sustainable development and especially relevant policy challenges pertaining to developing countries;
- Understand the challenges of measuring e-commerce and the digital economy;

- Understand how to plan and carry out intergovernmental support activities and the stakes of policy discussions taking place in the United Nations;
- Understand the close relationships between the three pillars of UNCTAD – research, intergovernmental machinery and technical assistance.

IV Supervision

Title of Supervisor:

OIC, Digital Economy Policy Research Section

Content and methodology of supervision: Establishment of a Work Plan: During the first month of the assignment, the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) will work jointly with his/her direct supervisor to finalize an agreed upon work plan. The final work plan will be discussed and mutually agreed to by the JPO and his/her supervisor. The formal system is complemented by a) informal meetings among the team members of the Digital Economy Policy Research Section, b) work meetings of the ECDE Branch, and c) quarterly coaching meetings between the JPO and the Chief of the Section.

Evaluation: The United Nations Performance Evaluation System (e-performance) will serve as a primary platform to evaluate the JPO's performance.

V Required Qualifications and Experience

Education:

Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in economics, international economics, law or development studies.

Working experience (incl. internships and volunteering):

A minimum of 2 years of relevant work experience in economic research and analysis, policy formulation, application of economic principles in development programmes, project management, or related area, with substantive experience in international trade and development matters, including economic analysis, research and writing, is requested.

Languages:

English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this post, fluency in oral and written English is required. Working knowledge of other UN languages is an asset.

Other skills:

Comprehensive and sound computer literacy.

UN competencies:

PROFESSIONALISM: Provides research and analysis in support of the activities of the research and intergovernmental unit on trade and sustainable development, including e-commerce and digital economy for development; Shows pride in work and in achievements; Demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter; Is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results; Is motivated by professional rather than personal concerns; Shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges; Remains calm in stressful situations.

COMMUNICATION: Speaks and writes clearly and effectively; Listens to others, correctly interprets messages from others and responds appropriately; Asks questions to clarify, and exhibits interest in having two-way communication; Tailors language, tone, style and format to match the audience; Demonstrates openness in sharing information and keeping people informed.

TEAMWORK: Works collaboratively with colleagues to achieve organizational goals; Solicits input by genuinely valuing others' ideas and expertise; is willing to learn from others; Places team agenda before personal agenda; Supports and acts in accordance with final group decision, even when such decisions may not entirely reflect own position; Shares credit for team accomplishments and accepts joint responsibility for team shortcomings.

PLANNING & ORGANIZING: Develops clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies; Identifies priority activities and assignments; adjusts priorities as required; Allocates appropriate amount of time and resources for completing work; Foresees risks and allows for contingencies when planning; Monitors and adjusts plans and actions as necessary; Uses time efficiently.

Workforce Diversity

The United Nations believes that an inclusive culture attracts the best talent and encourages all qualified applicants, regardless of gender, disability, sexual orientation, cultural or religious backgrounds, to apply.

VII How to apply

Applicants should submit their application electronically directly to the Organization.

Please apply **online** via

<https://owa.undesa.it/oas/oas.aspx?CMD=START&CP=6>

Applications must be received no later than **23 March 2025, 6.00 pm (Eastern Standard Time UTC-5, New York USA)**. Applications received after this date will not be considered. Applicants will receive a confirmation of receipt.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted thereafter

VI Background information on Agency/Department/Section

As the focal point within the UN system for the integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development, UNCTAD is uniquely placed to address the cross-cutting development implications of e-commerce and the digital economy. This is a significant advantage given the new development agenda which advocates for an integrated approach as opposed to previous "silo-based" approaches embraced earlier by the broader development system. Through its intergovernmental set-up, UNCTAD retains a special political role in global economic governance. In the context of fostering development gains from the digital economy, UNCTAD also has proven competences engaging in dialogue, analysis and cooperation with the private sector, civil society and academia, notably through the multi-stakeholder UNCTAD eWeek.

An increased mandate on e-commerce and the digital economy

The Bridgetown Covenant – the outcome document of UNCTAD's 15th Ministerial Conference (2021) – recognized

the widening digital divide and the uneven speed of digital transformation as two of the major global challenges that have become more acute in recent years. It called attention to the role of digitalization in transforming economies for a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable world, not least in view of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Covenant called on UNCTAD to strengthen the work on assisting developing countries to enhance their readiness to engage and integrate into the digital economy, thus contributing to the closing of the digital divide. In doing so, the Covenant reinforced UNCTAD's mandate to work on enhancing development gains from the digital economy, which is carried out through the E-commerce and Digital Economy (ECDE) Programme.

Vision of the ECDE Programme

A future where everyone has the opportunity to meaningfully engage in e-commerce and capture value from the digital economy with a view to enabling inclusive and sustainable development outcomes.

Mission of the ECDE Programme

To support an enabling and inclusive digital economy ecosystem in developing countries, through entrepreneurship, innovation, trade, decent jobs and value creation, by providing analysis, offering technical assistance, and facilitating consensus-building while harnessing effective partnerships.

Problem analysis

The global digital economy is characterized by a high degree of market concentration, which was given a further boost by the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of capacity to engage in and benefit from the data-driven digital economy, two countries stand out: the United States and China. Together, they account for half the world's hyperscale data centers, the highest rates of 5G adoption in the world, 94 per cent of all funding of AI start-ups in the past five years, 70 per cent of the world's top AI researchers, and almost 90 per cent of the market capitalization value of the world's largest digital platforms. Most Internet traffic takes place between the Asia and North America regions and between Europe and North America, with a very small share accounted for by Latin America and the Middle East and North Africa.

In many developing countries, certain population groups face an increased risk of exclusion from the opportunities offered by e-commerce and the digital economy. These include people living in rural areas without adequate access to electricity, ICT infrastructure or postal services; refugees and migrants as well as stateless persons who may not be in possession of a (digital) ID or a valid address required to establish a trustworthy online business presence or access digital services, including digital financial services; elderly people who lack the digital skills to navigate an online transaction environment; and people with disabilities, for whom accessibility in the digital economy may be as limited as in the offline world.

For digital entrepreneurs in developing countries, and especially for women digital entrepreneurs, the playing field is far from level. Their ability to start and grow a successful e-commerce or other digital business is constrained by a number of barriers such as insufficient access to and use of ICTs and the internet, owing to differences in device ownership, high bandwidth cost, lower digital literacy and access to finance. Women's still prevailing social role as caregivers and other socio-cultural norms add to the key factors that hold women back from engaging in the digital economy.

To reverse current trends towards widening inequalities and ensure that e-commerce and the digital economy work for businesses and consumers in developing countries and contribute to inclusive and sustainable development outcomes, it has become even more important to enhance cooperation in this area and make it effective at national, regional and global levels. Governments in developing countries need to adapt existing policies, laws and regulations and adopt new ones, in particular in the following areas: national and regional e-commerce strategies, digital infrastructure, payment solutions, trade logistics and facilitation, legal and regulatory frameworks related to data and digitalization, skills development and financing for MSMEs in the digital economy. Laws and policies on e-commerce and the digital economy increasingly need to effectively mainstream gender and integrate human rights and environmental sustainability considerations.

Developing countries are also disproportionately affected by climate change yet lack the resources to leverage

digital technologies to mitigate the effects. Addressing widening digital ecological inequalities requires concerted international efforts to ensure fairer practices such as promoting sustainable mining approaches, enhancing digital infrastructure, curbing illegal digital waste exports, and support capacity-building in developing countries.

In view of these many challenges and following various global crises, the ECDE Programme has become even more relevant. The critical importance of strengthening our overall ability to support developing countries in the area of digital transformation has also been confirmed by global processes, such as current work on a Global Digital Compact.

A three-pillar approach strengthened by partnerships

The ECDE Programme is aligned with UNCTAD's three pillars – namely research, technical cooperation and consensus building - and are further supported by strengthened and more gender-inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnerships on e-commerce and the digital economy for development, which are essential for achieving the desired impact in a collaborative and transparent manner.

- **Research**

The 2019 edition of the *Digital Economy Report* focused on *Value Creation and Capture in the Digital Economy*, and implications for developing countries. The 2021 edition focused on *Cross-border Data Flows and Development*. The 2024 edition focused on *Shaping an Environmentally Sustainable and Inclusive Digital Future*. Other recent research outputs include studies on the interface between COVID-19 and digitalization, development implications of e-commerce negotiations and the Global Cyberlaw Tracker, which indicates the availability of laws related to e-transactions, consumer protection online, cybercrime, and data protection and privacy.

The importance of measuring the use of ICTs by enterprises for impact assessment and policy formulation is a priority for UNCTAD –a founding member of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development. UNCTAD has developed new methodologies for measuring cross-border trade in ICT services and ICT-enabled services. A technical assistance programme on measuring the information economy has been set up.

- **Consensus-building**

The ECDE Programme contributes to the consensus-building pillar of UNCTAD by servicing the IGE on E-commerce and the Digital Economy. This Group of Experts aims to strengthen the work of UNCTAD on ICTs, e-commerce and the digital economy for development, so as to enhance its ability to support developing countries to engage in and benefit from the evolving digital economy, and reduce the digital divide, for the creation of more inclusive knowledge societies. It offers member States the opportunity to discuss relevant issues and prepare agreed policy recommendations for the consideration of the Trade and Development Board (TDB). In the Bridgetown Covenant, member States emphasized that the IGE is an important element under the intergovernmental machinery.

- **Capacity-building**

Policymakers, businesses and consumers in many developing countries, especially in LDCs, lack the capacities, readiness and resources to participate in the global digital economy and develop effective e-commerce ecosystems. With 36 eTrade Readiness Assessments (eT Readies) conducted since 2017, of which 25 in LDCs, UNCTAD has been pioneering country diagnostics focusing on key pillars for e-commerce development strategy formulation, ICT infrastructure and services, trade facilitation and logistics, legal and regulatory framework, payment solutions, skills development and access to financing.

The wealth of expertise accrued over the years by UNCTAD has allowed the development of integrated eTrade Readiness assistance, including the immediate follow-up to the eTready assessment by the preparation of E-Commerce Strategies (ECS) and monitoring. An ECS helps to ensure that diagnostics and recommendations actually lead to the design and implementation of concrete reforms in ECDE-related policy areas.

The ECDE Programme's work on measuring e-commerce and the digital economy aims to build the capacity of countries to produce official statistics on e-commerce and the digital economy that can be used to guide policy

making. The lack of timely, robust and internationally comparable data currently constitutes a significant gap in the tool-kit governments need to design and implement relevant policies and monitor their impact on various development objectives.

eTrade for Women combines the transformative power of women entrepreneurship with the positive impact of digital technologies. It supports women digital entrepreneurs from developing countries to help them thrive as business leaders, and emerge as an influential voice in the public policy debate.

- **Multistakeholder dialogue and partnerships**

UNCTAD has contributed to various international initiatives, many of which are organized in partnership with other organizations:

- Since 2017, seven sessions of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy have been held, with the participation of some 500 delegates at each session.
- UNCTAD has organized the eCommerce Week (eWeek) since 2014, including
 - in December 2023 in Geneva and online, gathering 3,500 participants from 159 countries;
 - in April 2022 in Geneva and online, with more than 2,000 participants from 139 countries;
 - in April 2020, its first virtual eWeek in view of the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - in April 2019, the fifth edition of eCommerce Week with more than 1,500 participants from 131 countries;
 - in December 2018, the first Africa eCommerce Week, in Nairobi, Kenya. It was held in collaboration with the African Union and the European Union, and financially supported by Germany.
- UNCTAD is regularly invited to contribute on e-commerce related matters in sessions organized by the WTO, and makes various contributions to the Aid for Trade Global Review and the WTO Public Forum.
- UNCTAD serves as the Secretariat for the ECOSOC Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD). It services the CSTD's deliberations on the Follow-up to the Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).
- UNCTAD co-organizes the annual World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum, together with the ITU, UNESCO and UNDP.
- UNCTAD is the lead facilitator of the WSIS Action Line on e-business, in collaboration with ITC and UPU.
- UNCTAD will in 2025 take over as chair of the UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS).
- UNCTAD is a vice-chair of the Working Group on Digital Technologies, and a co-lead of the implementation of the GDC, notably in regard to objective 2 and objective 4.

The Programme's contribution to the SDGs

Digital technologies can help accelerate progress towards all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By working to increase understanding, build capacity, and foster dialogue between developing countries and their partners to enable them to reap the benefits and mitigate the risks of digitalization, the ECDE Programme contributes directly to SDGs 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (reduced inequalities) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals).

The *research pillar* generates better official data and analysis, which are needed to facilitate policy formulation to harness digital trade for development and promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8), foster innovation (SDG 9), reduce inequalities (SDG 10) and boost exports of developing and least developed countries (SDG 17).

