Digital Trade: From “we need standards” to “let’s drive adoption”

A year ago, the World Trade Organization (WTO) launched the Digital Trade Initiative (DTI), with the aim of 

accelerating standard-setting work towards the negotiation of a new WTO Agreement on Digital Trade. The initiative is 

nearing its first anniversary, and it’s time to assess its achievements and prospect its future.

Beyond MC13: Digitalisation is still at the forefront

The unprecedented upheaval in the digital economy created by the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the 

importance of digitalisation in facilitating recovery and development. It has also highlighted the need for 

more comprehensive digital trade rules to govern the digital economy.

Moreover, the Interagency Task Force on Trade Measures related to Digitalisation has called for a 

coordinated international approach to digital trade negotiations. The DTI was established to respond to 

these needs and advance digital trade negotiations.

The agreement is intended to set a new agenda for digital trade negotiations, building on the 

Doha Development Agenda (Doha Agenda) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (Addis Agenda), and 

promoting a rules-based trading system.

The agreement is expected to cover a wide range of digital trade issues, including data 

flows, e-commerce, digital services, intellectual property rights, and digital infrastructure.

What’s next for the Digital Trade Initiative?

The DTI is a stepping stone towards a comprehensive digital trade agreement. It is expected to 

be finalized by the end of 2022. The agreement will be subject to approval by WTO member states.

We can be optimistic about the future of digital trade negotiations. The DTI will provide a 

framework for addressing the challenges presented by the digital economy and ensure that 

trade rules keep pace with technological innovation.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Innertex Global Digital Forum

April 10, 2023

IMTS 2023

April 10, 2023

Yakus and Investment Forum

April 11, 2023

DTI Digital Trade Conference & Awards

April 11, 2023