

19-22 OCTOBER 2026 UfM ECONOMIC FORUM CAIRO, EGYPT

UfM Regional Workshop on Digital Trade and
E-Commerce in the MENA Region / 19 October 2026



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Draft agenda

Regional Workshop on Digital Trade and E-Commerce in the MENA Region

Working Towards Regional Collaboration and Harmonization to Support Cross-Border Digital Trade and E-Commerce

Focus on the regulatory framework and the tools and solutions (e.g. trust services, electronic signature, digital payment, etc.)

08:30 – 09:00	Welcome and registration Moderation: Natascha Walker
09:00 – 09:15	Opening session Welcome remarks, UfM Deputy-Secretary General Meltem Büyükkarakaş Welcome remarks, Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade, Senior official (tbc)
9:15 – 9:30	Setting the Scene: Objectives and Expected Outcomes This opening session introduces the regional project and sets the tone of the workshop by presenting the overall objectives, expected outputs, and how the discussion links to the regional project - especially the development of a regional roadmap for the harmonization / approximation of legal and regulatory frameworks governing cross-border digital trade and e-commerce and the support to regional dialogue and peer learning activities. It ensures all participants share a common understanding of the purpose and structure of the workshop. Speaker: Representative of GIZ, Regional Programme “Digital Trade and E-Commerce in the MENA Region”
9:30 – 9:45	Group Photo
9:45 – 10:30	Overview of the Regulatory Landscape and Gaps in Cross-Border Digital Trade and E-Commerce in the MENA Region This session provides a concise overview of the current legal and regulatory frameworks affecting cross-border digital trade in the region, highlighting key



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	divergences between countries and gaps vis-à-vis international and EU approaches. It establishes a shared baseline of knowledge to inform discussions, with the objective of building a common understanding of regional challenges fragmentation affecting cross-border digital trade and e-commerce. Speakers: • International consultant, Regional Programme “Digital Trade and E-Commerce in the MENA Region”. • International expert, World Trade Organization (tbc).
10:30 – 11:30	Session 1: Identifying Potentials for Cross-Border Digital Trade and E-Commerce Participants work in groups (one group per country) to identify what can be improved to support cross-border digital trade and e-commerce in their country. The focus is on regulatory and solutions aspects (e.g. inconsistent rules with trading partners, lack of mutual recognition on trade documents or electronic signatures, regulatory gaps). Methodology: • Participants work in country groups (one group per participating country). • Guided brainstorming to identify regulatory, legal and operational barriers affecting cross-border transactions. • Prioritization of the most critical challenges based on their impact and feasibility of addressing them.
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 – 13:00	Session 2: Presentation of Country Priorities and Identification of Common Themes Building on the outcomes of Session 1, each country group will present its priority areas for strengthening cross-border digital trade and e-commerce. Through a facilitated plenary discussion, the moderator will cluster the identified priorities into common themes, highlighting areas of convergence for collaboration, regulatory harmonization / approximation.



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	Methodology: - Each country group presents its priority challenges and opportunities (5–7 minutes per group). - The moderator captures and clusters common priorities and recurring challenges.
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	Session 3: Deepening Priority Themes and Exploring Regional Activities Building on the priorities identified in the Session 2, participants will form thematic working groups around the four priority topics that emerged from the plenary discussion. Rather than working in country groups, participants will join the topic that is most relevant to their expertise or interest. Each group will analyse the selected theme in greater depth, explore opportunities for regulatory alignment, interoperability, mutual recognition, peer learning, etc. The outcomes of each group discussion will be presented in the plenary. Methodology: - Each group analyses the selected theme from a regional perspective, drawing on the experiences of different countries. - Discussions are guided by a facilitator and a set of guiding questions. - Rapporteurs present the group's key findings and recommendations.
15:15 – 15:45	Coffee Break
15:45– 16:30	Session 4: From Priorities to Action: Defining Support Needs and Future Activities Building on the outcomes of the thematic discussions, participants will continue working in the same groups to define the conditions required to advance each priority area. Groups will identify the type of support, expertise, and resources needed to address the identified challenges and translate them into action-oriented recommendations. The discussion will focus on possible next steps, potential actors involved, and opportunities for regional collaboration and future initiatives. Methodology: Thematic groups (same as in Session 3) to identify what is needed from the regional programme and from other stakeholders to address the priority topics and advance regional collaboration.



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	Each group defines key next steps, including potential actions, responsible stakeholders and possible collaboration mechanisms.
16:30 – 17:00	Conclusions and Way Forward



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