Consultative Document

ITC Strategic Plan (2018-2021)

Trade Routes to
Sustainable Development
INVITATION TO CONSULT ON THE ITC STRATEGIC PLAN

Dear Colleagues,

What follows is a consultative document describing features of the forthcoming ITC Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The document is a work in progress and reflects the feedback we have received from the ITC online stakeholder survey conducted in April, as well as the many interactions and consultations with different constituencies over the last months.

*Trade Routes to Sustainable Development* identifies planned priority areas of work in ITC over the next period and the direction we plan to pursue with the benefit of your valued feedback. The plan is evolutionary, not revolutionary. We are confident that the path we took with our current Strategic Plan 2015-17 remains relevant, and this view has been confirmed by the feedback received to date, and our stocktaking of results achieved and prevailing needs.

ITC focused on six practice areas, and devised programmatic approaches for each of them. We focused on launching new tools for improving trade intelligence, innovative initiatives to strengthen the work of trade institutions, and established new local, regional and global partnerships. We have improved Results-Based Management (RBM), collaborating with partners, and developed new projects based on strong demand from client countries. ITC put more focus on women, young entrepreneurs and displaced people. Through regionally targeted programmes ITC has connected businesses and institutions in the southern hemisphere.

Good results have triggered increased demand and requests to delve deeper into some aspects of trade assistance. Thus, we plan to continue the work in our six practice areas, and invest in improving and upgrading the solutions we offer in view of the evolving needs and demands of our clients. We are also observing changes in the trade and development landscape that will shape future client needs, and our own operating environment:

- **Sustainable Development Goals.** Action to attain the SDGs is underway. As a result, we need to work harder to ensure that trade contributes to prosperity for the many, not the few, and fosters sustainable production and consumption.

- **Global Trade.** The trade landscape continues to change since we launched our last strategic plan. Changing political and economic geographies, increased trading within value chains, and new technologies have created new opportunities and new obstacles.

- **UN Reform.** The Secretary-General’s United Nations (UN) reform agenda calls on UN agencies to focus on their core business, reduce overlap with partners, and put clients at the centre of their technical assistance.

- **Partnerships along the Trade Value Chain.** Working with partners to make sure that we can deliver cross-sectoral coherence to meet the needs of our country beneficiaries is more important than ever before.

- **Global Public Goods.** Growth in web-based products and services helps ITC better exploit its expertise in the provision of globally available solutions in trade intelligence and e-learning.

We intend to develop deeper and more customized solutions in order to address changing client needs.
We will be continuing our deliberations over the summer months to keep pace with the reform agenda of the UN Secretary-General and the General Assembly. We have already heard from many of you, but we are keen to have as full a public debate as possible on ITC going forward.

Please send your contributions to strategicplan@intracen.org by 15 September 2017.

I hope that you will respond to this call to action and make your voice heard.

Arancha González,

Executive Director, International Trade Centre

4 July 2017
At the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015, all members of the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the 2030 Development Agenda, entitled ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’. During a three-year consultative process, the UN’s 193 member states and civil society constructed a shared global vision to pursue three intersecting pillars of economic, environmental and social development. The 2030 Agenda was developed to mobilize action and commit every country towards ending poverty, safeguarding the environment, and building prosperous, peaceful, and inclusive societies. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specify a framework of 17 interlinked goals and 169 targets to be achieved by 2030.

International trade is explicitly recognized as one of the means to achieve the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda notes that “International trade is an engine for inclusive economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction, and contributes to the promotion of sustainable development”. It also recognizes the role of the private sector “as a partner in development, and a major driver of productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation.”

The 2030 Agenda therefore frames the new International Trade Centre (ITC) strategy. As the joint technical cooperation arm of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), ITC is the only multilateral agency fully dedicated to supporting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to realize their international trade potential.

Globally, small businesses represent more than 90% of all enterprises and over 70% of employment opportunities. Evidence shows that MSMEs integrated into global markets are more productive than MSMEs that do not participate in international trade. ITC contributes to economic growth and employment (SDG 8) by assisting MSMEs to connect to international value chains with products that meet internationally recognized standards in an open, equitable, rules-based trade environment (SDGs 17, 10).

Since development gains are not always equally distributed, ITC works with women (SDG 5), young people, and marginalized groups (SDGs 1, 4) to empower them through entrepreneurship and business skills that provide gateways to self-employment and enterprise creation. It targets sectors that provide employment opportunities at scale for these groups and helps them benefit from international trade and investment.

International business opportunities for MSMEs, with the potential of triggering positive contributions to other SDGs, exist in the agricultural, manufacturing and services sectors (SDGs 2, 9, 12). ITC supports producers to move up the value chain and increase their incomes sustainably. It works with trade and investment support institutions to help enterprises build capacity and meet private and public sustainability standards, and with
policymakers to ensure that policies and strategies facilitate trade and reflect business interests, and are pro-poor and gender-inclusive (SDGs 1, 8, 16).

The UN development system, WTO and ITC as well as other multilateral, bilateral and non-state development actors share responsibility for supporting countries to achieve the SDGs.

ITC is well-positioned, working within its mandate, to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to ensure that inclusive economic development contributes to sustainable peace and prosperity.

WTO decisions, including those stemming from its last Ministerial Conference in Nairobi 2016 will also guide the work of ITC.
2 TRADE LANDSCAPE

The global trade landscape continues to change. The concept of sustainability is central to preserving our planet and improving the quality of people’s lives. A growing young population means there are more entrants into the workforce who need decent work. A larger share of the world’s population now live in cities which brings productive opportunities as well as challenges for an adequate provision of infrastructure. It increases the need for provincial and municipal involvement in national decision-making. Refugees and economic migrants also place burdens unequally on countries, many of which are themselves coping with the effects of conflicts, poverty and natural disasters.

The trade landscape is also changing. Changes in the trade landscape will shape ITC’s strategy moving forward:

2.1 Trade and Globalization
- Multilateralism is under stress.
- Anti-globalization sentiments persist in many parts of the world.
- Trade acts as a focus for perceived negative consequences of globalization.

2.2 New Trade Routes
- New geographic trade routes are opening which reflect the growing importance of South-South trade and investment flows.
- Global and intra-regional value chains create both threats and opportunities for domestic enterprises.
- Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) are increasingly impeding trade for exporters and importers.
- International online sales are increasing important.
- Global tourism brings opportunities to MSMEs for reaching foreign buyers in home markets.

2.3 Technological Progress
- The speed of change of the fourth industrial revolution has no historical precedent.
- Technology and digitization are disrupting entire systems of production and consumption.
- Access to technology is unequal, both in countries and among countries.
- Explosion in digital services and more broadly the services trade.
2.4 Sustainable Production and Consumption
- Renewable energy technologies (e.g. solar panels) are more cost-competitive.
- Certified products and services for ethical and green practices are increasingly demanded.
- Increased demand for traceability and transparency in supply chain.
- A negative perception of trade with respect to the environment (e.g. on equity and climate) continues.
- Rise of the informed consumer with preference for sustainable products.

2.5 Global Entrepreneurship
- Demographic changes are impacting entrepreneurship.
- Women and youth-owned enterprises are more prominent.
- Entrepreneurship is undertaken by migrants and refugees.
- More enterprises are born global and are web-based.

Rapid advances in environmental technologies are creating new markets in environmental products driven by the purchasing power of better informed consumers.

The routes to decent work will increasingly mean self-employment, requiring new skills in entrepreneurship, innovation and capacity to engage in with global online marketplaces.

1 Trade landscape. Are there other trends or factors that will shape the strategic landscape for trade and investment over the next two to four years?

2 MSME competitiveness. What are the key competitiveness factors that will impact MSMEs’ ability to compete and connect to markets that ITC should address?
3 DEVELOPMENT LANDSCAPE

The landscape for trade development solutions is evolving rapidly. There is a growing recognition that private and public sector cooperation is essential to make trade work better for economic and social development. The routes to public-private cooperation are, however, not always clear. All development actors will need to exploit their comparative advantages, and collaborate when needed. New country coordination mechanisms are being demanded to ensure that country beneficiaries are full owners of development cooperation.

3.1 Advanced Data and Diagnostics

Funders and stakeholders are using advanced data analytics to make better resource allocation decisions. The application of diagnostics by all development actors will grow to improve needs assessments, analyse cross-sectoral problems, improve targeting of assistance, and report on results. Using trade intelligence in the spirit of prevention rather than cure envisages greater cooperation with national statistical authorities as well as national development agencies working inside and outside of trade circles.

3.2 Public-Private Partnerships

Earmarking severely limits the ability of developing agencies to deliver core support and adapt to a changing environment. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires a United Nations development system that is strategic, accountable, transparent, collaborative, efficient, effective and results-oriented, and that works in accord with the humanitarian and peace pillars. This is the agenda being championed by the UN Secretary-General.

Public Sector. The public sector is looking for value for money in its development assistance, focusing increasingly on funds which are earmarked for specific purposes.

Public-Private Partnership Platforms. New shared partnership platforms are emerging which combine services to achieve specific development outcomes. They open opportunities for leveraging development support with private sector contributions. Public projects addressing market failure are likely to explore more openly how impediments to private investment can be removed.

Private Sector. Doing good is often good for doing business. The private sector is motivated to invest in initiatives which lower risks and the cost of doing business. Multinational enterprises want supply chains that are reliable, yield quality products and are fit for purpose. At the same time the private sector as buyer, investor, provider of technical knowledge and funding can be powerful in leveraging public support.
3.3 Fragile States, Agribusiness, and the Informal Sector

Countries recovering from conflict stand a better chance of integrating back into the international community if they can generate decent work and export earnings for their citizens. The same countries which are plagued by conflict rely heavily on revenues from natural resource industries, including agriculture, to achieve economic growth. In all countries, ITC has witnessed an increased demand for interventions at the bottom of the pyramid to create jobs for at risk groups in the informal sector. Since agriculture employs a disproportionate number of women and young people, and is closely linked with environmental and nutrition goals, supporting greater value addition and connecting to markets can achieve multiple development objectives simultaneously. The services sector, with its fast growth, low barriers to entry and ability to absorb lower skilled labour, provides a good stepping stone for developing countries to compete and eventually expand services online.

3.4 National and Local Ownership of Results

Increasing efficiency of support on the ground requires alignment and better coordination of all actors in-country and creates a culture of genuine partnership with shared ownership of results.
4 OUR MISSION

ITC supports MSMEs in developing and transition economies to become more competitive and connect to international markets for trade and investment to generate opportunities, especially for women, young people and poor communities, and contribute directly to ten SDGs.

Mission

To foster inclusive and sustainable growth and development through trade and international business development

Goals

➢ To improve the international competitiveness of MSMEs in developing countries and economies in transition.

MSME international competitiveness is contingent on the decisions and actions of different actors: entrepreneurs and managers of MSMEs; policymakers and regulators; public and private trade and investment support institutions, including social enterprises; and private market partners such as buyers or investors.

ITC seeks to influence these four groups of decision makers to improve MSME international competitiveness leading to sustainable business transactions. Our intermediate goals are:

▪ Trade policymakers and regulators make the business environment more conducive to trade growth, integrating business interests in their decision-making.

▪ Trade and investment support institutions offer high quality, sustainable services that support MSME international competitiveness.

▪ MSMEs upgrade their products and services offering in line with market demand, social and environmental sustainability considerations.

▪ International market partners offer better opportunities for MSMEs from developing countries and transition economies to enter value chains.
Mission. Are there any elements that we are missing in our mission statement? What would you change?
5 CLIENT NEEDS

5.1 Understanding Client Needs

ITC has always built customized solutions jointly with local partners for each project intervention. While ITC’s target beneficiaries are MSMEs, our direct clients are usually government ministries of trade and commerce and trade and investment support institutions, which serve MSMEs. To ensure the effectiveness of our projects, all partners have to fully understand MSMEs’ needs. This is becoming even more important in the current fast-changing business and international trade environment.

ITC has developed a suite of relevant tools to better understand the challenges facing clients and tailor interventions to the specific context, which we plan to evolve further:

*Client Self-Assessment.* Increasingly, ITC tools feature online, easy to use self-assessment diagnostics in topics including international standards, enterprise competitiveness, and public-private dialogue. These tools can also potentially be used to identify and realize international markets opportunities.

*Expert Assessment.* Our experts work closely with the client providing mentoring and advisory services which is our typical way of offering in depth client service. We plan to bring in private sector market partners even more in our projects and programmes, and facilitate further the exchange of South-South and peer group expertise.

*Client Surveys.* ITC conducts client surveys to assess the changing needs of beneficiaries as well as to understand client satisfaction with ITC services. Additionally, ITC runs the SME Competitiveness Survey together with national trade and investment support institutions to assess and analyse the state of a country’s enterprise competitiveness. Additionally, ITC conducts SME surveys to assess and analyse the non-tariff impediments to trade. Over the period of the next strategic plan, we intend to make these surveys more granular, and aggregate the data in a unified database that can link to others.

*Country-led Diagnostics.* The UN Secretary-General’s vision, to strengthen the UN’s capacity to be a trusted advisor to governments, broadening options for partners as they seek solutions, calls for a culture of collaboration, results-orientation, and inclusive decision-making. ITC plans to contribute its expertise to support countries to develop national, sectoral and functional trade strategies, and to support a public-private dialogue with the business sector. These mechanisms allow all actors to work together, voice and understand their respective needs, and collectively decide on how to move forward. We will continue to engage in the development of the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), wherever governments see a role for trade-related technical assistance and need ITC’s expertise.
5.2 Responding to Client Needs

ITC has a global mandate and therefore needs to have universal reach. Its commitment, however, is to ensure that at least 80% of ITC interventions benefit least developed countries (LDCs), land-locked developing countries, small island developing states, small vulnerable economies, post-conflict states, and sub-Saharan Africa. A large number of ITC projects are implemented in the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), and we have an ongoing dialogue and close collaboration with the ACP Secretariat.

We plan to continue engaging with our clients through direct and indirect channels to provide trade and investment improvement services wherever our clients live and work. We intend to increase our presence on the ground, reflecting our anticipated engagement in larger and deeper country and regional interventions, and active participation in the delivery of the following services requested by national governments from UN country teams.

- **Globally accessible services.** These are known as global public goods. In practice, ITC serves clients worldwide, through publications, trade intelligence databases, webinars and e-learning courses.

- **Regional and country projects.** ITC designs and implements projects with and around each client, based on an initial needs assessment creating consensus on the plan through collaborative governance structures and monitoring of results. We will be deepening our engagement with countries and regions to address their specific needs.

- **Global, regional and national events.** Face-to-face meetings are essential to build trust and develop partner relationships. ITC hosts face-to-face events in Geneva, in regional hubs, and in country capitals to raise awareness, share knowledge and build skills. Examples of ITC flagship events include the World Export Development Forum (WEDF), the World Trade Promotion Forum (WTPO), Trade for Sustainable Development Forum (T4SD) and the SheTrades Global Vendors meeting.

- **Strategic advice.** In some situations, partners will be looking for impartial advice on specific questions. ITC will be offering its expertise and tools to support partners with alternative options to solve problems.

**Outreach.** What additional mechanisms would be useful to increase outreach of ITC services?
5.3 Delivering Value – ITC’s Six Practice Areas

MSMEs in developing countries and economies in transition face many challenges to grow and compete in international value chains. ITC’s comparative advantage is to offer a differentiated approach based on its long-term investment in global trade intelligence services and customized regional and country projects. ITC will be offering regional economic entities and national governments a comprehensive capacity to build trade enhancement programmes along the trade development value chain working at policy, strategy, institutional, enterprise and market levels.

On the basis of our consultations and the lessons learned from our programme work, we intend to maintain the six interrelated practice areas that we established together with you, when designing our current Strategic Plan. These are practice areas which we consider most relevant for MSME international competitiveness, and where ITC believes it has a comparative advantage. The first three areas of work do not only produce stand-alone results but are also integral building blocks for the other three focus areas.

**Trade and Market Intelligence.** Access to trade and market intelligence is essential to making informed policy, strategy and business decisions, and to identify market opportunities. But since information has a cost, governments and TISIs in developing and transition economies are often disadvantaged, as are MSMEs in comparison with large firms. Improving access to trade and market intelligence is a cross-cutting work area that supports all ITC goals.

Since its inception, ITC has been providing market intelligence. Over time, ITC has developed a suite of global public goods addressing trade flows, export potential assessments, tariffs, and private standards. We offer customized analyses as well as capacity building to design and deliver trade intelligence services to MSMEs. In addition we publish series documenting non-tariff impediments to trade.

During the next Strategic Plan period, we want to drill deeper and provide greater granularity of information – with regard to non-tariff measures, value chains, trade rules and standards and geographies. We also intend to integrate data sources across areas, and create customized regional and thematic portals to meet client requirements. We will continue to work with the WTO, UNCTAD and UN Secretariat to close the ‘data gap’ in the field of trade and development, through a clear division of labour drawing on our competitive advantage.

**Conducive Business Environment.** Enterprises’ competitiveness is influenced by policy and regulatory decisions, as well as the provision of public services. MSMEs usually do not have the choice to relocate or negotiate special conditions, and rely on the respective decision makers to consider their interests.

ITC brings to policymakers and regulators the voice of business through public-private dialogue. It supports trade negotiations for WTO acceding countries and ensures that policy and regulatory reforms facilitate trade transactions, which enable enterprises to compete. It also supports national governments and regional bodies to develop and implement inclusive trade strategies.
ITC envisages expanding its support to trade facilitation in a wider sense, including for the implementation of trade facilitation reforms, regulatory reforms for the trade logistics services sector, e-commerce and MSME cross-border trade. We will continue to build soft policy and strategy infrastructures and support the creation of mechanisms to implement national and regional trade strategies.

**Trade and Investment Support Institutions.** TISIs are gateway service providers to MSMEs. Strengthening the capacity of regional and national trade support networks is essential to ensure that MSMEs receive business and trade support, and benefit from advocacy.

ITC supports TISIs to assess and manage performance, develop clearer strategies, establish proven results measurement systems, strengthen networks and optimize the use of resources at their disposal.

ITC has developed a suite of customized services to address the needs of the ecosystem, including trade and investment promotion organizations, sector associations and membership-based business associations. Recent evaluations have emphasized the importance of long term engagements in institutional capacity building. ITC has responded with a client management system that combines long term engagement for a limited number of institutions, with substantial and adhoc engagements for a wider audience of beneficiaries, adapting delivery modalities to the level of its available resources.

**International Value Chains.** Eighty percent of world goods trade takes place within international value chains of which 60% are intermediate products. ITC focuses on sectors in which MSMEs are particularly active and can be competitive, and sectors in which women, youth and marginalized communities find greater employment opportunities. In many countries, these sectors are agriculture and agri-processing, light manufacturing, and services such as business process outsourcing and tourism.

ITC offers market-led solutions to help MSMEs provide differentiated, value-added products and services and capitalize on opportunities of e-trade. This focus area targets simultaneously an improvement of enterprise and sectoral capacities, the ecosystem in which they operate, and the linkages with buyers and investors in international value chains.

In 2018-2021, we intend to deepen the understanding of opportunities and competitiveness factors in new and rapidly changing value chains, help MSMEs adjust to new production and consumption patterns, and connect MSMEs to new markets including through online marketplaces.

**Regional Economic Integration and South-South Links.** Southern markets are the fastest growing markets in global trade. They offer opportunities for our clients, but come with specific trade obstacles. While growing infrastructure investments promise increases in trade, they do not necessarily lead to promised second tier investments that create jobs and upskill the workforce. MSMEs struggle with market access due to information problems, risk perceptions, competing trade regimes, market access standards as well as other institutional and physical trade barriers.

Strong trade and investment support institutions represent the building blocks for scaling up small business support……

…… in priority export sectors like agriculture, light manufacturing and services to make enterprises visible and active in online marketplaces.
ITC’s integrated regional interventions address trade and investment obstacles at policy, institution and enterprise level. ITC also connects TISIs and businesses within and between regions for trade, investment and technology transfer that works to the mutual benefit of all South-South market partners.

More opportunities exist, however, to deepen and widen regional integration and South-South partnerships on a bilateral and multilateral basis. In 2018-2021, ITC intends to expand its work on regional integration in Africa and on facilitating sustainable and socially responsible South-South investments; help enterprises take advantage of the evolving new trade routes; support successful Southern social entrepreneurship to export their business models; and strengthen platforms for South-South and intra-regional business and TISI networks.

Inclusive and Green Trade. Inclusive and green trade offers possibilities to help specific client groups benefit directly and immediately from trade, produce in a sustainable manner, and take advantage of market opportunities that arise from a new class of ‘conscious consumers’.

Women, youth, displaced persons and people in poor and marginalized communities need equal opportunities to find gainful employment and lead rewarding lives. ITC works with market partners, TISIs and enterprises to increase their opportunities.

ITC intends to build upon the SheTrades initiative for women vendors to ensure that the target of 1 million women can be connected to markets. The Poor Communities and Trade Programme will be expanded to a new group of artisanal products, agri-products, and new countries. The Trade for Sustainable Development Programme addresses trade-related challenges by working with MSMEs, cooperatives and policymakers to help conserve biodiversity and build resilience in agriculture. Through its Sustainability Map, T4SD helps farmers and producers understand voluntary sustainability standards, codes of conduct and audit protocols, and provides clear product traceability for consumers. ITC will deepen its work on sustainability and inclusiveness to expand opportunities for women and youth to connect to international value chains.

Priorities. How do you view ITC’s practice areas and planned work directions? How would you prioritize them?
6 PARTNERING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Partnerships are invaluable in fostering improved trade cooperation. Each partnership exists for a purpose, based on a mutually agreed value proposition. ITC values partners who can deliver with us on mutually shared objectives in relation to trade and the Sustainable Development Goals. These partners include UN agencies, other multilateral and bilateral development agencies as well as an increasingly diverse range of public and private sector partners like multinationals, private sector associations, development banks, professional bodies, non-governmental organizations, universities and foundations.

We have proactively expanded our partnerships over the past biennia, but we intend to intensify these efforts to better leverage access to knowledge, expertise, funding and local networks.

6.1 Technical Partnerships

Technical partnerships provide ITC with access to knowledge and expertise. ITC partners with a core group of international trade agencies with whom we share complementary mandates and target audiences. This includes our two parent organizations, WTO and UNCTAD, as well as other agencies working in the domains of decent work and entrepreneurship (ILO), industrialization (UNIDO), private sector (UN Global Compact), agriculture (FAO), tourism services (UNWTO) and intellectual property and green technology (WIPO).

Company partners whether they are global lead firms or start-ups, have the potential to stimulate innovation and act as gateways to global value chains. Improved business processes, greater network power and higher engagement of MSMEs in global supply chains are all benefits from working more closely with multinational enterprises. Existing engagements with companies like Bosch, DHL and Nestlé have yielded good results.

Academic partnerships give ITC access to the best thinking from thought leaders and stimulate ideas to solve trade development challenges. Universities help to build South-South and triangular co-operation in trade education and training by building faculties, constructing new course curricula, structuring fellowships, collaborating on research papers, and incubating entrepreneurs.
6.2 Funding Partnerships

Traditional funding is changing so that funding for ITC programmes is often managed by agencies which have dual technical and financing roles. Tendering for development assistance projects has become a more frequent practice. Securing longer term, unearmarked financing for rapidly responding to country requests, innovation and development activities remains a challenge and part of our strategy will be to create new partnership platforms that provide discretionary funding tied to development outcomes.

6.3 Network Partnerships

Just as ITC is a network of networks, we work with global apex bodies like the International Standards Organization (ISO) to convene stakeholders that share an interest in our work in specific practice areas like public and private standards. At the regional level, we work with UN Regional Economic Commissions and regional trade groupings to cascade capacity building programmes at a regional level when they are more effective than individual country solutions. At the country and sub-national levels, we work through local partners.

Working with local partners secures local ownership and is also an efficient way to conduct business. Project functions which can be decentralized to the field should be delivered locally. This implies new ways of working with more emphasis on assessing partner suitability and monitoring for results.

6.4 Switzerland and International Geneva

ITC considers its location in Geneva a strategic asset where it has access to some of the best minds on world trade, digital governance and e-commerce, working in collaboration with the WTO, UNCTAD, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the World Economic Forum (WEF). In addition, public Swiss institutions and a vibrant Swiss private sector provide ITC with internationally recognized expertise in many areas of relevance to our work.

7 Partnerships. What are ITC’s strengths in engaging in partnerships, and where do you see room for improvement?

8 Private sector. Are there specific private sector actors with whom ITC should develop new or deeper partnerships?
7 MANAGING FOR RESULTS

ITC will advance its results-based management approach at corporate, programme and project level building on the progress it has achieved in the last three years. It will develop its human resource management planning to increase skills in large project management and continue to promote gender balance and diversity. Following our recent focus on innovation, ITC will continue to nurture a learning and innovation culture in the organization. All goals will be tracked, and supported through a systematic risk management plan.

7.1 Results-Based Management

During 2015-2017, ITC made significant strides towards addressing the independent evaluation recommendations to better mainstream Results-Based Management (RBM) into the organization. In the next period we will focus on:

**Strengthen Corporate Results Management and Further Increase Transparency.** An ITC Results Framework was approved, clearly identifying the linkages between outputs, intermediate outcomes and the organization’s contribution to the relevant SDG targets. Annual planning and reporting have been structured around a matching Corporate Scorecard. A new project portal was developed with an easy-to-use interface and strong information retrieval functions for project managers. ITC intends to comply with the results-based programme and project management standards in line with the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DECD) and the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standards for transparency in trade.

**Deliver Value for Money.** ITC will ensure a full costing of ITC’s operations. This will provide objective criteria for driving efficiencies.

**Deepen Evaluation of Results and Impact.** ITC will invest further in an impact measurement tool for TISIs, which will serve both the individual organization and ITC. The SME Competitiveness Survey will be expanded to a larger group of client countries, and serve as a large-scale baseline to measure improvements in SME competitiveness. The Independent Evaluation Unit will continue to choose subjects for evaluation on behalf of the organization based on strategic learning opportunities and risks.
7.2 Human Resource Management

ITC is entering the age of the lean organization where workforce planning is essential to identify the talents and skills required for project-based work while maintaining sufficient core skills in key technical and administrative functions. We will focus on:

**Leadership Development.** We will establish a performance-driven culture throughout the organization including using 360 degree feedback disciplines.

**Talent Management.** Staff development and key talent management practices will be strengthened to ensure that staff possess the skills required, particularly in large project management, and that key talent is retained. We will continue to mainstream gender and seek diversity in the composition of our workforce to provide an inclusive, positive work environment.

**Human Resource Partnerships.** Fellowships, staff exchanges, job sharing and secondments are all useful routes to sharing expertise with a diverse range of partners. ITC intends to expand these partnerships.

7.3 Resource Mobilization

We continue to believe that funders will see the merit of investing in projects where demand exists and where ITC can deliver at scale. ITC will continue to make the case for securing unearmarked funding for activities which lead to new products, processes and the maintenance of core capacities to deliver. A balanced project portfolio across size of project and source of funding enables the organization to be present in important fields of work where it has a comparative advantage.

Our resource mobilization strategy will be updated to:

**Diversify Funding Sources.** Diversifying the sources of funding and resources, including with private sector funding and in-kind contributions, will remain an important thrust in the ITC strategy.

**Foster Multi-stakeholder Partnership Platforms.** It is clear that our country partners as well as our funders are looking for reduced duplication of efforts and well-conceived development value chains. The drive for efficiencies needs to build on multi-stakeholder partnerships for the purposes of making trade development assistance more accessible. The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and the new Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF) all provide best practice in this area.
7.4 Learning and Innovation

During the period of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 ITC will continue to foster in-house learning and innovation. In 2017, ITC officially launched its own Innovation Lab, which will actively support internal development and build external partnerships.

**Knowledge Management Framework.** A knowledge management strategy will be completed to better capture lessons learned across all areas of the Strategic Plan. The process will support an organizational culture that instills a spirit of continual examination and reflection on project performance.

**Innovation Lab.** ITC’s Innovation Lab will continue cooperation, where relevant, with innovation partners like the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, other faculties of the University of Geneva and the Canton of Geneva to promote scalable development solutions. ITC will also actively engage with the United Nations Office in Geneva’s Innovation Lab on the Sustainable Development Goals.

7.5 Risk Management

There are risks associated with achieving each objective of the organization, such as risk of non-delivery against mandate, reputational risk, staff health, safety and security, legal risks associated with procurement and sub-contracting, financial risks vis-à-vis funding and cashflow, to name just a few.

Building on the risk framework developed in 2017, in parallel with the development of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, risks concerning all key results areas of the Strategic Plan will be monitored at the corporate level. Furthermore, a specific focus will be on providing corporate support for the mitigation of risks in projects in conflict and post-conflict countries and benchmarking of the ITC risk management framework against best practice in the UN and beyond.

9 Corporate management. Do you have any other priorities at the level of managing the organization?

10 Resource mobilization. How can ITC be more effective in bringing forward robust proposals which justify investment from potential funders?
Join us on our journey.  
Make your voice heard.

Send your feedback to 
strategicplan@intracen.org 

The consultation period is open  
until 15 September 2017.
ABOUT ITC

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the only development agency that is fully dedicated to supporting the internationalization of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

This means that the agency enables MSMEs in developing and transition economies to become more competitive and connect to international markets for trade and investment, thus raising incomes and creating job opportunities, especially for women, young people, and poor communities.

Established in 1964, ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.