



# Competitive Intelligence

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## IN BRIEF

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The ITC Competitive Intelligence (CI) Programme delivers training, advice and online solutions to strengthen the capacity of trade and investment support institutions (TISIs) to gather and distribute to clients customized intelligence about their competitive environment. It assists small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to define their information needs and use the information to identify opportunities and anticipate risks.

## THE PROBLEM AND ITC SOLUTION

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TISIs, policymakers and SMEs in developing countries are at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their counterparts in advanced economies in their ability to access trade intelligence. While access to a vast range of online content is possible, accessing content that has a direct impact on an enterprise's capacity to compete internationally is difficult to obtain for most SMEs.

To address these challenges and bridge the trade intelligence gap, the CI programme supports TISIs

and SMEs, including via e-learning, in monitoring their competitive environments, setting up online intelligence tracking solutions and creating trade intelligence portals. Effective and timely dissemination of the right content to the right audience is an integral part of any value-adding competitive intelligence service offered by a TISI. As such, the programme builds the capacity of SMEs and TISIs to identify and collect the intelligence they need and to anticipate opportunities, threats and risks.

## IMPACT

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Examples of ITC's work in this area include:

### [Creating a cotton trade monitoring cell and information portal for UEMOA](#)

ITC has set up a facility and trained staff within the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) Commission to monitor, compile and disseminate online intelligence required by cotton producers and traders for a more sustainable business. The project – Coordination

of African Regional Cotton Sector Strategies Implementation – was featured in a France 24 TV programme, in French, English and Arabic, in March 2015.

### [The Zimbabwe European Business Information Centre](#)

ITC is assisting Zimbabwe's national trade promotion organization, ZimTrade, to redesign its trade intelligence portal and create the first Zimbabwe European Business

Information Centre (Zim-EBIC), a physical centre and an online platform to facilitate trade between local SMEs and the European Union and this takes advantage of the recently concluded EU- Zimbabwe Economic Partnership Agreement.

### The Malawi Trade Information Portal

The Malawi Investment and Trade Centre (MITC) launched its first ever Trade Information Portal in November 2015: the MITC Trade Information Portal is a web-based platform designed and developed by ITC in partnership with MITC. It provides an authoritative 'one-stop shop' of readily accessible trade information for Malawian businesses. At the launch, MITC's Chief Executive Officer explained how the portal was purposefully designed to "significantly reduce the financial and time cost that has for so long restricted trade between Malawian producers and the rest of the world."

### ITC's online guide to the 'next generation' trade intelligence portals

ITC has developed an online guide for the 'next generation' of trade intelligence portals (TIPs), with input from trade institutions and experts around the world. It provides a repository of best practices, video case studies and tutorials, and a step-by-step review of the ten critical elements making up a sustainable portal, both in terms of content and the related services it can bring to the business community. This online guide embodies a shift away from providing single pieces of trade information towards an integrated, customizable, competitive intelligence solution. The guide is the principal mechanism for aggregating and disseminating online all trade information content and services offered by a trade support institution.