

There are no translations available.

Market intelligence tools have become extremely popular in recent times, with many initiatives that have been launched by individual States, regional organizations and intergovernmental bodies to simplify market research, by offering traders, researchers and analysts meaningful, useful information for business analysis purposes. Their characteristic is that they integrate trade and business information into one user-friendly, online tool that aggregates information from diverse sources about the markets in which companies want to do business, including information on market access, border procedures, trade statistics and usage of trade preferences. With the globalization of world markets and development of value chains, trade information and data analysis is increasingly important in understanding the dynamics of world trade.

At global level, a useful market intelligence tool is the International Trade Centre (ITC) [Market Access Map](#), a free analytical portal that allows users to access, compare, analyse and download customs tariffs, tariff-rate quotas, trade remedies and non-tariff measures applicable to a specific good in any market in the world. More recently ITC, UNCTAD and the WTO launched the [Global Trade Helpdesk](#) (GTH), an electronic platform that aims to simplify market research for companies, particularly Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), that often lack the resources and skills to acquire and process trade-related information.

In Africa, in May 2019 the African Union officially launched the [African Trade Observatory](#) (ATO), a platform that provides updated and reliable data to inform business and policy decisions and to monitor the implementation process of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and its impact. At sub-regional level, different Regional Economic Communities have adopted similar tools. Examples are the

[Regional Trade Information Portal](#)

of the East African Community, which is linked with national trade portals in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, and the

[ECOWAS Trade Information System](#)

(ECOTIS), a centralized portal that provides easily accessible, timely and relevant trade related information and intelligence for informed business decisions, policy formulation and academic research. At national level, trade portals have been developed, among others, by

[Zambia](#)

, [Cameroon](#)

, [Nigeria](#)

,

[Morocco](#)

,

[South Africa](#)

and many other African countries.

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in partnership with UPS, TRALAC and West Blue Consulting, recently developed a new initiative called “ [eTrade Hubs portal](#) ”, that provides timely information, a knowledge zone, as well as trade management tools relating to export, transit and import operations in the State parties of the AfCFTA. The portal makes available online all the documents, licenses, permits, certificates, together with the fees to be paid in destination countries and other relevant trade information which is useful for the trading community. The portal includes a Tariff Classification Tool that helps users find their specific tariff code with intelligent search functions. The related tariff line, Most Favored Nation (MFN) duties, preferential rates of duties and all the detailed trade requirements can be accessed through the platform, that also offers an estimate of the duties and levies applicable to goods in the import markets.