



ITC and DHL renew partnership to help small businesses trade

Geneva, September 16, 2026: The International Trade Centre (ITC) and DHL today signed a memorandum of understanding to deepen their long-standing collaboration supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly women-led businesses, to trade across borders.

The agreement combines ITC's expertise in market intelligence, SME development and inclusive trade with DHL's global logistics network and technical expertise. SMEs account for around 90% of businesses globally, provide roughly 70% of employment and contribute 70% of global GDP, making them play a critical role in driving growth and job creation, yet many continue to face barriers to participating fully in international trade. This partnership aims to strengthen the ecosystem of support that helps businesses overcome those barriers and access new opportunities.

Under the agreement, ITC and DHL will:

- Support small businesses with cross-border trade, covering exports, supply chains and logistics;
- Work with business support organizations and ITC SheTrades Hubs to improve their services for small and women-led businesses;
- Advocate for small businesses and women entrepreneurs in global discussions and at high-level events, as well as among private sector organizations and government agencies.

Over the past decade, ITC and DHL have worked together through [DHL GoTrade](#), [ITC SheTrades](#), and the [ITC ecomConnect](#) programme, reaching small businesses across more than 60 countries across Africa, ASEAN, Latin America and the Caribbean. The partnership has combined training with tailored support, including shipping assistance for SMEs and women-led businesses, and has extended to advocacy and high-level dialogue that amplifies the voice of small businesses in global trade discussions. In July 2025, DHL took part as a private-sector champion at ITC's inaugural [Global SME Ministerial Meeting](#) in Johannesburg, South Africa.

ITC Executive Director Pamela Coke-Hamilton said: 'For small businesses, the main challenge is not in creating quality products for customers, but getting it to them. That's why we're deepening our work with DHL to help more small businesses, particularly women-led businesses, to overcome last-mile



logistics barriers and reach new markets, and to ensure their perspectives are heard at decision-making tables.’

Hennie Heymans, CEO, DHL Express Sub-Saharan Africa, said: ‘SMEs are the backbone of economies worldwide, yet their participation in international trade remains disproportionately low. The challenge is rarely a lack of ambition. More often, businesses need access to knowledge, finance, digital capabilities and logistics support. That is why partnerships like this matter. By bringing together the right partners, we can build the ecosystems that help businesses grow with confidence, reach new customers and unlock the opportunities that international trade creates.’

About the ITC and DHL partnership

DHL and ITC have partnered since 2016 to advance inclusive trade. Results to date include:

- **DHL GoTrade:** Since 2021, projects launched in more than 60 countries, reaching over 26,000 SMEs and 8,000 women-owned businesses through training on logistics, e-commerce and trade.
- **ITC SheTrades:** Since 2018, ITC SheTrades and DHL have worked together to provide technical assistance, logistics know-how and shipping solutions to women-led businesses, reaching over 4,000 women-led businesses across 60 countries. The partnership has increasingly worked through local ecosystems, engaging SheTrades Hubs in Kenya, South Africa, Mauritius and Trinidad and Tobago to connect women-led businesses with DHL country offices, relevant expertise and opportunities.
- **ITC ecomConnect:** Between 2020 and 2024, connected more than 400 SMEs with DHL support, including preferential shipping arrangements that cut costs by up to 60% in selected markets.

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You can find the press release for download as well as further information on group.dhl.com/pressreleases

Press release

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DHL – The logistics company for the world

DHL is the leading global brand in the logistics industry. Our DHL divisions offer an unrivaled portfolio of logistics services ranging from national and international parcel delivery, e-commerce shipping and fulfillment solutions, international express, road, air and ocean transport to industrial supply chain management. With approximately 389,000 employees in more than 220 countries and territories worldwide, DHL connects people and businesses securely and reliably, enabling global sustainable trade flows. With specialized solutions for growth markets and industries including technology, life sciences and healthcare, engineering, manufacturing & energy, auto-mobility and retail, DHL is decisively positioned as “The logistics company for the world”.

DHL is part of DHL Group. The Group generated revenues of approximately 82.9 billion euros in 2025. With sustainable business practices and a commitment to society and the environment, the Group makes a positive contribution to the world. DHL Group aims to achieve net-zero emissions logistics by 2050.

About ITC SheTrades – The SheTrades Initiative is the International Trade Centre's flagship women and trade programme. It works with women, business support organizations, policymakers and value chain actors to strengthen the people, ecosystems, and policies that enable women to participate in and benefit from trade.

For more information, please visit SheTrades.com: www.shetrades.com



About ITC – The International Trade Centre is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. ITC assists small and medium-sized enterprises in developing and transition economies to become more competitive in global markets, thereby contributing to sustainable economic development within the frameworks of the Aid-for-Trade agenda and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information, visit www.intracen.org.

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