



Digital Attaché Program

The Digital Attaché Program promotes and defends U.S. digital commercial interests with Commercial Officers in multiple target markets.



Digital Attache Program

Why is the Digital Economy Important?

The digital economy offers great opportunities but challenges too. In 2014, the United States exported roughly \$400 billion in digitally-deliverable services, accounting for more than half of U.S. services exports. All goods and services sectors, from consumer goods to smart cars are increasingly benefiting from a global digital economy. Governments around the world are increasingly pursuing protectionist policies that could restrict the free flow of information on the Internet. These rules, such as data localization requirements, present significant risks to the competitiveness of U.S. firms globally. For many digital economy and Internet companies, dealing with these potential regulatory and trade barriers, and advice on how best to enter new markets is the kind of export assistance they really need.

What Can the Digital Attaché Program Do for You?

As the U.S. Government's leading advocate for business, a priority of the U.S. Department of Commerce and the International Trade Administration specifically is ensuring that all U.S. companies have access to the digital economy and can reach global markets. To further this goal, the Department, through the Commercial Service arm of the International Trade Administration, designated an expert network of "Digital Trade Officers" in its offices in U.S. embassies in 16 markets to help U.S. firms increase international market access, and overcome regulatory or policy challenges.

Responsibilities of the Digital Trade Officers include assistance in helping U.S. companies increase exports, access the global online marketplace, and navigate digital economy policy challenges. Digital Trade Officers provide significant leadership in-country, including valuable issue expertise.

- Digital Trade Officers are charged with assisting U.S. companies abroad through a number of official performance measures, including success in commercial diplomacy, trade barriers addressed, and the number of U.S. clients assisted. As part of these responsibilities, the officers work with U.S. companies and officials in foreign markets.
- ITA's Commercial Service currently has more than 128 commercial offices located in U.S. Embassies and Consulates in more than 75 countries focused on leveling the playing field for U.S. companies exporting abroad.
- The mission of the Commercial Service is to promote U.S. exports, market access for U.S. companies abroad, and inward investment into the U.S.

Where Are the Digital Trade Officers?

The Digital Attaché Program began in March 2016 and initially started out as a six-month pilot program that concluded in September 2016. The program identified existing Commercial Service Officers in six target markets serving as Digital Trade Officers. The six pilot markets included four countries and two regions: Brazil, China, India, Japan, ASEAN, and the EU. In December 2017, the Program was expanded into six new markets: South Korea, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, Germany, and France. Markets were selected based on stakeholder feedback and internal evaluation for their potential for the program. We currently have Digital Trade Officers in 16 markets: EU, Egypt, Japan, ASEAN/Singapore, India, China, Brazil, France, Germany, South Africa, South Korea, Mexico, Indonesia, Vietnam, United Kingdom, and the UAE.

What is the Commerce Department Leadership Role?

In the U.S. Government, the Department of Commerce plays a critical role in advancing the digital economy, drawing on the expertise of its bureaus working on trade, standards, and emerging technologies, the free flow of information, intellectual property, privacy, cybersecurity, and Internet policy. The Digital Attaché Program is part of the Department of Commerce's comprehensive effort to promote the digital economy and better meet the U.S. industry's current and future needs. Efforts are closely coordinated with the State Department's Digital Economy Officers Program in support of U.S. Digital Economy companies globally.

This program is led by the Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration, working with bureaus across the Department of Commerce, in collaboration with the Department of State and industry stakeholders. Digital Trade Officers bring to bear the expertise offered across the Department, including NIST, NTIA, and ITA. Their training is coordinated through the ITA's Office of Digital Initiatives, with assistance from agencies and bureaus across the Commerce Department.

In parallel, the ITA's eCommerce Innovation Lab in Silicon Valley helps direct U.S. companies needing assistance to the relevant Digital Attaches in each market. Because of the increasing reach of digital technology, the Digital Trade Officers collaborate closely with other embassy staff involved in digital economy issues.