

## SPOTLIGHT

### Global ICT Excellence Awards 2021: Call for Nominations



The World Information Technology and Services Alliance is excited to announce the 2021 WITSA Global ICT Excellence Awards program! The Global ICT Excellence Awards will be presented in conjunction with the [WCIT 2021](#), to be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from November 11-14, 2021.

The Awards will be presented to select individuals, academic institutions, corporations, NGOs or governments whose use and applications of digital technologies exhibit exceptional achievement within the following broad categories:

Private Sector/NGO	Public Sector
Digital Opportunity/Inclusion Award	Digital Opportunity/Inclusion Award
Smart Cities Award	Smart Cities Award
Sustainable Growth/Circular Economy Award	Sustainable Growth/Circular Economy Award
Innovative eHealth Solutions Award	Innovative eHealth Solutions Award
Public/Private Partnership Award	Public/Private Partnership Award
E-Education & Learning Award	E-Education & Learning Award
Emerging Digital Solutions Award	Startup Ecosystem Award

In addition, a *Chairman's Award* will be presented to a nominee selected from the entire pool of candidates from all award categories.

Members are invited to nominate up to three candidates in each award category. **The deadline for forwarding the nominees to WITSA is September 1, 2021!** Please send your nominations to Anders Halvorsen at [ahalvorsen@witsa.org](mailto:ahalvorsen@witsa.org) as well as Molly Poisant at [molly@witsa.org](mailto:molly@witsa.org) at your earliest opportunity and do not hesitate to let us know if you have any questions.

We encourage all WITSA members to participate in our 2021 Global ICT Excellence Awards Program; its success will be a direct result of our members submitting high-quality nominations. All members are urged to begin the process of nominating candidates immediately. The Awards will give your member companies an opportunity to give their "best customers" the recognition they deserve, but will also benefit your association as well as provide a valuable addition to the Congress program. Previously submitted nominations may be re-nominated, provided information is updated as appropriate.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

[View Nominations form and additional  
details](#)

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**WCIT NEWS**



11-14 November 2021  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

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The World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) is one of the largest & most prestigious ICT events in the world. It features discussions related to the evolution of the digital age. WCIT is a signature event of the World Information Technology & Services Alliances

(WITSA), a consortium of information and communication technology. The congress will include sessions on topics ranging from the artificial intelligence, virtual reality, smart cities, to cyber security, climate change and more.

## WHY ATTEND IN THIS EVENT

### WORLD-CLASS GLOBAL PROGRAM

One-of-a-kind event to attend and shape the conversation around our Digital Future and discuss the outcomes that the information and communications technologies have in our lives.

### UNIQUE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

An exceptional window to expand your network and shape new business opportunities within a group of global leaders.

### DISCOVER BEAUTIFUL BANGLADESH

An exquisite opportunity to explore Bangladesh's rich culture, sublime nature, delicious cuisine, and innovative tech community.

[www.wcit2021.org.bd](http://www.wcit2021.org.bd)

[facebook.com/wcit2021bd/](https://facebook.com/wcit2021bd/)

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2021

## PUBLIC POLICY

### Members Asked to Participate in WITSA's Global Policy Action Committee Meeting

The past year has been challenging for the ICT industry, as it has been for society at large. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital technologies in general, but also several vulnerabilities across the

world. As WITSA looks at its priorities and activities for 2021, it is clear that digital transformation and resilience will remain a key focus and a baseline for our planned activities.

**All members are kindly invited to participate in a call of the WITSA Global Policy Action Committee (GPAC) on Tuesday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:00AM EDT** (time-zone conversions available [here](#)) in order to finalize WITSA's policy plan for the current year. Kindly let Anders Halvorsen at [ahalvorsen@witsa.org](mailto:ahalvorsen@witsa.org) know at your earliest convenience if you or someone from your association can participate in our call. You are also encouraged to send any comments or suggestions in advance of our call. Call-in details will be provided shortly.

WITSA recently concluded its *2021 Membership Survey*, where public policy was a central theme. Public policy continues to be the top priority for WITSA members and developing high-level policy papers that enhance WITSA's stature as the global voice for the ICT industry and that supports our members' own advocacy outreach remain the number one value requested from WITSA.

Unsurprisingly, cyber-security, data protection and privacy, as well as issues related to digital transformation and solutions to navigate a post-COVID-19 world were the top concerns among our membership. WITSA has already done some significant work in these areas (see our policy reports at <https://witsa.org/statement-resolution/>), and we will consider what new initiatives should be undertaken this year through our *Global Policy Action Committee*. Other policy issues that ranked high among our membership include the *Global Skills Gap* and the *Future of Work*, challenges related to international trade, restrictions on the *Free Flow of Data Across Borders*, ensuring a better representation of women in the ICT sector as well as inclusion of people with disabilities, supporting a new e-commerce agreement at the World Trade Organization, and continued challenges to the multistakeholder approach to Internet governance.

*More than two-thirds of respondents expressed an interest in participating in our Global Policy Action Committee (GPAC)*; a good sign that members are willing to help WITSA improve its successes in this area. Members also pointed out several ways WITSA can better assist them in the area of public policy. In order to maximize its impact and build its brand, WITSA should consider more engagement with similar-minded organizations by collaborating on issues of mutual concerns such as by co-signing multi-association letters of global interest. WITSA has traditionally been open to such activities and have recently co-signed letters related to the ongoing Geneva e-commerce agreement negotiations, our work with the multi-association Digital Trade Network (DTN) initiative, and UNCTAD's eTrade for All initiative. WITSA has also signed a number of Memorandums of Understanding (MoU's) with global partner organizations, to include the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). Through GPAC, we will continue to explore how we can continue to expand our outreach and build partnerships.

Respondents also urged WITSA to improve its sharing of information and best practices among the membership and to consider creating regional policy task forces and a roundtable to share best practices among regions. Finally, WITSA was asked to explore opportunities to provide better benchmarking capabilities and access to top practitioners.

All members interested in public policy are invited to participate on a call on April 27<sup>th</sup> to finalize WITSA's policy action plan.

## **WITSA Calls for Partnerships with Governments to Connect the World**

The World Information Technology and Services (WITSA) on January 22<sup>nd</sup> published a statement of policy entitled "The Role of Government in Connecting the World - an Industry Perspective". The paper makes the case that, in a Digitally driven world economy, the need to fully join the Digital Age is no longer just a smart thing to do, -it is required for a nations' future. It is up to governments, in partnership with

industry and other stakeholders to shape e-commerce and the digital economy by adopting rules that favor the adoption of ICTs and economic growth. In many developing countries, this is an enormous challenge that will involve reforming existing policies, laws and regulations in many areas.

See the paper at <https://witsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/WITSA-The-Role-of-Government-in-Connecting-the-World-Report-2021.pdf> The press release is available at [https://witsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/WITSA\\_Connecting\\_the\\_World-PR\\_final.pdf](https://witsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/WITSA_Connecting_the_World-PR_final.pdf)

### **WITSA Seeks Collaboration with the European Union**

Following its letter to President Biden on January 20, WITSA on February 4<sup>th</sup> sent letters to Ambassador Mr. Stavros Lampranidis and Mr. Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President of the European Commission for Promoting the European Way of Life at the European Commission. WITSA expressed its desire to work with the EU in order to realize the Promise of the Digital Age to everyone -in the EU and around the world- and to reap the gains from participation in global markets and trade, to advance sustainable development, and to deliver benefits in the form of jobs and opportunities in Europe and beyond. These objectives should be pursued together as the EU moves to build forward better and stronger, in partnership with its allies worldwide.

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## MEMBER NEWS



### **WITSA's New Member: ATIC of Moldova**

Welcome to WITSA's new member, the Moldovan Association of ICT Companies (ATIC).

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### **WITSA's New Member: BTECH of Bahrain**

WITSA extends a warm welcome to our new member, the Bahrain Technology Companies Society (BTECH).

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## PARTNER NEWS

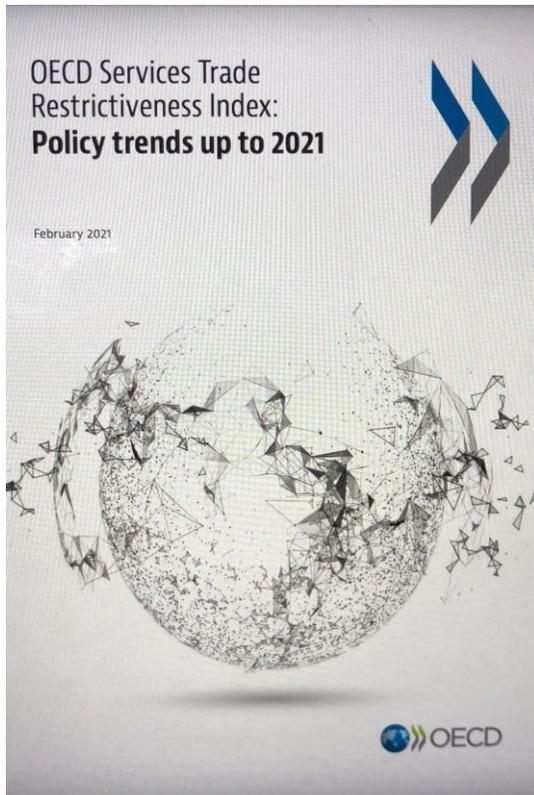


### **WITSA Signs Memo of Understanding with the Arab ICT Union**

On March 24, 2021, WITSA and AICTU signed a Memo of Understanding (MoU). The objective of this MoU is to explore, develop and collaborate on potential activities between AICTU and WITSA that mutually advance the missions of both organizations.

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### **OECD Services Trade Restrictiveness Index: Policy Trends Up to 2021**

This report highlights key outcomes of the 2020 OECD Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI Update). It seeks to inform the decisions of policy makers and regulators, convey transparent and accessible information to exporters, and supply a source of data for academic research and on drivers of and impediments to services trade.

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## UNCTAD: Keeping Gender Equality on the Agenda Beyond 8 March

UNCTAD Acting Secretary-General Isabelle Durant has launched a new initiative to ensure gender equality issues get the attention they deserve all year, not just on International Women's Day. Gender equality is a fundamental human right, necessary to build a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Yet it remains unachieved across societies. While International Women's Day is an occasion to celebrate women's achievements and highlight the remaining barriers on the road to gender equality, one day is insufficient.

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## ICANN71 to be Held as Virtual Policy Forum

The Board of Directors for the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) announced that ICANN71 will be held as a Virtual Public Meeting due to the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ICANN71 Policy Forum was scheduled to be held in The Hague, Netherlands, from 14-17 June 2021.

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## SECRETARIAT'S CORNER

### WITSA's Spring Board Meeting Held

The WITSA Board of Directors met virtually on Wednesday, March 24, 2021. Congratulations to ATIC of Moldova and BTECH of Bahrain who were voted in as new WITSA Members! WITSA also wishes to congratulate Mr. John Kyle who was re-elected as Regional Vice Chairman of the Caribbean. The WITSA Board will meet next in Dhaka, Bangladesh on November 10, 2021.

## WITSA Secretariat & Chairman's Highlight Report

In the last edition of WITSA News, we explored WITSA's relationship with UNCTAD. This edition, we take a look at WITSA's relationship with the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations.

You can read more about the WTO/WITSA relationship on page 14 of the report.

[Read the Full Report](#)

[Here](#)



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