



WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

WASME

WORLD SME NEWS

JULY 2023 / ISSN 0973-1261



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READERS' REVIEW



“ By utilizing their experience in technology, skills, market, and research, WASME is actually boosting SME internationally. They discuss the critical impact of cybersecurity on SMEs in their paper on the topic, noting steps made by both governments and other SMEs. It's a wealth of knowledge. ”

Ajang Goi, Kathmandu, Nepal

“ Insight from the case study is thorough and interesting. This business publication is targeted at small- and medium-sized business owners and independent contractors. This journal offers readers the chance to engage with a global network while also educating and introducing business owners to useful resources. ”

Niamma Jennie, Geneva, Switzerland

“ I've been a subscriber for a while, and because it's such a great magazine, I'm now pleased to contribute. As a reader, there is always something new to learn about new technology and many other topics because each issue covers so many different viewpoints. Particularly the Face to Face interview offers insightful information about the function of strategic business coaching for SMEs. ”

David Pamy, Bangkok, Thailand

“ Any SME may benefit greatly from World SME News. The Country and Industry Scans provide in-depth analyses of the Nigerian SME market and the technology developments in the telecoms sector. Overall it is offering readers interested in SME growth insightful information. Everyone who contributed to this book did a great job. ”

Harsh Tokas, Noida, India

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Connect with us

editor@wasmeinfo.org

wasme@wasmeinfo.org

91-120-4216283/6284

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FROM THE DESK OF SECRETARY GENERAL



Dr. Gyan Prakash Agarwal

Welcome to the July edition of the WASME newsletter!

WASME's mission is to promote the growth and advancement of the SME sector worldwide, recognizing its role as a key driver of economic development. In the backdrop of rising natural calamities catalysed by climate change, this issue focuses on responses adopted by SMEs in various sectors to mitigate the effects of climate change through adopting mechanisms for transition to clean energy. In our editorial, we discuss the impact of climate change on SMEs and highlight some of the best practices adopted by SMEs to reduce the impact of climate change.

In this edition, the guest article by Mr. Arvind Kumar Ojha, Founder, Quality and Technology Services brings attention to some of the sustainable practices being adopted by India in the food-processing sector, a sector highly prone to the adverse impact of climate change.

Our exclusive Face to Face interview features Mr. Abhilash Puljal, Trade Facilitation Strategy Advisor, World Bank. He talks about sustainable practices being adopted in organic farming in South African countries. His insights become ever so important for a sector which has been the most hard-hit due to climate change. Our Entrepreneur of the Month is Ms. Nnyone Victoria Achukwu, a Nigeria based confectioner and cake decorator. She talks about her inspiring journey to becoming a mompreneur and how the SME sector needs to refocus its attention on youth participation.

In this edition, our Country Focus segment is based on Uganda. We map Uganda's SME sector, highlight the major challenges currently being experienced by the sector, the important measures being taken by the government and share some of the key resources. Global Industry scan provides recent global trends in the food-processing industry which is witnessing a gradual shift towards clean energy.

We also bring to our readers recent United Nations related developments in UN Scan. WASME Updates provides news related to WASMEs activities over the previous month.

We hope that by reading this newsletter, our readers will gain valuable insights into the latest developments in the SME sector.

Happy reading!

WASME EDITORIAL

Role of SMEs in Adopting Green Technology to Lessen Effects of Climate Change

Introduction

Climate change has emerged as a significant factor influencing businesses today, presenting both opportunities and risks. Positive developments include the rise of the new green economy, characterised by low carbon, resource-efficient, and socially inclusive practices, as well as efficiency gains from decarbonization efforts. However, negative effects such as trade disruptions and supply chain vulnerabilities due to climate events impact businesses, including Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

While larger corporations have traditionally been seen as major greenhouse gas emitters, it is crucial to recognize that more than 80 percent of their emissions are linked to their supply chains. These supply chains often involve smaller enterprises, which play essential roles in product or service production within global value chains (GVCs). Although individual SMEs may not be significant carbon emitters, collectively, they represent about 90 percent of businesses worldwide, making them crucial contributors to achieving global decarbonization targets. As a result, addressing climate challenges in SMEs becomes paramount for overall sustainability efforts.

Key regulations for SMEs in the area of climate change

While there is no single global law that specifically targets SMEs in relation to climate change, there are several important international agreements and initiatives that have implications for businesses, including SMEs, to address climate

change. These agreements and initiatives set global frameworks and standards for climate action, which can impact SMEs' operations and sustainability practices.

Paris Agreement: Adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement is a landmark international treaty aimed at limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees Celsius. It calls on all countries, including developed and developing nations, to take climate action, which can influence domestic policies and regulations that affect SMEs.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Goal 13 of the SDGs focuses on climate action and aims to "take urgent action to combat climate



change and its impacts." This goal encourages businesses, including SMEs, to integrate climate-friendly practices into their operations and contribute to global efforts to address climate change.

UN Global Compact: The UN Global Compact is a voluntary initiative that encourages businesses to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies. One of its principles focuses on supporting environmental responsibility, including actions to address climate change. SMEs can participate in this initiative and align their practices with the Compact's principles.

ISO 14001: This is an international standard for Environmental Management Systems (EMS). While it is not a law, many businesses, including SMEs, voluntarily adopt this standard to establish, implement, maintain, and continuously improve their environmental management systems. Compliance with this standard can enhance SMEs' environmental performance and resilience to climate change impacts.

National Climate Change Policies: Many countries have developed national climate change policies, which may include regulations and incentives that affect businesses, including SMEs. These policies

can involve carbon pricing mechanisms, renewable energy targets, energy efficiency mandates, and reporting requirements for greenhouse gas emissions.

Green Financing and Support Mechanisms: Various international and regional financial institutions offer green financing and support programs aimed at promoting climate-friendly projects and practices. SMEs can access these resources to fund initiatives that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Impact of climate change on SME operations

Climate change can have significant impacts on the operations of SMEs across various industries. These impacts can be diverse and complex, affecting different aspects of their business.

Business Disruptions: Extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and droughts, can disrupt SME operations by damaging infrastructure, disrupting supply chains, and causing temporary or long-term closures. These disruptions can lead to financial losses and reduced productivity.

Increased Costs: Climate change can lead to rising costs for SMEs. For example, more frequent and



intense weather events may require additional investments in disaster preparedness and resilience measures. Additionally, changes in weather patterns can affect the availability and cost of resources, such as water and energy, impacting production and operational costs.

Supply Chain Risks: SMEs often rely on global and interconnected supply chains. Climate-related disruptions, such as extreme weather events, sea-level rise, or agricultural impacts, can disrupt the supply of raw materials and components, leading to production delays or shortages.

Regulatory Compliance: As governments and international bodies take action to address climate change, SMEs may face new regulations and reporting requirements related to greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, waste management, and sustainable practices. Compliance with these regulations may require investments in technology and processes, impacting the bottom line.

Market and Customer Demands: Climate-conscious consumers and businesses are increasingly seeking products and services with a smaller environmental footprint. SMEs that fail to adapt to changing market demands may face reduced sales and market share.

Insurance Costs: Climate change-related risks, such as extreme weather events and natural disasters, may lead to higher insurance premiums for SMEs, particularly those operating in vulnerable areas.

Human Resources and Health Impacts: Extreme heat or other climate-related events can impact the health and productivity of SME employees, leading to increased absenteeism and decreased work efficiency.

Investment and Financing Challenges: Access to financing for SMEs may be affected as financial

institutions and investors consider climate-related risks in their decision-making processes. Businesses with inadequate climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies may face difficulties in obtaining loans or investments.

Reputation and Brand Image: SMEs that are perceived as environmentally irresponsible or not taking climate change seriously may face reputational damage, leading to reduced customer loyalty and investor confidence.

Bangladesh

Cyclone Sidr, exacerbated by climate change, had a profound impact on Bangladesh's SME sector, both directly and indirectly, as revealed by the government information cell. The cyclone resulted in significant income reductions for various industries: 24% in fisheries, 12.5% in poultry, and about 16% in cattle farming. Moreover, the business sector saw an average income decrease of 24%, with 4% experiencing an increase and the rest remaining unchanged. Approximately 4% of service holders also faced reduced income. Sidr's indirect effects led to property sales for 8% of households and 28% of agricultural land losses. The total damages amounted to nearly \$450 million.

Challenges faced by SMEs in adopting clean energy mechanisms

The transition to decarbonization and sustainable practices presents both opportunities and challenges for SMEs. Due to capital constraints and higher risk aversion, SMEs may be less motivated to react to climate events and implement efficiency changes compared to larger companies. For instance, smallholders in the agriculture sector may be hesitant to adopt lower-carbon, higher-yield practices due to their limited capacity to absorb potential failure.



Knowledge gaps can also pose compliance challenges for SMEs when new regulations are enacted, leaving them unaware of new requirements or adaptation methods. Limited capacity and skills may prevent SMEs, particularly those led by women or young people, from taking advantage of new opportunities. Currently, a significantly lower percentage of SMEs have made investments to reduce environmental risks compared to large firms, and only a fraction of SMEs have plans for decarbonization.

However, if SMEs do not embrace sustainability, they risk exclusion from value chains as large companies prioritise decarbonising their inputs and production. As key components in supply chains, SMEs' efforts are essential for large firms to achieve their decarbonization targets. For example, a substantial portion of carbon emissions for companies like PepsiCo originates from their suppliers, emphasising the interdependence between large corporations and SMEs in achieving climate goals.

Impact of adopting clean energy practices by SMEs

Decarbonization efforts present valuable opportunities for innovation and improved business

efficiency that businesses of all sizes can capitalise on. A survey conducted by the International Trade Centre (ITC) in 2021 revealed that over half of African firms reported positive outcomes from greening their companies. These benefits included improved product output and quality, access to new markets, reduced input costs, and better access to green finance.

While businesses may initially require capital to invest in more efficient appliances and lower-emission vehicles, the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that the long-term cost savings can significantly outweigh the initial expenses. Many of the necessary changes are already feasible and within reach. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2021, the global supply chains responsible for more than half of global emissions could reduce approximately 40 percent of those emissions through relatively easy and affordable changes that have marginal cost implications or yield increased efficiency.



Global SME best practices on mitigating climate change

Bhadrachalam Paperboard Plant – India

The Bhadrachalam Paperboard Plant has undertaken several eco-friendly initiatives to reduce its environmental impact. The plant effectively recycles fly ash, a byproduct from its boilers, by using it in the production of bricks, thus reducing waste and promoting sustainable practices. Through a dedicated social forestry program, the plant has distributed an impressive 313 million saplings, promoting the plantation of both Eucalyptus and Subabul trees across 74,427 hectares in Andhra Pradesh. This initiative aims to reclaim wastelands and contribute to environmental conservation. The plant is responsible for 60% of the carbon dioxide emissions from all ITC Units. To address this issue, the plant has significantly increased the utilisation of black liquor, a biomass waste generated during the pulping process, as fuel. By doing so, the plant minimises its reliance on fossil fuels and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Appointing climate expert – Morocco

In the semi-arid coastal region of Souss-Massa, Morocco, climate change impacts, including rising average temperatures, altered rainfall patterns, droughts, and sea level rise, are affecting the local environment. To address these challenges, several awareness raising workshops have been conducted, using real case studies to attract private sector companies to conduct individual climate risk assessments. As a result, business associations (CGEMs) and other multipliers have taken steps

to integrate climate resilience approaches at the national level within their regular programs, benefiting their 88,000 company members. This integration has been made possible by trained consultants who can effectively execute vulnerability assessments for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

The Climate Expert methodology follows a practical 4-step approach, providing working materials to assist companies in analysing climate change risks and identifying potential opportunities. By conducting cost-benefit analyses, the approach enables SMEs to develop robust adaptation strategies that can enhance their resilience to climate impacts and capitalise on emerging opportunities. This approach aims to empower businesses in the region to proactively address climate challenges and foster sustainable and climate-resilient practices.

Training of trainers (ToT) – Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, the Ministry of Industry is actively promoting the integration of climate risk management tools and training concepts into the standard training programs conducted by different training institutes under its supervision. To achieve this goal, the Ministry adopts a Training of Trainers (ToT) approach. The ToT sessions are conducted for resource persons and partner institutes, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver training to entrepreneurs, with a particular focus on empowering women in the business sector. By utilising this ToT strategy, the Ministry aims to effectively scale up climate resilience training and ensure a wider dissemination of valuable knowledge and practices to entrepreneurs across the country.

Sembrar Sartawi Agricultural Risk Financial Solution – Bolivia

Sembrar Sartawi is an agricultural risk financial solution operating in Bolivia, which aims to address the challenges of financing small farmers and agro-enterprises comprehensively. The institution offers tailor-designed financing options that are linked to the specific value chains, as well as providing improved inputs and technology linkages to enhance agricultural productivity. Alongside financial support, Sembrar Sartawi offers technical assistance, market risk information, and fosters partnerships to ensure secured market access for the farmers.

What sets Sembrar Sartawi apart is its comprehensive approach to risk management. While many financial institutions would typically limit their risk analysis to financial aspects, Sembrar Sartawi goes beyond that. It employs GIS technology in collaboration with the National Climate Service to develop risk map layers using relevant time-series data. By using these maps, the institution can better understand and manage climate-related risks faced by the farmers and agro-enterprises. Moreover, Sembrar Sartawi mitigates systemic risk through geographical and ecosystem diversification, reducing vulnerabilities by investing in a range of different areas and ecosystems.

Overall, Sembrar Sartawi's approach offers a holistic and innovative solution to address the various risks faced by small farmers and agro-enterprises in Bolivia, promoting more resilient and sustainable agricultural practices.

Kukua – Africa

Kukua has developed cost-effective, solar-powered weather stations that are interconnected to the internet and have been deployed across five African countries. Kukua is currently in the process of installing 70 weather stations in Nigeria in collaboration with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). This initiative aims to enhance weather data collection and forecasting capabilities in the region.

Conclusion

SMEs play a vital role in the global economy and have the potential to significantly contribute to the fight against climate change. Throughout this discussion, we have explored various sustainable practices that SMEs can adopt to reduce their environmental impact and promote climate resilience. These practices encompass a wide range of strategies, including energy efficiency, waste reduction, sustainable sourcing, green innovation, and stakeholder engagement. By implementing these practices, SMEs can not only mitigate their carbon footprint but also gain a competitive advantage, reduce operational costs, enhance brand reputation, attract eco-conscious customers, and comply with evolving environmental regulations. Moreover, SMEs can actively participate in sustainable supply chains, collaborate with other businesses, and influence larger industries to adopt environmentally friendly practices.

Governments, NGOs, and other support organisations also have a crucial role in providing SMEs with the necessary resources, incentives, and guidance to facilitate their transition to more sustainable operations. Policy frameworks, financial assistance, capacity-building initiatives, and information dissemination can all aid SMEs in adopting climate-friendly practices.

GUEST ARTICLE

Nutraceuticals: An Upcoming Segment in the Food Industry

Arvind Kumar Ojha, An astute and result oriented professional with over 30 years of cross functional experience in Food Processing Sector. Demonstrated abilities in setting and running food processing units of MSME and large scale with the Government and Private Entities. Having expertise in New Product development, Quality and Testing, Skill development and Training in Food and Hospitality Sector.

The global food supplements market size is valued at USD 291.33 billion in 2022 and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.4% from 2023 to 2030. The primary factors driving the market growth are preventive healthcare, increasing instances of lifestyle-related disorders, and rising consumer focus on health-promoting diets. Additionally, increasing consumer spending power in high-growth economies is projected to contribute to the growing demand for food supplements. The growing demand for dietary supplements and food supplements is also attributed to consumer preferences shifting towards self-directed care in the treatment of lifestyle disorders such as cardiovascular disorders and malnutrition.



Mr. Arvind Kumar Ojha

Ex. Assistant Director,
Minsitry MSME Govt
of India



Key Factors Accelerating Advancements In The Nutraceuticals Sector

Food supplements are associated with various medical and health benefits, which is driving its increased adoption among consumers globally. Rising healthcare costs, coupled with the increasing geriatric population across the world, are anticipated to assist the global food supplements industry growth over the forecast period. Consumers' attitude is very positive towards functional foods mainly because of the added health and wellness benefits offered by these products. The rising geriatric population, increasing healthcare costs, changing lifestyles, food innovation, and expectations regarding higher prices have aided overall growth.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for dietary supplements and functional foods has soared. Immunity-boosting supplements have become mainstream over the past year and this has led to a significant change in buying patterns and consumer behaviour. Moreover, after the COVID-19 pandemic, preventive healthcare measures such as dietary supplements will become a part of people's everyday lives. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic across the globe has paved the way for food supplements to build a strong presence in the global market.

Growing technological advancements in the food supplements industry is projected to influence consumer demand positively. The growing innovation in the market has led to the adoption of AI which will enable more personalised solutions based on dietary and health data of a consumer.

Therefore, AI will be pivotal in the global growth of the food supplements industry.

Quality Control & Compliances

The nutraceuticals comply with all the provisions of Food Safety and Standards (Health Supplements, Nutraceuticals, Food for Special Dietary Use, Food for Special Medical Purposes, Functional Food and Novel Food) Regulations, 2016, which came into force on 1st January 2018.

The labelling of the article of food shall be in accordance with the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011, and the specific labelling requirements provided in these regulations. The articles of manufacture shall conform to the Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011. The articles of food sold in capsule format, hard or soft or vegetarian, shall comply with the general monograph and quality requirements specified for them in Indian Pharmacopoeia:

The food business operator may declare the addition of flavour on labels of such products in accordance with the provisions of Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Packaging) Regulations, 2011. The tablets, capsules and syrups shall fulfil the general quality requirements and standards as specified

in Indian Pharmacopoeia, British Pharmacopoeia or United States Pharmacopoeia. The quantity of nutrients added to the articles of food shall not exceed the recommended daily allowance as specified by the Indian Council of Medical Research and in case such standards are not specified, the standards laid down by international food standards body, namely, Codex Alimentarius Commission, shall apply.

In case of food products falling under health supplement categories, the individual nutrient content shall not be less than fifteen per cent of the recommended daily allowance where a nutrient content claim is being made: Provided that, if claim of higher nutrient content is made, the nutrient content shall not be less than thirty per cent of the recommended daily allowance.

For the articles of food specified in these regulations, the Food Authority may permit the food business operator to add food colours subject to the level restrictions as mentioned in Food Safety and Standards (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011. 4 Version-I (29.09.2021). The articles of food with standard nutrient or nutritionally complete formulation shall consist of a composition delivering the desired level of energy, protein, vitamins and minerals, and other essential nutrients required for respective age group, gender and physiological stage in accordance with the guidelines made by the Indian Council of Medical Research.

The purity criteria for the ingredients used in the categories of articles of food covered under these regulations shall be as determined and notified in the official gazette by the Food Authority from time to time. In case such



standards are not specified, the purity criteria generally accepted by pharmacopoeias, namely, Indian Pharmacopoeia, Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India, relevant Bureau of Indian Standards Specifications, Quality Standards of Indian Medicinal Plants, Indian Council of Medical Research, British Pharmacopoeia, United States Pharmacopoeia, Food Chemical Codex, Joint Food and Agriculture Organization or World Health Organization Expert Committee on Food Additives or CODEX Alimentarius may be adopted by food Business operators. The food business operator shall intimate the purity criteria adopted for ingredients to the Food Authority including any change when adopted. The tolerance limit for variation in case of articles of food covered in these regulations during analysis of samples of finished products, shall not be more than 10% from the declared value of the nutrients or nutritional ingredients on the label.

The manufacturing of ingredients and products covered under these regulations shall be carried out in compliance with the established good manufacturing practices. Boswellia Serrate in the list of ingredients in Schedule - VI and the list of plants or botanical ingredients in Schedule-IV

Model Project for Business in Nutraceuticals Sector

The SMEs interested in shifting to clean energy in their production processes can aim to incorporate a model project within their strategies of operation. A nutraceutical project is capable of processing various agri, horti and forest produces viz herbs, gums, spices viz fenugreek, tulsi, turmeric, ginger, garlic, onion, amla etc. The size of the investment of the enterprise could be based on the investment capacity of the entrepreneur. As this activity could be developed for the “raw material to extraction

model” or “raw material to purification model” or “after extraction to purification model” and “purification to end use product model”.

Blueprint to developing a model project

If the whole project including the R&D lab infrastructure is proposed under one roof assuming the processing of BOSWELLIA SERATA of 375000 Kilo Gram Per Annum, the project cost of the enterprise could be estimated as under:



PARTICULARS	AMOUNT (INR IN MILLION)
Land (Area -4000 Square Metre)	As Actual
Building	35.00
Plant & Machinery	120.00
Others	3.00
The margin for Working Capital	4.00
TOTAL	174.00

Financial Viability Parameters

Pay Back Period	2.50 Years
Break-Even Capacity Utilization	20.00 %
Internal Rate of Return	25.00%

If you are interested in implementing this model business in Nutraceuticals sector and looking for knowledge transfer, technology transfer and setting up of the business in your country, write to wasme@wasmeinfo.org, directorpnd@wasmeinfo.org or call at +91 9811396682.

COUNTRY FOCUS

UGANDA

Population

44.27 million; Urban – 18.4%; Rural – 81.6% (2021)

Ethnic groups

Baganda: 16.9%, Banyankole: 9.5%, Basoga: 8.4%, Bakiga: 7.9%, Iteso: 7.0%, Langi: 6.3%, Acholi: 4.9%, Bagisu: 4.6%, Lugbara: 4.2%, Bunyoro: 2.7%, Other ethnic groups: 29.6% (This category includes smaller ethnic groups such as the Karamojong, Rwenzori, and others.) (2021)

Youth unemployment rate (ages 15–24)

13.3%; Male – 8.2%; Female – 20.2% (2021)

GDP – composition, by sector of origin

Agriculture: Around 23–25%, Industry: Approx. 22–24%, Services: Approx. 50–52%

Industries

- ◆ Agriculture: Major agricultural products include coffee, tea, cotton, tobacco, sugarcane, bananas, maize, and other cereals.
- ◆ Manufacturing: Food and beverages processing, textile and apparel manufacturing, paper and pulp production, cement, and other building materials.
- ◆ Mining: Gold, Copper, Limestone, and other valuable minerals. The mining industry is still in its early stages but has the potential for growth and development.
- ◆ Tourism: The tourism industry contributes to the country's economy through wildlife safaris, eco-tourism, and adventure tourism.
- ◆ Other upcoming Industry: Information Technology (IT), Construction, Financial Services and Renewable Energy.



Definition of SME in Uganda

The majority of SMEs, according to the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development (MFPED), have less than 20 employees. MFPED defines a 'Small Enterprise' as an enterprise employing between 5 and 50 people and having an annual sales/revenue turnover total asset of up to 360 million Uganda Shillings (USH.) and a 'Medium Enterprise' as an enterprise employing more than 50 people and having an annual sales turnover or assets of between 360 million and 30 billion (USH.).

Characteristics of SMEs in Uganda

SMEs in Uganda are characterised by their diverse nature, spread across various industrial sectors. Approximately ten sectors make up around five percent or more of the overall SME base. The highest proportion of SMEs operate in the agricultural sector (14 percent), followed by the education & health sector (13 percent), and recreation & personal services (10 percent).

These SMEs in Uganda are relatively young enterprises, with the majority (69 percent) being between one and ten years old. The entrepreneurial spirit is evident in the Ugandan SME environment, as nearly nine out of ten owners started their businesses using their own funds, and almost three-quarters of SMEs operate as sole proprietorships. The owners themselves typically run and manage these businesses, with only a minority (31 percent) having a separate manager



in charge of operations. Moreover, a significant number of owners have attained a secondary education or higher, highlighting their relatively well-educated background.

The relationship between SMEs and their clients is often intimate, as the main customers for these businesses are individuals (81.1 percent) rather than companies. Furthermore, a majority (66 percent) of SMEs operate within the same immediate local area as their customers. Additionally, SMEs tend to employ relatives, with one relative often present among the typical five members of staff.

Although MSMEs play a crucial role in Uganda's economy, only a small percentage (15 percent) belong to business associations. The reasons for this might be attributed to their relatively small size and limited resources, which could hinder their participation in formal business networks. Overall, the MSME sector in Uganda reflects a dynamic and closely-knit entrepreneurial environment, driven by resourceful and educated owners who contribute to the country's economic growth and development.

SME contribution in Uganda's economy

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are critical to Uganda's economic development. MSMEs account for almost 90 percent of private sector production and employ over 2.5 million people.

The backbone of the Ugandan economy is formed by SMEs, which collectively contribute to approximately 90 percent of private sector production. These enterprises are widespread across all sectors of the economy and are the primary drivers of job creation, making them a vital source of employment opportunities. With over 2.5 million people employed, SMEs have a significant impact on the labour market, including the empowerment of marginalised groups such as women and youth. The role of MSMEs in generating income is especially crucial for impoverished communities, contributing to poverty alleviation and economic inclusivity.

A distinguishing characteristic of SMEs in Uganda is their prevalence in the informal sector. They often operate with a focus on utilising locally available resources, including labour and other inputs, in a more intensive manner than larger enterprises. This adaptability and resourcefulness enable SMEs to



thrive and contribute substantially to the country's economic growth.

Constraints to growth of SME sector in Uganda

Financial

The primary growth constraints faced by SMEs in Uganda revolve around financial issues, with the most significant challenges being limited access to finance and the high cost of finance. The stringent requirements set by commercial banks and financial institutions for collateral pose a fundamental obstacle for SMEs, as they often lack the necessary assets to meet these demands.

Taxes and infrastructure

In addition to financial constraints, other challenges that SMEs encounter include issues related to taxes, inadequate road infrastructure, unreliable electricity supply, challenges within the broader macroeconomic environment, difficulties in accessing land, and corruption. A significant proportion of SMEs in Uganda do not have access



to the internet. Among the different business sizes, micro-enterprises have the lowest internet penetration, while medium-sized SMEs fare better.

The current situation also highlights an opportunity for collaboration between the public sector, private sector, and development partners to create an

enabling environment for businesses. One potential measure could be adopting an accommodative tax policy, which would help ease the burden on SMEs and encourage their growth and compliance.

Credit structure

SMEs in Uganda display a reasonably high level of awareness of financial concepts, and they express a need for various financial management services. Specifically, there is a significant demand for loans. The loan application rates vary by sector. The most common reason for applying for loans is to secure



working capital. A major challenge for SMEs in accessing loans is the requirement for collateral, which a majority of them are unable to provide. As a result, many SMEs fail to secure loans from formal financial institutions.

When loans are granted, most SMEs use land as collateral. Commercial banking and mobile banking are the primary channels for accessing financial services. Larger SMEs tend to favour conventional commercial banks, while smaller businesses rely more on mobile banking services. Microfinance institutions (MFIs) are the second most common source.

Registration of SMEs

Approximately 20 percent of SMEs in Uganda have not registered their businesses, and a significant number (three quarters) lack a tax identification number (TIN). One of the main reasons for this is

that around 25 percent of SMEs either do not know how to register or find the registration process too complex. Simplifying the registration process could present an opportunity to support SMEs in complying with legal requirements and thriving in their business activities.

Lack of opportunities for young population

The data indicates that only a small fraction (2 percent) of MSMEs are owned by individuals aged between 18 and 24. This presents a specific opportunity for the Government of Uganda to develop strategies that encourage and facilitate young people's involvement in MSME activities. By supporting young entrepreneurs, the government can foster innovation, job creation, and economic growth.

Uganda's efforts to strengthen SME sector

As of my last update in September 2021, Uganda has implemented several laws, policies, and schemes to support and strengthen the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) sector. Here are some notable ones:

The Small Scale Industries Development Act (SSIDA): This law aims to promote and develop small-scale industries, including SMEs, by providing them with support, training, and access to finance. It also establishes the Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO) to implement

various development programs for SMEs.

The Microfinance Policy and Regulations: This policy framework aims to promote financial inclusion and improve access to finance for micro, small, and medium enterprises. It encourages the establishment and growth of microfinance institutions to serve the financial needs of SMEs and other vulnerable groups.

The National Industrial Policy: This policy provides a comprehensive framework for the development of industries, including SMEs. It focuses on promoting entrepreneurship, innovation, and competitiveness in the industrial sector.

The National SME Policy: This policy is designed to provide an enabling environment for the growth and development of SMEs in Uganda. It addresses various aspects, including access to finance, access to markets, skills development, and capacity building.

The Youth Livelihood Programme: This is a government scheme aimed at empowering young people to start and grow their own businesses. It provides financial support, training, and mentorship to young entrepreneurs to help them establish sustainable enterprises.

The Uganda Development Bank (UDB): The UDB offers financial support and affordable credit to



SMEs through various financing schemes and credit facilities tailored to their specific needs.

The Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB):

This board provides assistance to SMEs looking to explore international markets. It offers export training, market information, and other export-related services to help SMEs access global opportunities.

The Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB):

This agency plays a vital role in the business registration process, simplifying and streamlining registration procedures for SMEs.

The Uganda Investment Authority (UIA):

UIA offers support and guidance to both local and foreign investors, including SMEs, by providing information, facilitation services, and investment incentives.

Useful resources for MSMEs operating in Eswatini

MSME finance providers	Details
Incubators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Outbox Hub, Kampala, Uganda ◆ East African Business Center (EABC), Kampala, Uganda ◆ Stanbic Business Incubator, Kampala, Uganda ◆ Makerere Innovation and Incubation Center (MIIC), Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda
Banks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Stanbic Bank Uganda, Kampala, Uganda ◆ Bank of Africa Uganda, Kampala, Uganda ◆ Development Finance Company of Uganda Bank Limited, Kampala, Uganda
MFI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Pride Microfinance Limited, Kampala, Uganda ◆ FINCA Uganda Limited, Kampala, Uganda ◆ UGAFODE Microfinance Limited, Kampala, Uganda
PE/VC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Inua Capital, Kampala, Uganda
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Microfinance Support Centre Limited (MSC) ◆ Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) ◆ Agricultural Credit Facility (ACF)

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Trade delegation



Investment



International exhibitions & EXPOs



Business Match Making



Technology Transfer



Skill Development



Startup Support



Women Entrepreneurship



Incubation



Research & Development



Conference/Seminar/Trainings/workshops



Policy Advocacy

GLOBAL INDUSTRY SECTOR

Clean Energy in Food Processing Industry

The world is facing a pressing need to transform its energy and food systems to meet the increasing demands while aligning with sustainable development goals and climate change agreements. The interconnection between these two systems is evident, with agri-food systems consuming approximately 30% of the world's energy, and a significant portion of greenhouse gas emissions in these systems is attributed to energy use. As such, any energy transition will inevitably impact the food system, and vice versa.

These intertwined food and energy systems play a critical role in society, economies, and the environment, making them central to achieving multiple Sustainable Development Goals. With over 2.5 billion people worldwide relying on agriculture for their livelihoods, the agri-food sector becomes a vital driver for development. By ensuring access to reliable, affordable, and environmentally sustainable energy for primary production, post-harvest processing, storage, and cooking, the agri-food system can achieve higher yields, increased incomes, reduced losses, and enhanced climate resilience. However, there are regional disparities and challenges in accessing modern energy, particularly in developing countries, where a significant portion of the population still relies on wood fuel for cooking, leading to health and environmental issues, disproportionately affecting women and children.

Challenges in adopting clean energy in food-processing sector

While the adoption of clean energy in the food-processing sector is essential for sustainability and

environmental stewardship, it comes with several challenges.

Initial Investment Costs: Transitioning to clean energy often requires significant upfront investment in renewable energy infrastructure, such as solar panels, wind turbines, or biomass systems. For many food-processing SMEs with limited financial resources, this initial cost can be a barrier to entry.

Technology Maturity: Clean energy technologies are continuously evolving, and some may still be in the early stages of development. SMEs may hesitate to adopt these technologies due to concerns about their reliability, efficiency, and long-term viability.

Limited Access to Financing: Securing financing for clean energy projects can be challenging, especially for smaller food-processing businesses. Traditional lenders may be hesitant to provide loans for clean energy projects due to perceived risks and uncertainties.

Energy Intensive Processes: Some food-processing operations involve energy-intensive processes, such as heating, cooling, and refrigeration, which may not be easily replaced by clean energy alternatives. Finding suitable and cost-effective clean energy solutions for such processes can be challenging.

Regulatory and Policy Environment: In some regions, the regulatory and policy environment may not be conducive to promoting the adoption of clean energy. Uncertain or unfavourable policies, lack of incentives, and bureaucratic hurdles can deter food-processing businesses from making the switch.



Use of technology to facilitate food-processing industry's transition to clean energy

As the world recognizes the importance of sustainable practices and environmental stewardship, the food processing industry is embracing innovative technologies to transition towards cleaner and greener energy sources. Some key global trends include:

Renewable Energy Integration: Food processing plants are increasingly adopting renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and biomass to power their operations. The integration of solar panels, wind turbines, and biogas generators into processing facilities allows companies to generate clean energy on-site, reducing their reliance on traditional fossil fuels.

Energy Efficiency Measures: Technology-driven energy efficiency measures have become prevalent in the food processing industry. Advanced automation systems, smart sensors, and energy monitoring tools help identify energy wastage and optimise processes for higher efficiency, leading to reduced energy consumption and lower carbon emissions.

Green Building Practices: Companies are investing in green building practices for their food processing facilities. Incorporating sustainable building materials, energy-efficient lighting, and better insulation contribute to overall energy savings and environmental sustainability.

Waste-to-Energy Solutions: The concept of waste-to-energy is gaining traction in the food processing sector. Innovative technologies are being used to convert organic waste from food processing operations into biogas or bioenergy, providing a renewable source of power while minimising waste.

Electrification of Equipment: The transition from fossil fuel-powered equipment to electric alternatives is becoming more common. Electric

motors, ovens, and other processing machinery are being developed to replace their conventional counterparts, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting clean energy adoption.

Energy Storage Solutions: The use of advanced energy storage solutions, such as batteries and flywheels, is on the rise. These technologies allow food processing facilities to store excess energy generated from renewable sources for later use, ensuring a stable and continuous supply of clean energy.

Sustainable Supply Chains: Technology is enabling better monitoring and optimization of supply chains to reduce energy-intensive processes. Digitization and data analytics help identify areas of inefficiency, enabling companies to make data-driven decisions that lead to more sustainable practices.

Blockchain for Traceability: The use of blockchain technology is gaining momentum in the food processing industry. Blockchain enables transparent and traceable supply chains, allowing consumers to make informed choices about sustainably sourced and environmentally friendly products.

Emerging technology driven practices of food processing industries in the SME sector

In the SME sector of the food processing industry, there are several practices in the use of technology to facilitate the shift towards clean-green energy. While larger corporations may have more resources to invest in sustainable practices, SMEs are also embracing innovative technologies to enhance their environmental performance.

Energy-Efficient Machinery: SMEs are increasingly investing in energy-efficient processing machinery and equipment. Modern technologies enable these enterprises to reduce energy consumption, optimise processes, and minimise waste during food production and processing.

Solar and Renewable Energy Integration: SMEs in the food processing sector are adopting solar and other renewable energy sources to power their operations. Solar panels and other renewable energy solutions are becoming more accessible and affordable, enabling SMEs to generate clean energy on-site and reduce their reliance on fossil fuels.

Energy Monitoring and Management Systems: Technology-driven energy monitoring and management systems are gaining popularity among SMEs. These systems help track energy usage patterns, identify areas of high consumption, and optimise energy usage for greater efficiency and cost savings.

Biomass and Biogas Solutions: Some SMEs are exploring the use of biomass and biogas solutions to convert organic waste into renewable energy sources. By utilising food processing waste, these enterprises can not only reduce their environmental impact but also cut down on waste disposal costs.

Internet of Things (IoT) for Energy Efficiency: IoT technology is being utilised to enhance energy efficiency in SME food processing operations. Smart sensors and IoT-enabled devices enable real-time data collection and analysis, allowing SMEs to make data-driven decisions to optimise energy usage and reduce carbon emissions.

Sustainable Packaging Solutions: The adoption of sustainable packaging materials and practices is another significant trend in the SME food processing sector. Eco-friendly packaging reduces the environmental footprint of products and aligns with the clean-green energy shift.

Green Infrastructure: SMEs are increasingly adopting green building practices when constructing or renovating their processing facilities. Energy-efficient building design, lighting systems, and insulation contribute to reduced energy consumption and environmental impact.

Virtual Collaboration and Remote Monitoring: Technology facilitates virtual collaboration & remote monitoring, enabling SMEs to work with experts and consultants from around the world to implement sustainable practices and improve energy efficiency.

Energy Storage Solutions: SMEs are exploring energy storage solutions, such as batteries and microgrids, to store excess energy generated from renewable sources for later use. This allows SMEs to maintain a stable and continuous supply of clean energy.

Sustainability Certifications: SMEs in the food processing industry are pursuing sustainability certifications, such as ISO 14001 and LEED, to demonstrate their commitment to clean-green energy practices and environmental stewardship.

Case study 1: The European Union's "Farm to Fork" strategy as part of the Green Deal

The Farm-to-Fork strategy is a comprehensive plan by the European Union to expedite the shift towards a sustainable food system with a neutral or positive impact on the environment. Its primary objectives are to address climate change, enhance adaptation measures, reverse biodiversity loss, and ensure food security by providing sufficient, safe, nutritious, and sustainable food for all. The strategy also aims

to maintain affordability while promoting fair economic returns and competitiveness for European agricultural producers, all while fostering fair trade practices.

Farm-to-Fork incorporates a mix of regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives, with the common agricultural and fisheries policies playing crucial roles in supporting a just transition. To reduce

emissions, the strategy encourages farmers to employ anaerobic digesters that can convert waste and residues, including livestock manure and municipal waste, into biogas. Energy efficiency

is emphasised, and there are provisions for investments in solar production for farmhouses and barns, prioritised through the Union's Common Agricultural Policy.

Case study 2: Integration of Productive Uses of Renewable Energy (I-PURE) for Inclusive and Sustainable Energisation in Mindanao, Philippines

Mindanao, known as the Philippines' food basket, plays a crucial role in the country's agricultural sector, accounting for 36% of the farm area and 43% of total food production. Despite its significance in food production, nine of the ten poorest provinces in the Philippines are located in Mindanao, with many of its residents working in farming and fishing, struggling with poverty.

The region is a major source of high-value crops, including cocoa, coconut, rubber, coffee, banana, oil palm, pineapple, and seaweed, which are vital export commodities enhancing economic resilience, especially during times of crises like the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the agricultural sector in Mindanao faces challenges in realising its full potential due to the lack of enabling conditions, particularly access to energy, needed to add value and foster growth. In response to this, the Mindanao

Development Authority, in collaboration with the National Electrification Administration and funding support from the European Union's Access to Sustainable Energy Programme, initiated the I-PURE Mindanao project. I-PURE, which stands for Integration of Productive Uses of Renewable Energy for Inclusive and Sustainable Energization, aims to address the energy needs of rural areas, particularly in agriculture.

The project focuses on deploying renewable energy investments to support development in rural areas, particularly in post-harvest agro-fishery processing facilities. The implementation includes equipping 10 post-harvest facilities with renewable energy to produce high-value goods, enabling them to fetch better prices in the market and increase their revenues. Additionally, 22 fish centres in off-grid regions will be equipped with solar-powered facilities and biomass-based processing equipment.

Conclusion

The structure of energy consumption within food systems differs between developed and developing countries. In developed nations, energy use is distributed with a quarter in production, 45% in food processing and distribution, and 30% in retail, preparation, and cooking. In contrast, developing countries allocate a smaller share of energy on the farm and more for cooking, with about 35% of the population relying on wood fuel for this purpose. Over the years, energy consumption in agri-food systems has seen significant growth, driven primarily by mechanisation in Asia. However, energy use in Africa has remained relatively constant, limiting the region's ability to cope with increasing

food demand and climate-related challenges due to limited access to energy throughout the agri-food system.

To address these issues, there is a critical need to enhance access to energy at each stage of the agri-food system. Empowering farmers and agri-enterprises with access to energy can boost productivity, reduce losses, and build resilience against climate change and other shocks. By recognizing the linkages between energy and food systems and adopting sustainable practices, we can foster inclusive, secure, and sustainable growth while meeting global development and climate goals.

Face *to* Face



Mr. Abhilash Puljal

Mr. Abhilash Puljal is a trained social scientist. He has two decades of experience in conceptualizing and implementing sustainable ventures, as well as providing policy and regulatory advice in the fields of agriculture, renewable energy, healthcare, ICT, and education, among others, in middle- and low-income economies in Africa and Asia.

He also works on South-South and trilateral development cooperation and is presently conducting a study for the World Bank on Trade Facilitation and advising the UN World Food Programme on the millet value chain based trilateral cooperation project.

What has been your personal and professional journey which led you to your current work in the agricultural sector in Africa?

I grew up with a strong interest in agriculture. Initial projects in my early career were based on the development of agriculture and agri-business sectors in South Asia and Africa. I have always been attracted to assignments that led to poverty alleviation which mostly had an agricultural policy base. I am passionate about developmental issues affecting the Global South and worked actively on South-South and Trilateral development Cooperation by connecting sustainable technologies and building efficient capacities in middle and low-income economies of Africa and Asia.

Personally, it has been a rewarding experience to travel and work in fragile economies, understanding their ground realities in order to design solutions for the challenges; particularly in enhancing private sector development. Importantly, it is the relationships that I have built over the years in Africa that I cherish very much.

What has been the process behind picking specific countries in Africa as your base for operations & scope of your work in the African region?

I never had a choice in picking a specific country, rather it was a process focussed on country identification based on parameters set as per client's terms of reference. For example, I have been given a mandate by a bilateral development agency to identify countries in Africa given the challenges identified.

I have always focused on identifying challenges and obstacles and follow a solution-driven approach. I have also travelled to client locations, on the invitation of stakeholders (both public and private sector), to understand the particular need on the ground and develop plausible solutions to complex problems by ensuring a balanced outcome that would keep stakeholder interests. For instance, I was asked by the leadership in Rwanda to identify solutions for agricultural mechanisation with minimal financial burden.

Here, I was lucky to stumble across a young team of enthusiastic entrepreneurs from Karnataka and Andhra who were keen on “setting up a business in Africa.” After much deliberation, an Agri machinery services company was set up that would rent out machinery to small scale farmers thereby increasing their productivity. This business became very successful not just in Rwanda but then expanded to Zambia as well. In another instance, I was given an opportunity by DFID, (now merged into FCDO) to design UK’s first ever South-South Trilateral Development Programme – UK-India-Africa where, I was to identify countries with possible sectors that would require interventions from a technology transfer, capacity building etc.

What are the key challenges that you face in your line of work? Please provide insight into how you navigate these challenges and some of your recommendations for mitigating some of these challenges that can be taken by SMEs?

The main challenge we face on the ground while executing projects pertains to the continuation and longevity of project ideas. This is at times in some parts of the continent due to unstable governments and for the most part due to lack of access to finance (especially for SMEs), which is the major bottleneck in the region. For the former challenge there is not much of a solution we can offer but for the latter the factors are, including but not limited to, the high cost of credit, the lack of feasible collaterals, and the lack of trust between banks and SMEs. Another roadblock is limited financial literacy and good management practices.

My team and I navigate these barriers and challenges by building relationships with financial institutions, which helps us to understand lending criteria, preferred structures etc. Also, we conduct training and advise SMEs on management of finances, Good Management Practices, thereby

helping them to improve their financial literacy and make better decisions. Moreover, we also advocate for policies that support SMEs so that the projects see a longer shelf life. We try to promote business friendly policies that will make it easier for SMEs to succeed.

We address these issues by ensuring that an idea or project we are implementing is sustainable for the region or community and is run by the locals after the handholding is completed. We address these gaps by formulating and conceptualising projects which are solution-centric, long-term, and work with the multiple stakeholders which we leverage through our networks. We align our stakeholders with the project concept, which is actionable and feasible, thereby adapting it to the local country context.

What are some of the opportunities that this sector and the African region offers for budding entrepreneurs?

Africa is truly a vibrant continent with vast opportunities in numerous sectors especially in the agriculture and agri-business space for budding entrepreneurs. Lets not forget that Africa is not one grand big location, but 54 different countries and their sub regions with vast opportunities – each different unto themselves.

Africa’s rapidly rising population and markets present significant business potential. At the same time, innovation and investment are required to meet Africa’s unmet demand for goods and services, bridge infrastructural gaps, generate jobs, and reduce poverty. National and regional economies across the continent are continually speeding their growth and attracting foreign investors’ interest. Africa’s resource potential is almost endless, and the continent’s moment has come as stable governments with defined fiscal policies emerge, lowering foreign investors’ perceived risk.

Diversification and value addition: Though still in its early phases, African economies are beginning to diversify beyond commodities and looking at adding value to produce before export. Africa's returning diaspora who are educated and with a global perspective, realise the possibilities of such value addition of local produce and are looking for partners who can bring appropriate technologies, capacities and market access.

Changing consumers: Africa's middle class is steadily growing, and so is their demand for quality produce. The demographic is also changing into an educated, professional, brand-aware and sophisticated bunch of young people. So this is a ripe market for establishment of production units for quality retail-able consumer products, perhaps with a brand that reflects the local heritage but with global standards.

Digital Transformation: Africa continues to lead the globe in mobile penetration, providing the most cross-sectoral economic prospects. Mobile payment networks, which were pioneered in East Africa, gave impoverished, unbanked city and rural inhabitants access to the wired, global economy. Novartis, for example, uses mobile communications to manage its supply chain, and Olam has used mobile to connect with new African suppliers and farmers. These mobile projects have had a tremendous amount of success. Therefore, I envision digital transformation opportunities as the key driver for Africa's success.

Moreover, projected changes in demographic, income, and food demand patterns in Africa offer potential opportunities for trade and investments in African agriculture and agri-food value chains—the processes connecting food production, delivery, and the consumer. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), is expected to help expand these opportunities through economic integration, intraregional trade, and investment among member countries.

The economic transformation of the continent combined with changes in demographics and consumer preferences are projected to help the region to become an economic powerhouse for global trade and investments. This is a win-win situation for Indian SMEs and African companies as Indian SMEs can provide agri-mechanisation, and climate smart agricultural technologies as a part of tech-transfer programs.

What have been some of the major impacts of your work in the region and communities where your operations are based?

One of the major impacts in the regions where we witnessed success is in the SMEs, in the agricultural sector mainly in South Asia and Africa. Also, our work has benefited the local communities, private sector and impacted their market entry strategic decisions for investments. This mainly stems from our work in conducting needs assessment and feasibility studies for the private sector as well Governments which are looking to explore markets and alternative geographies for their products/services. We have also been successful in connecting the Indian and African SMEs on various capacity building initiatives, and bringing low-cost technologies to Africa through Indian SMEs.

How do you think WASME can be of assistance to your organisation and other organisations working in this sector?

WASME can be an ideal partner to our organisation as we can together leverage our networks and connections to identify partners for African and Indian businesses for investments in various sectors such as healthcare, education, pharmaceuticals especially Agriculture. Further, we can also assist WASME in conducting macro level research studies, conduct feasibility studies and join delegations as aligned with our areas of focus.

ENTREPRENEUR OF THE MONTH

Ms. Nnonye Victoria Achukwu Victoria Signature Cakes, Nigeria

Ms. Nnonye Victoria Achukwu is a Nigeria-based certified confectioner and cake decorator with over 20 years of experience. She uses tech, unconventional and street smart strategies to help stay-at-home moms and teenage school children unleash their creative ability and use it to start a profitable business to improve their lives.

A resilient journey of opening an independent business in bakery and confectionery sector

At the tender age of eight, my life took a tragic turn when my mother passed away during childbirth, leaving me feeling hopeless and shattered. The world seemed distorted, with many people focused solely on their own interests. Losing the person who was meant to guide and support me was an immense loss. However, my life took a new trajectory when I was sent to live with my aunt, who happened to be a certified Wilton cake instructor with vast international work experience. Living with her became a turning point, as she bestowed upon me a treasure trove of sustainable skills and knowledge that would last a lifetime. I saw this as an opportunity to equip and empower myself, all the while continuing with my education.

Throughout my journey, I diligently honed my skills, particularly in baking, as it became my core proficiency. The bakery skill I acquired proved to be my anchor during financial struggles, allowing me to confront challenges with practical solutions, all without becoming a burden to others. By the time I got married, I had not only gained a valuable set of skills but also developed a sense of self-reliance & resilience. My proficiency in baking provided me with the means to overcome adversities and thrive independently.



Positive impact of owning a business on personal and professional life

Facing significant challenges, such as staff not adhering to instructions, has been a transformative experience for me. It has enabled me to tap into my reservoir of patience and learn the art of delegating tasks based on individual strengths, thus enhancing productivity and refining my leadership abilities.

Additionally, directly handling customers' complaints and obtaining firsthand feedback has led me to uncover creative ways to enhance our services and maintain a thriving business. This has honed my intuition as a businessperson, enabling me to make informed decisions and strategically navigate towards achieving my goals. I have become adept at sensing opportunities and knowing precisely which moves to make to propel myself towards my desired milestones.

Navigating a path full of challenges and emerging as an empowered business woman

Obtaining a loan of 2 million Naira to improve the living conditions of my family and expand my home bakery business proved to be an arduous task. Traditional banks and investors seemed reluctant to support me as an entrepreneur, opting to favour politicians and imposing stringent measures that were challenging to navigate.



However, my breakthrough came unexpectedly when I was nominated to attend a business boot camp hosted by the Bank of Industry. During the program, I learned from Mil Margaret Bishop, an American business teacher, that being skillful and creative wasn't enough; I needed entrepreneurship skills to run a sustainable business.

Inspired by the program, I decided to go to business school to acquire formal entrepreneurship education. Undeterred by the bankruptcy of my business at 5,000 Naira (less than US\$ 10), I set a target to raise 2 million Naira in six months. I strategically planned to produce and sell my signature product, the meat pie, which had high demand and could generate daily profit. I recruited staff, found a suitable location, and devised a knowledge-based strategy to save 13,350 Naira daily over 150 days to reach my goal.

By leveraging the power of knowledge and realistic planning, I raised 30,000 Naira from friends and family, using it to produce meat pies and cupcakes. The profits from these sales covered staff salaries and my daily expenses, bringing me closer to my benchmark target of 2 million Naira. With hard work and determination, I achieved my goal, improving my family's life and creating opportunities to train others and uplift their lives through replicating my successful process.

Achieving key milestones as a mompreneur

As a parent who has personally witnessed the remarkable outcomes and positive changes that entrepreneurship skills can bring, I am dedicated to empowering every student I teach with comprehensive business knowledge, coaching, and mentorship to help them embark on their entrepreneurial journeys. My efforts have been instrumental in empowering struggling mothers to establish profitable bakery businesses from the comfort of their homes, enabling them to provide for their children and achieve financial stability.

Overall, my endeavours have led to the training and empowerment of 200 adults and 30 teenagers, significantly improving their lives and paving the way for greater opportunities and prosperity.

The need of imparting entrepreneurship and skill development in youth to help improve their quality of life as well as that of the community

Entrepreneurship has had a profound impact on my mindset, turning me into a strong advocate for its inclusion in education. I firmly believe that teaching children the principles of business from an early age can significantly shape their behaviour and bring balance to our society. Having education and talent without entrepreneurship knowledge is a missed opportunity that hinders both personal growth and societal development. I strongly recommend making entrepreneurship education compulsory across all sectors of the educational system to address the rising issue of crime. Understanding business principles is crucial because, at the core, we all make money by selling something.

The recent rise in the instant wealth syndrome, leading to an increase in cybercrime within our society, can be effectively curtailed by introducing this invaluable tool in our educational systems. When children learn how to channel their energy productively and transform their skills into a means of income generation, they are more likely to lead fulfilling lives. This approach is especially potent when we start early, nurturing their entrepreneurial spirit. To bring about this change, schools should not only focus on skill-based teachers but also employ dedicated business teachers who can impart entrepreneurship knowledge to the students. By doing so, we can equip the younger generation with the necessary tools and mindset to thrive, create positive impacts, and contribute meaningfully to the society's advancement.

Future plans for the self-led business

In the upcoming five years, my company envisions the establishment of the School of Money Wisdom, dedicated to providing young individuals with a supportive platform to nurture and amplify their innate creative potential. This initiative aims to make education materials and experienced teachers readily accessible at affordable prices, with a particular focus on empowering underprivileged children. Additionally, we aim to develop an electronic marketplace that will serve as a platform for showcasing their creative talents and enabling them to sell their products to generate income.

To achieve this ambitious goal, I plan to offer affordable online courses for sale, with the proceeds being directed towards funding the capital-intensive project that requires a significant investment amounting to hundreds of dollar. This strategic approach will help us turn our vision into a reality and empower the younger generation with the tools and resources needed to succeed in their creative pursuits and financial ventures.

Crucial advice to our readers who are working mothers

As a working mother, I can personally attest to the multitude of challenges we encounter while striving to balance family responsibilities and professional aspirations. One of the most significant struggles we face is the difficulty in securing funds for our ventures, often being met with numerous rejections when seeking financial support.

To address these challenges and foster personal growth and financial stability, here are some



practical steps that can be taken: Consider building or joining an economically-oriented women's group comprising around 10 like-minded individuals. Such groups can pool financial resources and support each other's business endeavours. Attend business seminars and networking events to connect with others who share similar ambitions and learn from their experiences. Be intentional about parenting and consider seeking guidance from a parenting coach, even using online resources like YouTube if professional services are not easily accessible. Efficiently plan family meals and buy groceries in bulk to reduce the stress of daily meal preparation. Involve children as young as 8 years old, especially those showing interest, in business activities and mentor them in their pursuits. Hire a capable and resourceful helper who can take on some of the responsibilities, especially if you lack a live-in helper. Encourage self-independence in children by teaching them essential skills like cooking, washing, and organising their belongings. Discover and invest in children's creative abilities by enrolling them in skill programs during holidays, fostering entrepreneurship from a young age. Educate children about financial literacy by involving them in discussions about bills and savings, providing them with customised piggy banks and cash books to manage their money responsibly. Prioritise self-care, ensuring adequate rest and a healthy diet to promote both physical and mental well-being. Surround yourself with supportive friends who inspire and motivate you to be the best version of yourself, particularly if your partner is not as supportive.



WASME CORNER

From global to local, unleashing potential of SMEs in Africa and other countries by nominating **WASME Permanent Representatives**

WASME is extending its extensive experience and expertise in the key areas such as technology transfer, skill development, quality control, packaging, market access, export, research and development to enhance the sustainability, competitiveness, and growth of SMEs in different countries in technical trades like aerospace, mechanical, electrical, electronics, chemical, textile, food processing, ceramic, and wooden industries etc.

With special focus on SME development in African Sub-continent along with other countries across the globe, WASME has identified and nominated Permanent Representative (PR) that will partner with WASME in implementing SME development and promotion activities. It includes:



Skill Development & EDP programmes, end to end support for business/ enterprise development by facilitating through consultancy, technology transfer, trade facilitation, incubation support, market, export development and research & development activities to SMEs.



Training of the Trainers (TOT) programme for Skill Development project in all technical trades.



Extending support to SMEs in the area of Digital Infrastructure, E-Commerce, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Robotics, Electric Vehicle (EV), Renewable Energy (RE), Software Development & Hardware etc.



GAP study in various fields and expert consultations for incubation including programmes on enhancing export and marketing.



Access to credit and market by preparing sample Detailed Project Report (DPR) by including cost effective & right technology.



Exposure of the global expertise and experience of WASME to SMEs, through B2B meetings, exhibitions/trade fairs, outreach programmes, buyer-seller meetings and activities with other member countries of WASME.



Advising, formulating and implementing schemes and programmes for enterprises at regional and national level.

WASME is open for collaborating with organizations in different countries and work closely to identify critical issues and problems faced by SMEs and draft an action plan to empower and nurture the growth of SMEs in respective country. Please send your interest or query at dg@wasmeinfo.org and directorpnd@wasmeinfo.org.

WASME CORNER



WASME Signs Agreement with Small Enterprises Development Company (SEDCO), Swaziland.

The Small Enterprises Development Company (SEDCO), develops the Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) (MSMEs) in the Kingdom of Eswatini. (erstwhile Swaziland). It stimulates home grown entrepreneurship with a sustainable economic growth through entrepreneurship development and growth through training, advocacy and business incubation.

To fulfil its mandate of entrepreneurship development it provides business development services to add value to emerging and existing SMMEs.

WASME and SEDCO agreed to work towards the promotion & development of SMEs, enhancing trade cooperation, in the following area as listed below:-

- ◆ SME Marketing Promotion Services (packaging, marketing, export etc.)
- ◆ Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Development Programmes
- ◆ Training of Trainers and accreditation opportunities for trainers and business coaches
- ◆ Development of training and business coaching manuals/Online training in the area of digital marketing, e-commerce, finance etc.
- ◆ Organizing International Conference, Export & International Exhibition and SME Excellence Awards for SMEs
- ◆ End to end EDP training in the area of technology transfer, use of machines and equipment,
- ◆ Exchange of Knowledge and Expertise,
- ◆ Technology, Trade Facilitation, Financial Assistance, Market Linkage for SMEs.
- ◆ Foreign Trade and Multilateral Agreement, WTO & Intellectual Property Right (IPR)
- ◆ Setting up New Business Incubators and Business Incubation Management System (BIMS)
- ◆ Joint Research Studies for Gap analysis as well as for policy advocacy on the burning issues of SMEs in Eswatini.



UN SCAN



ITC

A new grant agreement reconfirms the long-standing partnership between the International Trade Centre, a United Nations agency, and the Government of Ireland to foster inclusive and sustainable trade

Ireland has committed €1 million to support the International Trade Centre (ITC) throughout 2023.

ITC Executive Director Pamela Coke-Hamilton and H.E. Ambassador Noel White, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations and other International Organizations at Geneva, today signed the grant agreement at ITC in Geneva.

The funds provide flexibility and predictability for ITC to implement its Operational Plan 2023 and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The agreement reaffirms the alignment of ITC and Ireland's development priorities by focusing on enhancing the competitiveness of small businesses, addressing global peace and prosperity, and prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable in least developed countries.

'This contribution reflects the importance Ireland attaches to the work of ITC and our ongoing commitment to a positive partnership. Our policy for international development seeks to put the 'furthest behind first'. Through our partnership with ITC, we are helping developing countries, including least developed countries, to meet the challenges

of the 'four Cs' of COVID, climate, conflict and cost-of-living.' H.E. Ambassador Noel White, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations and other International Organizations at Geneva

'Ireland is a reliable, long-term partner of ITC, and we are grateful for our continuing collaboration. Together, we're supporting key players in the global economy – small businesses in developing countries – to navigate crises and changes in the trading landscape. The flexible core financing provided by Ireland allows us to quickly respond to the needs of our clients so they can play a role in inclusive and sustainable trade-led development.' Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, International Trade Centre (ITC)

Source: <https://intracen.org/news-and-events/news/ireland-itc-renew-partnership-to-strengthen-small-firms-in-developing>

ECA

Setting the Stage for Implementation of the Financing Model for MSMEs for the Kingdom of Eswatini n inclusive financing model for MSMEs was developed with technical assistance from the Economic Commission for Africa to alleviate a key constraint for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs): that of access to finance. Although it is estimated that MSMEs in Eswatini have the potential to provide employment opportunities to more than 65 percent of the workforce and contribute over 50 percent of GDP; this potential remains unfulfilled.

At present, the MSME sector employs approximately 92,000 people, representing about 21 percent of the workforce. Furthermore, the MSME landscape in the country is highly skewed towards the informal sector with an estimated 75 percent operating without a business license, thus facing important constraints to growth as many are unable to produce some of the basic financial documentation required by banks.

MSME Director in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Mr. Mluleki Dlamini, indicated that an inclusive financing model for MSMEs was launched during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic on 1st September 2021 with the goal of expanding access to funding, supporting MSMEs' growth and solving the issues in the MSME financing ecosystem. He added that since the launch of the model, the Ministry had organized sensitization workshops for stakeholders and capacity building workshops for MSMEs to ensure effective implementation of the model.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Olayinka Bandele, Chief, Inclusive Industrialization Section, ECA, Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa highlighted that "MSMEs are cornerstones of inclusive and sustainable development, with the potential to significantly accelerate industrialization and support high-value-addition activities. They have an immense potential to promote domestic-led growth in nascent and established industries, to strengthen the resilience of the economy in a challenging environment, and to contribute considerably more to employment and poverty reduction."

In his reflections, Managing Director for Eswatini Development Finance Corporation (FINCORP), Mr. Dumisani Msibi, shared that the MSME Unit had pioneered the review and revamping of the Small-Scale Loan Guarantee Scheme (SSLGS) housed under the Central Bank of Eswatini by expanding the base of financial intermediaries through which MSMEs can access the scheme by including MSME-

oriented non-bank financial institutions. Many MSMEs have taken full advantage of this opportunity in the last two- years. In addition, the Citizen Economic Empowerment Bill meant to strengthen the development and growth of MSMEs – was passed during the month of July 2023 and awaits promulgation of the legislation into law.

Speaking on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer for Federation of Eswatini Business Community, Mr. Mavela Sigwane, commended the Ministry's and ECA's efforts and early successes in implementing the financing model for MSMEs.

Dr. Vinaye Ancharaz, ECA Consultant gave an overview of Eswatini's MSME Financing Model. The inclusive financing model is premised on five (5) key pillars: a) improving MSME financial capabilities; b) enhancing banks' and financial institutions' capabilities to evaluate MSME projects; c) promoting greater competition in the financial sector; d) expanding MSMEs' financing opportunities; and, e) broadening sources of funding for MSMEs, especially high-growth enterprises. Dr. Ancharaz highlighted that the prioritization of recommendations in the model, beginning with impactful "low-hanging fruits", allows for a sequential approach to implementation.

Mr. Sandile Mavuso from Sibongile Beverages extended his gratitude to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, through the MSME Unit, for his participation in the training program. He underscored that the new financing model was needed for the manufacturing, arts, and technology sectors to thrive locally and serve both the local and export markets.

The official project close-out meeting with the Government of Eswatini showcased some of the early success stories from implementation of the financing model in Eswatini. Ms. Maria Ngarachu, Economist, Inclusive Industrialization Section at ECA indicated that the intention is to roll out the

support to the region, starting with adaptation of the financing model to at least two to three SADC member States. Countries with a clear MSME policy focus and key stakeholders who have already expressed interest in the support to the MSME sector would stand to benefit from the project roll-out.

Source: <https://www.uneca.org/stories/setting-the-stage-for-implementation-of-the-financing-model-for-msmes-for-the-kingdom-of>

IFAD

New partnership to promote decent work across food systems

The new alliance between ILO, IFAD and CARE will promote decent work and productive employment, with the aim of tackling poverty and inequality in the sector while also promoting sustainable business.

A new multi-stakeholder partnership to advance labour and human rights, decent jobs and fair and adequate incomes and wages within the agri-food sector has been formed by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and CARE International. The Decent Work for Equitable Food Systems Coalition will promote decent and productive employment across food systems. Its priorities are based on the four pillars of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda: rights at work; full and productive employment; social protection; and social dialogue.

The Coalition will build partnerships with Member States, employers' and workers' organizations, civil society, business, international organizations, employment and labour institutions, and food systems communities. It provides a space to share and leverage experience on strategies needed to improve the working conditions and livelihoods of agri-food workers and promote sustainable enterprises in the sector. Agri-food jobs are among most hazardous, unprotected and poorly paid. Two-thirds of those workers classified as 'extremely poor'

are in agriculture. In some countries, agricultural workers are excluded from general labour legislation. They may therefore lack the rights and legal protections available to workers in other sectors.

"Recent crises have exposed the frailty of our food systems, highlighting the serious employment and labour challenges facing agri-food workers and businesses. Building resilient and equitable food systems that produce enough nutritious food for the world's growing population requires an approach that guarantees the rights of agri-food workers, addresses decent work deficits and promotes sustainable growth of the agri-food sector. The ILO has a wide range of tested tools and methods to effectively advance such approaches," said Alette van Leur, Director of the ILO's Sectoral Policies Department.

"Tackling inequality must be at the heart of sustainable development. IFAD's vision of inclusive and sustainable rural transformation is one in which extreme poverty is eliminated and every rural family works and lives in dignity. The international community, and initiatives such as the Coalition have an important role to play in achieving this," said Tom Anyonge, IFAD Lead Technical Specialist, Youth, Rural Development and Institutions.

"We cannot address extreme poverty worldwide until we address economic justice and equitable livelihoods for every farmer, fisherfolk and worker in food systems. At CARE we know this reality far too well. For over 75 years, CARE has led the way to a better life for the world's most vulnerable people. We welcome others to join us in this daunting yet necessary challenge for justice," said Christine Campeau, Advocacy Director, CARE International.

The three organisations will build on their collective mandates to accelerate a substantial increase in impactful actions by stakeholders across food

systems. Together, the coalition will deliver concrete progress on achieving a fairer and more equitable world of work for the 4.5 billion people dependant on food systems for their livelihoods.

Source: <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/-/new-partnership-to-promote-decent-work-across-food-systems>

ADB

ADB Approves Loan to Upgrade Skills and Competitiveness in Bangladesh

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$300 million loan to strengthen the skills base and training programs for Bangladesh's workforce.

The economy of Bangladesh has been growing at more than 7% on average from 2011 to 2019. The growth has been driven by the country's thriving ready-made garment industry, remittances, and public investments. To reach its goal of high-income status by 2041, Bangladesh strives to diversify its economic base and transition into the high-value, high-skilled manufacturing space. Higher levels of skills and education among the country's workforce will be required to drive this transformation as few graduates now have industry-required technology-based skills.

"ADB has been supporting Bangladesh's nationwide skills program and is committed to further enhancing the skills and productivity of its large young workforce, with emphasis on technology-oriented advanced skills, managerial capabilities, and innovation capacity based on research and development," said ADB Principal Social Sector Specialist Sunhwa Lee.

"This initiative assists the government in increasing a highly skilled workforce across industries to foster technology adoption and boost industry competitiveness, creating synergy with other ADB interventions in the country," said ADB Country Director for Bangladesh Edimon Ginting.

ADB will support the government to expand training partnerships with industries, universities, and training institutions to provide industry-aligned skills training for priority and emerging sectors, such as automotive, light engineering, and pharmaceutical industries. The program will also build the institutional capacity of training institutions to deliver advanced skills training with technology applications, such as smart textile technologies and green technologies. ADB will facilitate technical cooperation with international partners for transfer of knowledge and capacity development.

The ADB-financed program will strengthen mid-level managerial development courses for garments and other priority industries to produce a cadre of managers abreast of global technology trends and green business practices. It will also provide competitive grants for university-industry collaborated research and development projects to stimulate innovative solutions for industries.

Skills courses with international certification will be scaled up for potential migrant workers to gain better employment opportunities overseas and increase remittance flows. In addition, special skills programs will be created for vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, transgender people, and people in small ethnic communities. For women workers in the garment sector who are at high risk of job loss due to automation, upskilling and multi-skilling will be provided, along with support for alternative livelihood, green entrepreneurship, and community-based empowerment.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region.

Source: <https://www.adb.org/news/adb-approves-loan-upgrade-skills-and-competitiveness-bangladesh>

ABOUT WASME

WASME is an International Non-Governmental Organization that has observer and consultative status with many UN agencies, such as UNIDO, UNCTAD, UNICITRAL, WIPO, ILO, ECOSOC, UNESCAP, ITC, and UNESCO. Additionally, WASME has several inter-governmental and international organization affiliations. It has been striving to stimulate, foster, promote, and coordinate international cooperation for the growth & development of MSMEs.

WASME was founded in 1980 with the goal of supporting MSMEs in member countries. We have achieved this through our strong association with local government bodies, regional authorities, international linkages, civil societies, SMEs, etc. We are continuously working to improve our innovative and sustainable framework so that we can better serve MSMEs around the world.

WASME's vision is further realized and advanced with the consistent support of its large base of member representatives in over 100 countries.



WASME's focus is on MSMEs by providing technology transfer and trade promotion through international/regional conferences/workshops/seminars. WASME also organizes programs on various important issues for the growth of MSMEs such as IPRs, Skill Development, Certification & Accreditation, ICT, Marketing, Global Supply Chain, Technology Transfer, Entrepreneurship development, quality control, AI, Machine learning, robotics, etc.

WASME also publishes monthly "World SME News" which features developments in the MSME sector from around the world, as well as a fortnightly e-newsletter called the "SME e-Bulletin". These two organs act as a way to disseminate information among members and advocate for sustainable and regenerative MSME development and growth.

CORE ACTIVITIES



Articulating concerns and interests of MSMEs at various national and international level.



Developing relationship between MSMEs in developed and developing countries by encouraging enterprise-to-enterprise cooperation in the area of skill development, technology transfer and export;



International cooperation by networking with MSME promotion organisation at national and international level.



Enlarging collaboration with UN agencies and international organisations.



Capacity building of MSMEs through seminar, EDP and skill development programmes.



Information dissemination on technology, export, marketing, match making etc. in MSME sector.



Carrying out research and studies on national/international issues confronting MSMEs.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

WASME has members in different countries across the world. Member constituents represent industrial promotional organizations of various types and come from highly industrialized, developing and transition economies, as well as least developed countries. WASME has a broad membership spectrum that includes:

Categories

General Members

- ◆ Ministries/ Government Departments
- ◆ Public Sector Undertakings/Semi Government Organization
- ◆ Export Promotion Councils/ Trade Councils
- ◆ Financial Institutions/ Banks/ NBFCs
- ◆ SME Promotion Organization/Enterprise Development Organization

Chambers/ Industry Associations/ SME Associations

International & Regional Federations/ Associations

Associate Members

- ◆ Corporations, Consulting Firms
- ◆ Partnership/ Proprietorship/ LLP etc
- ◆ Research Institutes/ Technical Institutes/ Universities
- ◆ Individual Consultants/ Experts/ Students
- ◆ NGOs/ SMEs etc.

Associate Membership-Indian Chapter

Any General Member or Associate Member who is willing to be Permanent Member of WASME

Benefits to Members

Collaborating with other members on issues of common interest to enable local SMEs gain access to a variety of advantages, such as:

- ◆ Making advantage of a vast network of WASME to create new alliances
- ◆ Building a global network and making your voice heard
- ◆ Globally promoting your company using WASME marketing platforms
- ◆ Possessing the chance to organise or present at WASME Global Conferences, Seminars, Exhibitions, events, and programmes
- ◆ Having your interests represented at multilateral organizations including UN organizations, national and international forums etc.
- ◆ Sharing your opinions and ideas in WASME publications
- ◆ Get access to WASME Resource Centre of Knowledge, Experts, Technology, Trade Facilitation, Financial Assistance, Market Linkage etc.
- ◆ Get tailor made services and support

For more information visit our

Website: www.wasmeinfo.org

Contact: membership@wasmeinfo.org

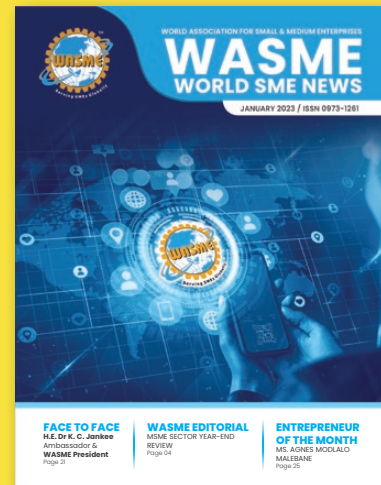
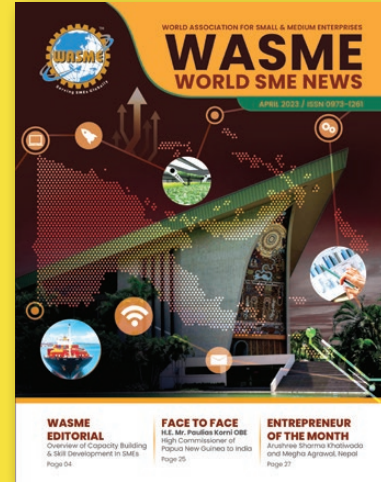
WARNING

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WORLD SME NEWS NEWS 2022-23 ISSUES

Postal Regd. No. : UP/GBD-163/2019-21

Registrar Newspaper of India under RN No.UPENG/2002/10196



WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

WASME House, Plot No. 4, Sector- 16/A, Institutional Area,
Film City, Noida- 201301, Uttar Pradesh, India

Call us: +91 120 4216283 / 4216284, Fax: +91 120 4216283

Email: wasme@wasmeinfo.org • Website: www.wasmeinfo.org