WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

WASME
WORLD SME NEWS

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IN THIS ISSUE

READERS' REVIEW

“The WASME Editorial on E-commerce's role in the SME sector is a must-read for entrepreneurs. It brilliantly outlines the significance of digital commerce in today's business landscape. Mrs. Shraddha Sawhney's guest article provides a compelling perspective, making this edition highly informative and thought-provoking.”

Gillian Shaver
Johannesburg, South Africa

“WASME events are highly inclusive and informative. They bring together academias, policymakers and industry experts for highly engaging and productive discussions. The opportunities to learn and network for hand-holding and development for SMEs are well-utilized.”

Marlene Gonzales
Halifax, Nova Scotia

“The Entrepreneur of the Month feature, showcasing Mr. Junaed Ahmed, is truly inspiring. His journey as the Founder and CEO of ePolli in Bangladesh demonstrates the potential and resilience of SMEs. This addition adds a personal touch to the newsletter and motivates aspiring entrepreneurs.”

Bela Walia,
Jaipur, Rajasthan

“The are in-depth and thorough and they cover a myriad to topics related to SMEs growth. I really like the topic for an issue concept, as well. For future purposes, it will be easy to find that issue that applied to the topic well.”

Michael Zhrab,
Dubai,UAE

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Connect with us
editor@wasmeinfo.org
wasme@wasmeinfo.org
91-120-4216283/6284

FROM THE DESK OF SECRETARY GENERAL

Dr. Gyan Prakash Agarwal

Welcome to the September edition of the WASME newsletter!

Here at WASME, our unwavering dedication to fostering the growth and progress of SMEs worldwide remains resolute. As we move forward on this journey, we are pleased to present another insightful issue, brimming with valuable content that sheds light on crucial aspects of our mission.

We are excited to announce that SEDCO and WASME have joined forces through an MOU to support MSMEs in Eswatini. Over the next five years, WASME HQ in India will offer specialised services and expert knowledge in key areas, propelling the comprehensive development and promotion of MSMEs in the kingdom. Discover more about this partnership and other updates in the WASME Updates section.

In this edition, our spotlight turns to Ethiopia in our 'Country Focus' segment. We delve into the SME landscape in Ethiopia, exploring challenges, government initiatives, and essential resources. This knowledge can provide valuable insights and opportunities for our SME community. In our 'Industry Scan,' we take a deep dive into the critical issue of Financing SMEs and the emerging global best practices. We examine the trends, innovations, and strategies that SMEs can leverage to thrive in these dynamic fields.

In our editorial, we explore the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and how it is driving enhancements in intra-regional SME integration. We've also prepared a guide for SMEs on using AfCFTA in the editorial. Mr Ajith D Perera, Executive Secretary of APTA Chamber of Commerce, offers a compelling guest article that delves into the trade relations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Our 'Entrepreneur of the Month' spotlight shines on an extraordinary individual from Swaziland, Mr. Mkhuleko Bigboy Shongwe, the Founder of Avtex Investments Pvt. Ltd. He shares his personal journey of starting his own business amid personal challenges and structural obstacles.

In the 'UN Scan' section, we bring you the latest developments related to the United Nations, offering insights into global efforts that impact our SME community.

As always, our mission is to provide you with valuable insights and resources that empower SMEs worldwide. We hope you find this newsletter enlightening and informative. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for being a part of our vibrant WASME community. Together, we continue to drive economic development and foster innovation in the SME sector.

Happy reading!

WASME EDITORIAL

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): Enhancing intra-regional SME integration

Signing of AfCFTA and Member Nations

On March 21, 2018, during the 10th Summit of the African Union, nearly all African countries signed the historic African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, establishing the world's largest free trade zone. This agreement connected 55 nations and a population of 1.3 billion people, contributing a combined gross domestic product (GDP) valued at \$3.4 trillion.

Regional Integration in Africa: As-is Assessment

AfCFTA was conceived to address the persistent economic fragmentation of the African continent, where trade barriers have remained high. While statutory tariffs have dropped to below 5% for approximately half of the countries, they remain elevated for sensitive sectors. Additionally, numerous non-tariff barriers in services and other domains, fragmented rules governing investment and competition, and insufficient institutions like customs management further hinder continental economic integration. Africa's global trade and GDP representation is disproportionately low, accounting for less than 3% of the world's trade and GDP while being home to 16.7% of the global population. Signatory countries engage in limited trade with one another, with less than 8% of their exports directed toward prospective member nations. Even compared to overall intra-regional trade in Africa (approximately 11%), this proportion is meagre, highlighting significant constraints on regional trade growth. Poverty reduction remains a paramount concern in Africa, as indicated by high poverty headcount ratios (the percentage of the population living below the \$1.90 per day poverty line) across AfCFTA countries, averaging 32.2%. These ratios vary widely, ranging from 77.8% in Madagascar to 0.5% in Algeria and Mauritius.

Tapping the Potential

1. Intra-African Trade

One of the most significant impacts of AfCFTA would be on intra-African trade, particularly in the realm of manufacturing. By 2035, total export volumes are expected to surge by nearly 29% compared to the business-as-usual scenario. Intracontinental exports could skyrocket by over 81%, while exports to non-African nations would also rise by 19%, creating fresh opportunities for African manufacturers and workers. The anticipated benefits stem, in part, from reduced tariffs, which have persistently remained high in several regional countries. Even more substantial gains would materialise through the lowering of trade costs, achieved by diminishing non-tariff barriers and enhancing both physical and administrative infrastructure at borders—commonly referred to as trade facilitation measures. These measures aim to streamline procedures, reduce compliance costs for traders, and ultimately simplify the integration of African businesses into global supply chains. These reforms, while undoubtedly challenging, promise substantial rewards.

Moreover, enhanced intra-African trade would notably benefit women by narrowing the gender wage gap and offer improved employment prospects for all workers, particularly through the growth of the manufacturing sector. Studies predict that compared to a business-as-usual scenario, AfCFTA's implementation could lead to an almost 10% increase in wages, with more significant gains expected for unskilled workers and women. Projections suggest that by 2035, implementing this agreement could uplift an additional 30 million individuals from extreme poverty and 68 million from moderate poverty. Furthermore, the full realisation of AfCFTA could potentially yield substantial real income gains, increasing by approximately 7%, equivalent to nearly $450 billion. In light of the economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, AfCFTA offers a long-term platform for reform and integration across African economies.

2. SMEs

For non-sensitive products, which constitute a substantial portion of AfCFTA trade, a comprehensive liberalisation plan is in place. These products are set for full liberalisation at a rate of 90%, with tariffs completely phased out over a 10-year timeframe for least developed countries and a faster 5-year timeframe for non-least developed nations. Sensitive products, on the other hand, will undergo a more gradual liberalisation process, starting at a rate of 7%. Tariffs on these products will be eliminated within 13 years for least developed countries and 10 years for non-least developed countries. Additionally, there is a category of excluded products, comprising 3% of goods, which will not be subject to liberalisation under AfCFTA.

The distinction between sensitive, non-sensitive, and excluded products is made based on various criteria,

including their contribution to employment, revenue generation, export earnings, food security, national security, fiscal revenue, livelihood, and industrialization. These trade liberalisation measures are designed to facilitate the smooth integration of African economies, promote intra-African trade, and contribute to the overall economic development of the continent.

Tariffs applied to 90 percent of goods under AfCFTA will undergo a gradual reduction process, with the aim of complete elimination. This reduction will occur annually, and over the course of 10 years for least developed countries (LDCs) and a shorter 5-year period for non-LDCs. For products exported from an AfCFTA State Party into a non-LDC, the tariff reduction schedule is as follows: a 25 percent tariff in 2021, decreasing to 20 percent in 2022, and further reducing to 15 percent in 2023. These reductions will continue annually until the product is traded without any duties by the year 2026. A small proportion of goods, specifically 3 percent categorised as 'excluded' products, will not undergo tariff elimination and will maintain their tariff rates. This status will be reviewed periodically every five years. Additionally, 7 percent of 'sensitive' goods will see their tariffs gradually reduced within a timeframe of 10 years for non-LDCs and 13 years for LDCs, contributing to the broader trade liberalisation efforts within AfCFTA.

In the context of AfCFTA and the liberalisation of trade in services, there are four distinct modes of supply. The first mode, known as "cross-border supply," involves the flow of services from the territory of one AfCFTA member into the territory of another member. An example of this is architectural services transmitted via telecommunication or mail. The second mode, termed "consumption abroad," occurs when a service consumer travels to another member's territory to obtain a specific service. For instance, a company may visit an architect's home country to utilise their building design services. The third mode, "commercial presence," involves a service supplier from one member establishing a territorial presence in another member's territory through ownership or leasing of premises. This presence enables them to provide services within that territory. An example could be an architect establishing a branch of their company in another country to offer their architectural services locally. The fourth and final mode is "presence of natural persons." This mode involves an individual from one member entering the territory of another member to supply a service. An illustration of this is an architect temporarily working in another country to provide their services for a specific project.

3. Key Sectors

AfCFTA has identified five key sectors for prioritised liberalisation efforts. These sectors encompass Business Services, Communications, Financial Services, Transport, and Tourism. AfCFTA aims to enhance transparency and facilitate trade in services by publishing "schedules of specific commitments" for AfCFTA State Parties in these priority sectors. These schedules will outline the removal of trade barriers, which could encompass measures such as visa and residence restrictions and requirements for local content or business participation. Additionally, they will detail how AfCFTA State Parties plan to support cross-border trade in services, including initiatives like the mutual recognition of professional qualifications. While these five sectors are in the spotlight for immediate liberalisation, other service sectors will undergo progressive liberalisation in subsequent rounds of negotiations within the AfCFTA framework. This approach is intended to promote the expansion of trade in services and foster greater economic integration across the continent.

4. Women-led Firms

Trade within the ECOWAS Region encompasses both formal and informal channels, encompassing the exchange of goods and services. Notably, a significant portion of cross-border traders within the continent, approximately 70 percent, are women. Recognizing the importance of gender equality and the enhancement of women's export capabilities, AfCFTA State Parties have committed to specific goals in this regard. Achieving these objectives entails the implementation of tangible policy measures and investments to ensure the effective integration of women into value chains, employment opportunities, and the broader benefits arising from the AfCFTA, as highlighted by UNDP in 2020. To support women's participation in the AfCFTA, several priority actions have been identified, including providing information and awareness about the AfCFTA, its advantages, and its key priorities. Additionally, there is a focus on capacity-building regarding AfCFTA tools and mechanisms, improving access to financing and essential inputs, enhancing production tools, facilitating marketing opportunities, fostering networking among women entrepreneurs, and promoting the involvement of women in decision-making processes. Empowering women in decision-making spheres is also an essential component of these efforts.

One noteworthy initiative is the SheTrades program led by the International Trade Centre (ITC), which aims to empower women-owned businesses to capitalise on the trade opportunities created by the AfCFTA. This program focuses on capacity building, networking, and advocacy. It collaborates with more than 50 women's business associations across the continent to address priority issues for women within the AfCFTA framework and engage in dialogues with trade negotiators to advance women's economic participation and empowerment.

Tools for SMEs to enter into trade under AfCFTA

Rules of origin: Rules of origin serve as a "passport" for goods within a free trade area (FTA), allowing them to circulate without duties as long as they meet the criteria for originating within the FTA. These rules are essential in determining a product's national source, particularly given the complexities of modern production and assembly processes. They define the conditions that a product must satisfy to qualify as originating within an FTA, ensuring it receives preferential treatment such as reduced import tariffs within the FTA. Under the AfCFTA Agreement, a committee on rules of origin oversees the implementation, transparency provisions, and submits reports for review. These rules assign an economic nationality to products, facilitating their eligibility for preferential treatment, like tariff reductions, within the AfCFTA, provided they originate from a member country. Additionally, the rules of origin consider a product as originating from a State Party if it has either been wholly obtained within that party, undergone substantial transformation, or undergone specific processing within that territory. The criteria include adding a certain percentage of value to the final product, a change in the Harmonized System (HS) Classification, and specific processing stages. These conditions help determine a product's economic nationality and eligibility for preferential treatment within the AfCFTA.

The documents required under AfCFTA include an origin declaration form is a statement regarding the origin of goods, typically provided by the manufacturer, producer, supplier, exporter, or another authorised individual. This statement is included on documents like the commercial invoice or any other documentation related to the goods being exported. An AfCFTA Certificate of Origin is an official document issued by a recognized authority, such as the Customs Authority or National Chamber of Commerce, as evidence of a specific product's compliance with the origin requirements

specified in the Annex Protocol on Trade in Goods, which enables it to qualify for preferential trade treatment. A supplier's declaration is a statement in which a supplier furnishes details to their customer regarding the origin status of goods in accordance with the particular preferential rules of origin.

AfCFTA Tariff Negotiation Tool: The AfCFTA Tariff Negotiation Tool is a digital platform designed to streamline the negotiation process for tariff lines. It offers a secure online environment for chief negotiators to efficiently create and distribute tariff concession proposals, ensuring transparency, timeliness, and simplicity in the negotiation process.

Documenting, Observing, and Removing Non-Tariff Obstacles: Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) pose significant challenges to trade within Africa, making them a focal point for the AfCFTA's objectives. The goal is to gradually eliminate existing NTBs and prevent the introduction of new ones to enhance intra-African trade. SMEs often encounter various NTBs, including stringent customs requirements, import restrictions, onerous document demands, and specific quality and packaging prerequisites. SMEs can mitigate the impact of NTBs by conducting thorough research on the necessary documentation for accessing their target markets, engaging professional service providers like freight forwarders, adhering to official trade channels, seeking guidance from government entities and industry associations, and utilising trade portals offered by countries to streamline trade procedures. The AfCFTA has established an online reporting and monitoring system known as the Continental Non-Tariff Barriers Reporting Mechanism to streamline trade by eliminating non-tariff barriers. This mechanism, officially recognized under the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Goods, has been negotiated and launched by all AfCFTA Member States. It allows anyone engaged in cross-border trade in Africa, whether from small, medium, or large businesses, informal sectors, or women and youth entrepreneurs, to report obstacles encountered during trade activities. Upon reporting, government authorities responsible for addressing these barriers will take action to resolve the issues. Each AfCFTA State Party has designated National Focal Points to oversee this process, with support from the NTB Coordination Unit in the AfCFTA Secretariat and regional economic community NTB Units. Once the reported non-tariff barrier is successfully eliminated, the trader is notified accordingly. This online tool simplifies the reporting process, making it accessible to all and facilitating prompt resolution of trade-related challenges.

Pan-African Payments and Settlement System: The PAPSS, developed by the Africa Export-Import Bank (AFREXIMBANK) and endorsed by the African Union Assembly, represents a significant innovation in cross-border payments for trade within Africa. Unlike the traditional correspondent banking system, which is costly and time-consuming, PAPSS offers a centralised digital platform for conducting intra-African trade payments instantly and in African currencies. This system not only ensures speedy transactions but also reduces costs, enhances

accessibility, and minimises the reliance on foreign exchange, thanks to its multilateral netting settlement approach. PAPSS aims to benefit small and medium-sized enterprises by providing a more affordable, user-friendly, and low-risk transaction environment. Its initial pilot phase has been implemented in the West African Monetary Zone, covering countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, and Liberia.

African Trade Observatory: The African Trade Observatory (ATO) plays a crucial role in providing up-to-date and reliable data that serves as a foundation for informed business decisions and policy formulation, as well as for tracking the progress and impact of the AfCFTA. The ATO encompasses several modules, each designed to serve distinct purposes. The "Explore Module" allows users to compare trade and market access data across various dimensions, such as countries, products, and markets. It offers insights into market opportunities, conditions, business contacts, market share, growth potential in exports and imports, trade agreements, and applicable Rules of Origin certificates. The "Compare Module" offers comprehensive information on specific country-product-market combinations, including trade figures, applied and MFN tariffs, and export potential analysis by product. Lastly, the "Monitor Module" is a restricted module used for tracking intra-African trade trends over time, accessible to designated entities like ATO Focal Persons, the Steering Committee, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and the African Union Commission (AUC).

E-Commerce: The scope of E-commerce encompasses a wide range of critical issues. This includes governance and management of data, addressing data protection, security, privacy, and the establishment of rules governing various data types, such as personal, company, health, and public data. It also addresses the need for coordinated cybercrime laws and investigations while considering intermediary service provider liability. The rules delve into cross-border data flows and regulations on data localization. Furthermore, they encompass aspects related to electronic transactions, electronic signatures, and jurisdiction in cross-border electronic transaction disputes. E-commerce taxation aspects involve prohibiting customs duties on electronic transfers, establishing de minimis thresholds, and simplifying customs regimes to promote e-commerce parcel trade. Trade facilitation is emphasised with the inclusion of electronic single windows, automated customs procedures, and online publication of customs documents. The rules extend to the liberalisation of goods trade and services trade commitments necessary to support e-commerce, particularly in telecommunications, computer services, electronic payments, and delivery services. Intellectual property rights in the realm of e-commerce are addressed, with specific considerations given to aspects like source code, algorithms, and the prevention of cyber theft of trade secrets. Competition-related provisions encompass defining dominance and anti-competitive practices, acknowledging the unique challenges posed by digital business models and the significance of data. Moreover, the rules incorporate provisions for online consumer protection, covering areas such as returns, consumer safety, and supplier liability. Lastly, other aspects covered include open government data and provisions related to e-procurement.

Conclusion

AfCFTA carries significant implications for small and medium-scale producers and traders across the continent. Firstly, it promises improved access to trade financing, which has historically been a challenge for many SMEs. Secondly, AfCFTA presents the opportunity for growth by allowing these businesses to enter new markets within the African region. Thirdly, the agreement's focus on expanding manufacturing within Africa's borders is expected to create more job opportunities, particularly benefiting SMEs. Moreover, AfCFTA simplifies the process of procuring raw materials from other African countries, leading to reduced production costs for various goods and products. This, in turn, opens doors for setting up assembly firms in different African nations. Larger enterprises will also be able to collaborate with SMEs under the AfCFTA framework, sharing their expertise in processing raw materials, introducing best practices, and transferring valuable technology. As a result of increased trade between African countries facilitated by AfCFTA, SMEs and traders are poised to experience improved profitability, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of livelihoods across the continent. This historic trade agreement holds the promise of reshaping the economic landscape for small and medium-sized businesses in Africa.

GUEST ARTICLE

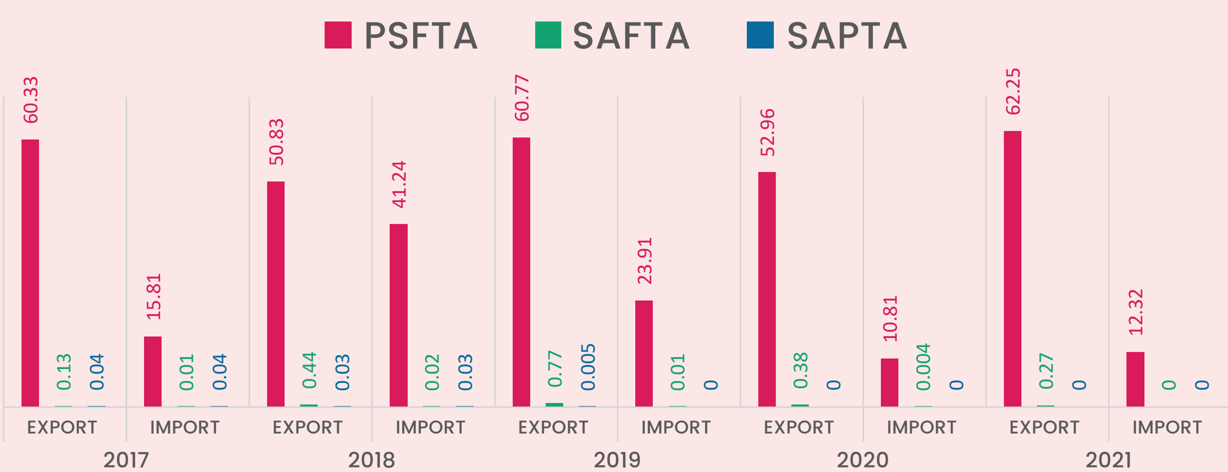
Pakistan - Sri Lanka Trade Relations

Mr. Ajith D Perera

Ajith D. Perera has over 20 years of experience in both the retail and corporate sectors, both locally and internationally, as a former banker turned corporate executive. He is the president of the Professional Business Coaches Association and Executive Secretary of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He was also the Secretary-General and CEO of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry from 2014 to 2022. He is a writer and speaker on trade agreements.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka share warm and friendly relations through a long history based on religion, culture and trade. In modern times both countries further cemented the cooperation through sports, technology, and defense. Pakistan and Sri Lanka commenced formal trade in 1955 by providing most-favored nations status (MFN) to each other. On the trade front Sri Lanka's exports to Pakistan were $91.86 Mn in 2021 and Pakistan's exports were $394.34 in the same year while combined trade volumes were around USD 486 Mn. The trade balance between two countries has been in favour of Pakistan for the last five (5) years. This is no surprise because in international trade most of the time the bigger economy always tend to export more to the smaller economy. At present Pakistan is the 26th export market for Sri Lanka and Pakistan is the 12th Import partner of Sri Lanka. The other notable feature is neither country is in the other country's top 10 export or import destinations. This was in contrast to the trade patterns in the past. In 1977, Pakistan was Sri Lanka's largest export market with a share of 8.67% supported by strong market penetration of traditional products such as Ceylon Tea amounting to 27,617 MT. Even In 1990, Pakistan accounted for 45.8% of Sri Lanka's exports to SAARC countries and 27.6% of Sri Lanka's imports from same region. Thereafter the trade volumes between two countries showed a sharp decline. The trade landscape between Pakistan and Sri Lanka is supported by Pakistan Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (PSFTA) signed in August 2002 effective July 2005, South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) and South Asia Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA). Under PSFTA Initially Pakistan offered duty-free market access to 206 products and Sri Lanka granted duty-free access to 102 products and later product coverage was increased to over 4000 products.

Bilateral Trade Flow under Trade agreements, Value in US$ Mn



Agreement	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Export	Import	Export	Import	Export	Import	Export	Import	Export	Import
PSFTA	60.33	15.81	50.83	41.24	60.77	23.91	52.96	10.81	62.25	12.32
SAFTA	0.13	0.01	0.44	0.02	0.77	0.01	0.38	0.004	0.27	-
SAPTA	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.005	-	-	-	-	-

However Sri Lanka's low export volumes in 2021 under FTA concessions are amounted to 67% of total exports to Pakistan. The dominant partner Pakistan managed to channel around 93 % of its exports to Sri Lanka outside the PSFTA. Agreement (PSFTA) provide law tariff restrictions for both the countries, but the existing negative list , non-tariff barriers have overshadowed the impacts of tariff rationalization under the PSFTA and in turn, have been the major impediments to export performance for both.

Future works on Sri Lanka Pakistan trade under the FTA should be focused more on identifying realistic export opportunities for Sri Lanka in Pakistan's markets and identifying the possible constraints with which Sri Lanka exporters may face in diversifying its export to Pakistan. Similar exercise should happen on, Pakistan as well since Sri Lanka is an important market for textile products, machinery, and pharmaceuticals along with other products that Pakistan records significant exports to other countries. Any FTA will provide a significant market share to partner countries on the drawing board but to get the best out of FTA's is challenge for some countries. According to trade complimentary index prepared by SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2020) in Islamabad Pakistan-Sri Lanka bilateral trade has the combined potential of over US$ 2.7 billion. One of the major opportunities for Sri Lanka is to enhance its Tea exports which have rapidly declined since 1970-80s.Sri Lanka lost the Pakistan Tea market to Kenya mainly due to the low cost tea came from Kenya. Though imposition of quotas, licenses are true fully against the spirit of free trade Sri Lanka needs to explore more innovative ways of utilizing the quota offered by Pakistan under the FTA for Sri Lankan Tea. The famous quote 'The old questions can only be solved by new solutions "provides the direction to solve the challenge of utilizing the quota up to 10,000 MT of Ceylon Tea in all forms under FTA. The recent market survey indicate the increased popularity of Sri Lankan construction materials in Pakistan market.

Both Pakistan and Sri Lanka are lucrative investment destinations and the close proximity (1531 nautical miles) between Pakistan and Sri Lanka can be covered within 4 days therefore speedy delivery of goods is a positive factor for both countries. By and large both countries are English speaking countries with a sizable proportion of upwardly mobile middle class income earners providing an excellent opportunities for marketing communication. It's important that both governments encourage their exporters to tap the partner country market by incentivizing and granting tax concessions on expenses incurred on research, innovation, and value addition and branding in the partner country to help them adjust to the demands of the partner country market. In case of Sri Lanka the trade support measures need to be upgraded and among those are need for rationalization of HS codes, Implementation of aggressive productivity improvement plan across the major industries, establishment of the national single window, introduction of progressive National Trade Policy (NTP) based on national interest, setting up of a specialized unit for market intelligence, granting subsidies to Sri Lankan exports and special grants to encourage SME'exports etc.

COUNTRY FOCUS

ETHIOPIA

Population
118 million (2021), Urban - 21%, Rural - 79%(2021)

Ethnic groups
Oromo: Around 40%, **Amhara:** Approximately 25%, **Tigray:** Roughly 7%, **Somali:** About 6%, **Sidama:** Around 9%, **Gurage:** Approximately 2%, **Wolaita:** About 4%, **Afar:** Roughly 4%, Other Ethnic Groups: Approximately 3%(2021)

Youth unemployment rate (ages 15-24)
19.1% (2022), Male - 16.6%, Female - 24.6% (2020)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin
Agriculture: 34%, Industry: 16%, Services: 50%

Industries
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture and Agro-processing
- Construction and Infrastructure
- Energy and Hydropower
- Mining and Minerals
- Information Technology (IT) and Software
- Tourism
- Textiles and Apparel
- Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals
- Telecommunications

Ethiopia is a landlocked nation situated in the Horn of Africa, entirely within tropical latitudes. It has relatively balanced dimensions in both its north-south and east-west extents. The capital city is Addis Ababa, often referred to as the "New Flower," positioned near the country's geographical centre. Ethiopia is the most extensive and heavily populated country in the Horn of Africa. Following Eritrea's secession in 1993, which led to the loss of its Red Sea province, Ethiopia became a landlocked country. Ethiopia shares its borders with Eritrea in the north, Djibouti in the northeast, Somalia in the east, Kenya in the south, and South Sudan and Sudan in the west.

Ethiopia, with a population of approximately 123 million as of 2022, ranks as Africa's second most populous nation, trailing only Nigeria. It is also one of the fastest-growing economies in the region, recording an estimated growth rate of 6.4 percent in the fiscal year 2021-22. However, it remains one of the poorest countries, with a per capita gross national income of $1,020. Ethiopia has set a goal to attain lower-middle-income status by 2025. Ethiopia's impressive growth trajectory is based on a consistent pattern of economic expansion over the past 15 years, averaging nearly 10 percent annually, one of the highest rates globally. This growth has been driven primarily by the accumulation of capital, particularly through investments in public infrastructure. Although the country's real GDP growth slowed down between the fiscal years 2019/20 and 2021/22, largely due to various shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the industrial and service sectors experienced a drop to single-digit growth. In contrast, agriculture, employing over 70 percent of the population, was relatively unaffected by the pandemic, contributing slightly more to overall growth compared to previous years. The sustained economic growth over the past decade has resulted in positive trends in poverty reduction, both in urban and rural areas. The percentage of the population living below the national poverty line decreased from 30 percent in 2011 to 24 percent in 2016, accompanied by improvements in human development indicators.

Definition of SME in Ethiopia

- **Small Enterprise:**
  - **Industry:** 6 to 30 hired labourers with capital ranging from 2,001 to 20,000 EUR.
  - **Service:** 6 to 30 hired labourers with capital ranging from 4,001 to 60,000 EUR.
- **Medium Enterprise:**
  - **Industry:** 31 to 100 hired labourers with capital starting from 20,001 EUR and going up to 300,000 EUR.
  - **Service:** 31 to 100 hired labourers.

Name of SMEs	Based for definition			
	maximum Number of employees	Paid up capital or total assets		Included SMEs
		EBT	USD	
Small Enterprises	6-30	100,001 - 1,500,000	4,630 - 69,500	Industry
	6-30	50,001 - 500,000	2,310 - 230,150	Service
Medium Enterprises	31-100	1,500,001 - 20,000,00		Industry
	31-100	500,001 - 7,500,000		Service

Source: Regulation No. 373/2016 and Proclamation No. 954/2016

Characteristics of SMEs in Ethiopia

In the Ethiopian context, Micro and Small Enterprises (SMEs) have emerged as significant contributors to employment generation, with statistics showing that they employ a substantial workforce, second only to the agricultural sector. These SMEs also play a pivotal role in the country's industrial output, constituting over half of the total. Studies indicate that in Ethiopia, small enterprises make up a substantial portion, accounting for 65% of all firms and a remarkable 98% of business entities (Hagos et al., 2014). Consequently, the government is increasingly focusing on SMEs due to their capacity to create meaningful employment opportunities, alleviate poverty, and foster job growth.

Ethiopian policies across different domains, including self-employment opportunities, aim to address gender disparities. There has been an increase in women's participation in SMEs since the inception of the first SMEs strategy in 1997. Nevertheless, annual reports from the region, as indicated by MOUDH (2016), reveal that women's involvement remains limited, particularly in the priority sectors of SMEs such as manufacturing, construction, and urban agriculture.

While women possess the potential to become successful entrepreneurs, contributing significantly to job creation and economic progress, a significant gender gap persists in their participation and the overall success of enterprises owned by them, as underscored by EEA (2022) and IDRC (2020). However, initiatives aimed at empowering women in the economic sphere are yielding positive outcomes. For instance, research indicates that approximately 90% of employees in Ethiopia's Bole Lemi Industry Park are female, marking an improvement compared to previous statistics where men dominated the manufacturing sector of SMEs 91% of the time (Amha, 2011). Nevertheless, research consistently highlights that women's overall engagement remains lower than that of men (EEA, 2022; IDRC, 2020).

SMEs contribution in Ethiopia's economy

- Employment Generation: SMEs are the largest employers in Ethiopia. According to data from the Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency (CSA), SMEs accounted for over 90% of all jobs in the country. This indicates the significant role they play in providing employment opportunities.

- Contribution to GDP: SMEs contribute a substantial portion of Ethiopia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2020, SMEs were estimated to contribute about 50% of Ethiopia's GDP, according to the World Bank. This demonstrates their importance to the overall economy.

- Export Earnings: While large industries dominate Ethiopia's export sector, SMEs have been increasingly contributing to export earnings. This contribution comes from sectors such as textiles, leather products, and handicrafts. Specific export data for SMEs may vary from year to year.

- Rural Development: SMEs are crucial for rural development, as they operate in various sectors, including agriculture and agro-processing. By providing opportunities for income generation and employment in rural areas, they contribute to poverty reduction and regional development.

- Innovation and Growth: SMEs often drive innovation and are agile in adapting to market changes. This innovation can lead to growth in various sectors of the economy, contributing to overall economic development.

Constraints to growth of SME sector in Ethiopia

- Access to Finance: Access to finance remained a major challenge for SMEs in Ethiopia. According to the World Bank, in 2019, only about 12% of Ethiopian SMEs had access to formal credit, primarily due to stringent lending requirements and collateral constraints. This limited access to capital for investment and expansion, hampering SME growth.

- Infrastructure Deficiencies: Inadequate infrastructure continued to be a significant impediment to SME operations. The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report in 2019 highlighted Ethiopia's infrastructure as a key bottleneck, affecting transportation, energy, and logistics. High transportation costs and unreliable electricity supply posed significant challenges for SMEs.

- Limited Access to Markets: Data from the World Bank in 2020 indicated that many Ethiopian SMEs faced difficulties in accessing markets, both domestic and international. The report noted that constraints related to market access, including marketing and distribution challenges, limited their growth potential.

- Regulatory and Administrative Burdens: Regulatory hurdles and bureaucratic red tape remained persistent issues for SMEs. The World Bank's Ease of Doing Business report in 2020 ranked Ethiopia low in terms of ease of starting a business and dealing with construction permits, reflecting the complexities of doing business in the country.

- Skills and Capacity Gaps: A lack of skilled labor and management expertise was a significant constraint for SMEs. According to the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Industry, in 2019, only about 5% of SMEs received formal training for their employees, highlighting the skills gap that hindered their competitiveness.

- Lack of Access to Technology: Limited access to modern technology and digital tools was evident among Ethiopian SMEs, particularly those in rural areas. This digital divide limited their ability to adopt efficient business practices and participate effectively in the digital economy.

- Market Competition: SMEs faced stiff competition, including from larger firms, which was confirmed by data showing challenges in gaining market share. Competition made it difficult for smaller businesses to grow and expand their operations.

- Inadequate Business Support Services: Access to business development services, such as training and advisory support, remained limited. Data from the Ethiopian Investment Commission showed that many SMEs lacked access to these critical services.

Ethiopia government's initiatives to strengthen SME sector

- Access to Finance: The Ethiopian government, through the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), has worked on improving access to finance for SMEs. It has established the Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE) to provide credit and financial support to SMEs at lower interest rates and with more flexible terms.

- SME Development Strategy: The government has adopted a Small and Micro Enterprise Development Strategy that outlines a comprehensive approach to support SMEs. This strategy includes measures to improve access to finance, enhance business development services, and promote innovation among SMEs.

- Business Registration and Licensing Reforms: The Ethiopian government has introduced reforms to simplify business registration and licensing processes. These reforms aim to reduce bureaucratic red tape and make it easier for entrepreneurs to start and operate SMEs.

- Infrastructure Development: The government has invested in infrastructure development, including road networks and electricity supply, to improve logistics and reduce transportation costs for SMEs. These improvements enhance market access and reduce operational constraints.

- Entrepreneurship Training and Capacity Building: Various programs and initiatives offer entrepreneurship training and capacity-building support to SMEs and aspiring entrepreneurs. These programs aim to equip SME owners and managers with the skills and knowledge needed to run successful businesses.

- Export Promotion: The government has focused on promoting exports from SMEs by providing incentives and support. Export promotion agencies work to identify export opportunities for SMEs and facilitate market access.

- Technology and Innovation: Initiatives have been launched to encourage technology adoption and innovation among SMEs. This includes support for research and development, as well as the promotion of digital tools and technologies.

- Access to Markets: The government has taken steps to help SMEs access domestic and international markets. This includes trade facilitation measures, such as trade fairs and exhibitions, to showcase SME products to potential buyers.

- Cluster Development: Efforts have been made to encourage the clustering of SMEs in specific geographic areas and sectors. Clustering can lead to economies of scale, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among SMEs.

- Policy Reforms: The Ethiopian government continually reviews and updates policies and regulations to create a more conducive environment for SMEs. This includes tax incentives and other policy measures aimed at reducing the burden on SMEs.

Useful resources for SMEs operating in Ethiopia

MSME finance providers	Details
Incubators	◆ Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations (ECCSA), headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ◆ Entrepreneurship Development Center (EDC), headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ◆ BlueMoon Ethiopia, headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Banks	◆ Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE), headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ◆ Awash Bank, headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ◆ Dashen Bank, headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
MFI	◆ Addis Credit and Saving Institution (ACSI), headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ◆ VisionFund Microfinance Institution, headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ◆ Buusaa Gonofa Microfinance Institution, headquarters - Oromo, Ethiopia
PE/VC	◆ Precise Consult International, headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ◆ Cepheus Growth Capital Partners, headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ◆ Impact Angel Network Ethiopia, headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Government	◆ Small and Micro Enterprise Development Agency (SMEDA), headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ◆ Addis Ababa City Administration Small and Micro Enterprises Development Agency, headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ◆ Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC), headquarters - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

GLOBAL INDUSTRY SECTOR

SME Financing: Global Practices

Introduction

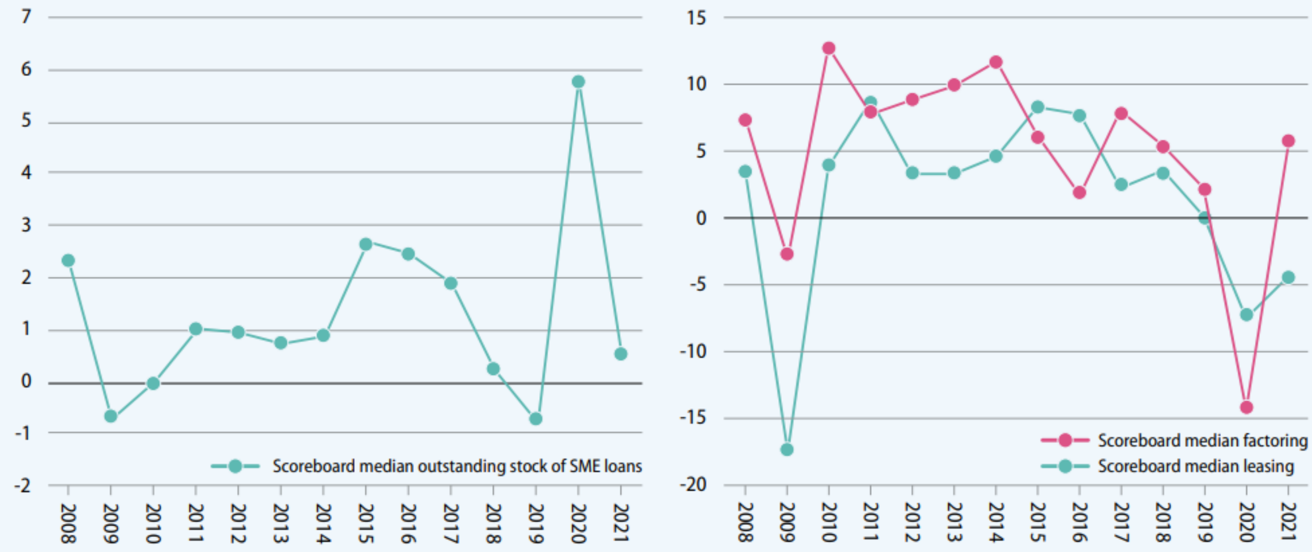
Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) represent a substantial majority, accounting for more than 90% of businesses worldwide. A collaborative study conducted by the IFC and McKinsey in 2010 estimated that there are between 420-510 million formal and informal micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises globally, with the majority, approximately 365-445 million, situated in developing nations. These SMEs play a pivotal role in the global economy as they are the primary drivers of employment and job creation, particularly in developing economies. Moreover, they significantly contribute to the overall economic value added in these regions. Recognizing their significance, the World Bank Group has actively invested in SME finance, with nearly $4.8 billion in ongoing lending across 47 economies through 61 lending projects as of January 2018.

Despite their economic importance, SMEs encounter more substantial financial challenges compared to larger corporations. They have limited access to external financing and grapple with elevated transaction costs and risk premiums. Nearly 70% of SMEs do not utilize external financing from financial institutions, and an additional 15% face underfinancing issues. The total credit required to adequately fund these SMEs surpasses $2 trillion, equivalent to 14% of the total GDP of developing economies. Research across different countries reveals that the likelihood of facing credit constraints decreases with increasing firm size, and SMEs in the least-developed regions, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, and South Asia, are more prone to significant financing challenges. Unsurprisingly, limited access to finance is identified as one of the most significant hindrances to SME growth. Conversely, the availability of external financing is positively correlated with entrepreneurial indicators, including the number of startups and the dynamism and innovation of firms.

Prospects for Enhancing SME Financing

Access to finance is a crucial facilitator for Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to commence operations, invest, expand, build resilience, transition towards green and digital economies, and engage in supply chains. However, many SMEs encounter challenges when seeking bank financing. Additionally, most financing sources beyond traditional bank loans remain accessible to only a limited portion of SMEs, particularly in regions with underdeveloped private capital markets, where SMEs lack the requisite scale, knowledge, and expertise to tap into alternative funding avenues. Nevertheless, recent years have witnessed significant progress in the evolution of alternative financing options, despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020 and 2021, the landscape of SME finance policies was predominantly influenced by the impact of the pandemic. Robust governmental support, particularly in the form of debt financing, bolstered SME finance in 2020. In 2021, there was a gradual return to pre-crisis patterns, marked by a decline in traditional lending and an upswing in alternative financing mechanisms.

Median growth, as a percent, outstanding stock of SME loans (left), leasing and factoring (right)



Source: OECD 2023 SME Financing Scoreboard Highlights, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/finance-and-investment/oecd-financing-smes-and-entrepreneurs-scoreboard-2023-highlights_a8d13e55-en.

Evolution in SME finance policies

Characteristic	Aftermath of the crisis	Recent years
Target beneficiaries	Broad SME population	Subgroups of the SME population: innovative firms, start-ups, lagging regions, women
Support for debt financing	Strong increase in credit gurantee volumes Direct lending Credit mediation	More focus on the delivery and eligibility criteria of support measures Creation of SME banks
Support for equity financing	Equity instruments were kept largely in place	Tax incentives Establishment of funds/funds of funds SME bank activities
Regulatory measures	Emphasis on financial stability Supply-side regulation (bank capital requirements)	Regulation of Fintech industry Emergence of regulatory sandboxes

Source: OECD, Financing SMEs and Enterpreneuurs 2020: An OECD Scoreboard.

Overview of Financing for Small and medium enterprises

Small and medium enterprises require external credit to capitalise on business opportunities and grow. The necessity for credit often arises due to cash flow mismatches, particularly when revenues are received after service delivery. However, SMEs encounter substantial obstacles in obtaining credit. Their financial records are often untimely and not externally audited, making them ineffective for assessing financial health. Moreover, a lack of financial literacy in many developing countries further complicates the process of interacting with financial institutions and preparing required documentation. Even if SMEs navigate these hurdles, collateral becomes a significant challenge as they typically lack sufficient assets. Consequently, SMEs often end up paying higher interest rates, impacting their financial position and growth potential.

To assess borrower risk, banks need reliable information, which SMEs often lack. They struggle to adhere to accounting standards, leading to delayed financial reporting. Additionally, monitoring costs and collateral availability pose challenges, as financial institutions find it easier to monitor large enterprises with collateral. Regulatory bottlenecks further hinder SME lending, with Basel regulations treating SMEs similarly to large corporations, resulting in higher capital requirements and risk premiums. Despite some regulatory efforts to facilitate SME lending, the financing gap remains substantial, with high interest rates often imposed on SMEs. Public sector interventions have had mixed success in bridging this gap. Overall, these challenges persist in SMEs' access to finance.

Analysing the Economic Challenges in Accessing Finance

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) often struggle to access finance due to a combination of financial and non-financial factors. One significant non-financial factor is asymmetric information, where SMEs possess vital information about their revenues and growth opportunities that lenders lack, making it challenging to provide audited financial statements and business plans. Loss/regret aversion further complicates lending decisions, as individuals tend to avoid riskier SME lending. Defensive decision-making can occur in public-sector-dominated financial systems, where decision-makers choose suboptimal options to avoid negative consequences. Satisficing is another issue, where lending processes may not evolve to meet SME needs effectively. Additionally, public goods like credit registries and collateral registries often require government intervention as private entities lack incentives. Robust property rights and insolvency systems are crucial for SMEs facing financial difficulties, enabling smoother restructuring or liquidation processes.

Gaining access to credit within the financial system necessitates the provision of dependable, timely, and robust financial data, along with well-structured business plans. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) encounter substantial hurdles owing to the quality and timeliness of their financial record-keeping. Frequently, these records lack external auditing, are prepared with a significant lag of 9 to 12 months, rendering them ineffective for assessing financial health. Moreover, given the prevalent financial illiteracy in many Asian and Pacific developing countries, SMEs often find the process of preparing such documentation and engaging with financial institutions bewildering, leading them to steer clear of it.

For those SMEs that navigate past initial financial literacy challenges, another obstacle arises in the form of collateral. SMEs typically lack adequate collateral, posing a significant hindrance to their ongoing growth. Even when loans are approved, SMEs often end up shouldering higher interest rates, impacting their financial positions and growth prospects negatively. In summary, obtaining credit remains a complex ordeal for SMEs due to deficiencies in financial infrastructure, information asymmetry, collateral constraints, and insolvency mechanisms in many Asian and Pacific countries, impeding their access to vital financial resources essential for growth and sustainability.

Promising trends in SME financing globally

Public initiatives addressing the challenges encountered by SMEs encompass three key elements: (i) dedicated financial institutions specialising in SME financing, (ii) schemes for insuring SME credit, and (iii) credit guarantee schemes (CGSs) tailored to SMEs.

CASE STUDY - 1
Republic of Korea - Financial institutions specialising in SME financing

In the Republic of Korea, the Industrial Bank of Korea is legally mandated to allocate 70% of its total loan portfolio to SMEs. The government provides financial support to cover any deficits and may guarantee interest and principal payments on the bank's bonds. The bank's growth surged in the 1980s when the government shifted its industrial policy from larger export-oriented businesses to technology-focused SMEs. It has been providing policy loans to SMEs engaged in the production and sale of intermediate goods. Serving as the country's "SME bank," it has reached 1.42 million clients out of a total of 4 million SMEs in the nation. The bank has a philosophy of supporting SMEs even during economic crises, such as the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and the credit card crisis in 2004. During the global financial crisis, the Industrial Bank of Korea played a pivotal role, contributing $17.6 billion to the total net increase in SME loans. Furthermore, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it remained a significant source of SME financing, providing substantial support to the sector. In 2015, the bank alone offered new loans amounting to W10.3 trillion, representing 20% of the annual W52.8 trillion net growth in SME loans extended by all Korean banks. With a market share of 22.3% in SME loan balances, it is the sole Korean financial institution for SMEs with a market share exceeding 20%. As a policy bank specialising in SME lending, it contributed to the government's fiscal policies in 2015, stimulating the country's creative economy and launching tailored financial products for SMEs, including startups. In the first half of 2018, unsecured loans accounted for 32.3% of the SME loan portfolio and 23.6% of the micro-business portfolio of the Industrial Bank of Korea.

CASE STUDY - 2
Thailand - SME Credit Insurance Schemes

SMEs require credit insurance to safeguard themselves in trade transactions against external risks, including political and macroeconomic factors. Government-owned specialised financial institutions like Thailand's Export-Import Bank (EXIM Thailand) provide various financial services to support SMEs, such as start-up credit, export support, border trade, expansion, and research and development funding. In 2019, EXIM Thailand reported an insurance turnover of approximately $4 billion, reflecting a significant annual growth rate of 31.3%.

CASE STUDY - 3
Sri Lanka - Credit Guarantee Schemes

Sri Lanka does not have a separate credit guarantee organisation, with the Central Bank of Sri Lanka assuming the role of providing credit guarantees for banks to lend to SMEs since 1967. The central bank has been involved in various credit guarantee schemes (CGSs) over the years. The initial CGS in 1967 was aimed at cultivating loans extended by two state banks but was withdrawn in 1978 due to high loan default rates. Subsequent schemes were introduced, particularly for SMEs, to address challenges arising from economic liberalisation in the late 1970s and increased competition from imported branded products.These initiatives have helped Sri Lanka manoeuvre CGS related challenges involving mandatory coverage, loan recovery, high rejection rates for claims, collateral requirements, and strict legal actions, which deterred SMEs from obtaining loans.

Credit Guarantee Schemes (CGS) vary significantly among different countries, each tailored to their specific needs and financial systems. China: Established in 2001, China's CGS is quite complex, involving over 6,000 Credit Guarantee Companies (CGCs), with a strong private sector presence. There's government reinsurance support. India: India's CGS, founded in 2000, consists of two agencies with no private players, and it operates primarily at the individual level. Japan: Japan's CGS, established in 1953, involves 51 regional guarantee corporations and two central agencies. There is no private participation, and it largely focuses on individual guarantees. South Korea: Dating back to 1976, South Korea's CGS comprises 16 regional and two central agencies, with a primary emphasis on individual guarantees. Malaysia: Founded in 1972, Malaysia's CGS features a single central agency with public and private bank participation. It mainly offers individual guarantees. Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka's CGS, initiated in 1967, operates through the Central Bank and lacks private participation. It focuses on individual guarantees. United States: The U.S. has a CGS established in 1953 with the involvement of a government department. It is predominantly portfolio-based and includes government reinsurance support.

Conclusion

SMEs play a vital role in economies, contributing to employment, GDP, and global competitiveness. However, accessing essential financing remains a significant challenge for SMEs. Factors affecting their access to finance include internal issues like governance and external factors like regulatory norms and limited diversified financial institutions. Many countries heavily rely on banks for credit, lacking non-bank financial institutions and venture capital support. Furthermore, there's a lack of credit infrastructure, such as credit registries. Credit Guarantee Schemes (CGSs) have emerged as a key tool to bridge information gaps and expand SME access to credit. CGSs share default risk with financial institutions, enhancing SMEs' access to financing. These schemes have evolved to offer services beyond risk-sharing, including trade insurance, direct lending, and credit information services. To ensure the success of CGSs, countries should conduct a thorough assessment of their purpose, governance structure, and services, adhering to prudent principles in risk management and monitoring. During crises like COVID-19, CGSs have proven valuable in supporting SMEs, and their role should be further recognized and enhanced.

ENTREPRENEUR OF THE MONTH

Mr. Mkhuleko Bigboy Shongwe

From Financial Struggles to Entrepreneurial Success: The Avtex Story

From Adversity to Ambition

Growing up on the outskirts of Manzini, I embarked on a unique journey. I couldn't help but notice that many people, even in my residential area of Ngculwini, were struggling financially, despite holding college and university certificates. It pained me deeply to witness this, and it became the driving force behind my quest for financial independence.

What struck me even more was that some of my own relatives were in this difficult situation. I was determined to make a difference, to join the few individuals striving to combat poverty in my community. My inspiration came from my father, a successful businessman in the welding industry. I admired the work he did and decided to carry on his legacy, with the goal of expanding and adapting it to meet the needs and preferences of our customers. This is how Avtex Investment Pty Ltd came into existence.

Through careful observation and research, I came to realise that in Eswatini, the path to earning an income above the average was through entrepreneurial ventures. It was clear to me that I needed to develop my business skills to make a significant impact. In pursuit of that goal, I earned a diploma in mining and boiler-making engineering from Mangosuthu University in South Africa. Currently, I am passionately pursuing my bachelor's degree in Agricultural Biosystems Engineering. My aim is to enhance my knowledge and skills, empowering me to grow Avtex and contribute even more to my community.

My journey is a testament to the power of determination, family legacy, and the belief that through entrepreneurship and education, we can create positive change in our lives and communities.

Influences of Swaziland Upbringing on Entrepreneurial Vision

In Eswatini, job opportunities are scarce, and many people, particularly civil servants, receive low wages compared to their counterparts in other countries. Due to these circumstances, I conceived a vision to pursue an unconventional path, one that is often less chosen, especially by the youth. My goal was twofold: to achieve financial independence and contribute to lowering the unemployment rates in Manzini.

Hurdles Encountered During the Inception of the Company

The challenges within the steel industry in Eswatini are multifaceted. Firstly, there is a lack of standardised pricing for services provided to clients, making it challenging for businesses to establish

fair and consistent rates. Secondly, operational costs are driven up significantly due to the need to import steel materials from South Africa, which not only adds expenses but also poses logistical challenges. Additionally, the Kingdom of Eswatini faces a shortage of steel materials, further hindering the industry's growth potential.

Moreover, the limited availability of funds presents a significant obstacle. Acquiring machinery to diversify product offerings is a challenge, restricting businesses to a narrow range of steel products when there's potential for a wider array of designs and offerings. In Eswatini, obtaining support and resources for business endeavors is an arduous task, as many institutions require expensive documentation before processing funding requests. While there is a growing willingness among some organizations to assist startups with resources, the associated costs often prove prohibitive for most new businesses, leaving many reliant on their own investments, ultimately stunting business growth in both the short and long term.

Fostering Community Well-Being

At present, there are two individuals from my community who are interning at Avtex Investment Pty Ltd. My objective is to impart valuable skills to them, such as welding, with the intention that they can explore opportunities to establish their enterprises and sustain themselves. Furthermore, one of my future aspirations is to become a mentor to young people, particularly those within my community. I

aim to offer guidance and share insights about the business world, particularly in the field of steelwork, not only through theoretical teachings but also by providing practical demonstrations.

Achievements and Aspirations for Future Growth

It's important to emphasise that Avtex Investments Pty Ltd has a plethora of ambitious goals set for the company's future. With the infusion of funds, Avtex is poised to attain achievements that exceed even the boldest imaginings, primarily owing to the considerable growth potential within the steel industry. Up to this point, Avtex has already made substantial strides. Firstly, the company has garnered increased exposure and gained valuable experience in the intricacies of industry operations. Secondly, by consistently providing exceptional customer service, Avtex has not only expanded its clientele but also established a reputable name, leading to referrals and further client acquisition. Furthermore, Avtex has enjoyed the advantages of economies of scale, particularly since the company's inception, as it has secured substantial projects. Lastly, Avtex has diversified its offerings, now capable of producing a wide array of products to meet the diverse needs of its clients.

Avtex Investments Pty Ltd has an ambitious roadmap for the future, aiming to achieve several significant milestones. Firstly, the goal is to expand the current permanent workforce of three employees to encompass more than ten, thereby contributing to reducing unemployment in the region. Additionally, there's a strong desire to diversify our product offerings, exploring new avenues beyond our current scope. The plan also involves pursuing growth and expansion into various cities within Eswatini and even venturing beyond its borders. Over the next two years, the company aims to achieve a substantial 40% increase in sales, driven by its commitment to staying well-informed about industry trends and maintaining the impeccable reputation that Avtex Investments has diligently built over time.

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@waseminfo.org.**

WASME CORNER

Serving SMEs Globally

SEDCO delegation visit to WASME for Industry Exposure in India

R-L Mr. Skhumbuzo Mbuyisa, Senior Manager Business Incubation, Mr Vijay Kumar, Director General, WASME, Dr. G P Agarwal, Secretary General, WASME, Mr. Sibusiso Musi, Training Manager, SEDCO, and Ms. Archana Sharma, Director Planning and Development, WASME.

Small Enterprises Development Company (SEDCO) and World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises (WASME) has signed MOU for the promotion and development of MSMEs in Eswatini under which WASME HQ in India will be offering highly specialized services and end assistance/ solutions/expert knowledge in the key areas given below for the holistic development and promotion of MSMEs of the kingdom of Eswatini for the next 5 years:

1. Technology Transfer and Upgradation including Innovation
2. Advanced Skill Development Training programme including EDP
3. Testing and Quality Control, national/ international standardization
4. Prototype and product design and development
5. Packaging solutions for products/components
6. Marketing and Export Promotion
7. Setting up of quality control and testing labs
8. Promotion and development of artisans and micro enterprises in rural areas
9. Cluster development programme including setting up of common facility centres

In this context, two senior officials from SEDCO, Eswatini, visited WASME HQ India from 25th September to 30th September to discuss and draw a detailed activity plan for the development and promotion of MSMEs in Eswatini. The delegation included Mr. Skhumbuzo Mbuyisa – Senior Manager Business Incubation and Mr. Sibusiso Musi – Training Manager, SEDCO, and Swaziland that was received and facilitated by Mr Vijay Kumar, Director General, WASME and Ms. Archana Sharma, Director Planning and Development, WASME.

The senior officials of SEDCO visited in and around Delhi to the MSME Institutions, Common Facility Centres (CFC), Business Incubators, Skill Development Training Centres and Prototype Design and Development Centres, MSME units in Textiles, Footwear and Food Processing industry sectors as follows:

- UP International Trade Fair at India Expo Centre, Noida
- Common Facility Centre for Footwear Industry, Bahadurgarh, Haryana.
- Common Facility Centre for Printing & Packaging industry, Karnal
- Common facility Centre for pharmaceutical industry, Karnal
- Industry Visit to MSME in Food Processing Industry Sector manufacturing Bakery Items and Pasta, Marconi as well as manufacturing of Machines
- Industry Visit to MSME in Drugs Manufacturing
- Industry Visit to MSME in Textiles manufacturing garments.
- Amity Innovation Incubator
- Footwear Design Institute, FDDI, Noida
- Fashion Design & Technology Institute (FDTI), Noida

Through the visit to Common Facility Centres, the delegates understood the key strategy for enhancing the productivity and competitiveness as well as capacity building of MSMEs of government of India addressing common issues such as improvement of technology, skills and quality, market access, access to capital, etc. CFC common Production/Processing Centre, Design Centres, Testing Facilities, Training Centre, R&D Centres, Effluent Treatment Plant, Marketing Display/Selling Centre, Common Logistics Centre, Common Raw Material Bank/Sales Depot, etc. for the holistic promotion and development of MSME cluster in respective industry sector.

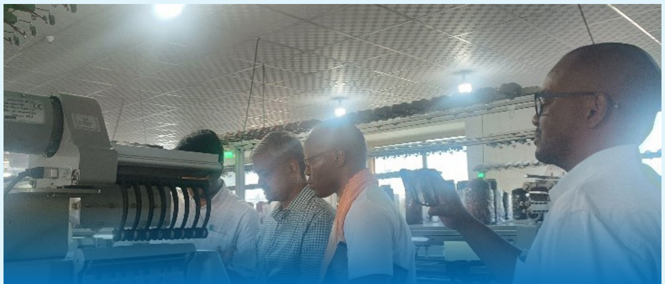
Industry Visits in CFC in Footwear, printing and packaging and pharma industry along with the visit to one of the manufacturing provided the delegation a first-hand exposure to the end-to-end process of manufacturing of the product including raw material, prototype and product design, testing and quality control, branding and packaging, international standard certification etc. The visit also showcased the various cost effective and high-end machines and equipment used in the process, technology transfer, setting up of such CFC and testing labs etc.

The visit to Design Institutes provided understanding of the advanced skill development and specialised training provided to young graduates and existing entrepreneurs in state-of-the-art infrastructure equipped with latest technologies, machines and equipment, testing labs including use and operation of relevant machines and equipments. The advanced training provided in such institute will enable the trainees to start their enterprise immediately and promotes the entrepreneurial culture in the country

Industry visit to the MSME units in footwear, textiles and food processing provided the delegation with end-to-end manufacturing process using cost effective and cutting edge technology and machines improving the production while reducing the cost, employment generation and skill development.

WASME proposed and recommended to set up such CFC and testing centres, industry units, technology transfer, machine equipment and skill development of MSMEs of Eswatini based on the GAP analysis followed by recommendations by WASME.

In the concluding discussion, the delegation was felicitated by the Dr. G P Agarwal, Secretary General, WASME and urged SEDCO to expedite the MSME promotion and development activities in Eswatini through WASME. Mr Vijay Kumar, Director General WASME concluded the meeting by sharing the proposed SME promotion and development activities to be undertaken to SEDCO with support of WASME in coming 5 years beginning from October 2023 to July 2028.


Delegation at CFC Fotwear, Bahadurgarh

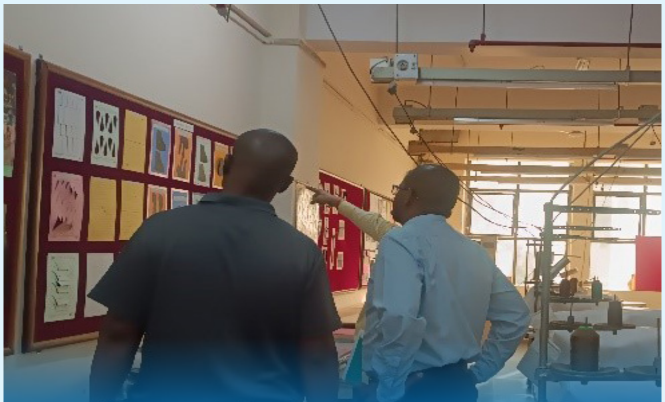
Delegation at CFC Pharmaceuticals, Karnal


Delegation at CFC Printing and Packaging, Karnal


Delegation at Textile MSME Unit in Noida, Delhi NCR


Delegation at Bakery Product Manufacturing MSME Unit in Noida, Delhi NCR

Delegation at Amity Business Incubator Noida, Delhi NCR


Delegation at Footwear Design and Development Institute (FDDI) and Apparel Design Institute, Noida, Delhi NCR

WASME participated at 5th Edition of The Global Sustainability Alliance - SDG Summit 2023.

The World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises (WASME) took part in The Global Sustainability Alliance's SDG Summit 2023's 5th Edition. Dr. Sanjiv Layek, Executive Secretary of WASME, attended the summit on September 27 at the ITC Maurya in New Delhi, and on September 28 at the Dr. Ambedkar International Center in New Delhi. Under the topic of "Strengthening Economies - Collaboration, Financing, Resilience," the WASME team participated as exhibitors and engaged with several MSME units. The fifth edition sought to alter the world by converting concepts into remedies. It concentrated on helping companies adopt greener practices by monitoring and lowering emissions. Along with a variety of experts and innovators, the summit brought together leaders from industry, government, international organizations, and civil society to launch, develop, and scale up entrepreneurial solutions to address climate change and advance sustainable development.

WASME Meetings with Embassies

Embassy of Gabon in India

Dr Sanjiv Layek Executive Secretary WASME with Her Excellency Mrs. Joséphine Patricia NTYAM-EHYA, Chargé d'Affairs a.i, Embassy of Gabon, New Delhi, India and discussed on various topics related to strengthen of SMEs of both countries

Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in India

Dr Sanjiv Layek Executive Secretary WASME with His Excellency Mr. Demeke Atnafu Ambulo, Ambassador, Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, New Delhi, India and Mr. Gebru Teklay, Third Secretary, Embassy of the

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia discussed about the future collaborations with WASME and employment of SMEs of both countries.

Embassy of the Surinam in India

Dr Sanjiv Layek Executive Secretary WASME withH.E. Arunkoemar Hardien, Mr Rajinderpersad Bhoendie, Mr Prasraam Mohanlall and SMEs

World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises (WASME) Celebrates Excellence at World MSME Business Summit 2023

Dr. Sanjiv Layek, Executive Secretary of WASME welcoming H.E. Ms. Lalatiana Accouche, High Commissioner, Embassy of Seychelles;

The World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises (WASME) recently hosted the prestigious World MSME Business Summit 2023, an event that brought together leaders, visionaries, and innovators from across the globe. The summit, held at The Auditorium, Scope Convention Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi, on *Friday, 15th September 2023*, centered around the theme, "Empowering MSMEs: Navigating Opportunities, Overcoming Challenges, and Celebrating Success." The summit provided a vital platform for the exchange of ideas, exploration of policy reforms, and recognition of excellence within the MSME sector.

The event began with a warm welcome from *Dr. Sanjiv Layek,* Executive Secretary of WASME, who extended his heartfelt greetings to all dignitaries and delegates present. Dr. Layek's words highlighted the significance of the MSME sector in today's rapidly evolving business landscape. He emphasized that MSMEs are not only the lifeblood of economies but also the drivers of innovation and employment generation.

The summit featured a distinguished array of Guests of Honour, including ambassadors and prominent personalities from various countries and sectors. Their presence symbolized the growing collaboration between nations and industries in fostering MSME growth. These esteemed guests included H.E. Ms. Lalatiana Accouche, High Commissioner, Embassy of Seychelles; H.E. Alejandro Simancas Marin, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Cuba; and Mr. Rajesh Maheshwari, CEO of NABCB, QUALITY COUNCIL OF INDIA (QCI), New Delhi.

Dr. Sanjiv Layek, Executive Secretary of WASME welcoming H.E. Ms. Lalatiana Accouche, High Commissioner, Embassy of Seychelles;

The highlight of the summit was the "KNIGHTWOOD AWARD - FELICITATION CEREMONY FOR YOUR EXCELLENCIES," which recognized the outstanding contributions of esteemed dignitaries. The awardees included H.E. Mrs. Katharina Wieser, Ambassador, Embassy of Austria; H.E. Mr. Claudio Ansorena Montero, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Costa Rica; H.E. Ms. Jacqueline MUKANGIRA, High Commissioner, Republic of Rwanda; H.E. Ms. Yasiel Burillo, Ambassador and Consul General, Embassy of Panama; H.E. Mr. Demeke Atnafu Ambulo, Ambassador, Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; H. E. Mrs. DILLAH LUCIENNE, Ambassador, Embassy of Chad; H.E. Ms. Lalatiana Accouche, High Commissioner, Embassy of Seychelles; H.E. Mrs. Joséphine Patricia NTYAM-EHYA, Chargé d'Affairs a.i, Embassy of Gabon; H.E. Mr. Yawo Edem AKPEMADO, Chargé d'affaires, Embassy of the Togolese Republic; H.E. Deliwe Mumbi, Acting High Commissioner, Zambia High Commission; and H.E. Alejandro Simancas Marin, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Cuba.

The event was graced by the presence of other eminent personalities including Mr. Rajesh Maheshwari, CEO of NABCB, QUALITY COUNCIL OF INDIA (QCI), New Delhi.

The heart of the summit lay in its enriching panel discussions, which delved into crucial aspects of MSMEs in today's dynamic world:

1. ***"Enabling Ecosystem for MSMEs**: Policy Reforms, Supportive Infrastructure, and Access to Finance"* - The first panel discussion, moderated by *Ms. Progyanjana Tarafdar*, a Finance Expert, featured eminent speakers who explored ways to create an enabling environment for MSMEs.

2. ***"Digital Transformation**: Leveraging Technology to Boost MSME Competitiveness"* - Panel Discussion 2, moderated by *Mr. Arijit Bhattacharyya,* Founder of Coinnovateventures, delved into the critical role of technology in enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs.

3. ***"MSMEs in the Post-Pandemic World"*** - Panel Discussion 3, moderated by *Mr. Probir Roy,* Co-Founder of Paymate and Independent Director at Nazara Technologies, examined the strategies and resilience of MSMEs in the face of the global pandemic.

The discussions brought forward valuable insights, offering actionable strategies and solutions for the MSME community.

During the summit, WASME also made significant announcements:

1. ***WASME's Flagship Event 27th ICSME 2023, Dubai, UAE:*** An international stage for networking and collaboration, promoting global MSME development.

2. ***"Rwanda – The Gateway for Africa, Europe, and Asia:"*** An exploration of Rwanda's economic potential, highlighting opportunities for international collaborations.

The event concluded with the *"WORLD MSME BUSINESS AWARDS 2023 FELICITATION CEREMONY FOR ACHIEVERS,"* honoring about 80 exemplary individuals and organizations. Additionally, a Special Address on *"How IVF Industry is evolving and its Future in India"* by Dr. Kaberi Banerjee, a respected authority in the field, and a Book Launch Ceremony for *"Nano Delights: Unveiling the Vibrant World of Delhi's Street Food Vendors in 'Sizzling Streets'"* authored by Mr. Rony Banerjee, Advisor at E & Y, added further depth to the summit.

As the event came to a close, the resounding message was clear: the World MSME Business Summit 2023 celebrated not just the achievements but also the immense potential of MSMEs to drive economic growth, foster innovation, and create a brighter future for all.

WASME EVENTS

For more details please visit to www.wasmeinfo.org

UN SCAN

ITC

ITC, KTPA to support digital transformation of small business in developing countries: The Korea Technopark Association (KTPA) and the International Trade Centre (ITC), a United Nations agency, signed a Letter of Intent to promote the digital transformation of manufacturing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries, starting with Kenya. The institutions will work closely together to develop joint initiatives that favors small business skills, technology transfer and foster innovation.

The partnership is a response to the need of adapting businesses' production operations in the context of the fourth industrial revolution. By sharing Korean experiences and best practices, 'the Korea Technopark Operational Model', or K-TP Model in short, will serve as an innovative ecosystem that will promote partnerships between government, industry, Research and Development institutions, and academia.

Among the joint initiatives under the Letter of Intent is the implementation of Techno parks in developing countries, strengthening the innovation and technology ecosystems in developing countries, and creating linkages between Korean institutions and businesses in developing countries.

As its first initiative, ITC and KTPA, supported by the Ministry of SMEs and Startups of Republic of Korea, commit to support the digital transformation of Kenyan manufacturing SMEs and energizing Kenya's industrial innovation ecosystem.

'We are delighted to sign this partnership agreement with ITC. KTPA will contribute its knowledge and expertise in creating innovative ecosystems where manufacturing SMEs can flourish in developing countries, and by sharing Korean best practices, KTPA will contribute to the objective of the Government of Korea to help developing countries reach the Sustainable Development Goals.' Youngjib Kim, Chairman, Korea Technopark Association

'With this partnership, ITC strengthens its relationship with the Government of the Republic of Korea. ITC and KTPA will build on the strengths of each institution to support small businesses in developing countries on their digitalization journeys and in creating more resilient and robust economies.' Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, the International Trade Centre

Source: https://intracen.org/news-and-events/news/itc-ktpa-to-support-digital-transformation-of-small-business-in-developing

UNIDO

UNIDO and SECO launch second phase of Global Eco-Industrial Parks Programme

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) have embarked on a new chapter of collaboration with agreement on a second phase of the Global Eco-Industrial Parks Programme (GEIPP).

The GEIPP helps emerging economies to create more competitive and sustainable industrial parks by adopting circular economy practices and advancing climate change mitigation strategies.

At a ceremony in the federal capital of Switzerland, UNIDO Director General, Gerd Müller, and the Swiss

State Secretary, Helene Budliger Artieda, signed a letter of agreement on a second phase of the GEIPP with a CHF17.7m contribution from SECO.

GEIPP II will span five years, facilitating comprehensive programme implementation across industrial parks in several countries. These parks will receive comprehensive technical assistance, with a strong emphasis on enhancing their park management, and environmental, social and economic performance.

GEIPP II's aspirations extend beyond national borders, focusing on fostering international collaboration and cross-country learning. A pivotal aspect of this phase involves the development of eco-industrial park recognition schemes and standards, based on the International Framework for Eco-Industrial Parks developed by UNIDO, the World Bank and GIZ.

Source: https://www.unido.org/news/unido-and-seco-launch-second-phase-global-eco-industrial-parks-programme

AfDB

AfDB, EBRD announce joint task force to build entrepreneurship and jobs creation in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia

The African Development Bank Group & the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD) on Thursday announced the setting up of a joint taskforce to foster entrepreneurship to catalyse jobs creation & growth in Egypt, Morocco, & Tunisia.

The official launch of the taskforce took place on Thursday, 21 September 2023 during a workshop in Tunis, at the North Africa Regional Office of the African Development Bank.

The Joint North Africa Task Force on Entrepreneurship and MSMEs for jobs impact will operate under the Framework Partnership Agreement signed by the EBRD and the AfDB in May 2021 (link is external). The task force will ensure that the two institutions will jointly identify and implement innovative and operational initiatives to tackle the challenges faced by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) development.

Initiatives include developing knowledge products and innovative solutions to inform and co-finance operations that promote the export capacity and growth potential of MSMEs. This work will focus on supporting the emergence of start-ups, businesses led by women and youth, or operations linking the development of MSMEs and start-ups to regional and local value chains.

During this first joint activity, the task force announced support to a special cohort from the Souk At-Tanmia initiative under the EBRD Star Venture Programme. This programme aims at identifying high-potential start-ups and mobilise global expertise to support their operations and assist them in scaling up. Souk At-Tanmia was an African Development Bank Group programme which ran from 2012 to 2021, offering substantial direct technical and financial support to 272 local entrepreneurs.

On this occasion, five shortlisted companies from the Souk at-Tanmia Tunisia laureates presented their business idea during a pitching session. Two finalists will be selected and will qualify for EBRD support, including access to mentorship, technical advisory, and strategic business development from mentors and experts with strong and recognised experience in the entrepreneurship field. This assistance will last over an 18-month a period and allow start-ups to further develop their activities and access international markets.

The setting up of the taskforce and the organisation of the pitching were facilitated by the AfDB EInA (Entrepreneurship Innovations and Advice-North Africa Initiative) and the EBRD SME Finance and Development Group SEMED (Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region).

Source: https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/press-releases/afdb-ebrd-announce-joint-task-force-build-entrepreneurship-and-jobs-creation-egypt-morocco-and-tunisia-64480

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	Associate Members	Associate Membership-Indian Chapter
◆ 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**	◆ Corporations, Consulting Firms ◆ Partnership/ Proprietorship/ LLP etc ◆ Research Institutes/ Technical Institutes/ Universities ◆ Individual Consultants/ Experts/ Students ◆ NGOs/ SMEs etc.	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

We don't entertain cash for any membership activity / event / sponsorship / Exhibitions or other related activities. Cheque in favour of **"World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises"** payable at Noida / Delhi or NEFT/RTGS.

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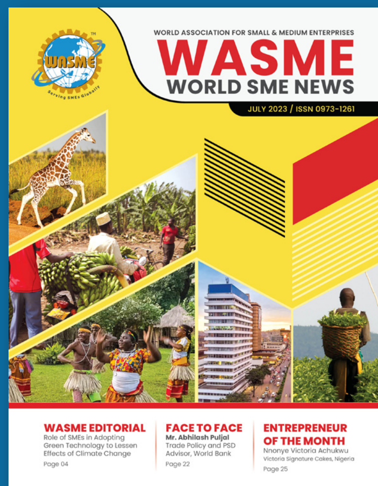

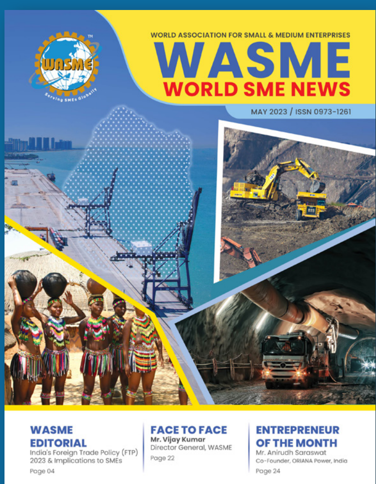

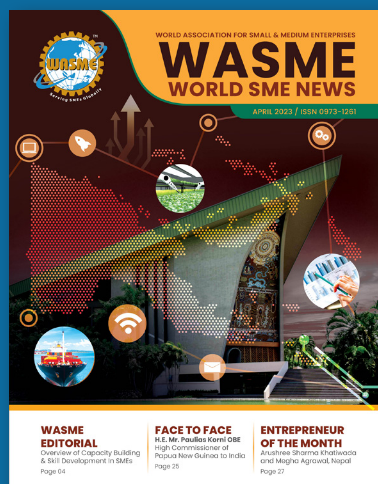

WASME™

Serving SMEs Globally

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