

APEC: Growing Indigenous Businesses Through Trade

Micro, Small and Medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) can help drive economic growth and innovation. Being agile and innovative, MSMEs, including Indigenous-owned businesses, can be a vital contributor to post-Covid economic recovery.

While the number of successful Indigenous businesses is growing, there is potential for them to grow even further by engaging in international trade and expanding markets overseas.

However, like many MSMEs, Indigenous businesses around the world often lack the knowledge, confidence and connections necessary to grow through international trade.

Building Indigenous businesses' trade knowledge and networks, including among peers and with service providers, will enhance their competitiveness and longer-term viability.

Project description

'Growing Indigenous Businesses Through Trade' is about encouraging and building capacity of Indigenous entrepreneurs to engage in global business. Thereby strengthening their contribution to social and economic outcomes, and demonstrating that trade can be inclusive.

The project is funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in partnership with Treasury and the National

Indigenous Australians Agency. The project has received co-sponsorship of Canada, Chile, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Chinese Taipei and the United States.

The project will be delivered by the Export Council of Australia (ECA) in cooperation with Supply Nation. The program will cater for up to 30 participants who will be selected from nominated candidates.

The program is open to Indigenous entrepreneurs in APEC economies who are:

- (i) able to understand and speak English;
- (ii) already operating successfully in a domestic context;
- (iii) exploring the idea of exporting, or have just started to export and are looking to other markets.

The project will comprise:

- Five online training sessions delivered weekly (September to November 2022)
- Two additional interactive online sessions on pitching – including a practice session and a final pitch event;
- Networking opportunities throughout the project; and
- One-on-one coaching

The training sessions will focus on practical elements of trading across borders, including in relation to regulations (e.g. tariffs and intellectual property rights), terminologies used in cross-border finance and logistics, as well as how to price and market internationally. Additional information on the sessions can be found in the Program Outline.

Objectives

The immediate objectives of the project are to:

- (i) increase awareness among Indigenous businesses of the benefits of engaging in international trade, including as a means for sustained growth;
- (ii) build practical understanding of the fundamentals of doing cross-border trade, including through global value chains and direct exports;
- (iii) facilitate connections among the participating Indigenous

entrepreneurs and business guest- speakers (including non-Indigenous), as a first step to creating a supportive ecosystem.

The longer-term objectives include:

- (i) growth and resilience of Indigenous businesses, for instance through increased sales, revenue, trade volumes and value; boost in reputation or profile; increased networks and access to markets;
- (ii) recognised value of policies and programmes in support Indigenous businesses; and
- (iii) strengthened contribution of Indigenous businesses to their respective economies.

The APEC: Growing Indigenous Businesses Through Trade project will support Indigenous businesses' efforts to build livelihoods and generate jobs. It may assist in developing or enhancing programs that promote Indigenous business growth.

The project will encourage inclusive trade, trade diversification, and boost economic growth. A brief report for APEC will be prepared on the outcomes of the project.

For further information, please contact:

Angela Wright
Senior Project Manager, ECA Edge
Export Council of Australia

(+61) 02 8243 7400
AngelaWright@export.org.au

Applicant Information

Applications can be submitted via: export.org.au/apecgrit2022