

Fostering Greater SME Participation in Global Value Chains 2023 Phase 2: Digitalisation and Utilisation of Emerging Technologies

Project Information

Context

This initiative is intended to enhance the capabilities of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to engage in international trade and global value chains using digital technologies.

Many SME exporters are not fully utilising available digital technologies that would ease trade, reduce costs, build stakeholder trust, increase efficiency and enhance demonstration of good environment, social and governance (ESG) practices. Adopting these technologies can make SMEs more competitive in global markets, increase their productivity, and support sustainable growth.

What does this project involve?

Online and in-person roundtable discussions between SMEs and government officials from APEC economies, technology providers, and academia.

After nomination, selected participants will take part in:

- Three virtual workshops to introduce participants and discuss core issues, including a final session on lessons for government
- A one-day APEC Symposium on Technology and Trade for participants on 23 August (in Sydney and online), including a site visit to business facilities*
 - access to a two-day Super Exchange: Emerging Technologies and Sustainable Trade conference on 24-25 August 2023*
- Additional online follow up discussions and completion of surveys with SME participants

Across the virtual and in-person events, discussion session will include the following issues:

- Benefits of digital technologies
- Improving operational efficiency
- Building digital trust
- Interoperability and logistics
- E-commerce and payment systems
- Traceability (blockchain, ESG)
- Fintech and access to finance
- Best practice regulation

At the conclusion of the sessions, participants will gain access to online resources including articles, case studies, and guidance notes.

What are the benefits from this project?

We envisage the benefits from this project to include the following:

Early outcomes

- SME participants become more aware of the available digital technologies to improve their participation in global value chains
- SMEs identify and build the necessary skills to utilise available technologies
- Government officials recognise the need to address regulatory constraints to the development and adoption of digital technologies by SMEs.

Longer-term outcomes

- MSMEs adopt and utilise digital technologies to boost their competitiveness and longer term sustainability
- Regulatory environment, infrastructure investment and government support promote the development and take up of digital technology.

* Site visit and Super Exchange conference is only available to in-person attendees

Why participate?

Build new connections and increase market prospects

Participants will have opportunities to meet fellow businesses in the Asia-Pacific region who are leaders in their field. They will be able to learn from and connect with peers, including successful exporters, and find ways to enhance their business operations internationally.

Greater participation in global value chains may provide SMEs with an additional channel to grow markets and increase the productivity and sustainability of their business.

Be recognised as a thought leader

Participants will be associated with a reputable forum and trailblazing initiative. Participants will be involved in meaningful dialogue between business and government representatives.

Gain valuable knowledge

Participants will gain the latest insights into various digital technologies being used to assist SME's participation in global value chains.

Utilising digital technologies in business practices can improve business efficiency, engagement with customers, reduce costs, and enhance overall competitiveness when operating in international markets.

Participants who are invited to attend in person at the APEC Symposium in Sydney, Australia will also:

- undertake online cybersecurity training
- attend the Super Exchange Conference on 24 - 25 August 2023 in Sydney.

The Super Exchange conference aims to build knowledge and encourage take-up of emerging technologies among SMEs to enhance their competitiveness and performance, with discussion on the links between technology, environment and trade, including recent developments, trends, and opportunities.

Is this initiative for the purposes of trading with Australia only?

No. This initiative seeks to encourage trade among all APEC member economies, as well as trade on a global scale.

What kind of participants are we seeking?

Expressions of interest are sought from individuals from APEC member economies who can engage in discussions in English, and are:

- (i) from an SME (especially SMEs owned or led by women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities) offering exportable products or services and
 - a. open to adopting new technologies in their business operations
 - b. at the early stages of export (including pre-export)
- or
- (ii) involved in a business that develops or provides technologies that SMEs can utilise

In-person participants must also:

- hold a valid passport and visa (if required)
- be able to travel to Sydney, Australia for activities held on 23 to 25 August

We ask that interested individuals submit an Expression of Interest no later than 8 June 2023. A participant selection process will be carried out by the project team.

Contact

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