



World SME Update

(A Global Update On SME News, Events, Policies & Programs)

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AUSTRALIA

Small business suppliers have rights under Food and Grocery Code

All small business suppliers to the major grocery stores including Coles, Woolworths and Aldi can now enjoy the full benefits of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct.

According to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) a majority of suppliers have chosen to enter code compliant grocery supply agreements (GSAs) with the major supermarket chains.

The Code requires retailers and wholesalers to deal with suppliers in good faith during the bargaining stages of establishing GSAs, during the term of the agreement, and in dealing with any disputes.

Suppliers are reminded that if they haven't signed a new GSA, they still have protections provided by the Code which overlay their existing terms.

The ACCC will monitor compliance with the Code and if suppliers have any concerns about their dealings with the supermarkets, they should raise them with the ACCC.



Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement

The Australian Government has delivered a comprehensive update of Australia's second oldest free trade agreement, creating significant opportunities for Australian service providers.

Today (October 13, 2016), with my Singaporean counterpart Minister Mr. Lim Hng Kiang, I signed an Agreement to Amend the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). The Agreement is a crucial part of Australia's Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Singapore.

This updated FTA delivers big wins for Australian service providers with greater access and certainty in sectors such as education, law, financial and professional services.

Singapore has given Australia its best FTA treatment, putting our exporters on an equal or better footing than our foreign competitors. Singapore has also agreed to recognise the Juris Doctor degrees of Australian universities currently listed in SAFTA, providing access for those universities that have moved to a graduate model of legal education.

Australia and Singapore will also establish a framework under SAFTA to support mutual recognition of professional qualifications. Priority will be given to arrangements for engineers and accountants, with Singapore and Australia agreeing to commence negotiations on mutual recognition arrangements.

Complementing existing tariff-free entry for goods, the updated rules of origin will simplify administration and reduce the compliance costs for traders using the Agreement.

SAFTA will also reduce red tape for investors from Singapore, Australia's fifth-highest source of foreign investment, by harmonising the Foreign Investment Review Board screening thresholds for Singapore with those agreed under the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement.

We are also supporting innovation exchange between Australia and Singapore by establishing a Landing Pad for Australian entrepreneurs at Singapore's largest integrated startup space, BASH (Build Amazing Startups Here).

The amended SAFTA builds on the success of the FTAs the Coalition concluded with the North Asia powerhouse economies of China, Japan and Korea.

The Australian Government is pursuing an ambitious trade agenda, and more free trade agreements, as part of our national economic plan to create jobs and economic growth.

BAHRAIN

Tamkeen and Al Baraka Sign Agreement to Expand SME Finance Portfolio from BHD 10 Million to BHD20 Million



Tamkeen and Al Baraka Islamic Bank have signed an agreement to increase their joint small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) finance portfolio from BHD10 million to BHD20 million. The top-up is part of the two organisations' efforts to provide sharia-compliant finance solutions to SMEs and emerging enterprises, helping them achieve their development and growth goals.

Commenting on the agreement, Tamkeen Chief Executive Dr Ebrahim Janahi said: *"Tamkeen constantly works to support private sector enterprises overcome challenges and difficulties that hinder their development. One of the most serious challenge for these enterprises is securing the necessary funds to implement their plans and meet operational*

objectives. Therefore, Tamkeen works with a number of partners to provide finance solutions tailored for the needs of enterprises in the Kingdom. We are delighted to extend our agreement with Al Baraka Islamic Bank to give Bahraini business owners the chance to develop and grow their enterprises."

For his part, Al Baraka Islamic Bank CEO Mohamed Isa Al Mutaweh said: "The agreement to increase the joint SME finance portfolio between Tamkeen and Al Baraka Islamic Bank proves the effectiveness of the program, as was evident in the financial statements of the enterprises that were financed by the bank after the signing of the first agreement under Tamkeen's Enterprise Finance scheme. With this agreement, many enterprises and projects will be able to develop their services and products, further contributing to the national domestic product."

From September 2008 to March 2016, Tamkeen's Enterprise Finance Scheme, in cooperation with partner banks, has provided enterprises with BHD 412.5 million through 6,500 finance contracts.

BELARUS



Strengthen the role of councils for development of entrepreneurship in the decisions that affect the interests of business

Government decided to strengthen the role of the social and advisory (expert) advice on business development in management decisions affecting the interests of business. This follows from the decision of the Council of Ministers of Belarus on October 5, 2016 № 802.

The Resolution amends the previously adopted documents on the organization of public discussion of draft regulations for the development of entrepreneurship. Specific Resolution number 802 the order of discussion will stimulate dialogue between business and the state by strengthening the role of the social and advisory (expert) advice in management decisions affecting the interests of the business.

If the draft regulation may have a significant impact on the business environment and is subject to public debate, the it should be posted on the website developed by his state body and (or) in the media.

As before, the projects of normative legal acts are considered at meetings of the public advisory council for enterprise development, established with public bodies.

this decree № 802 stipulates that can not be this consideration draft acts, containing proprietary information of limited distribution, state secrets. The same applies to documents relating to the regulation of relations in the field of defense and national security, military-technical cooperation, export control, licensing activities associated with specific goods (works, services). Public discussion of draft acts dealing with

matters of environmental protection and rational use of natural resources is carried out in the manner prescribed by law.

Politics will also be required to provide a discussion at meetings of the boards of problems arising from legal and natural persons in the exercise of entrepreneurial activity.

Model provision of public -konsultativnom (expert) for enterprise development Council set out in the new edition.

BRAZIL



Small businesses gain stimulus package

In a ceremony at the Planalto, president of Sebrae announces refinancing task force of tax debts, bank, locatícias and micro and small suppliers

The president of Sebrae, Mr. Guilherme Afif Domingos, said on Wednesday (October 5, 2016) that the institution will organize a tax debt refinancing task force, banking, locatícias and suppliers of micro and small businesses across the country. The aim is that almost 700,000 companies indebted to the National Simple, reported this week by the IRS, remain alive in the differentiated system of taxation.

The initiative comes in the wake of the approval of the Growing up without Fear project yesterday (4), Chamber. The new law extends from 60 to 120 days for three months, the tax debt installment. The initiative will enter into force once the law is enacted by the Federal Government. "Nobody wants to kill these businesses. They need to be helped to continue contributing to the creation of jobs and income, " Mr. Afif said.

The task force was announced during a ceremony for the National Day of Small and Medium Enterprises, in the Planalto Palace. At the time, the Federal Government launched a package of measures to stimulate entrepreneurship in the country through credit, export incentive. The highlight is the release of \$ 30 billion for loans to small businesses, via Caixa and Banco do Brazil. Included in this total are already built the \$ 5 billion that BB operates in line that uses resources from the Fund for Workers (FAT).

The decree establishing the International Simple measure to reduce bureaucracy and simplify the operation of foreign trade of micro and small enterprises was signed. With support from Sebrae, Special Secretariat for Small and Medium Enterprises (Sempe) and three ministries - Finance, Foreign Affairs and Development, Industry and Foreign Trade - the program will establish the figure of the international logistics operator, which will be responsible for all operating export procedures. The goal is to increase the volume of exports by small businesses. Today, about 11,000 entrepreneurs of micro and small that sell abroad represent 46.37% of exporting companies, but only 1.08% of the total exported.

CHILE



Government initiates SME Week 2016 aims to highlight the contribution that SMEs make to the country

In the activity, entrepreneurs received their certificates as program beneficiaries Seed Capital and Capital Bee Embark Embark Sercotec, which support new business projects. The Minister Mr. Céspedes said that smaller companies or MSMEs play a fundamental role in the economy, and that the government is working to enhance its development.

More than 400 entrepreneurs and micro entrepreneurs arrived this morning at Barrio Yungay, to participate in the kickoff of the fifth version of the SME Week 2016: "SMEs move Chile" to be held between 3 and 9 October 2016, with more than 140 events throughout the country. The panel was headed by President Michelle Bachelet and the Minister of Economy, Development and Tourism, Mr. Luis Felipe Céspedes, who stressed the government's commitment to micro, small and medium enterprises.

The highest authority of the country highlighted the contribution of these companies to the national economy, which constitute 98% of formal enterprises and create 63% of jobs.

About them, he said that "if we want SMEs continue to grow, innovate and diversify, we all need to make our contribution: the central government, regions, municipalities, banks, large industries, educational institutions, even our embassies abroad."

In his remarks, President Ms. Michelle Bachelet highlighted the various programs to support small and medium businesses, among which the Centers Business Development, delivering technical, free and personalized advice to small businesses to carry out their plans deal.

the president also highlighted the SME Export Centers, Enterprise Desktop Platform and Strengthening 60 Commercial Barrios, which encourages partnership between small businesses; and Coworks and Hubs, collaborative workspaces for entrepreneurs to realize their business projects.

In that vein, the President of the Republic announced the program associated with Financial Services Business Development Centers, comprising a service platform of microfinance institutions in 5 regions; an agreement with BancoEstado is already operating in the country; financial education program and a study for the development of micro insurance oriented SMEs served by the centers.

Finally, the president made a call "to change the switch. As I said when presenting the draft budget for next year, Chile must regain optimism, look at our present and our future with more confidence. A Chile do not do well who are all bad. The facts,

poverty, unemployment, competitiveness, said the opposite: our country is moving forward and has the strength to go on. So I'm optimistic. "

In this regard, the Minister Mr. Céspedes said that one of the key issues of the development strategy promoted by the Government, is to promote small and medium enterprises, give space for them to grow, increase their productivity so they can be more competitive and can generate more jobs more value added. This effort is taking shape through the agenda Productivity, Innovation and Growth.

"The Government has a strong commitment to SMEs and development, so we have increased by 50% the resources to promote entrepreneurship, but it is also necessary among all actors we support a union that employs more than 5 million people, "he said.

The Secretary of State said that we should not forget that smaller companies face major challenges, particularly in terms of productivity, financing, and processing, and for that the Ministry has been working on various initiatives.

"We want to give momentum to MSMEs to be increasingly relevant day in the economic development of our country, which results for example in providing seed capital for companies to carry out their ideas, their businesses, improve and generating more growth in our economy, but a more inclusive growth, "he said.

IRELAND



Minister welcomes new loan supports for Ireland's young entrepreneurs

Young entrepreneurs entering 'IBYE' competition can apply for business loans at preferential rates from Microfinance Ireland

The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Ms. Mary Mitchell O' Connor T.D., has welcomed the announcement that every young entrepreneur entering this year's 'Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur' competition can apply for discounted loans through Microfinance Ireland.

By applying for the new IBYE business loan, young entrepreneurs aged between 18 and 35 can apply for up to €5,000 at a preferential rate of 5% APR, which is a reduction of 2.8% APR on Microfinance Ireland's standard rate, for people applying directly to them. The discounted loan package is designed to boost young entrepreneurs' access to credit, to help them set-up and grow their own businesses faster.

Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur competition is run by all 31 Local Enterprise Offices and the deadline to enter this year is Friday, October 14th. More than 1,400 entrepreneurs entered last year's competition and all 2016 entrants are eligible to apply for the new discounted loan.

Welcoming the announcement about the IBYE loan package, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Ms Mary Mitchell O'Connor T.D. said: "Microfinance Ireland is a key part of the start-up and microenterprise ecosystem in Ireland and this is a very attractive offer of discounted loan financing for IBYE competition applicants. This is a strong endorsement of the IBYE initiative and what it can achieve by encouraging a culture of entrepreneurship and driving successful business start-ups amongst young people all over the country. If you are aged between 18 and 35 with a new business idea, new start-up or established enterprise, there is still time to get your IBYE 2016 application in by Friday 14th October."

Garrett Stokes, Chief Executive of Microfinance Ireland, said: "Microfinance Ireland wants to make it easier for businesses to start up, expand, succeed and create jobs. That is why we are very pleased to support the 2016 IBYE competition. Our loan finance offers of up to €5,000 at a discounted rate of 5% APR to competition applicants recognises the ambition and potential that exists amongst Ireland's younger entrepreneurs. If you are an IBYE 2016 applicant requiring loan funding to establish or grow your business, I would encourage you to contact your Local Enterprise Office and check out how Microfinance Ireland can help."

IBYE is co-ordinated by the Local Enterprise Offices and Sheelagh Daly of the LEOs said: "Access to loans at a discounted rate is another significant reason why more young entrepreneurs should enter the IBYE competition this year. As well as accessing the IBYE loan package through Microfinance Ireland, every entrant could also win a share of the LEO €50,000 county investment fund or one of the hundreds of places on offer at Regional Business Bootcamps."

The loan offer is available to entrants across the three IBYE categories, which are: Best Business Idea, Best Start-Up and Best Established Business and the competition deadline to enter is Friday, October 14th.

JORDAN



Minister of Industry and Commerce business calls from Bosnia to invest in Jordan Men

Minister of Industry and Trade confirmed Supply Engineer expresses judges, during a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister / Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Mirko Sarovic , who is currently visiting the kingdom at the head of an economic delegation, the importance of working together to promote bilateral cooperation between the two countries in various fields, especially the economic ones .

The two ministers also stressed the importance of updating and activating trade and economic cooperation agreement signed between them in 2006 and entered into force in November of 2011 so as to increase intra - regional trade, which is still very modest despite the availability of opportunities in both countries and the possibility of trade

in many goods size and through the development of operational programs and mechanisms in order to strengthen economic cooperation .

Trade volume of the two countries does not exceed \$ 1.3 million a year and has seen a clear decline last year.

He m. Judges during the meeting, we look forward to the visit of economic delegation of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and joint business council to be held tomorrow in order to hand discuss means of enhancing economic cooperation and they provide visit and the Forum of opportunity for businessmen of both countries to meet and exchange views on the revitalization of intra - regional trade and the establishment of investment projects .

He called m. Businessmen judges in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina to invest in Jordan and take advantage of opportunities, benefits and incentives for investment projects in addition to the possibility of entry of Jordanian products to the largest and most important global markets by virtue of free trade , which Jordan signed a bilateral and multilateral agreements the parties with many countries and economic blocs of Arab , like States and Union Europe and the United States, Canada, Turkey, Singapore and others .

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply to the importance of simplification of rules of origin, which was signed by Jordan and the European Union recently in order to facilitate the entry of Jordanian exports to European markets within the rules of origin of a simplified, easy what gave an extra edge to the environment of the investment agreement.

He expressed Jordan 's readiness to provide technical support possible for Bosnia and Herzegovina in the economic field and informed of expertise in many fields.

Turning m. Judges to the comprehensive reforms taking place in Jordan under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II in various fields, particularly economic ones, and updating legislation governing economic activity, particularly the investment law , which was established under the investment window and establishing development and special economic zones to attract investment and so on .

He noted that the government, represented by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply works to find new markets for Jordanian products in Africa and other so as to increase marketing opportunities for national goods lost important markets such as Iraq because of the turmoil in the region .

During the meeting they agreed to hold meetings of the first session of the Joint Commission in the framework of trade and economic cooperation agreement, headed by the two ministers in order to translate frameworks to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

Bosnian Minister and extended an invitation to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply and economic delegation to visit his country soon and hold meetings of the Joint Committee.

For his part, the Bosnian minister stressed his country 's interest in upgrading the level of economic relations with Jordan and motivate businessmen in both countries to take advantage of opportunities and areas available. Also he expressed his admiration for the reforms taking place in Jordan and excellence in the troubled province's struggle to strengthen the partnership with the outside world.

Bosnian Minister and prominent display for the economy of his country 's economic developments and the aspiration to develop with Jordan evidenced by the presence of a large delegation from the private sector in the Kingdom now and his meetings with his counterparts from the Jordanian private sector.

The meeting was attended by Secretary General of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply, Mr. Yusuf north and a number of officials from both countries .



MALASIYA

SME development bill to be tabled in Parliament next year

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Bill will not be tabled in Parliament this year as consultation with stakeholders are still on-going, said International Trade and Industry Minister. Mr. Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed. He said the bill would probably be brought before Parliament in the middle of next year.

He said the bill was developed as a manifestation of the government's seriousness in making SME development an important national agenda and the Act was already in place in many developed countries to protect the interests of SMEs.

"We have consulted 25 stakeholders nationwide, including three in Sarawak and we will see if there is a need to continue with these consultations," he said in a media conference after attending a Sarawak SME Town Hall session with the International Trade and Industry Minister at a hotel here today(October 9, 2016)

"We feel it is important to show the government's commitment to the bill in order to finalise all the development framework, assistance and structure of the institution. For now we do not have anything concrete yet as we are still at the work-in-progress stage," he added.

Several media had reported that the bill was expected to be tabled in parliament later this year.

Meanwhile, Mr. Mustapa said based on a SME Corp Malaysia survey conducted in the first quarter of this year about 24.5 per cent of SMEs in Sarawak were involved in online business, while seven per cent export their products and services abroad.

Later in the day, Mr. Mustapa is scheduled to visit a silicon wafer and ingot manufacturer for the solar industry, Comtec Solar International a subsidiary of Comtec Solar International Ltd., China situated at Samajaya Free trade zone about 30km from here. According to a Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) statement with the implementation of a RM1.2 billion project, Comtec would become

the world's largest high-technology N-type monocrystalline solar wafer and ingot manufacturer.

SME Corp allocates RM9m for Tube 3.0 this year



ME Corporation Malaysia (SME Corp) has allocated RM9 million for the Bumiputera Entrepreneurs Youth (Tube 3.0) programme this year, said its Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Rizal Nainy.

He said since it was introduced in 2014, a total of 943 Bumiputera youths nationwide have participated in the programme. Some 99.2 per cent or 936 of them have succeeded in starting businesses with total sales generated from January 2015 to September 2016 hitting RM23.5 million.

After becoming entrepreneurs, the Tube participants have provided 1,513 job opportunities in various fields throughout the country. *"This is a positive development to the small and medium enterprises in Malaysia and I am confident the 500 Tube participants this year will achieve more success with the assistance of SME Corp, as well as, other government agencies,"* he said.

Mr. Rizal said this during his speech at the launch of Tube 3.0 at the National Service Training Programme Camp at Padang Kacong here today. Also present was Terengganu SME Corp Director, Muhammad Ibrahim.

The Tube 3.0 participants at the three-week camp will be exposed to knowledge on entrepreneurship, finance, marketing, and effective business strategies to prepare them for the real business world.

Meanwhile, Muhammad said some RM750,000 was allocated for Tube 3.0 participants from Terengganu who succeeded in completing the camp with a financing grant of RM15,000 each.

Tube has succeeded in producing many youth entrepreneurs in Terengganu, who have achieved sales of RM5.6 million over its almost two-year implementation.

The first batch, Tube 1.0, involving 114 participants recorded total sales of RM5.2 million over one year of doing business, while Tube 2.0 involving 50 participants registered sales of RM400,000 in the second quarter of 2016.

Besides increasing sales trend shown in the second year of implementation, it also opens up new job opportunities in the state whereby 430 jobs have been created by Tube participants in Terengganu," he said.

NIGERIA



SMEDAN Initiates National School Entrepreneurship Programme (N-SEP)

The core mission of National School Entrepreneurship Programme (N-SEP) is to deliver hands-on Entrepreneurship and Community Service learning in Primary and Secondary schools across Nigeria.

National School Entrepreneurship Programme (N-SEP) is set to provide access to functional and hands-on entrepreneurship and community service education to every primary and secondary school student in Nigeria so as to eliminate poverty, conflicts and massive youth unemployment.

Participating schools will run a “School Bank” conducted by students and facilitated by participating commercial banks. This will boost financial literacy and financial inclusion as well as spur investment culture in young people.

It will create a network of leaders who will see the challenges in their communities as their responsibilities.

- Expected outcome in year one are:
- 370,000 pupils will be directly impacted
- 3,700 micro businesses and community service projects created by participating schools
- 5,000 teachers will be trained on how to deliver hands-on entrepreneurship and community service education to students in primary and secondary schools.
- 18,500 business and civic leaders will be recruited as Business Advisory Board Members thereby enhancing community participation.
- 370,000 students bank accounts operated
- 3,700 school enterprise bank accounts operated
- 3,700 school banks”

N-SEP is an initiative of SMEDAN- Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria and SAGE Nigeria- SAGE-Students for the Advancement of Global of Entrepreneurship is an international programme initiated at the California State University Chico USA. It is currently operating in all the continents of the world. It engages young people in a hands-on learning process on how to create wealth, help others and their communities.

Because N-SEP is a comprehensive national programme it will be coordinating its planning and activities with Office of the Vice President and various stakeholder-state governments, Federal Ministry of Education, Financial Institutions, public agencies and private sector organisations.

Business Partner Cities Support SMEs

Manila, through the Department of Trade and Industry's Foreign Trade Service Corps (DTI-FTSC) recently joined Business Partner City (BPC) discussion to help promote bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation and boost the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Asia-Pacific region.

Participated in by 15 member cities including Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Seoul, Shanghai, Mumbai, Melbourne, Tianjin, Osaka, Jakarta, Auckland and Ho Chi Minh City, the BPC aimed to discuss measures in boosting the development and support services through business interactions for industries and small enterprises within the region.

Foreign Trade Officer Mr. Mario Tani discussed opportunities in the Philippines as well as the sustainability of the country's unprecedented growth amidst a new administration. "The Philippine government is focused on achieving inclusive growth through a number of breakthrough programs focusing on SME development," said Mr. Tani.

SMEs are considered to be an important economic growth driver for the Philippines as they comprise over 90% of the total number of establishments in the country. They are seen to be primary stimulator of domestic demand through employment generation, competition, and innovation. DTI, as the lead agency for economic development, sees the critical role of SMEs in achieving inclusive growth.

One of the forwarded initiatives of the Philippine government in supporting SMEs is the establishment of the Startup Ecosystem Development Program (SEDP). Targeted at startups and innovation entrepreneurs, SEDP aims to usher in a new breed of enterprises by enhancing the business environment conducive for growth and development of startup businesses.

Key immediate response to the growing sector of startup and innovation entrepreneurs in the Philippines is the establishment of the QBO Innovation Hub under the Negosyo Center Plus model of DTI. As a flagship initiative of DTI to encourage entrepreneurship in the country and to support small businesses, the over 290 Negosyo Centers across the country at present are equipped with materials and resource supports that will assist entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs. It also helps in addressing frequent concerns on how to avail government-initiated programs, trainings, seminars and business matching activities.

QBO Innovation Hub, which is located in DTI International Building in Makati City offers a wide range of support services including free ideation sessions open to startups on Tuesdays.

BPC, on its establishment, aims to create opportunities for SMEs to establish links with their counterparts in the network.

SINGAPORE



SBF and UPS team up to support SMEs

The Singapore Business Federation (SBF) and UPS Singapore (NYSE: UPS) will jointly organise a series of seminars and workshops to educate Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) on the benefits and resources available for internationalisation.

The first joint project was the SBF-UPS Trade Seminar “Opportunities for SMEs arising from Singapore’s FTAs” held at SBF on Friday, 7 October 2016. Nearly 100 participants from local SMEs and Singapore-based organisations attended the seminar that examined the current trends and the changes in regional supply chains, and learned how to make these agreements work for them. The speakers at the event included Dr Deborah Elms from the Asian Trade Centre, Ms Lin Shiumei from UPS, Mr Kumaran Pillai from Apple Seed Pte Ltd, and Mr Gary Lee from Tee Yih Jia Food Manufacturing Pte Ltd.

“With several FTAs in the pipeline, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the agreement on the ASEAN Economic Community and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), SMEs in Singapore are poised to benefit from greater opportunities overseas. The private sector can play a big role in supporting the implementation of these agreements,” said Mr. Michelle Ho, Managing Director of UPS Singapore. *“UPS is pleased to collaborate with SBF and share with SMEs our insights on how small businesses can leverage these FTAs as a tool for their internationalisation plans.”*

As a leading global supply chain and logistics specialist, UPS has the expertise and network to help Singapore-based SMEs venture into new markets and navigate the rules of international trade.

Mr. Ho Meng Kit, CEO of SBF, said, “SMEs are the building blocks of Singapore’s economy, constituting 99% of the country’s enterprises and contributing to nearly half the GDP. One way to keep them viable and successful is to help them make the most of Singapore’s free trade pacts. With 21 bilateral and regional Free Trade and Economic Partnership Agreements with 32 trading partners, Singapore has amongst the most trade agreements in the world. This broad range of agreements will be increasingly critical for Singapore’s SMEs as they grow beyond Singapore and extend their reach across more overseas markets. SBF looks forward to growing its partnership with UPS to help SMEs internationalise and remain competitive.”

SBF and UPS will continue working together on a series of seminars and workshops to educate SMEs on FTAs and other cross-border trade and investment issues. Two more seminars and workshops, focusing on the best supply chain practices in the technology as well as retail and e-Commerce industries are planned. These outreach programmes will help raise awareness among SMEs and encourage them to take the leap and expand into new markets.”.

SME foundation to provide support to startups

The Government's Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprise Development Foundation (SMEDF) could provide support to startups in the form of venture capital and crowd funding, according to a draft decision.

The draft on the Prime Minister's decision on the organisation and operation of SMEDF was being posted for public comment on the Ministry of Planning and Investment's website early this week.

SMEDF, a public financial institution, which officially began operations on April 22 this year, aims to provide support to small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) nationwide. According to the draft, SMEDF could provide support to SMEs in a number of ways, including direct lending, credit guarantee, venture capital (VC), crowd funding and support in enhancing SMEs' capacity.

The ministry said the diversification in SMEDF's support measures would help improve the efficiency of financial support being provided to SMEs, especially to startups which were in a disadvantageous position for accessing loans due to the shortage of mortgaged assets. The ministry said venture capital and crowd funding would enable startups to access capital.

Regarding venture capital, SMEDF would provide counterpart funds to startups, which received investment from angel investors, in exchange for stake in the SMEs.

The participation of both the Government and the private sector in venture capital was expected to promote the startup spirit and fuel the sector's development, the ministry said.

In addition, SMEDF could contribute capital to a VC fund that had already raised a minimum of VNĐ10 billion (US\$447,000) from private investors and had its portfolio approved by the foundation.

Venture capital from SMEDF would be capped at below 25 per cent of the foundation's charter capital.

SMEDF, under the draft, would also provide an online platform of crowd funding to SMEs, aimed at improving access to capital for startups and to call for idle capital from the private sector.

According to entrepreneur.com, crowd funding is the process of raising money to fund what is typically a project or business venture through many donors using an online platform.

The current charter capital of SMEDF was VNĐ2 trillion, which was still short compared with the demand of financial support of more than 500,000 SMEs nationwide, the ministry said, adding that the draft would allow the fund to raise capital in a number of ways, including capital raised from financial and credit institutions and the private sector, in addition to State funding.

SMEDF was founded following the Prime Minister's Decision No 601/QĐ-TTg issued in April 2013.

To date, SMEDF has signed framework agreements with trustee banks, including BIDV, Vietcombank and HDBank, and issued a financial support programme for 2016.

The ministry said SMEDF's operation has received the attention of SMEs since its officially began operations in April, including a policy of fixed lending interest rate at 7 per cent.

WASME ICSME 2016
International Conference on Small & Medium Enterprises
TANZANIA

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Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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INDIA'S LEADING BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY EVENT



World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises (WASME) is a global non-profit organization headquartered at Noida, India that has been spearheading the cause and development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) world over since its inception in 1980. Over three decades, WASME has emerged as one of the most representative, effective and leading international organizations, working towards the promotion of SMEs worldwide through policy advocacy, information dissemination, conferences, seminars, events, trainings, publication, network linkages and many **more**.

WASME enjoys consultative status with concerned agencies in UN system such as **ECOSOC, UNCTAD, ITC, WIPO, UNIDO, UNESCO, UNCITRAL, UNESCAP and ILO**, several intergovernmental and international organizations like **WCO, OECD, ICSB, APEC, APCTT, etc.**

WASME's fortnightly SME e-Bulletin "**WORLD SME UPDATE**" aims to keep abreast its readers with latest information on various developments taking place in SME sector around the globe. If you have any news/ information on the issues related to Government policies & programs and latest developments in the SME sector i.e. technology and innovations, success stories, case studies, research and methods, planning and programmes, training and developments, finance and management, and marketing that you would like to share with the world SME community, please do send those to us at.

We always welcome your valuable feedback/comments on the SME e-Bulletin to further enhance our services on information dissemination. Hence, please send us your valuable guidance and meaningful articles as a regular contribution to SME e-Bulletin and our website in the larger interests and benefits of SMEs world over.

Editor, World SME Update

World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises

Plot No. 4, Institutional Area, Sector - 16 A,

Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar - 201301, Uttar Pradesh, India

Tel: +91-120- 4216283, Fax: +91-120- 4216284 | Email: editor@wasmeinfo.org

Website <http://www.wasmeinfo.org>