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ISSUE: 1-15 MAY 2024

AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan introduces unified register for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises under new law

The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the Development of Micro, Small, and Medium Entrepreneurship" stipulates the establishment of a unified register for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise subjects. In accordance with this law, the "Regulation on the Unified Register of Micro, Small, and Medium Business Entities" was approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated May 13, 2024.

According to information provided by the Small and Medium Business Development Agency (KOBIA), this regulation delineates the legal, organisational, and technological framework for the register's operation, including the registration procedure and the required information to be included. The register, to be established in compliance with the regulation, will enable SMEs to obtain information from a single electronic source about the services and support measures provided to them by state institutions, as well as the results of the evaluation of their activities.

Information exchange between the register and other state information systems will be facilitated through the Electronic Government Information System, ensuring prompt access to necessary information, user convenience, and transparency for monitoring procedures and outcomes.

The register will contain various details about SME subjects, such as their names, addresses, Tax Identification Numbers (TINs), state registration information, contact details, activity classifications, issued licences and permits, field of activity, conducted inspections, and assessment results by state institutions.

SME subjects, state institutions involved in the register's information processes, and organisations facilitating support infrastructure for SMEs will have access to the register. Ownership and operation of the registry fall under the purview of the Small and Medium Business Development Agency.

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BUKRINA FASO

SME Lending Toolkit Helps Credit Unions Disburse \$41 Million in Loans

A toolkit developed by World Council of Credit Unions' (WOCCU) Technology and Innovation for Financial Inclusion (TIFI) Project in collaboration with partner credit unions led to the distribution of 1,767 loans worth \$41 million to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in four countries.

Those are some of the results from the SME Lending Toolkit pilot program conducted in partnership with five credit union associations, 23 individual credit unions and one credit union service organization in Kenya, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Guatemala.

That data and the lessons learned from the pilot are featured in the new TIFI SME Lending Toolkit Learning Brief, which also shows the average loan ranged from roughly \$11,000 in Kenya to more than \$102,000 in Guatemala, with just a 1.53% portfolio at risk.

“Many of these credit unions had experimented with SME finance in the past, but the high portfolio risk drove them to reduce or stop that lending altogether. The SME Lending Toolkit took a holistic approach by supporting credit unions to leverage the strengths of the cooperative model, while adjusting their strategies, staff capacity and operations to the needs of SMEs. It has allowed them to increase their SME portfolios and better manage their risk,” said Eileen Miamidian, WOCCU Technical Director of Inclusive Financial Services.

The implementation of the toolkit also generated a series of important lessons for credit unions seeking to increase outreach to SMEs in their markets, including that:

- Credit unions can play an important role in financing SMEs. Their presence in the market and large member base gives them an edge in identifying and serving SMEs in need of finance.
- Many credit unions require a change of mindset to make the adjustments needed to offer market-responsive SME products while managing risk. Comprehensive capacity building can enable the board of directors (BOD) and senior management to lead this change.
- Digitalization and innovation are essential to meeting the financial needs of SMEs.
- Sustainable SME finance includes environmental and social considerations.
- The TIFI Project is a six-year activity funded by the USAID Cooperative Development Program (CDP) that will conclude in August 2024. WOCCU is continuing the work of the TIFI Project and expanding on it in those same four countries through USAID-CDP Accelerating Growth and Inclusion in Lending for Credit Unions (AGIL4CU) Project (2023-28).

The AGIL4CU Project is further advancing the ability of credit unions to provide value to their members and contribute to the economic development of their communities, while extending business and climate financing to underserved market segments, including women and youth.

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CANADA

Commission proposes new rules to help SMEs with dispute resolution under CETA

European Commission proposed new rules – negotiated with Canada – to help small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) use investment dispute resolution under the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

The new rules streamline and simplify dispute resolution procedures, making it easier for SMEs to access the investment court system (ICS) foreseen by CETA, and saving them time and money. Such improved access is particularly relevant in the context of the tremendous uptake by SMEs of the opportunities created by CETA. Since the agreement provisionally entered into force in 2017, more than 2,500 new EU SMEs have started exporting to Canada or investing in the country.

Details of the proposal

The new rules will introduce an expedited procedure for dispute resolution under CETA, to which SMEs and natural persons, as well as claims below a certain level, will have preferential access. It will be possible for these litigations to be heard by a one-member – instead of a three-member – tribunal, and timelines will be shorter. A further streamlining of the rules to improve access of SMEs will be possible following regular reviews. The new rules will also contain built-in protections for the State (as the defendant), to ensure that the expedited procedure is used by those who need it most and to avoid abuse.

The Commission's proposal, which follows the conclusion of technical negotiations between Canada and the EU on the new rules in February 2024, will now go to the Council for approval. It will be formally adopted by the CETA Joint Committee once internal approval procedures on the EU and Canadian sides are complete. The new rules will enter into force together with the rest of the investment protection and investment dispute resolution parts of CETA, once the agreement has been fully ratified..

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EGYPT

Cooperation between the German Agency for International Cooperation and the Center for Industrial Modernization

cooperation agreement to launch a project to promote small and medium-sized companies in the food industry and agricultural manufacturing sectors in Egypt over a period of one and a half years.

The agreement was signed by Andreas Rupp, Director of the Private Sector Development Program at the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ), and Doaa Salima, CEO of the Industrial Modernization Center. This agreement comes as a continuation of the bilateral cooperation path to enhance the capabilities of small and

medium-sized companies, and launch technical and vocational training programs to develop conglomerates. Emerging industrial zones in general, and in the food industry and agricultural manufacturing sectors in particular, through 4 main axes, each of which includes a package of services directed by the Industrial Modernization Center as an executive arm of the project towards those working in industrial institutions and companies operating within the scope of the aforementioned industrial sectors, specifically in the “vegetable” industry. Fruits, medicinal and aromatic plants, dairy products, and sweets,” in three industrial zones: Sadat, Fayoum, and Beni Suef.

The signing of the agreement was witnessed by a number of local companies operating in Egypt. A panel discussion was also held on enabling medium and small industries to enter export markets, with the participation of elite representatives of export councils and export development experts, as well as exporting products from the food industry sector.

The project aims primarily to increase sustainable job opportunities, by supporting local industries and strengthening the capabilities of small and medium-sized companies in the food industry and agricultural manufacturing sectors to reach the target markets by applying international standards. The role of the Industrial Modernization Center comes as an executive body for the project due to its previous experience in Developing industrial sectors and direct cooperation with institutions and establishments operating in the targeted industrial sectors, and the possibility of identifying categories of trainees, directing vocational training programs for workers, and granting accredited certificates to those institutions to increase investment opportunities and enter new export markets.

Within the framework of these objectives, the Industrial Modernization Center developed an expanded executive work plan divided into 4 main axes to cover the project objectives within a time period of 18 months from the beginning of the signing of the agreement, provided that this plan is implemented in coordination with the German Agency for International Cooperation team, along with a group of experts. And consultants specialized in the fields of training services, product development and awareness of international regulations and standards.

The work axes begin with achieving the compatibility of industrial institutions in the food industries and agricultural processing sectors with the requirements and standards of the National Food Safety Authority, by launching a series of awareness and training courses for 60 companies operating in the sectors of medicinal and aromatic plants, fruits and vegetables, sweets, and dairy products. The program focuses on Training on familiarity with all documents required to register companies with the National Food Safety Authority, and awareness of the registration steps and the benefits of complying with occupational health and safety requirements, with the aim of qualifying these institutions to comply with the white list registration standards.

As for the second axis, the Industrial Modernization Center will work through it to grant an occupational health and safety specialist certificate to 50 specialists within the occupational safety and health departments in 50 industrial facilities according to specific criteria in selecting trainees to obtain an internationally accredited certificate as an “occupational health and safety specialist.”

The third axis moves from individuals to companies, and focuses on providing preparation and granting services for international conformity certificates ISO 45001, ISO 22000, and FSSC to 160 companies selected according to special criteria, provided that the services vary between preparation, accreditation, and monitoring based on the current stage of each institution.

In order to achieve sustainability and build capabilities and trained personnel, the fourth and final axis of the project focuses on improving workers' skills by targeting 50 workers in 50 industrial facilities by including them in a series of vocational training workshops.

Within the framework of those previously mentioned axes, the relevant authorities, led by the Industrial Modernization Center and the German Agency for International Cooperation, are joining forces, and the sub-activities are integrated within each of the project's axes of work to achieve tangible development within the institutions and companies operating within the scope of the targeted industrial sectors, and to create a positive impact on the workers within them. By pushing it towards familiarity with the requirements of international bodies and compatibility with global standards and requirements regarding product quality and safety, and the culture and level of worker competence, in a way that paves the way towards investment, export and sustainable work.

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GHANA

[ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development to Inject USD 200 Million into the Ghanaian Economy](#)

The ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) has strengthened its transformative partnership with the Republic of Ghana by committing to inject USD 200 million into the Ghanaian economy through strategic alliances with the Ghana Export-Import Bank (GEXIM) and GCB Bank PLC.

This was contained in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by Dr. George Agyekum Donkor, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of EBID, and Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, Minister for Finance of the Republic of Ghana, at a ceremony held at the EBID headquarters in Lome, Togo. The signing ceremony was attended by key stakeholders, including Mr. Lawrence Agyinsam, Chief Executive Officer of GEXIM, and Mr Samuel Aidoo, Executive Director, Wholesale, and Investment Banking at GCB Bank PLC, among others. The agreement epitomises EBID's unwavering dedication to fostering economic growth and shoring up resilience across the ECOWAS Member States.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Donkor commended Ghana for its steadfast support through the payment of its subscribed share of capital, and other commitments to the bank. He emphasised that the tripartite alliance between EBID, GEXIM, and GCB Bank PLC

exemplifies EBID's strategic thrust to bolster the recovery and transformation agenda of Member States by channelling vital resources into pivotal sectors of their economies. According to him, this collaborative involvement underscores EBID's commitment to forging partnership synergies within the finance and investment domain, serving as a trailblazing model for future regional collaborations and investments.

In his response, Dr. Amin Adam highlighted the importance of organisations like EBID in driving sustainable transformation, especially amidst prevailing global challenges. He lauded the profound impact of EBID under the leadership of Dr. Donkor and expressed unwavering optimism regarding the Bank's continued role in shaping the region's developmental agenda.

The USD 200 million injection is intended to stimulate the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in critical sectors of the economy, foster job creation, innovation, and sustainable development. This injection will bring EBID's total commitments in Ghana to USD 600 million.

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IRAN

[UAE and Iran agree to bolster economic ties and trade co-operation](#)

The UAE and Iran have agreed to bolster economic ties and promote co-operation in sectors including tourism, transport, entrepreneurship and renewable energy.

The two countries held the first session of the Joint Economic Committee meeting in Abu Dhabi, which was chaired by the UAE's Minister of Economy, Abdulla bin Touq, and Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash. Both countries also plan to boost economic co-operation in sectors including logistics, agriculture and environment, the UAE's Ministry of Economy said in a statement on Thursday. "The convening of the first session of the UAE-Iran JEC reflects our shared aspirations to solidify existing economic ties and expand them to the future sectors," Mr bin Touq said.

The UAE is continuing to strengthen trade and economic ties with countries across the globe through Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (Cepa) that aim to reduce or remove trade barriers. This week, it finalised the terms for a new Cepa with Ukraine. So far 11 Cepas have been signed with India, Turkey, Israel, Indonesia, Cambodia, Georgia, Mauritius, Kenya, the Republic of Congo, Colombia and Costa Rica.

The UAE is also holding talks to conclude deals with Serbia, Vietnam, the Philippines, New Zealand and Ecuador, while negotiations with South Korea are complete. The inaugural UAE-Iran JEC session also discussed new ways to enhance trade and provide support to exporters and importers.

The two countries agreed to establish joint technical task forces to follow up on the implementation of the JEC's recommendations to strengthen economic and trade co-operation.

They also agreed to support the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and export their products to new markets, according to the statement. Mr Bazrpash met Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed, Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Presidential Court, in Abu Dhabi. They discussed UAE-Iran co-operation, particularly in terms of expanding bilateral trade, state news agency Wam reported.

Iran imported \$20.8 billion of goods from the UAE in its last fiscal year, ending in March 2024, according to the country's customs body. Iran's real gross domestic growth is projected to grow 3.3 per cent in 2024 after expanding by 4.7 per cent last year, according to the International Monetary Fund's Regional Economic Outlook report for the Middle East and Central Asia, in April. It is forecast to grow 3.1 per cent next year.

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MONGOLIA

[IFC is providing \\$30 Million to M bank to Increase Digital Lending for Women and Small Businesses in Mongolia](#)

To expand digital lending for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Mongolia, including women-owned businesses, IFC and M bank, Mongolia's first digitally focused bank with a branchless model, joined forces to launch an innovative program in Ulaanbaatar today. It is part of IFC's ongoing efforts to promote an inclusive and sustainable financial sector in the country.

IFC will provide up to \$30 million in financing to M bank, with twenty-five percent of the funding earmarked for SMEs owned by women. As part of the program, IFC has been working with M bank to expand its SME finance and supply chain finance products and services. IFC will also provide technical guidance to help M bank further develop and implement an environmental and social management system.

SMEs, of which two-thirds are women-owned in Mongolia, account for about 70 percent of the country's workforce and 17.8 percent of GDP. Yet access to finance for SMEs in the country remains challenging with only about half of them receiving financing support from banks. According to the World Bank Enterprise Surveys in 2019, 31 percent of surveyed firms in Mongolia face full credit constraints, surpassing the average for other countries in the East Asia and Pacific region.

"At the forefront of digital transformation in Mongolia, M bank is optimistic that our partnership with IFC will further enhance our digital lending capabilities and provide

tailored financial solutions to customers across the country," said Temuulen Batmunkh, Deputy CEO, M bank. "We are also excited to pilot specific financial services for local businesses and merchants participating in supply chain."

M bank has rapidly grown since obtaining its commercial banking license in February 2022. With total assets exceeding \$200 million and nearly 40,000 borrowers as of December 2023, M bank is wholly owned by MCS Group, one of Mongolia's largest companies, and has a goal to grow by leveraging MCS Group's franchise across the country.

"Mongolia, as the most sparsely populated country, can greatly benefit from digital solutions to expand access to essential services nationwide," said Rufat Alimardanov, IFC Resident Representative for Mongolia. "We are excited to leverage our capital and expertise in supporting a digitally-focused bank in the country to promote market competitiveness and inclusive economic growth."

In Mongolia, IFC has provided \$345 million in financing and technical advice to local financial institutions in the past five years

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TAJIKISTAN

[EBRD helps enhance capacity of Tajikistan's banking sector](#)

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Tajikistan have agreed to cooperate on gender equality and support for women's entrepreneurship.

A memorandum of understanding, signed today by the Chairman of the National Bank of Tajikistan, Firdavs Nazrimad Tolibzoda, and EBRD President, Odile Renaud-Basso, will help the country develop the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Code (WE Finance Code).

The WE Finance Code is a commitment by providers of financial services, regulators, development banks and other stakeholders to jointly increase financial assistance to women-led micro, small and medium enterprises. This globally accepted multi-stakeholder approach will help eliminate constraints and financing gaps for women entrepreneurs in Tajikistan and will add value to the economy.

President Renaud-Basso said: *"Jointly, we'll be aiming to engage public and private-sector partners from Tajikistan's financial sector to improve the collection, analysis and use of data related to the financial inclusion of women-led enterprises. It will help to close financing gaps for women entrepreneurs and provide innovative solutions to mobilise the capital required for their growth."*

The EBRD is providing fresh funds and creating new growth opportunities for women-owned and managed businesses in Tajikistan by extending a US\$ 5 million (€4.6 million) loan to one of the country's largest lenders, Bank Arvand (Arvand). The loan is provided under the EBRD's Women in Business (WiB) programme for Central Asia, which is supported by the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative. Arvand will also benefit from technical assistance under the WiB, which will help promote women's entrepreneurship and business activity. Its clients, women-led small and medium-sized enterprises, will also receive access to technical advice through the Bank's Advice for Small Businesses programme.

A US\$ 1 million (€0.9 million) limit under the EBRD's Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP) to one of the country's leading microlenders, MDO HUMO (HUMO), will enable HUMO to scale up its growing trade-finance business. In line with the EBRD's strategic objective to promote interregional trade and cooperation, this deal will help local firms to import necessary goods, services and equipment, and to export their products.

To date, the EBRD has invested €947 million through 168 projects in Tajikistan.

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Asia

IFC Invests in New Sturgeon Capital Fund to Support Tech Startups across Central Asia

To promote digital economies and support the growth of early-stage tech startups in Central Asia, IFC will invest up to \$5 million in Sturgeon Emerging Opportunities II, LP a new venture capital fund managed by Sturgeon Capital, a major venture capital investor.

Sturgeon Emerging Opportunities Fund II will focus on startups in areas such as fintech, business-to-business platforms, agritech, healthtech, and ed-tech. It aims to help emerging entrepreneurs scale their businesses, improve operational efficiency, and create long-term employment opportunities in the regions.

"We believe technological innovations can help solve some of the key challenges in emerging markets, including job creation and financial inclusion," said Kiyam Zandiyeh, Sturgeon's founding partner. "We are delighted to have IFC join the first close of Sturgeon Emerging Opportunities II as the first institutional investor. We look forward to working with IFC and our other investors to support tech startups and address a significant funding gap in the regions' tech ecosystem."

The fund will mainly invest in Central Asia, but it will also look for opportunities in other emerging markets, such as Egypt and Pakistan. Sturgeon Capital estimates that the tech startup industry in these countries could generate nearly \$300 million in annual digital revenue by 2030, benefiting more than half a billion people. Local tech start-ups, however, often face challenges raising capital to launch and scale their products and services.

"Venture capital is gaining traction across Central Asia, but it's still a nascent market underserved by foreign investments," said Wiebke Schloemer, IFC's Director for Türkiye and Central Asia. "By investing in funds like Sturgeon, IFC aims to bring much-needed capital to the most innovative local businesses. This support will enable them to scale and pave the way for more institutional and private investors, replicating the successes we have seen in other regions."

IFC's investment in Sturgeon is part of IFC's Startup Catalyst program, which addresses funding gaps in underserved venture capital ecosystems by investing in incubators, accelerators, and seed funds focused on emerging markets. The program targets high-risk markets, including in some of the world's poorest and fragile countries. Since 2016, the program has supported more than 2,800 entrepreneurs, including 700 women, in 24 countries through 21 funds.

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EUROPE

Paris-based Tulyp raises €1.5 million aiming to revolutionise digital trade finance for SMEs

Tulyp, the one-stop shop software platform digitalizing trade finance based in Paris, has successfully closed a €1.5 million Seed round led by Speedinvest alongside other major investors including Kima Ventures, Purple Ventures and business angels.

With clients spanning three continents, Tulyp is committed to ensuring that SMEs have access to trade finance services on par with large corporations. To achieve this, the company provides an innovative, seamless platform that digitizes and secures the entire trade finance process, levelling the playing field for smaller businesses in global markets.

Trade finance, despite being crucial for the global economy (6% of global GDP), particularly struggles to serve the needs of smaller businesses. A study by the Asian Development Bank highlighted a substantial \$1.7 trillion gap in trade finance in 2020 alone, accounting for 10% of global trade. This gap is partly due to the sector's slow modernization compared to other areas of finance, which are rapidly embracing digital technologies. While large corporations benefit from these advancements, enhancing supply-chain efficiency and transparency, SMEs are often left behind due to their fragmented nature and limited scale.

Tulyp aims to solve the gap between SMEs and large businesses by providing an agile one-stop-shop platform that:

- Enhances the value for SMEs by enabling faster, more secure international deal closings beyond traditional processes
- Mitigates risks in import-export transactions, such as transport, currency, and counterparty risks, ensuring secure and transparent payment terms that protect both buyers and sellers
- Collaborates with global financing companies to alleviate cash flow problems for SMEs engaged in international trade, reducing financial pressures and associated risks
- Accelerates import-export transactions by providing a one-stop shop that consolidates all necessary services, streamlining the entire process

Nicolas Mazza, CEO of Nama Enterprise said: *“Since integrating Tulyp into our operations at Nama Enterprise, it has revolutionized our business by enhancing security and transparency, making transactions risk-free and efficient. Tulyp’s user-friendly interface and seamless workflow integration have simplified previously complex processes and provided transparency throughout the transaction lifecycle. Tulyp has supported our expansion into new markets, including large-scale trades and bulk shipments to Vietnam, playing a crucial role in facilitating smooth and secure transactions. Our partnership has been invaluable in mitigating risks and scaling our trading operations significantly.”*

This new capital will be used to accelerate growth and enhance Tulyp's service capabilities in key markets, notably by improving the platform, and refining functionality and scalability. This fundraising will also help Tulyp forge new strategic partnerships with B2B financing companies and freight forwarders, enhancing the added-value services offered to our clients. Tulyp also aims to increase the pace of customer acquisition in its strong markets, Europe and Asia, reinforcing its commitment to expanding its global footprint and reinforcing its market presence.

Maxime Girres, CEO and founder of Tulyp stated: *"After more than 2 years of hard work and iteration, we are really proud that Tulyp is now live with active clients on three continents. Bringing new key partners like SpeedInvest, Kima Ventures, Purple Ventures and strategic Business Angels will help us scale our client offering and onboard new clients. By helping SMEs develop their business all around the world, we truly believe that Tulyp is opening a new era for SMEs in trade finance! It is now a new chapter in Tulyp's growth that we are looking forward too!"*

Alexis Majos, Principal at Speedinvest mentioned: *"We are very excited to be investing in Tulyp for its role in revolutionizing SME trade, addressing the trust deficit and financing inefficiencies in international transactions. There is a \$500bn trade finance gap in the segment, and we believe that Maxime and his team are the pioneers that will tackle it with the right product."*

Alexis Robert, Partner at Kima Ventures stated: *"We had been looking for a startup in trade finance for a long time, and one that would disrupt the letter of credit that is slowing down our commercial exchanges. With Tulyp, we have discovered a passionate team and are very happy to support them with Kima Ventures"*

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Africa

Investment firm ABO Capital launches Angolan training Centre to build local talent pool

Angola-based international investment firm ABO Capital has opened the Amity Training Centre, an executive training programme, in Luanda to help foster the next generation of professional talent and continued economic growth. Founded and led by Zandre Campos, ABO Capital is an international investment firm that builds opportunities in emerging markets across Africa, investing in companies that create value and promote economic development.

With a focus on education and technology, but also operating in financial services, energy, manufacturing, distribution and real estate, ABO Capital is headquartered in Angola with offices in Dubai and the United States.

The Amity Training Centre in Luanda is an implementation of Amity University in Dubai, a programme that originated in India. It offers globally-benchmarked education to students of all ages and nationalities, designed to equip professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a workplace, with campuses across the world. The programme connects trainees directly with opportunities in the private sector. Based in the financial center of Luanda, the Amity Training Centre offers trainees first-hand experience to learn and work in key sectors driving economic development in Angola, including financial institutions, telecommunications, oil companies, and energy suppliers.

“The Amity Training Centre establishes a pathway for our young professionals to take their skills to the next level and compete in a 21st century economy – in Angola and beyond,” said Campos. “This executive training programme is exactly what our country needs to further build our local talent pool and expand economic opportunity for Angolans.”

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Future Africa, CatalyzU launch “How to Startup” fellowship for African entrepreneurs

Future Africa and CatalyzU have partnered to launch the “How to Startup” fellowship, a seven-week programme designed to empower African entrepreneurs and equip them with the essential skills and knowledge needed to build successful businesses. Future Africa is a leading pan-African VC firm, while CatalyzU vets, trains, and places Africa’s leading talent. The two have now partnered to launch “How to Startup”, a new initiative aimed at startup founders, aspiring founders, startup employees, and even corporate innovators eager to launch and scale innovative ideas in Africa. Developed by a team of Africa’s best founders and venture capitalists, the immersive fellowship offers tailored, experiential training that goes beyond traditional entrepreneurship education. Participants will learn directly from the best in the business, gaining practical strategies from live learning, and real-world case studies that aim to foster a deeper understanding of the unique nuances of the African startup ecosystem.

“Africa is home to a vibrant, rapidly growing entrepreneurial landscape, and we’re thrilled to launch this fellowship to empower the next generation of African startups,” said Karl Nchite, co-founder and CEO of CatalyzU. “By providing hands-on, live learning experiences and access to an extensive network of industry leaders, we’re equipping entrepreneurs with the tools and support they need to turn their innovative ideas into thriving businesses.”

Upon completion of the programme, fellows will graduate into the Young African Catalyst network – CatalyzU’s Alumni Network, a vibrant alliance of over 200 leading founders and venture capitalists across the continent, providing ongoing support and collaboration opportunities.

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Venue: WASME International Secretariat, Noida, India

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► Membership

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

Categories

General Members

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

Chambers/ Industry Associations/ SME Associations

International & Regional Federations/ Associations

Associate Members

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

Permanent Members

- ◆ 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 any query related to membership write to membership@wasmeinfo.org

WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (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 fortnightly SME e-Bulletin "WORLD SME UPDATE" aims to keep its readers abreast of latest information on various developments taking place in the SME sector around the globe. If you have any news/information on the issues related to Government policies & programmers and latest developments in the SME sector i.e. technology and innovations, success stories, case studies, research and methods, planning and programs, training and developments, finance and management, and marketing that you would like to share with the world SME community, please do send them to us at editor@wasmeinfo.org

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 as well as meaningful articles as a regular contribution to SME e-Bulletin and our website in the larger interests and benefits of SMEs the world over.

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