

## Building the ASEAN Community

### Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

#### *Fostering Competitive and Innovative SMEs in ASEAN*



The establishment of the AEC by the end of 2015 will provide a lot of opportunities to the SMEs in ASEAN. However, in order for them to gain benefits from the AEC ASEAN, there is a need for the SMEs to be better connected, better resourced and better engaged.

In ASEAN, cooperation on SME development began way back in 1995, when fostering SME development became one of the priority areas in respect of policy focus and resources. The ASEAN SME Agencies Working Group (SMEWG), which comprises representatives from ASEAN SME agencies, was formed to formulate policies, programmes and spearhead the implementation of

flagship initiatives and projects for SME development and cooperation in the region. Furthermore, the initiatives undertaken at reducing barriers to trade and eliminating tariff duties and non-tariff barriers have also been significant in spurring SME development.

Under the Strategic Action Plan for SME Development (2010-2015) or SAP SMED, a number of activities focusing on building the capacity of SME agencies and fostering greater connection among SMEs in ASEAN has been undertaken. Some of the flagship deliverables under the current Plan include (i) ASEAN SME Policy Index that assess and monitor policy and regulatory frameworks conducive to SMEs in ASEAN; (ii) ASEAN SME Service Web Portal with regional linkages, providing information crucial for SMEs to penetrate regional and international markets; (iii) the ASEAN SME Online Academy which is a self-paced e-learning platform for SMEs; (iv) ASEAN Guidelines on One Village One Product (OVOP) to transform local/rural products to the competitive products for export markets; and (v) Common Curriculum for Entrepreneurship in ASEAN. Recognising that access to information is crucial for market access and internationalisation of SMEs, a series of publications has been released notably the SME Guidebook towards the AEC 2015 and the Directory of Outstanding SMEs in ASEAN 2015.

To ensure that ASEAN SMEs become globally competitive and innovative, the Post-2015 Strategic Action Plan is being crafted with the aims to (i) promote productivity, technology and innovation; (ii) increase access to finance; (iii) enhance market access and internationalisation; (iv) enhance policy and regulatory environment; and (v) promote entrepreneurship and human capital development.

TO LEARN MORE

1. [The Strategic Action Plan for SME Development \(2010-2015\)](#)
2. [The ASEAN SME Policy Index](#)
3. [The SME Guidebook towards the AEC 2015](#)
4. [The Directory of Outstanding SMEs in ASEAN 2015](#)

For more information, please visit <http://www.asean.org/communities/asean-economic-community/category/small-and-medium-enterprises> or send an email to [aimo@asean.org](mailto:aimo@asean.org)