



Event Description:

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are important economic drivers in most countries, employing large shares of the workforce in developed and developing economies. Furthermore, there is evidence that SMEs promote diversity and inclusiveness, including the participation of women in the work force and as entrepreneurs. What is the impact of the global economy on SMEs and how can governments design international trade policies with SMEs in mind?

Leading researchers and academics in international trade from across the APEC region will present and discuss their recent findings on international economic trends following the global pandemic. These trade policy experts will explore key challenges and opportunities facing Small, and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in a rapidly changing international environment. The panellists will draw from their research and focus on the key issues facing SMEs in the APEC economies with a goal of providing evidence-based analysis relevant for policymakers and trade policy practitioners. The issues explored during the four panel sessions will include:

- the challenges and opportunities facing SMEs in the global economy;
- how are SMEs affected by trade policy and international trade agreements;
- impacts from the pandemic and best practices for economic recovery;
- best practices for performance measurement of global economic policies;
- and global supply chains and SMEs in a post-pandemic world.

Day 1: Monday, May 17, 2021 | 7am – 10am (Eastern Time, EST)

Opening

- Eugene Beaulieu, The School of Public Policy, University of Calgary

Welcomes participants

Setting the Stage

- John Hannaford – Deputy Minister of International Trade, Canada

Overview of the important link between research/academic community and policy-making. Will discuss the current policy environment with a focus on Canada’s strategy in the Asia-Pacific region, and the importance of the internationalization of SMEs, especially during the post-COVID recovery period.

Session 1: The Internationalization of SMEs

Description: What is the role of SMEs in the global economy? Although SMEs are important economic drivers in most economies, and promote inclusiveness and diversity, it is not clear how they are affected by the global economy. In fact, SMEs are underrepresented in international trade and account for a small proportion of exports relative to their share of overall activity and employment. How well are SMEs doing in the global economy and how are they able to compete with larger firms that are better positioned to navigate the complexity of foreign markets and foreign regulatory requirements? How is the rise of global value chains (GVCs) and the transformation of the digital economy creating more opportunities and challenges for SMEs? Can governments design and implement policy environment that support SMEs in a globalized economy?

Moderator: Akhmad Bayhaqui, APEC Secretariat

Speakers:

- Bernardo Blum, University of Toronto
- Sonali Chowdhry, Kiel Institute for the World Economy
- Sui Sui, Ryerson University

Q&A Period

Break

Session 2: Trade Policy and Integration in the Asia-Pacific Region

Description: As regional trade agreements (or free trade agreements – FTAs), continue to flourish, what are the implications for developing and strengthening exporting SMEs? Many FTAs now include SME provisions. What are the best practices and how are these agreements and SME chapters affecting SMEs? What is the evidence of the impact of FTAs on SMEs and what types of agreements and provisions are most effective at supporting SME activity? International trade is complex, what role can FTAs play in addressing constraints faced by SME exporters, what provisions specific to SMEs have been found to be most effective? What policy areas are and SME-specific provisions should trade negotiators

<p>be including in new FTAs?</p> <p>Moderator: Aaron Sydor, Global Affairs Canada</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jose-Antonio Monteiro, WTO • Michael Ferrantino, The World Bank • Pao-Li Chang, Singapore Management University
Q&A Period
Closing remarks

Day 2: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 | 7am – 9:30am (Eastern Time, EST)

Opening

- Eugene Beaulieu, The School of Public Policy, University of Calgary

Welcomes participants to Day 2 and briefly recaps the previous day's discussions.

Setting the Stage

- Marie-France Paquet, Chief Economist, Global Affairs Canada

Will provide an overview of how Canadian SMEs performed during the global pandemic with a focus on Canada's SME exporter population.

Session 3: Post COVID Recovery and Building Back Better

Description: The COVID-19 pandemic has been the greatest threat of the 21st century and has affected all facets of how we work, produce, consume and conduct trade. It has impacted how countries and economies interact and has short-term and long term implications for the global economy. What have been the impacts the COVID-19 pandemic on SMEs? Have SMEs been affected differently than larger firms? What has been the impact on employment, sales and has adjustment largely affected the intensive or extensive margins of SMEs? What are the prospects for SMEs as we move beyond the pandemic? What are the best practices for government policies designed to support SMEs and what is the role for international trade and international institutions.

Moderator: Peter Hall, Export Development Canada

Speakers:

- Anders Aero, International Trade Centre
- Trang Thu Tran, World Bank
- Paul Vandenberg, Asian Development Bank

Q&A Period

Break

Session 4: Supply Chains

Description: Global value chains (GVCs) have been expanding rapidly up to the COVID-19 pandemic. How have SMEs participated in GVCs and how are SMEs positioned to best take advantage of opportunities from the expansion of GVCs? This session will examine how SMEs participate in GVCs and explore the benefits from this participation. It will also discuss and analyze potential policy levers and strategies that can be employed to encourage GVC participation by SMEs. How has the pandemic affected GVCs and what do we expect to see post-pandemic for GVCs and how will SMEs participate? This session will examine the possibility of supply chains reconfiguring in the post-pandemic world. What are the trends toward near-shoring or re-shoring and what are the implications for SMEs?

Moderator: Elisabetta Gentile, Asian Development Bank

Speakers:

- Loretta Fung, Tsing Hua University, Chinese Taipei
- Heiwai Tang, University of Hong Kong
- Gary Gereffi, Duke University

Q&A Period

Conclusion