

## Removing Barriers to SME Access to International Markets

Although SMEs are a major source of growth and job creation, SMEs appear to be under-represented in the international economy relative to their contribution in national and local economies. Two original OECD-APEC surveys investigated how SME policy makers and SMEs perceive the barriers to SME access to international markets. For the most part, support programmes offered by governments are appropriate to the key barriers identified, particularly at the earlier stages of the firm's international experience. The report supported the case for continued and improved government support for SMEs seeking to internationalise; however, governments and agencies need first to ascertain what kind of SME they are dealing with, what stage of international operations it is at, whether it has perceived any barriers and if so what kinds of barriers does the SME regard as important. Presented at the OECD-APEC Global Conference on "Removing Barriers to SME Access to International Markets", held in Athens, Greece, in November 2006, the report is useful to both policymakers and entrepreneurs to shed light on facilitating SME internationalisation. This book also presents a synthesis of the Conference discussions and the main outcome of the Conference "the Athens Action Plan for Removing Barriers to SME Access to International Markets".

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