









# Foreword by the WTO Director-General

Trade

(including the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade and the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures), technical regulations and other standards would impose higher costs on firms to the detriment of SMEs. This is at least in part because it is easier and cheaper for large and potentially more efficient firms to comply with

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# Executive summary

## A. Introduction

**T**he report is organized as follows. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the findings. Chapter 2 discusses the methodology used in the study. Chapter 3 presents the results of the analysis. Chapter 4 discusses the implications of the findings. Chapter 5 provides conclusions and recommendations.

In the majority of countries, small and medium-sized

**SME**  **U**



C. Dynamics of SME internationalization

the World Bank and the OECD-WTO have all conducted a number of surveys that allow firms to be distinguished by their size. These surveys show that poor access to information, costly requirements, burdensome customs procedures and lack of trade finance are major barriers to international trade for SMEs.

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Many governments, particularly in developing countries, lack the appropriate policy tools to correct these market failures. Instead, SME support programmes are used as second-best policy tools to remedy market failures. Governance (Table 3.1)

The Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement appears to give members greater leeway to promote the technological development of their SMEs through, among many other initiatives, lower patent filing fees and intellectual property-related consulting services.

The Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) encourages SME participation in international procurement in several ways. It improves procurement legislation and systems relating to transparency, integrity and competition, provides flexibility to implement measures relating to procurement practices that facilitate SME participation, and allows preferential measures to help SMEs obtain privileged access to procurement contracts.

The WTO work programmes on e-commerce and small economies have prominent SME components which involve, among other things, analytical work examining how SMEs might better take advantage of e-commerce.

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