

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

SME TRADE ACADEMY



The SME Trade Academy Participant Reviews

The ITC SME Trade Academy Participant Reviews are the result of a series of interviews conducted in the second half of 2016 among course participants having successfully completed at least 5 online courses. They aim not only to showcase the practical benefits of online learning for ITC beneficiaries, but also to illustrate the difference which ready access to online educational and training materials can have in the lives of individuals.

The following interview has been lightly edited for clarity and brevity.

Testimonial – Masresha Yimer

Masresha Yimer is a consultant in trade and economics from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. With 26 years of experience in both the public and private sectors. Mr. Yimer is now providing consultancy and research services to the Ethiopian government and various business associations in fields including trade and market information research and analysis, socio-economic issues, business development support, as well as monitoring and evaluation.



"I became aware of ITC in 2001 when I joined the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Industry's Export Promotion Agency (EEPA). Since then, I have been regularly following the trade forum and using the market analysis tools on the ITC website. This is how I found out about the SME Trade Academy," stated Mr. Yimer, who has successfully completed 8 online courses with the Academy. He kindly shared his story with us.

The screenshot shows the ITC SME Trade Academy website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, ENGLISH (EN), GLOSSARY OF TERMS, LOG IN, and CREATE NEW ACCOUNT. Below the navigation is a banner for a new course titled "Considering Export Markets". To the right of the banner is a portrait of a woman. Below the banner is a search interface with sections for Course type (Awareness and knowledge-based courses, Competency and skills-based courses, Competency Assessment), Language (English, Français, Español, انجليزية), and a search bar labeled "Search the catalog :". There are also buttons for "Course Category" and "Next start date".

'The online courses offered by ITC's SME Trade Academy are highly relevant to and help me build my capacity for my work in trade and markets, value chains, SMEs and other private sector development consultancy services.'

Masresha Yimer, Ethiopia

Q1: Did you find the course which you followed relevant to your professional activities?

The online courses offered by the SME Trade Academy are highly relevant to me and help me build my capacity in terms of trade and markets, value chains, SME support and other private sector development consultancy and research support services.

Specifically, these courses help me keep up to date and remain exposed to current developments in the fields of international trade and market information, trade research as well as SMEs support services. In particular, the training provided by the SME Trade Academy equipped me with the latest SME and trade development resources, which will help me in my current and future work in capacity-building support services for SMEs.

25%
of SME Trade
Academy participants
are from LDCs





Furthermore, the courses which I took allowed me to build my abilities and confidence in order to provide technical support services directly to SMEs, the public sector, as well as other bilateral and multilateral development support agencies. These courses' approach and resources are well-designed and easy to understand, not only for those of us working with SMEs and the trade sector, but also for the SMEs themselves.

Q2: Please tell us your thoughts about your E-Learning experience with the SME Trade Academy

I feel that the courses offered by the SME Trade Academy are of great importance in two ways.

First, they are an excellent resource, not just for SMEs planning or starting their export or international business activities, but also for other actors in the value chain, such as suppliers, trade promotion institutions, trade representatives, the diaspora, TSIs, trade finance institutions, etc.

Second, they are very useful for professionals trying to begin their career, or already working in international trade, SME business development, trade and market-related consultancy, as well as research and advisory support services.

The fact that the courses are offered online was also very interesting for me. It allowed me to work at night, as well as during the day on the weekends, when it was convenient. I was able to study regularly and complete all of the course materials and assessments on time. What's more, the online system used by the Academy is also highly interactive and user-friendly.

I am very happy with the SME Trade Academy's online training and look forward to taking further advanced courses, all while making the effort to put the courses to practical use; namely, applying the skills and knowledge which I acquire in the service of SMEs and trade and development institutions.

'Investment is not just about physical infrastructure, or direct investment in factories. Investment is also about any country's biggest asset – its people. Investing in human capital and building skilled work forces is key to success in the 21st century. This is why we will continue to focus on building skills for trade through the SME Trade Academy.'

Arancha Gonzlez,
Executive Director of the ITC

Introducing the SME Trade Academy



ITC's SME Trade Academy offers a series of online courses and access to educational materials on a range of trade-related topics. It aims to provide staff in trade and investment support institutions (TISIs), small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and policymakers with access to vocational training in order to assist them in their daily activities.

Browse the SME Trade Academy course catalog and enroll to any course free of charge at:

LEARNINGINTRACEN.ORG