

PARTICIPANTS SPEAK

Victoria Francolino

Ambassador of Uruguay to Australia



The SME Trade Academy Participant Reviews

The ITC SME Trade Academy Participant Reviews are the result of a series of interviews conducted with course participants having successfully completed at least 5 online courses. They aim not only to highlight 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 – Victoria Francolino

Victoria Francolino is a career-diplomat who has devoted her professional life to international trade matters.

After joining the Uruguayan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1997, she served in Australia, Brazil and, most recently, Geneva, Switzerland, where she held the position of Deputy Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and International Trade Centre (ITC). Victoria is currently the Ambassador of Uruguay to Australia.



We recently contacted Victoria to hear about her experiences with the SME Trade Academy.

'I am a big fan of the SME Trade Academy and also a proud student. I have taken several courses over the years and I truly believe these courses have helped me to grow.'

Victoria Francolino, Australia

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

I found the courses to be extremely relevant! Since 2016, I have completed 16 online courses, most notably: "Women and Procurement"; "The Role of Standards in Sustainable Supply Chains", "How to Analyse Trade Flows", "Building a Trade Information Service", "Working with Foreign Trade Representatives", "E-commerce for SMEs: An Introduction for Policymakers", and "Accessing Halal Markets".

Looking back at my extensive learning experience with the SME Trade Academy, I believe that I was able to attain different goals with the different courses taken. In certain cases, the courses allowed me to deepen my understanding of topics of relevance to current WTO negotiations. An example of this is the course on "E-Commerce for SMEs" that is oriented toward policymakers.

59%

of SME Trade Academy participants enrol in more than one course





In other cases, the online learning opportunities allowed me to develop and strengthen the skills and competencies directly relevant to my daily work. For instance, I was able to reinforce my knowledge of how to use trade databases and analytical tools for market research purposes.

Examples of courses that have contributed to both my professional (and personal) performance include: “Embarking on a Lean Digital Transformation for Organisations”; “Considering Exports Markets”; “Introduction to Business Plans”; “Setting up an Export Marketing Strategy; and others.

Q2: Please tell us your thoughts about your e-learning experience with the SME Trade Academy.

The SME Trade Academy’s online learning platform is a very rewarding initiative. Certain courses allowed me to keep abreast of trade trends, such as content related to Halal certification, the increased importance of sustainability standards and the role of standards in the Agrifood sector. As I stated before, the e-learning experience allowed me to fulfil different purposes on both personal and professional levels. Besides this, the e-learning platform is extremely user-friendly.

I enjoyed each one of the 16 courses that I completed! At the same time, I am looking forward to starting my new courses. I am currently enrolled in two: “Creating Quality E-commerce Content” and “Using Virtual Marketplaces for your E-commerce Initiative”.

‘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 Gonzalez,
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

[LEARNING.INTRACEN.ORG](https://learning.intracen.org)



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