

SME Toolkit Project

SME Toolkit (www.smetoolkit.org) is a product of the IFC Small and Medium Enterprise Department. It uses the latest information and communication technologies to help small and medium enterprises in emerging markets learn sustainable business management practices.

The SME Toolkit consists of four major components:

- ❖ An easy-to-use Web and CD-ROM interface that allows users to search or browse to locate the content they need;
- ❖ A large set of best-of-breed small business content: the number of tools, business forms, news items, and how-to articles on sites exceeds 40,000 cumulatively. The articles cover the following in-demand areas of business management: Accounting & Finance, International Business, Marketing & Sales, Human Resources, Legal & Insurance, Operations, and Technology.
- ❖ Content management tool that allows partners to manage the Web site locally;
- ❖ A business training curriculum for business development service providers and SMEs.

To date, the Toolkit has been translated into 15 languages (Arabic, Bengali, English, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Macedonian, Mongolian, Nepali, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Urdu and Vietnamese) and already has 28 regional and sector sites. Collectively, the sites attract over 270,000 visitors per month, 85% of which come from developing countries.

“Small businesses are the growth engines of the world’s economies; yet their success rate is not as good as it could be simply because of a lack of access to good business management practices. Giving small businesses the information and new collaborative technologies they need, will help them grow and prosper.”

Lars Thunell, IFC Executive Vice President and CEO

Regionally, the SME Toolkit is distributed through partnerships with local organizations that can translate the product into national language(s), add relevant content such as business regulations, sources of financing, and business directories and distribute the localized versions to SMEs in their markets. Current Toolkit partners range from regional SME service providers and banks to NGOs, IFC Project Development Facilities, and IFC departments and country offices.

“BizMantra (Nepalese SME Toolkit) is a huge support for SMEs in streamlining management related issues. It not only helped my company optimize our pricing strategy, but also educated us on how to effectively organize a marketing campaign.”

Ms. Shrestha, User of the Nepalese SME toolkit

In September 2006, IFC signed a strategic partnership agreement with IBM. The partnership between IFC and IBM is highly complementary, as IBM brings world-class technical expertise and IFC contributes the knowledge of frontier and developing markets.

To learn more about the SME Toolkit, please visit www.smetoolkit.org.