

SMEs and the Internet

Globalization and deregulation are changing the ways goods and services are produced and marketed. For this reason, export markets have become extremely competitive and this is expected to intensify further. In this environment, many big companies are turning to IT in general and the Internet in particular to gain a competitive edge. In this respect, the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are not catching up fast enough. This and their vulnerability to change can prove fatal to them. To give them an insight into how the Internet could help them in their business endeavors, particularly the online marketing of their products, the APO organized a seminar on “SMEs and the Internet” in Kathmandu, Nepal, 30 June to 4 July 2003. Seventeen participants from 11 APO member countries took part. The seminar was inaugurated by APO Director for Nepal Dinesh Chandra Pyakurel, who is also the Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies.

The seminar dealt with the following topics: IT and SMEs; Internet and the strengthening of SMEs: Malaysian experience; e-Marketing: Current trends, challenges, and opportunities for SMEs; e-Trade readiness and SMEs of Nepal; Models of Internet use for SMEs; Role of NPOs in promoting the Internet for productivity enhancement of SMEs; Strengthening the capabilities of SMEs;



Group photo of participants

Case examples of the commercial use of the Internet by SMEs: Thai experience; and Government initiatives and IT application by SMEs: Case of Nepal.

For field studies, participants visited the Association of Craft Producers to observe the online marketing of handicrafts through the Internet; Lotus Holding Company, an ISP provider; and the Trade Promotion Center of Nepal for a briefing on the Trade Point Program of UNCTAD, established to facilitate access to international markets by SMEs. 