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The ASEAN SME Academy



Young entrepreneurs take classes in information and communication technology to access information online

Photo credit: USAID ASEAN Connectivity through Trade and Investment

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In March 2014, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the US-ASEAN Business Council (US-ABC) launched the US-ASEAN Business Alliance for Competitive Small and Medium Enterprises (Business Alliance). This innovative public-private partnership, has trained over 4,000 small and medium enterprise (SME) owners utilizing the world-class expertise offered by US-ABC corporate members in areas such as Marketing and Business Management, Finance, Legal, Logistics, and Information Technology. The Business Alliance partners have now also developed an online training tool, the ASEAN SME Academy (Academy), that will reach many more SMEs.

The core of the Academy is a series of training materials for SMEs from Fortune 500 companies. In addition, the Academy incorporates training materials focused on SMEs from regional firms and international organizations. This curated set of courses is part of a larger program to provide training and mentorship to enhance ASEAN SME's access to financial products, regional and international markets, information and advisory services, and technology and innovation.

The Academy also contains business information that is particularly relevant for regional SMEs, providing access to a curated directory of service providers to whom they can reach out for financial advice, corporate programs and networking.

The Academy will provide a calendar of events to give users more information about trainings from the Business Alliance and business development services in the region. In the near future, the Academy will also house online forums for SMEs in ASEAN to share experiences on common issues, identifying best practice and replicating excellence to create scale and momentum.

Users of the Academy will develop a user profile when first logging on to facilitate users' access to materials specific to their industry and links to existing business support.

The information and resources will be selectively translated into the local languages to expand the group of firms that can benefit from the Academy.

For more information on the ASEAN SME Academy, please visit the website at: www.asean-sme-academy.org.