**CHAPTER 16**

**SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES**

# Article 16.1

# General Principles

1. The Parties, recognising the fundamental role of SMEs in maintaining dynamism and enhancing competitiveness of their respective economies, shall foster close cooperation between SMEs of the Parties and cooperate in promoting jobs and growth in SMEs.

2. The Parties recognise the integral role of the private sector in the SME cooperation to be implemented under this Chapter.

3. The Parties recognise the importance of current initiatives on SMEs developed in relevant international fora, and in taking into account their findings and recommendations, where appropriate.

4. The Parties recognise the importance of SMEs owned or led by under-represented groups, such as women, youth, First Nations, persons with a disability and minority groups, participating in international trade.

# Article 16.2

# Cooperation to Increase Trade and Investment Opportunities for SMEs

1. The Parties acknowledge the importance of cooperating to achieve progress in reducing barriers to SMEs’ access to international markets.

2. The Parties may undertake activities to strengthen cooperation under this Chapter including:

(a) identifying ways to assist SMEs of the Parties to take advantage of the commercial opportunities under this Agreement;

(b) exchanging and discussing each Party’s experiences and best practices in supporting and assisting SMEs with respect to, among other things:

(i) training programmes;

(ii) trade education;

(iii) trade finance;

(iv) identifying commercial partners in the other Party;

(v) establishing good business credentials;

(vi) payment practices in the other Party’s market; and

(vii) small business support infrastructure, including dedicated SME centres, incubators and accelerators, export assistance centres and other centres as appropriate;

(c) facilitating the development of programmes to assist SMEs to participate in and integrate effectively into global markets and supply chains;

(d) identifying non-tariff barriers that adversely affect trade outcomes for SMEs and considering ways to minimise these barriers;

(e) exchanging information relating to the participation of SMEs in digital trade and e-commerce, with a view to assisting SMEs to take advantage of opportunities resulting from this Agreement; and

(f) considering any other matter pertaining to SMEs, including any issues raised by SMEs regarding their ability to benefit from this Agreement.

3. In carrying out any activities or programmes pursuant to paragraph 2, the Parties may seek to collaborate with experts, international organisations, or the private sector, as appropriate.

# Article 16.3

# Information Sharing

1. Each Party shall establish or maintain its own free, publicly accessible website containing information regarding this Agreement, including:

(a) the text of this Agreement;

(b) a summary of this Agreement;

(c) information designed for SMEs that contains:

(i) a description of the provisions in this Agreement that the Party considers to be relevant to SMEs;

(ii) any additional information that would be useful for SMEs interested in benefitting from the opportunities provided by this Agreement.

2. Each Party shall include in its website linksto:

(a) the equivalent websites of the other Parties;

(b) the websites of its own government agencies and other appropriate entities that provide information the Party considers useful to any person interested in trading, investing, or doing business in that Party’s territory.

3. Subject to each Party’s laws and regulations, the information described in paragraph 2(b) may include:

(a) customs regulations, procedures, or enquiry points;

(b) regulations or procedures concerning intellectual property;

(c) technical regulations, standards, quality or conformity assessment procedures;

(d) sanitary or phytosanitary measures relating to importation or exportation;

(e) foreign investment regulations;

(f) business registrationprocedures;

(g) trade promotion programs;

(h) competitiveness programs;

(i) SME investment and financing programs;

(j) taxationinformation;

(k) rules on government procurement;and

(l) other information which the Party considers to be useful for SMEs.

4. Each Party shall regularly review, or on the request of the other Party, the information and links on the website referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 to ensure the information and links are up-to-date and accurate.

5. To the extent possible, each Party shall make the information in this Article available in English.

# Article 16.4

# Non-Application of Dispute Settlement

The Parties shall not have recourse to dispute settlement under Chapter 25 (Dispute Settlement) for any matter arising under this Chapter.