

SMALL AND MEDIUM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT IN THE ASEAN REGION Marketing Factors

Edited by

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PREFACE

Development policies in the countries of the ASEAN region have in recent years reflected an increasing awareness of the significance of the small and medium-sized business enterprise in economic development. This has manifested in official action, initially hesitant but now increasingly vigorous, to develop and support small and medium businesses (SMBs), financially and otherwise.

The ASEAN Small and Medium Business Improvement project seeks to contribute to this awareness of the significance of SMBs in a direct and practical manner: through the examination of SMBs at ground level, and the dissemination of findings for policy action. The project is the collaborative effort of research teams in each of the ASEAN countries (except Brunei; the project was formulated before that country joined ASEAN), co-ordinated centrally at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS). The general objectives of the project are:

- (1) to collect, develop, and organize information relating to the role and potential of small and medium-scale enterprises in GNP formation, employment creation, and industrial growth;
- (2) through overall analysis of problems involved, as determined through primary (field surveys and case studies) and secondary research, to identify and recommend economic policies and measures (institutional, educational, and commercial) geared to the improvement of the small and medium business sector in ASEAN countries;
- (3) to disseminate the findings and recommendations of the project in a readable and easily comprehensible form.

The first phase of the project focused on financial (including fiscal) factors affecting the improvement of ASEAN SMBs. In the second phase, the participating research teams studied issues and problems relating to the marketing of SMB products. As with the first phase, the research teams in each country obtained primary

data from surveys they carried out, and supplemented this with relevant secondary information from published and unpublished sources. Early drafts of the country studies were revised in the light of valuable feedback from several experts in SMB marketing, from both the public and private sectors. This interaction between academicians and practitioners helped ensure that recommendations were as realistic as they were innovative.

The present volume is the distillation of the substantial output from the second phase. (Readers interested in the original papers should contact the respective writers.) The country studies are preceded by an Overview chapter which describes the analytical framework followed by the research teams, looks at similarities and differences in findings, and summarizes the conclusions and recommendations. We hope that this publication, and its companion volumes on Financial Factors and Production Management, will contribute to an increased understanding of SMBs and their potentially powerful role in the economic development of the region.

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May 1988

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