



*A professional organization that supports the advancement of women in international trade by providing networking and educational opportunities.*

## OWIT-Ottawa Newsletter

Summer 2021, Vol. 10

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### OWIT International Webinars



To learn more click [here](#).

### Contact Us

For any questions, comments or submissions, please contact us:  
[info@owit-ottawa.ca](mailto:info@owit-ottawa.ca)

Greetings!

We hope you are enjoying a safe and relaxing summer!

We were pleased to engage with so many of you over the last few months at our virtual events. We covered a wide range of topics - from strengthening trade relations with Mexico to supply chain sustainability in the fashion industry. You will find a full recap of events below.

We have also included an article of interest in this edition of our newsletter from Cowater International entitled "Helping SME's to Fully Realize the Benefits of Free Trade." We partnered with Cowater International in April to discuss business opportunities in South America and the Asia-Pacific.

Don't forget to engage with us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to stay up to date with our fall events and webinars.

Sincerely,  
OWIT-Ottawa

## OWIT-Ottawa Mentorship Program

Whether you work for yourself, for a business or large organization, or you're trying to break into the field of international trade, OWIT-Ottawa's mentorship program could provide valuable opportunities to help you engage with the Ottawa trade community.

Tell us what you would like to see in a trade focused women's mentorship

program.

Should you or your organization wish to learn more, please contact Nathalie Bradbury, VP Strategy, OWIT Ottawa, at [director@owit-ottawa.ca](mailto:director@owit-ottawa.ca) or at [nbradburyjost@outlook.com](mailto:nbradburyjost@outlook.com)

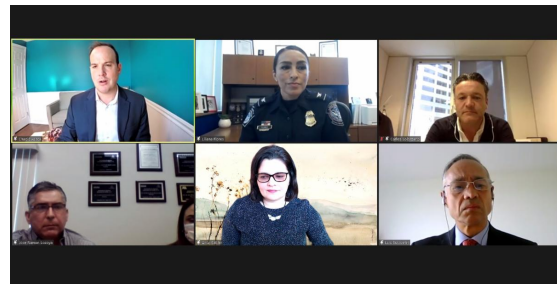
## Event Recap

### February: Ports-to-Plains Webinar

In early February, OWIT-Ottawa was pleased to co-sponsor *The Ports-To-Plains: Building Bridges Between Mexico and Canada*. The event was a great success with 263 individuals participating live.

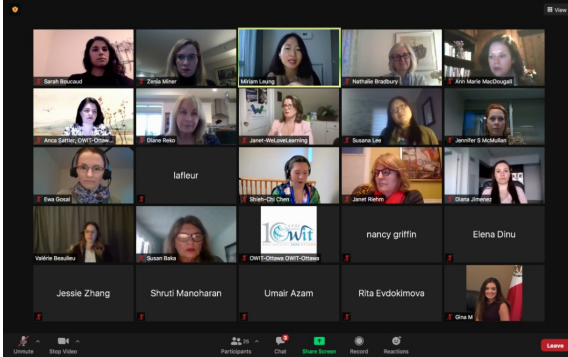


His Excellency, Juan José Gómez Camacho, Ambassador of Mexico in Canada and Paloma Villaseñor Vargas, Consul of Mexico in Del Río, Texas, offered introductory remarks. Guest speakers, including our **President, Anca Sattler**, discussed various topics including the Port-to-Plains Alliance and the further promotion of trade and commerce between Canada and Mexico in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (USMCA/CUSMA/TMEC).



### February: 2021 Kickoff Mixer

**Miriam Leung** (Director, The Counsel Network) shared helpful strategies for effective engagement in virtual events at our kickoff mixer in February. Miriam shared best practices based on her experiences as an effective recruiter with a successful track record placing lawyers at all levels and practice areas across Hong Kong, Greater China, London, Seoul, Tokyo, Singapore, and Bangkok.



## March: Women Empowerment - Discovering Limitless Opportunities

We were joined by three outstanding leaders from our community in celebration of International Women's Day:

- **Alexis Ashworth** (CEO, Habitat for Humanity Ottawa)
- **Kara Eusebio** (Senior Manager Strategic Partnerships, Invest Ottawa)
- **Janet Stewart** (Founder and CEO, WeLoveLearning)



## April: Business Opportunities with Canada's Developing Country Trading Partners

In April, we joined forces with [Cowater International](#) for a unique lunch and learn event. Our panelists discussed business opportunities in Peru, Colombia, Paraguay and the

Asia-Pacific region.

We were joined by:

- **Samantha Torrance**, Executive Vice-President, Governance and Economic Reform, Cowater International
- **Phil Rourke**, Project Director, EDM and CTIF
- **Ann Penner**, President, Three Point Perspectives and former Member, Canadian International Trade Tribunal
- **Pernille Fischer Boulter**, CEO and Founder, Kisserup International Trade Roots
- **Vicki Campbell**, Senior Program Manager, EDM
- **John Karalis**, Program Manager, Trade and Investment Advocacy Fund (TAF2+)

## May: The Runway to Sustainable Fashion

We explored the sustainable fashion industry

with innovators in May. We were joined by creative artists, researchers and entrepreneurs to learn about their experiences in the industry where they are promoting change from the individual consumer to systemic level.

Our panelists included:

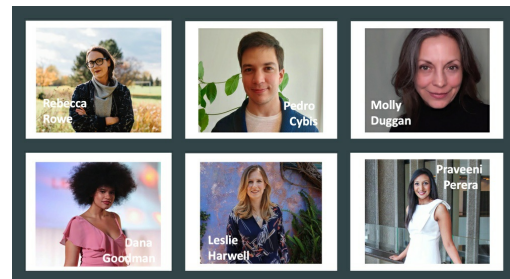
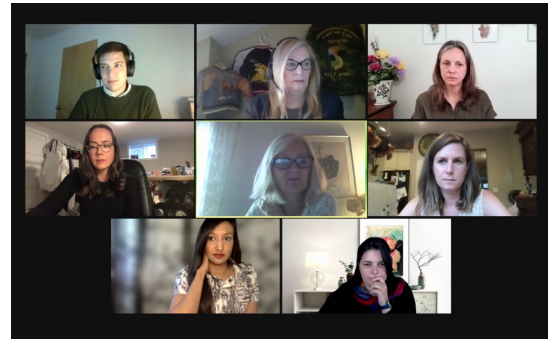
- **Praveeni Perera**, *Popular Fashion Blogger and Trade Specialist*
- **Dana Goodman**, *Former Model*
- **Rebecca Rowe**, *Designer, Capsule Creator*
- **Pedro Cybis**, *Sustainable Fashion Researcher*
- **Molly Dugan**, *Business Consultant*
- **Helene Carter**, *Bank and Vogue*
- **Leslie Harwell**, *Managing Partner at Alante Capital*



### The Runway to Sustainable Fashion

Join us for a talk with local and international movement makers

May 27 | 5:30 – 7:00pm



Thank you for your support!

## Helping SMEs Fully Realise the Benefits of Free Trade

25 MARCH, 2021

*Cowater International – Canada's largest and most technically diversified international development consulting*

*company – recognizes the important role of trade and investment in creating jobs, catalyzing export-driven growth, and shaping better economic opportunities for women and men around the world. To help realize this potential we implement a range of donor-funded interventions that support policy and legal reform, capacity building, and improved access to finance and markets for people and businesses in developing countries. We also work in partnership with multilateral institutions such as the WTO and ASEAN to improve standards, build knowledge, and unlock economic opportunities for communities, businesses, and governments to best ensure that women and men from all walks of life have access to the benefits of global*



*trade and economic integration.*

*This article on helping SMEs realise the benefits of free trade provides a window into some of Cowater's work in these areas. For more details on specific projects, readers are invited to visit Cowater's website at [www.cowater.com](http://www.cowater.com) and its social media pages on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).*

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Cowater International has been engaged extensively in ensuring that the benefits of economic development and free trade are accessible to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), including through fast growing e-commerce channels. We implement three large technical assistance initiatives – the [Canadian Trade and Investment Facility for Development](#) (CTIF), and the [Expert Deployment Mechanism](#) for Trade and Development (EDM) – both funded by Global Affairs Canada – and the [Trade and Advocacy Fund 2+ \(TAF2+\)](#) funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The three facilities advance inclusive trade and economic development.

CTIF's work focuses on increasing access to markets and finance for SMEs in the Asia-Pacific region, with a particular emphasis women-led enterprises and provision of project financing up to \$500,000.

In Thailand, one of CTIF's implementing partners, TFO Canada, recently completed its [mandate to expand SME access to Canada's organic agri-foods market](#). Working primarily with the ASEAN Organics Federation (AOF), which includes member federations from Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam, this project aimed to build the capacity of organic producers to export to Canada. Assistance included online training to AOF officials and one-on-one support to 72 SMEs focused on Canadian standards, trends, and opportunities for organic products. SME participants were able to gain a deeper appreciation of these requirements and associated next steps they may undertake to expand their export activities with Canadian buyers. As a result of this project, CTIF's technical assistance increased the capacity of the AOF to provide services to its members, particularly women-led SMEs, and increased members' knowledge of both business opportunities in Canada, and the country's regulatory environment. CTIF's implementing partner was also able to identify export-ready companies in all four countries of focus.

CTIF implementing partner Niagara College [continues its work](#) with Bhutan's Ser Bhum Brewery, a women-led craft brewery based in Thimpu, which is planning to increase its exports to Canada and other international markets beyond its immediate neighbours. Niagara College's Brewmasters and brewery operations experts are working with Ser Bhum's management team and staff to upgrade the brewery's overall standards, including environmental, health/safety practices, and other aspects, while also providing access to professional development opportunities to women and young people within Bhutan's brewing industry. By the project's end in late 2021, this

initiative will have increased the capacity of the Ser Bhum Brewery to produce more craft beer, comply with operating policies and procedures for export, and increased their access to new markets.

CTIF implementing partner Kisserup International Trade Roots recently began their work with another women-led SME, Leatherina Pvt Ltd., a Bangladesh-based boutique producer of fine leather goods such as handbags that is seeking to expand its access to international markets using e-commerce platforms. Leatherina was selected as a recipient of technical support through a CTIF Request for Applications initiative designed to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on small enterprises and help them become more resilient to future crises. Kisserup International Trade Roots will work with Leatherina's management and staff to enhance the company's e-commerce site, develop an e-commerce and digital marketing plan, and recommend ways to gain better access to North American markets.

Cowater International's EDM project is taking similar approaches to increasing economic opportunities for SMEs. EDM invests significant effort in increasing the capacity of partner governments and trade and industry associations to expand SME access to export-oriented opportunities and take advantage of free trade agreements (FTAs) between Canada and their home country. EDM prioritizes applications benefitting SMEs led by women, Indigenous peoples, or other under-represented groups.

In Vietnam, for example, Canadian experts deployed by EDM have supported Vietnam's trade promotion agency, VIETRADE, to design tools to strengthen the organisation's capacity to deliver export development services and help Vietnamese businesses access the benefits of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). This included advising on the design of a new client relationship management system and the creation of a database of trade promotion organisations in CPTPP countries.

At the request of Colombian counterparts, EDM is supporting the implementation and promotion of the Canada-Colombia FTA (CCoFTA), including provisions related to electronic commerce, rules of origin, creative industries, public procurement, labour, and environmental protection. For instance, EDM experts are working with Colombian officials to increase private sector awareness of the obligations and opportunities created by the e-commerce chapter of the CCoFTA. EDM's experts are also working with the Department of Huila, a regional government, to design and deliver training courses to Huila's agricultural producer associations and SMEs. One course will concentrate on the CCoFTA's agricultural market access provisions, while the second will focus more broadly on assisting SMEs with their export development efforts.

Under TAF2+, Cowater International is working through the World Trade Organisation to engage member states in assisting MSMEs to play a more active role in international trade. Through Cowater International's partnership with the Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), TAF2+ is supporting countries with grants to access knowledge, resources, and

best practices on MSMEs and e-commerce. The project supported the development of three knowledge products that explored investment facilitation, electronic commerce and MSMEs, and supported dissemination of knowledge around ways to address challenges and opportunities in the three areas in trade negotiations.

Finally, in partnership with the WTO Secretariat, and the delegations of Mexico and Uruguay to the WTO, TAF2+ is developing a MSME web platform to aggregate and curate training materials, studies, policy documents, statistics, databases, in English, French and Spanish, to help MSMEs address the challenge of accessing various sources through a centralised database.



Figure 1: Leatherina staff. Photo courtesy of Leatherina Pvt Ltd.



Figure 2: Location of Colombian participants in training delivered by EDM on expanding access to government procurement opportunities under the CCoFTA.

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