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## Preface

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The *Handbook of Research on International Entrepreneurial Strategy: Improving SME Performance Globally* is the result of a book project undertaken after discussion with Ben Booth of Edward Elgar Publishing. All three of us recognized that the SME international entrepreneurial strategy and performance research field had reached a growth point where definitions, parameters and more theory needed to be developed for the field to expand. Researchers, practitioners and policy-makers were increasingly showing keen interest in such expansion. Also, we had been working and publishing articles in this field and were widely known for our work.

This Handbook offers very good coverage of the origin and evolution of SME international entrepreneurial strategy and performance, definitions and the changing history of this sector. It goes on to discuss the importance of internationalizing SMEs in different parts of the world, and various research areas still to be investigated in this field, including the effects of different cultures on the origin and growth of SMEs. Thereafter, the international entrepreneurial strategies that SMEs can adopt are outlined. The text focuses on the different types of internationalizing SMEs that have emerged, ranging from the traditional to born globals, including international new ventures.

The text also analyses internationalizing growth paths of SMEs as affected by different factors. These factors include the interactions of entrepreneurship and internationalization growth, aspects of knowledge accumulation, application and management, and the influence of the Internet. Also, the impact of utilization of large channels, of alliances and networks, and of large partner MNCs is covered. Further, the institutional support available in selected countries is discussed.

A chosen group of leading scholars and researchers have written contributions to this book. They were invited due to their expertise and to reflect the diversity of perspectives. The book has two main parts. The first part begins with a chapter giving an intellectual overview and synopsis of the sector. The second part contains a wide-ranging chapter on conclusions and future research areas. These two chapters are written by us, the two author/editors of the book.

Part I of the book deals with international entrepreneurial behaviour of the SME and the development of theoretical and empirical research. The

overview chapter mentioned above is followed by nine contributor chapters. The sub-areas covered are international entrepreneurial causation strategy versus effectuation based on internal founder and firm-specific strategy; the influence of marketing intelligence and adaptation efforts on international performance; international networking strategies; marketing strategies of international new ventures and the export behaviour of new ventures from small and open economies; the simultaneous effects of innovativeness and export behaviour; managerial attitude as an antecedent of network development for internationalizing SMEs, outlining a process view of the internationalization of new ventures; and last how to enhance the competitiveness of an East European economy using SME innovativeness as a stimulator.

Part II of the book covers internationalization of EU SMEs, using export promotion programmes to assist internationalizing SMES, and the role of government in the same endeavour in emerging economies. Then there are four chapters on international entrepreneurship among Finnish, Italian, Scottish and Hungarian firms respectively, followed finally by the conclusions and future research chapter.

Overall we are happy to present the book to all academics, practitioners, policy-makers and others who are interested in the growing recognition of the importance of internationalizing entrepreneurial SMEs, specifically to those who wish to learn more about how these SMEs confer a multipronged and beneficial impact on economic growth, innovativeness, knowledge, human skill and ability development on the societies and global networks in which they flourish.

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