APPENDIX B: CONTRIBUTORS

We would like to thank the following survey respondents and contributors for their contributions to this publication.

- Wahida Mohamed Athman Ali, Islamic Fintech Hub of Sub Saharan Africa
- Stephen Arnold, Helaba
- Raphael Barisaac, UniCredit
- Kris Van Broekhoven, KomGo SA
- Dai Bedford, Ernst & Young LLP
- Oliver Belin, TradeIX/Marco Polo
- Colin Camp, Pelican
- Andre Casterman, Casterman Advisory, ITFA
- Natasha Condon, J.P. Morgan
- Nicholas Demetriou, essDOCS
- Arnaud Doly, Nabu
- Kate Drew, CCG Catalyst
- Sean Edwards, ITFA
- Thomas Frossard, Tinubu Square
- Merisa Lee Gimpel, Lloyds Banking Group
- Christoph Gugelmann, Tradedeq
- Lars Hansén, Enigio Time AB
- Hans Huber, Commerzbank
- Agnès Hugot, Fast Track Trade
- Daniel Huszár, efcom GmbH
- Katrin Kahr, Raiffeisen Bank International AG
- Atul Khekade, TradeFinex Tech Ltd.
- Michelle Knowles, Absa Group
- Joshua Kroeker, Contour
- Oswald Kuyler, ICC DSI
- Cecile Andre Leruste, Accenture
- Rebecca Liao, Skuchain Inc.
- Iain MacLennan, Finastra
- Pamela Mar, Fung Group
- Vinay Mendonca, HSBC
- David Meynell, tradefinance.training
- Barbara Meynert, Fung Group
- Marta Mróz-Sipiora, Asseco Poland
- Peter Mulroy, FCI
- John Omoti, Bank of China
- Samantha Pelosi, BAFT
- Joel Schrevens, China Systems
- Dr. Paul Sin, Deloitte Consulting
- Michael Sugirin, Standard Chartered
- Shona Tatchell, Halotrade
- Marc Vandermolen, KBC
- Michael Vrontamitis, Trade Digitalisation Working Group, ICC Banking Commission
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The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an international organization that deals with the global rules of trade between nations. The WTO administers agreements, negotiated and signed by its members, which provide the legal ground rules for international commerce. The WTO’s purpose is to help trade flow as freely as possible for the economic development and the welfare of its members’ citizens. The WTO is serviced by a secretariat which provides expert, impartial and independent support to member governments, including research, analysis and statistical information related to the role and development of trade in the global economy.
Emmanuelle Ganne is Senior Analyst in the Economic Research and Statistics Division of the World Trade Organization (WTO) where she leads WTO work on blockchain. She is the author of a 2018 book entitled “Can blockchain Revolutionize International Trade?” and is a regular speaker at blockchain events. Ms. Ganne is a member of the governing board of the ICC Digital Standards Initiative and of the government advisory board of the International Association of Trusted Blockchain Applications (INATBA). Ms. Ganne also leads WTO work on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

Prior to this, she held various positions at the WTO, including as Counselor to former Director-General Pascal Lamy, and in the Accessions Division, where she assessed the trade policies of governments wishing to join the WTO and advised them on how to improve their business environment. From 2015 to 2017, she held the position of Vice-President and Managing Director for Europe at the Allam Advisory Group (AAG), a team of former C-level executives and senior diplomats that specializes in helping businesses expand their operations globally. Ms. Ganne is a 2009 Yale World Fellow.

Email: emmanuelle.ganne@wto.org

Deepesh Patel is Editorial Director at Trade Finance Global (TFG). In this role, Deepesh leads efforts in developing TFG’s brand, relationships and strategic direction in key markets, including Dubai, Hong Kong (China), Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Deepesh regularly chairs and speaks at international industry events with the WTO, BCR, Excred, TXF, The Economist and Reuters, as well as industry associations including ICC, FCI, ITFA and BAFT.

Deepesh is the host of the ‘Trade Finance Talks’ podcast and ‘Trade Finance Talks TV’. He is co-author of ‘Blockchain for Trade: A Reality Check’ with the ICC and the WTO, alongside other industry research. In addition to his work at TFG, Deepesh is a Strategic Advisor for WOA, and a Board Member of ITFA’s Emerging Leaders Committee. He also sits on the Fintech Working Group of the Standardised Trust.

Prior to TFG, Deepesh worked at Travelex where he was responsible for the cards business and the Travelex Money app in Europe, NAM, UK and Brazil. Deepesh is Chair of Governors and co-opted LA Governor of the Wyvern Federation, which has responsibility for 5 primary schools in South London.

Email: deepesh.patel@tradefinanceglobal.com
For many micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) around the world today, access to financing can mean the difference between prosperity and bankruptcy. Working to identify, understand, and ultimately overcome the challenges that MSMEs face in their quest for acquiring financing will help to ensure that the next great technological idea does not cease to exist before it has a chance to change the world.

This publication seeks to identify some of the most pressing of these challenges, understand them, and explore the potential application of digital technologies to mitigating their impact. To that end, the authors conducted interviews and surveys with experts in the field of MSME financing, including, in some cases, trade financing, to shed light on these issues and explore the ways in which technology can be used.

This publication begins by examining some of the challenges that have been identified as impacting MSME financing, as well as the role that the COVID-19 pandemic has had in moulding the landscape. Next, it moves on to examining key digital technologies, their potential benefit to the industry – in particular to MSME financing – a selection of case studies and of companies utilizing these technologies, the adoption challenges they face, and recommendations for overcoming these challenges. The technologies in question include cloud computing, optical character recognition, the Internet of Things, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, distributed ledger technology and application programming interfaces.