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Author	Jani Peltonen	Student number	
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Supervisor	D.Sc. Niina Nummela		

Nowadays global market economy pushes even the smallest enterprises in some point of their lifespan to make decisions whether or not to enter into foreign market areas. Internationalisation for a small and medium sized enterprise is always a risk and managing that risk is a challenge for any SME. This study tries to find answers to questions such as why Finnish SMEs choose to use the inward internationalisation process as their internationalisation strategy, how does the inward internationalisation process proceed, and how the inward internationalisation process may facilitate the initiation of the firm's outward operations

Holistic concept of internationalisation includes inward operations, outward operations and co-operative operations which are studied in a coherent whole. Inward internationalisation process aim at reduce risks that are included in internationalisation by using easier operation modes to collect market information, contacts and operation-specific information to use later on in firm's internationalisation. In fact, inward internationalisation process model is a tool for managers to think about internationalisation as a process, not a series of independent events and thereby reduce the amount of risks in firm's internationalisation.

Empirical study tested the feasibility of the inward internationalisation model by the means of a case study method. Both cases were good representatives of proposed model and thence the feasibility of inward internationalisation model was certified. Benefits of proposed model were its risk-reducing possibilities, cost-effectiveness in comparison to otherwise acquired information, and easiness of thereby developed contacts. However, this was the case only if management was properly informed about the issue and if they managed knew how to use that information. Although benefits of inward internationalisation process were not used properly in past internationalisation of case companies, both managers reasoned that it would be useful to do so in upcoming international operations.

Inward internationalisation process is one possible internationalisation path for an internationalising firm. However, because inward internationalisation process seems to be very slow process after all, investors' pressure, opportunistic possibilities to enter foreign markets or many other circumstances may influence in internationalisation process of an enterprise.

Key words	Internationalisation, inward internationalisation, holistic model of internationalisation, SME, small and medium sized enterprises.
Further information	

