



BUSINESSatOECD

Business at OECD (BIAC)

SME and Entrepreneurship Committee

Annual Activity Report 2024

Message

from the Committee Chair

Dear Colleagues,

In 2024, the rapid pace of technological change and the adaptation to a post-pandemic world presented both significant challenges and opportunities for SMEs. Geopolitical context and market uncertainties underscored their vulnerability, but SMEs demonstrated resilience. While many have not yet fully returned to pre-COVID operational capacities, the economic outlook has been encouraging, with signs of recovery in turnover and employment.

During this year, our Business at OECD (BIAC) SME and Entrepreneurship Committee placed a strong emphasis on the twin transitions with digital and green, that are essential to building SME resilience and competitiveness. Just as digital transformation has enabled SMEs to enhance efficiency and innovation, the adoption of advanced industrial technologies, such as additive manufacturing and virtual twins, is helping them improve operations and strengthen their competitiveness. Similarly, fostering sustainability through green initiatives is critical not only for resilience but also for addressing energy security concerns amidst geopolitical tensions.

As international organization, it is our common purpose to recommend and support effective and trusted policies that assist SMEs in navigating these transitions. In 2024, we engaged actively in events such as the 2024 SMEs Assembly in Budapest, and we once again worked closely with the OECD through workshops, meetings, and reports to shape policies that foster a supportive business environment. As partners of the D4SME initiative, we continued supporting the OECD in its efforts to identify solutions for SMEs to adapt to global challenges and remain vigilant.

In 2025, we will build on this momentum by continuing our close cooperation with the OECD to empower SMEs and entrepreneurs, enhance their resilience, and harness their entrepreneurial spirit. We will engage in a new practice, preparing a biannual policy priorities paper, to ensure we regularly engage with the most vital part of our economies – SMEs and inform OECD of current challenges and opportunities. Together, we will strive to create the conditions necessary for SMEs to drive inclusive growth and contribute to a sustainable global economy.



Patrik Kovács

*Business at OECD SME and Entrepreneurship
Committee Chair*

Context

The OECD is a global leader of statistics, forecasts, and evidence-based policy recommendations in the area of SMEs and Entrepreneurship. Its publications, such as SME and Entrepreneurship Outlook, SME digitalisation to “Build Back Better”, are closely followed by policymakers and industry.

The OECD has strongly contributed to the G20 SME agenda, in particular with regards to SME finance, with the G20/OECD High-Level Principles on SME Financing and the report on G20/OECD Effective Approaches for Implementing the G20/OECD High-Level Principles on SME Financing, or through its contribution to platforms like the GPFI.

Business at OECD (BIAC) is the officially recognized business advisory group to the OECD and represents the leading business and employers’ organizations in OECD countries. The work of our SMEs and Entrepreneurship Committee enables private sector representatives to participate in high-level OECD sessions and regular policy meetings, exchange and network with governments and OECD leadership, access information and contribute to OECD policy recommendations, and build momentum with private sector peers to impact policy-making at all stages.

This activity report provides selected year highlights of the *Business at OECD* SMEs and Entrepreneurship Committee in 2024, and includes a list of Committee releases and sessions. In line with the OECD’s priorities and the efforts of many others in our Committees, our activities in 2024 focused on aligning core issues of the Committee with SMEs twin transition with digitalization and green, among other important entrepreneurship topics.

Our activity highlights

April

In April, A *Business at OECD* delegation led by our Committee Chair Patrick Kovacs, attended the Spring session of the OECD Committee on SMEs and Entrepreneurship Committee (CSMEE). We participated to discussions related to the 2025-26 Programme of Work and Budget, the twin transition and the importance of health in the workplace.



(Our Committee Chair Patrik Kovacs alongside the OECD Secretariat at the CSMEE meeting in April)

A large delegation also contributed to the **OECD High-Level Roundtable of the Digital for SMEs (D4SME) Global Initiative**, where we discussed on how to support SMEs and entrepreneurs in going digital. Serving as a network partner for the initiative, we also contributed to the Steering Group meeting and discussions on the future programme of work for the initiative.



(Our Committee Chair Patrik Kovacs alongside Rokas Morkunas, Policy Manager, Business at OECD and Italy's Deputy Minister of Enterprise and Made, Mr. Valentino Valentini, at the D4SME High Level Roundtable in April)

June

In June, we contributed to the **OECD Joint webinar of the OECD Platform on Financing SMEs for Sustainability and the D4SME initiative**, where our delegation contributed by discussing access to sustainable finance for SMEs. The discussions highlighted the importance of equipping SMEs with the tools and capacities to measure and report their sustainability performance, as well as the role of digital technologies in facilitating access to sustainable finance. These insights reinforced our commitment to advancing practical solutions that enable SMEs to contribute to and benefit from the green transition.

Our activity highlights

September

In September, we attended the **OECD Annual Informal Steering Group on SME and Entrepreneurship Financing**, where our delegation exchanged views on enhancing access to finance for SMEs in a rapidly evolving economic landscape. Discussions focused on innovative financial instruments, the importance of addressing barriers to sustainable finance, and the role of public-private collaboration.



(Patrik Kovacs alongside OECD Secretary General Mathias Cormann at the Competitiveness workshop)

November

In November, our delegation actively participated in a series of **OECD events** focused on advancing the sustainability and competitiveness of SMEs, including the **Annual Conference of the OECD Platform on Financing SMEs for Sustainability**, where our Chair Patrik Kovacs, participated to the panel discussion titled *"Beyond the 'E': Enabling SME Action on the Social and Governance Dimensions of Sustainable Finance."*

We also engaged in the **OECD Workshop on "Boosting Competitiveness – Major Challenges and Key Drivers,"** where our Chair addressed the critical role of SMEs in fostering long-term competitiveness amidst a challenging economic environment.

Our delegation attended the **OECD Workshop on Women entrepreneurs in global supply**, where Rachel Dignam, (Sage), representing *Business at OECD*, moderated a panel on *"How the public and private sectors are empowering women entrepreneurs in accessing global markets"*. Discussions focused on the barriers women entrepreneurs face in accessing trade-related finance and support, including networking, mentoring, and trade missions, and



(Rachel Dignam, Sage, moderating a panel discussion at the OECD Workshop)

Our activity highlights

Contributing to the Fall session of the OECD Committee on SMEs and Entrepreneurship (CSMEE), we convened business policy priorities regarding topics such as fostering SME growth, skills to navigate the twin transition, strengthening SME and entrepreneurship finance, boosting SME and entrepreneurship participation in the green transition and fostering SME and entrepreneurs' contributions to the digital and global economy.

Our delegation, led by our SMEs Committee Chair, Patrik Kovacs, represented *Business at OECD* at the 2024 SME Assembly in Budapest, hosted in partnership with the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In this context, we highlighted the importance of sustainability, digitalization, and practical tools for empowering European SMEs and entrepreneurs.



(Patrik Kovacs at the SME Assembly)

December

In December, we participated in the OECD Digital for SMEs (D4SME) Workshop in Turin, focused on "Boosting SME Digitalization for Local Development." As a network partners for the initiative, *Business at OECD* was invited to moderate a panel discussion on "Smart manufacturing: support uptake of advanced industrial technologies by manufacturing SMEs to improve their operations and strengthen competitiveness". This workshop explored how digitalization can drive SME growth and resilience, emphasizing practical solutions to support SMEs in navigating the digital transition. This engagement reinforced our commitment to advancing digital tools and strategies that empower SMEs and entrepreneurs to thrive in an increasingly digitalized economy.



(Rokas Morkunas, Policy Manager, *Business at OECD* moderating a panel discussion at the D4SME Workshop in Turin)

Sessions

Our Meetings with the OECD and Governments

Engagement in High-Level OECD Sessions

19 April

OECD High Level Roundtable of the Digital for SMEs (D4SME) Global Initiative

4 November

Annual Conference of the OECD Platform on Financing SMEs for Sustainability

12 December

OECD Digital for SMEs (D4SME) Workshop in Turin

Engagement in OECD Committee Sessions

17-18 April

OECD Committee on SMEs and Entrepreneurship (CSMEE)

28 June

Joint webinar of the OECD Platform on Financing SMEs for Sustainability and the D4SME initiative

10-11 September

OECD CSMEE Informal Steering Group on SME and Entrepreneurship Financing

5-6 November

OECD Committee on SMEs and Entrepreneurship (CSMEE)

6 November

OECD Workshop on Women entrepreneurs in global supply

7 November

OECD Meeting of the SME and Entrepreneurship Discussion Network

Committee Leadership

Chair

Patrik Kovács

Hungarian National Association of
Entrepreneurs and Employers
(VOSZ) (Hungary)

Vice Chair

Torbjörn Halldin

Confederation of Swedish Enterprise
(Sweden)

Vice Chair

Martina Le Gall Maláková

National Union of Employers - RUZ
(Slovak Republic)

Vice Chair

Guy Primrose

Suasor Commercial Consultants
(Australia)



(Participants of the 5th D4SME High-Level Roundtable in April)



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Established in 1962, *Business at OECD* (BIAC) stands for policies that enable businesses of all sizes to contribute to growth, economic development, and societal prosperity. Through *Business at OECD*, national businesses and employers' federations representing over 10 million companies provide and receive expertise via our participation with the OECD and governments promoting competitive economies and better business.