



OECD



From standards to action – Fostering a holistic approach to sustainable finance for SMEs

2nd Conference of the OECD Platform on
Financing SMEs for Sustainability

14 December 2023

OECD Conference Centre, Paris

With the support of:





OECD Platform on Financing SMEs for Sustainability: Second Annual Conference

From standards to action – Fostering a holistic approach to sustainable finance for SMEs

14 December 2023 | 10:00 – 17:00 | OECD Conference Centre

About the OECD Platform on Financing SMEs for Sustainability:

The OECD Platform on Financing SMEs for Sustainability provides a forum for global collaboration, knowledge sharing and implementation of good practices among public and private financial institutions, policy makers and SME representatives to enhance the provision and uptake of SME sustainable finance for a successful climate transition. The Platform was launched at the margins of COP26 in November 2021 to contribute to strengthening the evidence base and developing comparable indicators on SME sustainable finance. The Platform seeks to operationalise sound sustainable finance approaches and instruments for SMEs, enhance dialogue with policy makers and provide high level guidance to governments. The Platform also offers opportunities for creating meaningful networks among banks, ESG intermediaries, Fintech companies, SME representatives and other actors in the sustainable finance ecosystem. The Platform is hosted by the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, a global reference in the area of SME and entrepreneurship data, policy analysis and dialogue. Its members include the British Business Bank, the Business Development Bank of Canada, Bpifrance and the Industrial Bank of Korea. The Platform's knowledge partners include AECM, Bankers for Net Zero, the European Banking Federation (EBF), the SME Climate Hub and the Montreal Group.

About the conference:

The second annual conference will convene the Platform members, knowledge partners and other stakeholders to foster discussions around the critical challenges affecting the provision and uptake of sustainable finance for SMEs. It will showcase the growing body of research that the Platform and other actors have developed on this important topic, with a focus on a comprehensive approach to enabling sustainable finance to drive SMEs' green transition. The conference aims to share experiences and work towards operational solutions to address the growing sustainability-related data needs of financial institutions, the challenges that SMEs face in measuring their sustainability performance and initiatives to address these challenges. Participants will also shape the OECD Platform's agenda to support the development of a common approach to the streamlined collection of sustainability-related data that meets the needs of FIs, while avoiding an undue burden on SMEs.

Agenda

09:30 - 10:00	Registration and welcome coffee
10:00 – 10:15	Opening of the conference
Speakers	<p>Welcome by Lamia Kamal-Chaoui, Director, OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs Regions and Cities</p> <p>Opening remark by the Chair of the OECD Platform on Financing SMEs for Sustainability, Paula Crofts, Director, Business Growth at the Department for Business and Trade</p> <p>Remarks by Martin Godel, Head of SME Policy, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), Switzerland, and Chair, OECD Committee on SMEs and Entrepreneurship (CSMEE)</p>
10:15 – 11:20	Session I: How can financial institutions enable the SME journey to sustainability?
Key questions	<p>Financial institutions (FIs) are working to align their activities with the Paris Agreement and other sustainability targets. This means shifting their SME financing offer and portfolios towards sustainable and sustainability enabling investments. It also calls for financing the green transition of SMEs engaged in high-emitting activities. To do this in a way that is effective and credible, FIs will need to closely monitor and report on the sustainability performance of their financed activities, which involves the collection of granular sustainability-related data from clients, including small businesses. As the OECD survey <i>“Financing SMEs for Sustainability – Financial Institution Strategies and Approaches”</i> demonstrated, FIs are indeed increasingly seeking data on their SME clients, or plan to introduce reporting requirements in the future.</p> <p>This session seeks to understand the issues FIs face in developing financing instruments that can both incentivise and facilitate the transition of the SME sector. It will discuss emerging reporting requirements and the management of risks from the transition to net zero and sustainability. It will seek to address the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can FIs develop tailored financing solutions, including those that link financing conditions with sustainability performance? • How are data requirements from emerging mandatory reporting frameworks impacting FIs with respect to their SME operations/portfolios? • What data and monitoring is needed for FIs to offer transition finance to SMEs and what are the implications for smaller clients?
Moderator	Caroline English, Policy and Strategy Director, British Business Bank
Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jani Tuominen, Head of Climate and Innovation Finance, Finnvera • Jean-Louis Leloir, Special Advisor, European Association of Guarantee Institutions (AECM) • Burçak İnel, Director of Financing Sustainable Growth, European Banking Federation • Morvan Mallegol, Head of Sustainable Banking Hub, La Banque Postale
11:20 – 11:40	Coffee break
11:40 – 12:45	Session II: Challenges and solutions for SMEs to fund their green transition
Key questions	<p>Surveys show that most SMEs have only taken basic steps toward greening their business models, and few have set targets, transition plans or are measuring and reporting on their environmental performance. A large share of SMEs lack the awareness, knowledge, skills and finance to undertake these actions. What is more, reporting frameworks have been designed with large enterprises in mind. They are generally quite complex and demanding relative to the capacities and resources of</p>

	<p>SMEs. This means that non-financial support in the form of technical advice, easy-to-implement tools, data and information, are essential to support SMEs to meet the growing demands for data and reporting and facilitate their access to and uptake of sustainable finance.</p> <p>This session aims to shed light on the challenges and opportunities SMEs face in accessing finance to improve their environmental performance, including measurement and reporting. Questions for discussion include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What issues do SMEs face in accessing sustainable finance and improving and reporting on their sustainability performance? • How can digital solutions support SMEs and minimise the burden of data collection, measurement and reporting? • How are public and private FIs and other ecosystem actors supporting SMEs on these issues?
Moderator	Sandra Odendahl, Senior Vice President and Head of Sustainability, Diversity and Partnerships, Business Development Bank of Canada
Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Astrid Bartels, Head of SME Finance Unit, EC DG Grow • Christophe Menigault, Head of CSR, Bpifrance • Qamar Saleem, CEO, SME Finance Forum • Jan Greitens, Eurochambres Representative at the Platform for Sustainable Finance of the European Commission, German Chamber for Industry and Commerce • Pamela Jouven, Director, SME Climate Hub
12:45-13:45	Networking lunch
13:45-14:45	Session III: CEO roundtable: How can public financial institutions deliver on sustainable finance for SMEs?
Key questions	This session will bring together CEOs of public financial institutions serving SMEs to share their vision to drive forward the net zero and sustainability transition of SMEs. Showcasing key initiatives to enable SMEs to accelerate their green transition through financial and non-financial support, CEOs will reflect on key challenges and effective strategies to meet their dual mission of supporting entrepreneurs and ensuring that the investments they make contribute to achieving sustainability. They will also discuss how international cooperation can be harnessed to meet these objectives.
Moderator	Miriam Koreen, Senior Counsellor on SMEs, OECD CFE
Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isabelle Hudon, CEO, Business Development Bank of Canada • Louis Taylor, CEO, British Business Bank • Jean-Pierre Di Bartolomeo, CEO, Wallonie-Entreprendre, Belgium
14:45 – 15:00	Group photo
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 - 16:45	Session IV: Towards greater collaboration in the collection of climate and other environment-related data from SMEs
Key questions	<p>The lack of a common framework and approach to the collection of data from SME clients – both across and within countries – creates an additional burden for smaller businesses. The survey of financial institutions conducted by the OECD Platform showed most FIs already seek sustainability-related data from their SMEs clients, relying on a combination of their own methodologies and external frameworks. The lack of a common approach can result in multiple data requests for SMEs, compounding their measurement and reporting burden.</p> <p>This session will explore avenues to streamline data requirements and reporting by SMEs. It will respond to the call for the Platform to serve as a forum for dialogue on the development of a common approach to the streamlined collection of environment-related data that meets the needs of FIs while not overburdening SMEs. It will address some of the following questions:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What key data points are most critical and are easy to obtain from SMEs or other sources? • What initiatives are underway to streamline data collection and reporting? • How can the OECD Platform support the development of operational solutions to the SME data and reporting challenges?
Moderator	Nadim Ahmad, Deputy Director, OECD CFE
Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claudia Monteiro de Macedo, Product Manager, CSR Portal, France • Paul Gisby, Director, Accountancy Europe • Faith Goodman, Founder, VeriStell Institute • Eliot Cyriax, Chief of Staff & Head of Strategy and Programmes, Bankers for Net Zero
16:45 - 17:00	Wrap-up and concluding remarks by the Chair
Speakers	<p>Paula Crofts, Director, Business Growth at the Department for Business and Trade</p> <p>Nadim Ahmad, Deputy Director, OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities</p>