

Foreword

This publication presents the report of the OECD country review of small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) and entrepreneurship policy in the Slovak Republic. It was prepared at the request of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the Slovak Republic and undertaken in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic. It forms part of the series of OECD Country Reviews on SME and Entrepreneurship Policy undertaken by the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities. In addition to the Slovak Republic, country reviews have covered Canada, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Poland, the Russian Federation, Thailand and Vietnam.

The reviews provide a comprehensive assessment of SME and entrepreneurship policies and programmes in reviewed countries and hands-on policy advice to national governments and their partners. They are based on a standard methodology including a diagnostic questionnaire completed by national government authorities, fact-finding discussions between an OECD team and policy and business stakeholders, and a peer review session where representatives from OECD governments consider the report. The Slovak Republic review report was discussed by the OECD's Working Party on SMEs and Entrepreneurship in October 2020 and approved by written procedure in May 2021.

The country reviews typically include one or two thematic chapters on issues of special relevance for the reviewed country, as agreed between the OECD and the country concerned. This review has two thematic chapters, on SME digitalisation and inclusive entrepreneurship.

The report shows that the Slovak Republic has strong start-up rates, but an SME economy that is relatively weighted towards micro enterprises and individual entrepreneurs and with relatively low SME productivity rates compared with other OECD countries. Key challenges are therefore to stimulate growth and productivity gains in new and small enterprises.

The Slovak government has introduced important policy reforms to strengthen the environment for SME and entrepreneurship development. They include regulatory improvements such as the "one in-one out" or "one in-two out" rules for new regulation affecting SMEs and entrepreneurs, the creation of National Business Centres in each region to provide advice and consultancy, widening access to finance measures to expand loan guarantee and risk capital provision, and new approaches to involving SMEs in apprenticeship training.

This report takes stock of the recent policy developments and makes many further policy suggestions aimed at supporting small firm scale up, SME digitalisation, micro and service sector firm productivity growth, and greater SME innovation and participation in foreign markets. The recommendations span a variety of areas, such as better balancing tax costs between employment and self-employment, establishing integration hubs and portals for small business and entrepreneurship support and developing an online diagnostic tool to support SMEs with digitalisation.

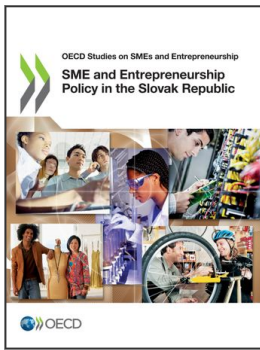
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The study was managed and supervised by Jonathan Potter (OECD CFE) and coordinated by Kris Boschmans (OECD CFE), under the supervision of Céline Kauffmann (Head of the Entrepreneurship, SME and Tourism Division, CFE). The report was drafted by a team involving Jonathan Potter (OECD, CFE), Chapter 1; Lenka Wildnerova (OECD CFE), Chapters 2 and 3; Lois Stevenson (independent consultant), Chapter 4; Alasdair Reid (European Future Innovation System Centre), Chapter 5; Robert Huggins (Cardiff University), Chapter 6; Kris Boschmans (OECD CFE), Chapter 7; and Thomas Cooney (Technological University Dublin) and David Halabisky (OECD CFE), Chapter 8. The report was edited by Kris Boschmans and Jonathan Potter. Heather Mortimer Charoy, Assistant, CFE, provided project support.

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