OECD Ministerial Conference on SMEs

Strengthening SMEs and Entrepreneurship for Productivity and Inclusive Growth

22-23 February 2018
Mexico City
Related events preceding the

OECD Ministerial Conference on
“Strengthening SMEs and Entrepreneurship for Productivity and Inclusive Growth”

OECD-INADEM WORKSHOP ON BUILDING BUSINESS
LINKAGES THAT BOOST SME PRODUCTIVITY

20-21 February 2018, Camino Real Polanco Hotel

The workshop “Building business linkages that boost SME productivity” is the third of a series of workshops on the topic of SME productivity organised by the OECD in collaboration with Mexico’s National Institute of the Entrepreneur (INADEM). The first workshop in the series looked into the importance of upgrading managerial skills and management practices to enhance SME productivity (Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, 3-4 November 2016), while the second dealt with the link between workforce skills and SME productivity (Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, 15-16 May 2017). This third workshop will focus on business linkages and how strengthening SME supply chain linkages and other types of inter-firm collaboration can boost SME productivity.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: SEIZING THE BENEFITS OF DIGITALISATION AND GLOBALISATION

21 February 2018, 14:30-18:00, Camino Real Polanco Hotel

This event will be an interactive workshop that includes an expert panel discussion and a policy hack. An international expert panel will explore the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs through a moderated discussion, with time allotted for questions and discussion with the audience. Key issues to be covered include digitalisation, access to finance and internationalisation. The policy hack will bring together participants in small groups to identify a tangible solution to specific policy challenges. Each group will identify one person who will “pitch” their solution to expert judges and other participants in 3 minutes. The expert judges will then select the top 3 ideas.

For more information on these events, please visit: oe.cd/2df
# OECD Ministerial Conference on “Strengthening SMEs and Entrepreneurship for Productivity and Inclusive Growth”

## AGENDA AT A GLANCE

### Wednesday, 21 February

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19h00</td>
<td>Welcome reception at the Soumaya Museum</td>
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### Thursday, 22 February 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07:30-9:00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-11:30</td>
<td>Side event with SME stakeholders and Ministers (or their representatives)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30-12:30</td>
<td><strong>Opening Ceremony and Introductory Remarks</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mr Angel Gurría, Secretary General, OECD</td>
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<td>- Mr Ildefonso Guajardo Villarreal, Minister of Economy, Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:00-15:30</td>
<td><strong>Plenary 1: Enabling SMEs to scale up</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>15:30-16:00</td>
<td>Family Photo Ministers and Heads of Delegations</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:00-17:30</td>
<td><strong>Parallel Sessions</strong></td>
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<td>- Improving the business environment for SMEs through effective regulation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Business transfer as an engine for SME growth</td>
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<td>- Developing entrepreneurial competencies</td>
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<td>19:00</td>
<td>Gala Dinner</td>
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### Friday, 23 February 2018

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00-10:30</td>
<td><strong>Plenary 2: Enhancing SME access to diversified financing instruments</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<td>- Promoting innovation in established SMEs</td>
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<td>- Strengthening social inclusion through inclusive entrepreneurship</td>
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<td>- Monitoring and evaluation of SME and entrepreneurship programmes</td>
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<td>12:30-14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:00-15:30</td>
<td><strong>Plenary 3: Fostering greater SME participation in a globally integrated economy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>15:30-16:30</td>
<td><strong>Statements by Vice Chairs</strong></td>
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<td>- Ms. Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch, State Secretary at the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), Switzerland</td>
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Day 1: Thursday, 22 February 2018

### Pre-Ministerial Event

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**Master of Ceremony:** Mr. Roberto Martinez  
*Head of the OECD Mexico Centre*

The event will consist of two separate panel sessions of one hour each, bringing together representatives from government and the private sector to address the following topics:

#### Session 1: The importance of SMEs for globalisation, growth and inclusiveness

**Moderator:** Ms. Lamia Kamal-Chaoui  
*Director, OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities*

Panellists will discuss the opportunities international trade creates to accelerate innovation, facilitate spills overs of technology and managerial know-how, broaden and deepen skill sets, and enhance the productivity of SMEs. To date, participation in global markets and value chains remains uneven across the SME population, with only a few “born global” firms and highly innovative SMEs that are fully integrated into global markets. Additional challenges arise from the fact that SMEs are less able to face the costs of engaging in international trade, due to their limited resources and management capacities.

**Panellists**

- **Mr. Kris Peeters**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Employment, Economy and Consumer Affairs, Belgium
- **Ms. Geannina Dinarte**, Minister of Economy, Industry and Commerce, Costa Rica
- **Ms. Cathy Feingold**, Director of the AFL-CIO, representing The Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD
- **Mr. Alban Maggiar**, Vice President, European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME)

#### Session 2: The future of SMEs in the digital economy

**Moderator:** Mr. Andrew W. Wyckoff  
*Director, OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation*

Panellists will discuss the opportunities and challenges of the digital economy for SMEs. Digitalisation can offer greater access to markets, talent and finance, the ability to better communicate and collaborate, as well as help reduce red tape. At the same time, there is a significant difference between large and small firms in how they take advantage of the ongoing digital transformation. SMEs face several barriers to adopting digital technologies in their operational activities. In particular, they often lack resources to acquire the necessary complementary knowledge-based assets, such as organisational and human capital, including the upskilling of workers.

**Panellists**

- **Mr. Pat Breen**, Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Ireland
- **Mr. Mariano Mayer**, Secretary of Entrepreneurs and SMEs, Ministry of Production, Argentina
- **Ms. Jackie King**, COO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce
- **Ms. Victoria Grand**, Director of Policy Programs, Facebook
# Ministerial Conference

## 11:30-12:30

**Opening Ceremony**  
*Master of Ceremony: Mr. Roberto Martinez*  
*Head of the OECD Mexico Centre*

Opening remarks

- **Mr. Angel Gurría**, Secretary-General, OECD  
- **Mr. Ildefonso Guajardo Villarreal**, Minister of Economy, Mexico (Chair of the Ministerial Conference)

Report back from the session with stakeholders and Ministers

- **Mr. Kris Peeters**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Employment, Economy and Consumer Affairs, Belgium (for Session 1)  
- **Mr. Mariano Mayer**, Secretary of Entrepreneurs and SMEs, Ministry of Production, Argentina (for Session 2)

## 12:30-14:00

**Lunch**

## 14:00-15:30

**Plenary 1: Enabling SMEs to scale up**

*Chair: Ms. Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch  
State Secretary, Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), Switzerland (Vice Chair of the Ministerial Conference)*

SMEs can experience sustained growth at different stages of their life cycle and across many sectors. Start-ups that scale up are a key source of innovation and account for a disproportionate share of job creation. Medium-sized enterprises that grow are a driving force of competitiveness in many countries. Growth-oriented small firms can achieve scale through different mechanisms, including strategic and inter-firm linkages. Digitalisation and participation in global markets and value chains are powerful engines to scale up, enabling new modes of growth.

**Questions for discussion**

- What policy approaches have proven effective in stimulating the scaling up of start-ups and SMEs? Which barriers to SME growth call for further attention?  
- How can digital technologies be harnessed to enable SMEs to scale up? How can policy address the barriers to adoption and use by SMEs of digital technologies?  
- How can policy take into account different growth aspirations by entrepreneurs and help them manage the challenges of high growth?

**Lead speakers:**  
- **Mr. Peter Kažimír**, Minister of Finance, Slovak Republic  
- **Mr. Pat Breen**, Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Ireland  
- **Mr. Sugyu Choi**, Vice Minister of SMEs and Start-ups, Korea  
- **Dr. Armgard Wippler**, Deputy Director-General for SME Policy, Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Germany

## 15:30-16:00

**Coffee break | Family Photo with Ministers and Heads of Delegations**
*Improving the business environment for SMEs through effective regulation*

**Chair:** Mr. Álvaro Santos Pereira  
*Acting Chief Economist of the OECD*

Regulatory conditions are among the most important factors affecting SMEs and entrepreneurship. SMEs usually face bigger challenges than large firms in screening the regulatory environment and dealing with norms. In recent years, important progress has been made to reduce the administrative burdens on start-ups, lower legal barriers to entry and reduce the costs of regulatory compliance in different areas. However, the complexity of regulatory procedures, covering areas such as license and permit systems, insolvency and tax, among others, remains a major obstacle to entrepreneurial activity.

**Questions for discussion**

- Have government efforts to develop a business environment that offers a level playing field for SME and entrepreneurship development been effective? How can remaining obstacles be overcome?
- When developing regulatory policies, how should governments take into account characteristics of SMEs such as size, age or sector?
- How can governments achieve regulatory simplification for SMEs, while preserving the incentives for these businesses to grow? Have regulatory simplification efforts been effective in boosting investments by SMEs?

**Lead speakers:**

- **Mr. Kris Peeters**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Employment, Economy and Consumer Affairs, Belgium
- **Mr. Timur Suleimenov**, Minister of National Economy, Kazakhstan
- **Mr. Mariano Mayer**, Secretary of Entrepreneurs and SMEs, Ministry of Production, Argentina
- **Mr. Viljar Lubi**, Deputy Secretary General for Economic Development, Ministry of Economy, Estonia

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*Business transfer as an engine for SME growth*

**Chair:** Mr. Greg Medcraft  
*Director, OECD Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs*

Many economically sound SMEs exit the market as a result of problematic business transfers, with negative effects for the growth and innovative potential of economies. In the coming years, with the ageing of entrepreneurs, the volume of business transfers is expected increase in many OECD countries. Successful business transfer of viable SMEs at different stages of their life cycle is crucial to retain employment, preserve the value of assets and ensure continuity in production processes and business relations. Furthermore, business transfer can represent an opportunity to rethink a firm’s strategic vision and business model and to innovate and seize new opportunities. It can also enable new entrepreneurs to enter the market.

**Questions for discussion**

- What can governments do to create conducive framework conditions for business transfer?
- Which targeted measures may be most effective to address the transfer challenges of small businesses?
- What are the main knowledge gaps with regard to business transfer conditions and trends?
## Developing entrepreneurial competencies

**Chair:** Ms. Mari Kiviniemi  
**Deputy Secretary-General, OECD**

Entrepreneurship competencies combine creativity, a sense of initiative, problem-solving, the ability to marshal resources, and financial and technological knowledge. They can be developed through entrepreneurship education and training that focus on promoting an entrepreneurial mindset and behaviours. Schools and vocational and higher education institutions are increasingly developing these competencies in students by enriching their study programmes with dedicated entrepreneurship education courses, either as self-standing modules or embedded into curricula. Problem-based teaching and assessment methods have proven particularly successful.

### Questions for discussion

- How can government approaches to promoting entrepreneurship competencies be enhanced? How can collaboration be achieved across relevant government ministries?
- What are current trends and gaps in developing entrepreneurship competencies from early levels of education to university? How can links between entrepreneurship education and start-up support be strengthened?
- How can the impact of entrepreneurship education and different entrepreneurship education approaches on business start-up and SME innovation performance be assessed? How can entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurship attitudes be measured?

### Lead speakers:

- **Mr. Youcef Yousfi**, Minister of Industry and Mining, Algeria
- **Ms. Eva Štravs Podlogar**, State Secretary at the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Slovenia
- **Mr. Daniel Arango**, Vice Minister of Business Development, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism, Colombia
- **Mr. Peter Cully**, Senior official, Department of Jobs and Small Business, Australia

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| 19:00 | Gala Dinner (Location: Museo Casa de la Bola) |
### Day 2: Friday, 23 February 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>09:00-10:30</th>
<th>Plenary</th>
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* The session will start with a reporting back from the parallel sessions on the afternoon of Day 1 by the Chairs (10 minutes).

**Chair:** H.E. Mr. Faruk Özlü  
*Minister of Science, Industry and Technology, Turkey (Vice Chair of the Ministerial Conference)*

Across all stages of their life cycle, SMEs require access to appropriate financing sources. While bank lending continues to be the main external source of finance for SMEs, it may be ill-suited to certain segments of the business population, such as new, innovative and fast-growing firms. At the same time, the uptake of alternative financing instruments remains uneven, pointing to persistent market failures and longstanding challenges on both the demand and supply sides. There is a need to broaden the range of financing instruments available to SMEs and entrepreneurs, in line with the G20/OECD High Level Principles on SME Financing.

**Questions for discussion**

- Are recent policy approaches to address SME financing challenges on the supply and demand sides meeting their objectives? What elements call for further attention?
- Which policy measures have proven most successful to stimulate the uptake of alternative financing instruments by small businesses? What role should policy play in channelling a broader range of financial resources, including private savings, towards SMEs?
- How can policy help maximise the potential of the digital transformation to strengthen SME access to finance and financial inclusion?

**Lead speakers:**

- **Ms. Lieneke Maria Schol Calle,** Minister of Production, Peru
- **Mr. Daisaku Hiraki,** Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan
- **Mr. Stefano Firpo,** Director General for Industrial Policy, Competition and SMEs and SME Envoy, Ministry of Economic Development, Italy
- **Mr. Ted Tan,** Deputy Chief Executive, SPRING Singapore

| 10:30-11:00 | Coffee break |
Promoting innovation in established SMEs

Chair: Mr. Mario Pezzini  
Director, OECD Development Centre

Supporting innovation in established SMEs can foster inclusive growth by reducing productivity gaps and wage gaps between SMEs and large companies. SMEs are, on average, less innovative than large enterprises. However, some small enterprises are highly innovative and can reach productivity levels above those of large companies. Companies which develop and use their internal strategic resources effectively (e.g. managerial and workforce skills, ICT, R&D, etc.), and collaborate with external partners in the innovation system, have better innovation performance.

Questions for discussion

- What are the key policy mechanisms that have proven successful to encourage innovation in SMEs? What new approaches are needed?
- How can such policies be addressed to SMEs with differences in terms of industry, size, age, and growth performance?
- How can policy help SMEs to harness the most recent advances in digital technologies?

Lead speakers:

- **Mr. Zhang Feng**, Chief Engineer of Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, People’s Republic of China
- **Mr. Balázs Rákossy**, State Secretary for EU Funds, Ministry for National Economy, Ministry of the National Economy, Hungary
- **Ms. Ana Lehmann**, Secretary of State for Industry, Ministry of Economy, Portugal
- **Mr. Raimonds Aleksejenko**, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Economics, Latvia

Strengthening social inclusion through inclusive entrepreneurship

Chair: Ms. Gabriela Ramos  
OECD Chief of Staff and Sherpa to the G20

Some groups are under-represented or disadvantaged in entrepreneurship, e.g. women, youth, older people, migrants and the unemployed. Increasing entrepreneurship among them, as well as improving the quality of their business start-ups, represents an opportunity to increase participation in the labour market and boost growth. While these social groups are heterogeneous, their members typically face greater barriers to business creation. Challenges include a lack of entrepreneurship skills, difficulty in accessing finance and navigating the regulatory framework, fear of failure and lack of confidence.

Questions for discussion

- What are the specific entrepreneurship support needs of people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups in entrepreneurship, and how can policy address these needs?
- How can inclusive entrepreneurship measures leverage digital platforms and tools to reach target clients that are often hard to reach?
- How do programmes balance tailoring support for the unique needs of socially excluded groups against the economies of scale gained through mainstream delivery?
Lead speakers:
- **Ms. Geannina Dinarte**, Minister of Economy, Industry and Commerce, Costa Rica
- **Mr. Paul Thompson**, Associate Deputy Minister, Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Canada
- **Ms. Paula Marinela Pirvanescu**, Deputy Minister for Investments, Ministry for Business Environment, Commerce and Entrepreneurship, Romania
- **Ms. Edith Vries**, Director-General, Department of Small Business Development, South Africa

Monitoring and evaluation of SME and entrepreneurship programmes

**Chair: Ms. Martine Durand**
*Chief Statistician and Director of the OECD Statistics Directorate*

Monitoring and evaluation are fundamental to public accountability and for assessing the economic efficiency of SME and entrepreneurship policies. They should also inform the design and mix of SME and entrepreneurship policies by identifying those features, which lead to desirable outcomes. Reliable methods for the evaluation of SME and entrepreneurship policies, using appropriate counterfactuals, have been established and demonstrated. However, such methods, which can address the heterogeneous policy impact on different types of SMEs, are not widely used. Key challenges include increasing the application of rigorous evaluation techniques; better specifying policy objectives, targets and indicators; making better use of data, including existing national administrative data sets; as well as seizing the potential of Big Data.

**Questions for discussion**

1. How can a stronger culture of monitoring and evaluation be established for SME and entrepreneurship policy?
2. How can governments ensure that evaluation outcomes are reflected in policy design?
3. Which new data sources can be exploited for SME and entrepreneurship policy monitoring and evaluation, and what is needed to enable their use?

Lead speakers:
- **Mr. Mario Buisán**, Deputy Vice-Minister for Industry and SMEs, Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism, Spain
- **Ms. Dato’ Hafsah Hashim**, CEO, SME Corporation Malaysia
- **Mr. José Fernando Ramos de Figueiredo**, Special Honorary Chairman, European Association of Guarantee Institutions (AECM)
Plenary 3: Fostering greater SME participation in a globally integrated economy

* The session will start with a reporting back from the parallel sessions on the morning of Day 2 by the Chairs (10 minutes).

Chair: Hon Stuart Nash  
Minister for Small Business, New Zealand  
(Vice Chair of the Ministerial Conference)

While SMEs tend to be under-represented in international trade, changes in the global environment, such as the rise in global value chains and digitalisation, offer new opportunities for SMEs to participate in global markets and scale up, innovate, broaden and deepen their skill-set, and enhance productivity. These trends increase the importance of whole-of-government approaches to lift longstanding and new barriers that SMEs face in internationalising, including connectivity, access to information, skills, technology and finance.

Questions for discussion

- What policy approaches have proven successful to strengthen SMEs’ participation in international trade? What new approaches are needed?
- Which types of firms prove to be most successful in integrating global value chains, and how can policy enable the integration of other SMEs? What aspects of open markets matter most for SME participation in global value chains?
- How can policy help SMEs harness the potential of digital technologies for international activity?

Lead speakers

- **Ms. Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch**, State Secretary, Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), Switzerland (Vice Chair of the Ministerial Conference)
- **Mr. José Ricardo Veiga**, Secretary of Micro and Small Enterprises, Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services, Brazil
- **Mr. Mario Buisán**, Deputy Vice-Minister for Industry and SMEs, Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism, Spain
- **Mr. Scott Ticknor**, Acting Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, Department of State, United States

Closing Session

Statements by Vice Chairs

- **Ms. Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch**, State Secretary, Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), Switzerland
- **H.E. Mr. Faruk Özlü**, Minister of Science, Industry and Technology, Turkey
- **Hon Stuart Nash**, Minister for Small Business, New Zealand
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About the OECD

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a forum in which governments compare and exchange policy experiences, identify good practices in light of emerging challenges, and promote decisions and recommendations to produce better policies for better lives. The OECD’s mission is to promote policies that improve economic and social well-being of people around the world.

About INADEM

The National Entrepreneur’s Institute (INADEM) is an administrative office of Mexico’s Ministry of Economy. Its tasks include the design, implementation and coordination of national policies for entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It supports the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Mexico as well as the innovation, competitiveness and internationalisation of Mexican SMEs with the aim to strengthen their contribution to national economic development and social welfare.

About the Ministerial Conference

The 2018 OECD Ministerial Conference on Strengthening SMEs and Entrepreneurship for Productivity and Inclusive Growth is part of the OECD Bologna Process on SME and Entrepreneurship Policies. The Conference will provide a platform for a high-level Ministerial dialogue on current key issues related to SMEs and entrepreneurship. It will seek to advance the global agenda on how governments can help strengthen SME contributions to productivity and inclusive growth; how SMEs can help address major trends and challenges in the economy and society; and how the OECD the support governments in designing and implementing effective SME policies.

Venue

Camino Real Polanco Hotel
Mariano Escobedo 700 Col. Anzures
México D.F. 11590

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More information: oe.cd/SMEs

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consejo coordinador empresarial CDMX CIUDAD DE MÉXICO