

Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies,  
Country Assessment Notes

# France

2020

This note is part of a series of notes on country-level inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes prepared by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for the European Commission. These notes provide an overview of current and planned policy actions and identify some actions that could be implemented to address gaps in the current support offering, or improve current offerings.

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# Foreword

Inclusive entrepreneurship policies seek to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to create a sustainable business for those with realistic potential, regardless of their background. Business creation by people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups (e.g. women, youth, seniors, immigrants, the unemployed, people who experience disability) helps generate jobs, thereby fighting social and financial exclusion while stimulating economic growth.

These policies have become much more relevant with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to rapidly increasing unemployment and inactivity. Addressing this jobs crisis is one of the top policy priorities in European Union and OECD countries and inclusive entrepreneurship schemes have strong potential for moving some unemployed people back into work. Moreover, these policies can be leveraged to help re-boot economies as there is untapped growth potential among some of the target groups.

This note is the fourth country assessment note prepared by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in collaboration with the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission on the state of inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes in each European Union Member State. Each note provides an overview of the entrepreneurship activities by women, youth, seniors, immigrants and the unemployed. It also provides an assessment of policies and programmes that support people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups in business creation and self-employment, and suggests policy actions to address gaps in the support system and to improve the quality of available support offers. The notes cover national-level policies and programmes and, where relevant, sub-national initiatives and actions by the non-governmental sector.

The 2020 notes include a special section on entrepreneurship support for people who experience disability. This section provides an overview of the entrepreneurship activity levels, obstacles faced and policy responses. It also contains a new section on entrepreneurship framework conditions to provide additional context for interpreting the tailored policies and programmes.

These country-specific notes are part of a wider programme of work by the OECD and the European Commission that includes “The Missing Entrepreneurs” publications, the Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool ([www.betterentrepreneurship.eu](http://www.betterentrepreneurship.eu)), a series of Policy Briefs on specific target groups, policies and issues, and national policy reviews of youth entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurship. This work stream examines how public policies and programmes can support inclusive entrepreneurship. This includes refining regulatory and welfare institutions, facilitating access to finance, building entrepreneurship skills through training, coaching and mentoring, strengthening entrepreneurial culture and networks for target groups, and putting strategies and actions together for inclusive entrepreneurship in a co-ordinated and targeted way. Governments are increasingly recognising the challenge of inclusive entrepreneurship, but there is still much to do to spread good practice. For more information please refer to: [www.oecd.org/employment/leed/inclusive-entrepreneurship.htm](http://www.oecd.org/employment/leed/inclusive-entrepreneurship.htm).

# Acknowledgements

This note is part of a series of notes on country-level inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes prepared by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for the European Commission. These notes were prepared by the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE) led by Lamia Kamal-Chaoui, Director, as part of the programme of work of the OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Programme, led by Karen Maguire, Head of Division. They provide an overview of current and planned policy actions and identify some actions that could be implemented to address gaps in the current support offering, or improve current offerings.

This note was prepared by Prof. Nadine Levratto of the University Paris Nanterre. Cynthia Lavison of the OECD CFE edited the note under the direction of Dr. Jonathan Potter, also of the OECD CFE.

An online seminar was organised to review the draft note on 4 September 2020. Suggestions and inputs were received from participants which included representatives of the Ministry of the Economy and Finance, the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion, the Ministry for Ecological transition, the Directorate-General for Social Cohesion, ADIE, Bpifrance, France Active, 100 000 Entrepreneurs, Fondation Entreprendre, Groupement de Créateurs, Agefiph, H'up entrepreneurs and TIH business.

Much of the data contained in this note were prepared under the direction of Dr. Jonathan Levie of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor.

Finally, this note benefited from feedback and suggestions provided by Julien De Beys and Guy Lejeune of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission.

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## Key messages

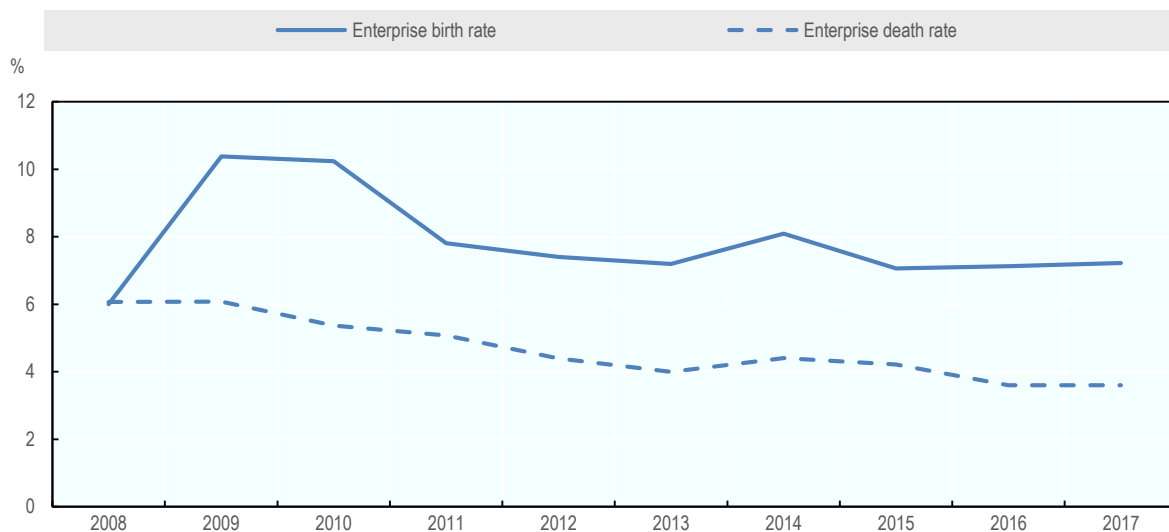
- The overall entrepreneurship conditions in France remain under the European Union (EU) median for some important indicators (e.g. administrative burden and new SME lending), despite some areas of relative strength (e.g. low cost of business creation, low interest rate for SMEs).
- Women accounted for about one-third of self-employed workers in France in 2019, slightly over the EU average (34.4% vs. 32.6%). For other groups, participation was in line with the EU average, with youth representing a small share of self-employed (8% vs. 7.5% in the EU), and seniors making up 40.4% of the self-employed (vs. 40.7% in the EU). Immigrants represented a slightly larger share of the self-employed than the EU average (13.5% vs. 10.9% in the EU).
- There are about 2.1 million early-stage entrepreneurs in France, i.e. those working on a start-up or managing a new business that is less than 42 months old. The share of people involved in these early-stage entrepreneurship activities was slightly below the EU average for the period 2015-19 (5.2% vs. 6.8%). This was true across all demographic groups. However, the share of entrepreneurs motivated by a lack of opportunities in the labour market was smaller than the EU average over the period.
- If all groups engaged in early stage entrepreneurship at the same rate as core-age men, there would be 935 000 more entrepreneurs in France. Around 80% of these “missing” entrepreneurs would be women. Those over 50 years old would account for 45% and those under 30 years old would account for 15%.
- Many policies and measures are in place to encourage business creation, including support for entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups (e.g. women, youth, the unemployed, and people with disabilities). Tailored support is offered by the various government agencies at national and local levels and many actors in the non-governmental and private sectors. The large number of programmes and actors makes for a rich but complex landscape, but co-ordination between offers is limited. Moreover, it can be difficult for entrepreneurs to identify the support that best matches their need, especially as limited evaluation evidence is available.
- Support for youth and women is well developed while other groups are less frequently targeted by tailored support (e.g. seniors, immigrants, and refugees). Inclusive entrepreneurship support is also offered through a territorial lens, targeting people living in deprived areas. The number and the nature of support programmes available (e.g. training, financing, awareness, etc.) also varies across locations due to the importance of regional and local actors in implementation, both in the public and private sectors.
- The following key recommendations are offered to further strengthen inclusive entrepreneurship support:
  - Improve the governance and co-ordination of entrepreneurship support programmes, including through simplification;
  - Improve sign-posting of support for different groups, for example by creating a central entry point (e.g. platform) to inform entrepreneurs and help them navigate the support offered;
  - Strengthen evaluation and monitoring of inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes.

# 1 Inclusive entrepreneurship trends

## Conditions for entrepreneurship

The enterprise death has been on a slow but steady downward trend since 2008, picking up slightly over 2014-15 before resuming its decrease. The enterprise birth rate increased sharply in 2009 before starting to decrease in 2011. Like the death rate, it picked up briefly in 2014. It has been relatively stable since 2015 with very modest year-on-year growth (Figure 1.1). The enterprise birth rate was under the EU median until 2015, but has converged with it since. The enterprise death rate has been consistently under the EU median since recovering from pre-crisis levels in 2011.

Figure 1.1. Business entry and exit rates



Note: Enterprise birth rate is the share enterprise births in the reference period (t) divided by the number of enterprises active in t. Enterprise death rate is the share enterprise deaths in the reference period (t) divided by the number of enterprises active in t. The construction sector is excluded from these rates.

Source: Eurostat (2020), Business demography statistics, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/structural-business-statistics/data/main-tables>.

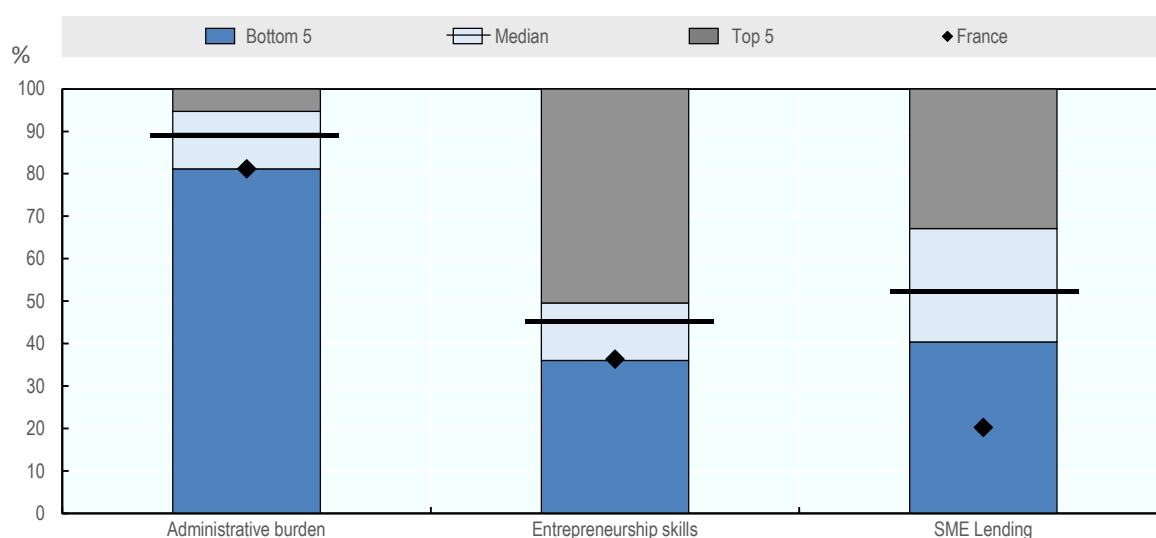
In spite of recent administrative simplification efforts, administrative burden on new start-ups in France is heavier than the EU median, and remains a constraint for entrepreneurs (Figure 1.2). However, the cost for starting a business is low. Recent regulatory efforts to facilitate entrepreneurship include the 2018 relaunch of the France Experiment initiative which aim to simplify legislation and administrative procedures (OECD, 2019). The tax regime for micro-entrepreneurs was also simplified and a reduction of corporate tax to 25% (15% for SMEs) was introduced by the 2018 Finance Bill, to be effective in 2022. In 2017, the government launched a plan increasing the social benefits of self-employed workers, to reduce disincentives (OECD, 2019).

France has a well-educated workforce. However, French respondents are less likely than the EU median to report having the skills and knowledge to start a business (Figure 1.2).

The share of loans to SMEs relative to all business loans was among the bottom five countries in the EU in 2019 (Figure 1.2). However, the interest rates for SMEs is low and the interest spread for SMEs was among the best in the EU in 2018. Recent government efforts to increase funding to entrepreneurs and SMEs include the SME Innovation Account (launched in 2017) which offers tax breaks to business angels who reinvest capital gains in innovative firms. Two instruments supporting very small firms and SMEs in the digital transitions were also introduced in 2016 by Bpifrance, the SME development bank (OECD, 2019).

### Figure 1.2. Conditions for business creation

Ranking relative to other European Union Member States, 2019



Note: The median score reported represents the median among EU Member States. Administrative burden is a score of 1 to 6 given to a country to reflect the relative scale of the administrative burden that new start-ups face. Entrepreneurship skills is the share of the population who report that they have the skills and knowledge to start a business. This indicator is an average of the period 2015-19.

Source: World Bank (2019), Ease of Doing Business Survey; GEM (2020), Special tabulations of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Survey, prepared for the OECD; OECD (2020), Financing SMEs and Entrepreneurs 2020.



## Recent labour market trends

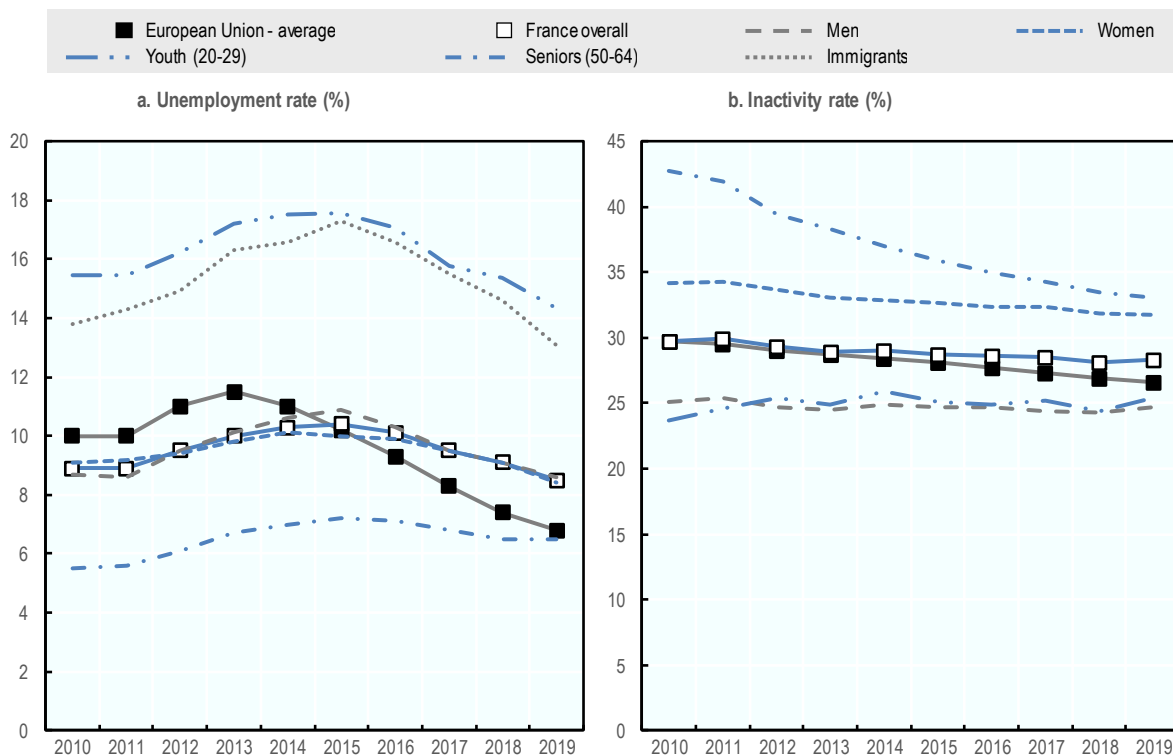
Unemployment has been decreasing since 2016, following a continuous increase between 2010 and 2015 when it peaked at 10.4% (Figure 1.3). The unemployment rate was 8.5% in 2019, still higher than the 6.8% EU average. This downward trend is observed for all categories but seniors. The highest levels by far are found among youth, followed by immigrants. In 2019, the youth unemployment rate was 14.3% in France and 11.1% across the EU. Among all groups observed, youth remains the group for which the difference between France's unemployment rate and the European average was the greatest. For immigrants, the unemployment rate, though decreasing, was still above the EU average in 2019 (13.1% vs. 9.7%). The unemployment rate has been approximately the same for women and men since 2012 (respectively, 8.4% and 8.6% in 2019). The unemployment rate for people aged 50 to 64 has been stable since 2015 but remained higher than the EU average in 2019 (6.5% vs. 5.1%). The unemployment rate for people with disabilities was more than twice as high as the national average in 2019 (19%), representing 8.6% of all job seekers (Agefiph, 2020).

The inactivity rate (Figure 1.3) is the proportion of the population not in the labour force. It was slightly higher in France than in the EU in 2019 (28.3% vs. 26.6%). It is highest among seniors (33.1%) and women (31.8%). Despite a steady decrease between 2010 and 2019, the inactivity rate of women remains higher than that of men (28.3%) Moreover, 25.3% of youth (20-29 years old) were inactive in 2019.

In total, in France, 2.850 million young people aged 15 to 34 are neither in education, nor training, nor in employment (NEETs), representing 18% of this age group (Insee, 2020).

**Figure 1.3. Unemployment and inactivity**

Proportion of the labour force that is unemployed and proportion of the working age population that is inactive



Note : Break in time series for unemployment and inactivity in 2014.

Source: Eurostat (2020), Labour Force Survey, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs>.

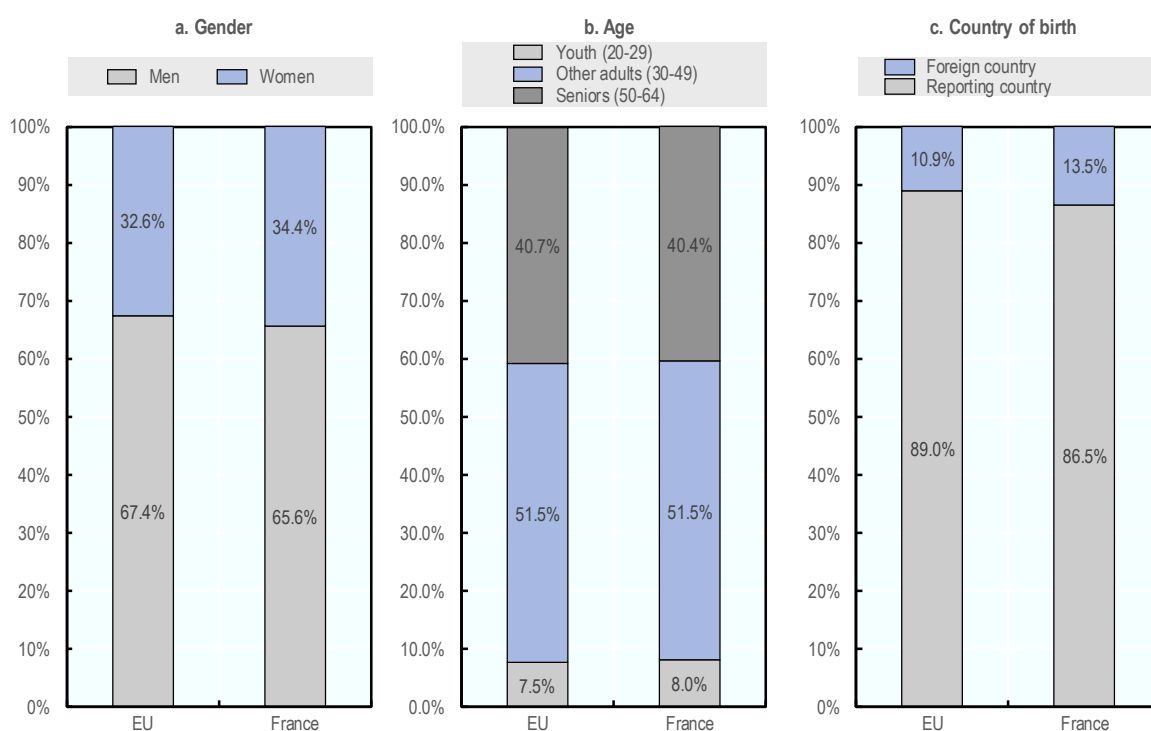
## Self-employment activities

The number of self-employed workers and the self-employment rate were traditionally low in France due to the prevalence of salaried employment, but both are steadily increasing. Self-employment has notably picked up after 2009, when the *auto-entrepreneur* regime was introduced (now called *micro-entrepreneur* since 2014). At the end of 2019, 928 000 micro-entrepreneurs were economically active, representing one in three non-salaried workers in non-agricultural sectors (Sources: Acoss and Insee). Still, three out of ten micro-entrepreneurs combine their self-employed activity with a salaried job when only one standard non-salaried employee out of ten does (Insee, 2020).

The structure of self-employed is roughly similar in France and in the EU (Figure 1.4). Women represent around one-third of self-employed (34.4% vs. 32.6% in the EU); youth represent a small part of the total number of self-employed (8.0%), a rate similar to the EU average (7.5%) and seniors, as in the EU, are over-represented (40.4% vs. 40.7%). Finally, as in the rest of the EU, a vast majority of self-employed are native (86.5% vs. 89.0% on average in the EU).

**Figure 1.4. Composition of the self-employed**

Proportion of self-employed workers, 2019

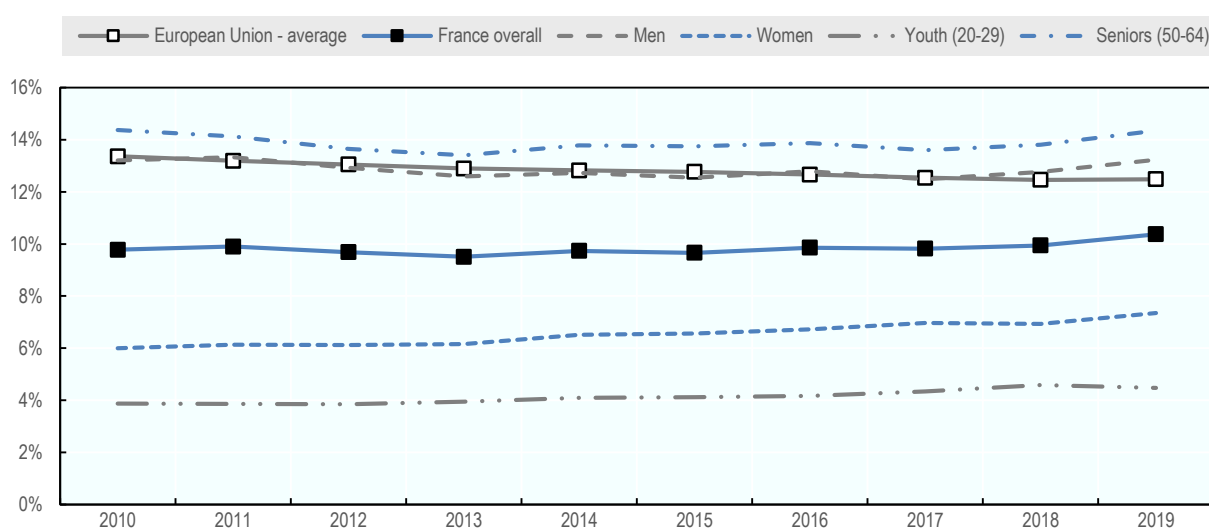


Source: Eurostat (2020), Labour Force Survey, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs>.

The share of the self-employed among people in employment has been quite stable in France over the past decade, while the EU average has been on a slight downward trend. The overall self-employment rate in France was 11.3% in 2019, close to the EU average of 13.4% (Figure 1.5). Seniors and men had the highest self-employment rates (respectively 15.3% and 14.5%) while women and youth were significantly less likely to work for themselves (respectively 8.0% and 5.2%). As in most countries, women were significantly less likely than men to be self-employed in 2019. The low self-employment rate among youth is consistent with the high participation in education and the system of assisted job contracts (whereby subsidies are offered to employers who hire certain profile of jobseekers), whose use sharply decreased after 2018.

**Figure 1.5. Self-employment rate**

Proportion of employment that is self-employed



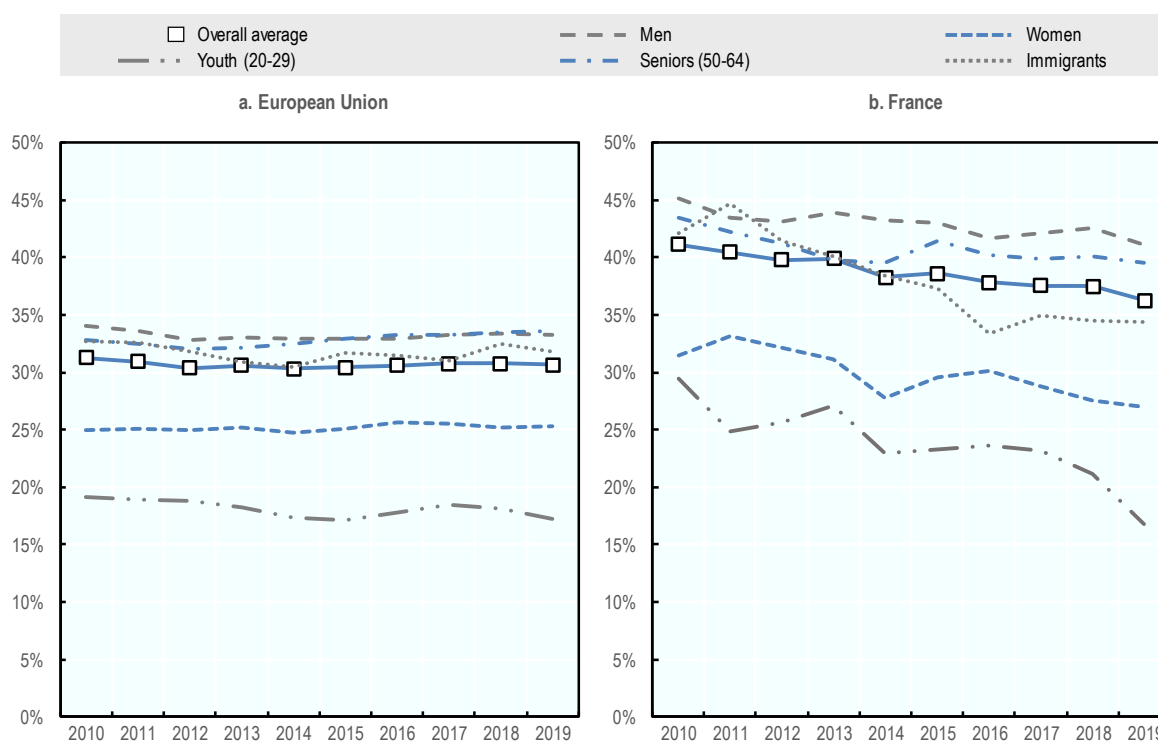
Note: break in time series in 2014

Source: Eurostat (2020), Labour Force Survey, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs>.

Self-employed workers also create jobs. 36.3% of them employed people in France in 2019, significantly higher than the 30.7% EU average despite a downward trend over the past decade (Figure 1.6). Men (41.1%) and seniors (39.5%) were more likely to employ others than women (27.0%), although the latter still outperformed the EU average for women (25.3%). Immigrants were almost as likely as the national average to employ others (34.4%), with an upward trend on employment following a steady decrease between 2011 and 2015. Youth were the least likely to report having employees (16.8%), close to the EU average (17.2%), following a sharp decrease in recent years. Heterogeneity within the self-employed category (in terms of status and the nature of the activity) may contribute to explaining these gaps. One-third of the self-employed are micro-entrepreneurs, a category where earnings are capped, which can make it difficult to hire employees, although the revenue thresholds have been raised in recent years. By contrast, self-employed workers operating in “liberal professions” tend to report significantly higher earnings and may be more prone to hiring. As women and youth most often operate in household services, an industry in which the average size of companies is smaller than in the manufacturing or professional industries, their propensity to create jobs is significantly lower than that of men and seniors.

**Figure 1.6. Self-employed as employers**

Proportion of the self-employed who employ others



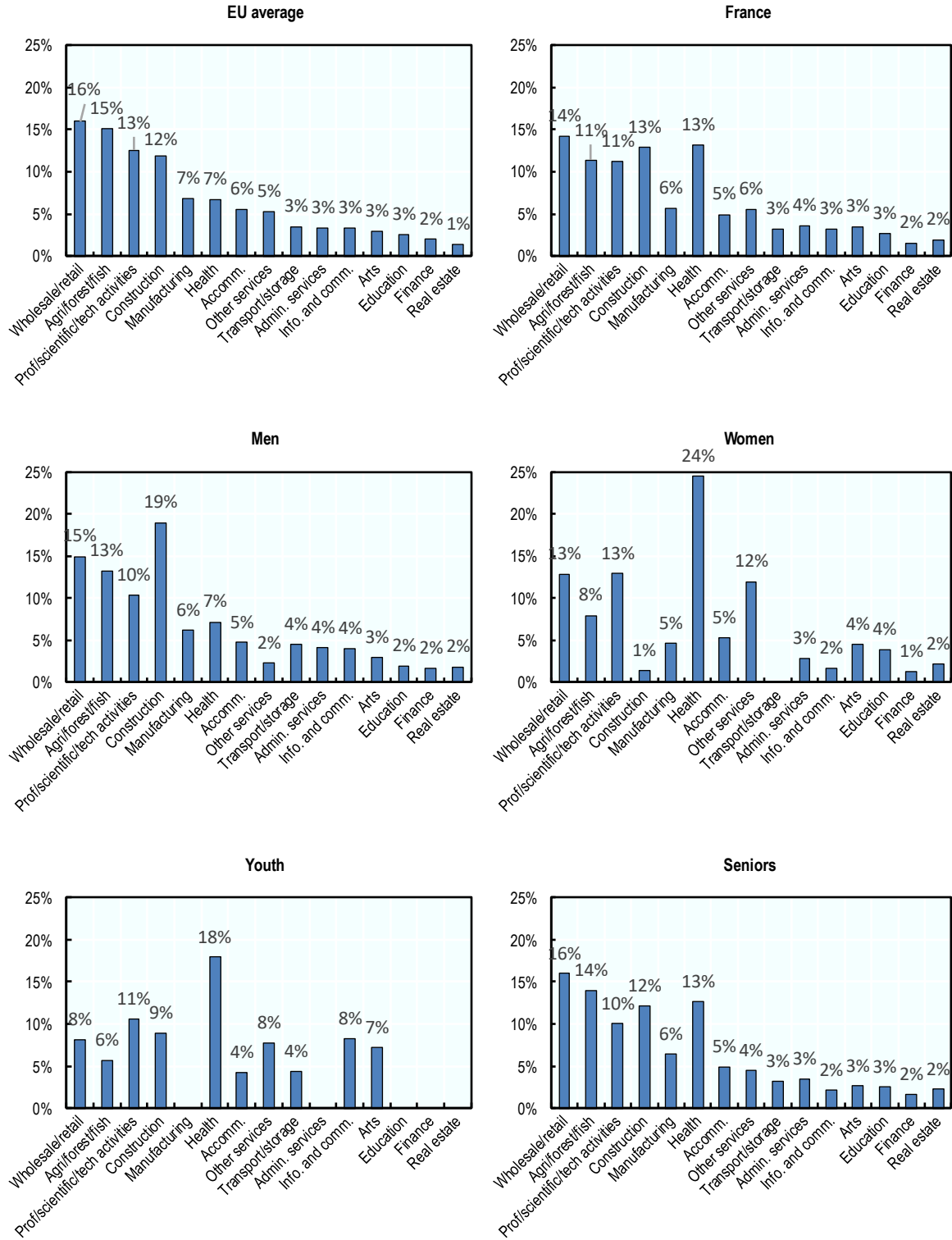
Note: Break in time series in 2014

Source: Eurostat (2020), Labour Force Survey, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs>.

In 2019, 62.7% of self-employed in France operated in five sectors: Wholesale and retail trade (14.2%), Agriculture, forestry and fishing (11.4%), Construction (12.9%), Human health and social work activities (13.1%) and Professional, scientific and technical activities (11.2%) (Figure 1.7). This distribution is similar to the EU average, with a small under-representation of Agriculture, forestry and fishing, and an over-representation of Human health and social work activities. The sectoral distribution of self-employed workers varies by gender and age. Men and people between 50 and 64 years old operated more frequently in agriculture than others. In contrast, women were more active in Human health and social work (23.7%) and Wholesale and retail trade sectors (14.9%). However, self-employed women were under-represented in Construction (1.5%) and Agriculture (8.8%), which are traditionally male-dominated activities. Young people were over-represented in Human health and social work (17.9%), Other services activities (11.9%), and Arts, entertainment and recreation (7.2%). In most occupations, older people were as likely to be self-employed as the overall average, with the noticeable exception of agriculture (14.0%) and Health (12.6%).

Figure 1.7. Self-employment by economic activity

Distribution of the self-employed by sector, 2019

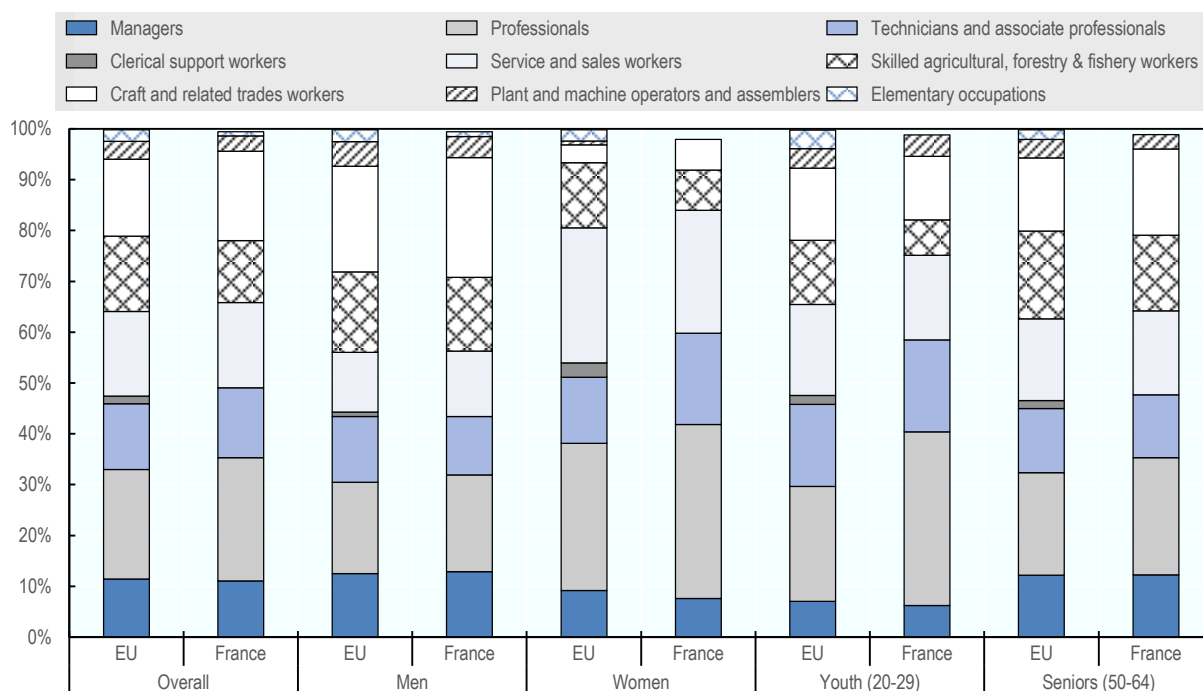


Note: some data for women and youth are unavailable or suppressed due to the quality of the estimates.  
 Source: Eurostat (2020), Labour Force Survey, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs>.

While distribution of the self-employed by occupation (Figure 1.8) is similar in France and in the EU, some differences are worth mentioning. The share of professionals is higher in France, mainly among women, youth, and, to a lesser extent, seniors. The national share of craft and related trade workers is similar but significantly higher among men. Skilled agricultural, forestry and Fishery workers are less common among the self-employed than in the EU, especially among women and youth.

**Figure 1.8. Self-employment by occupation**

Distribution of the self-employed by occupation, 2019



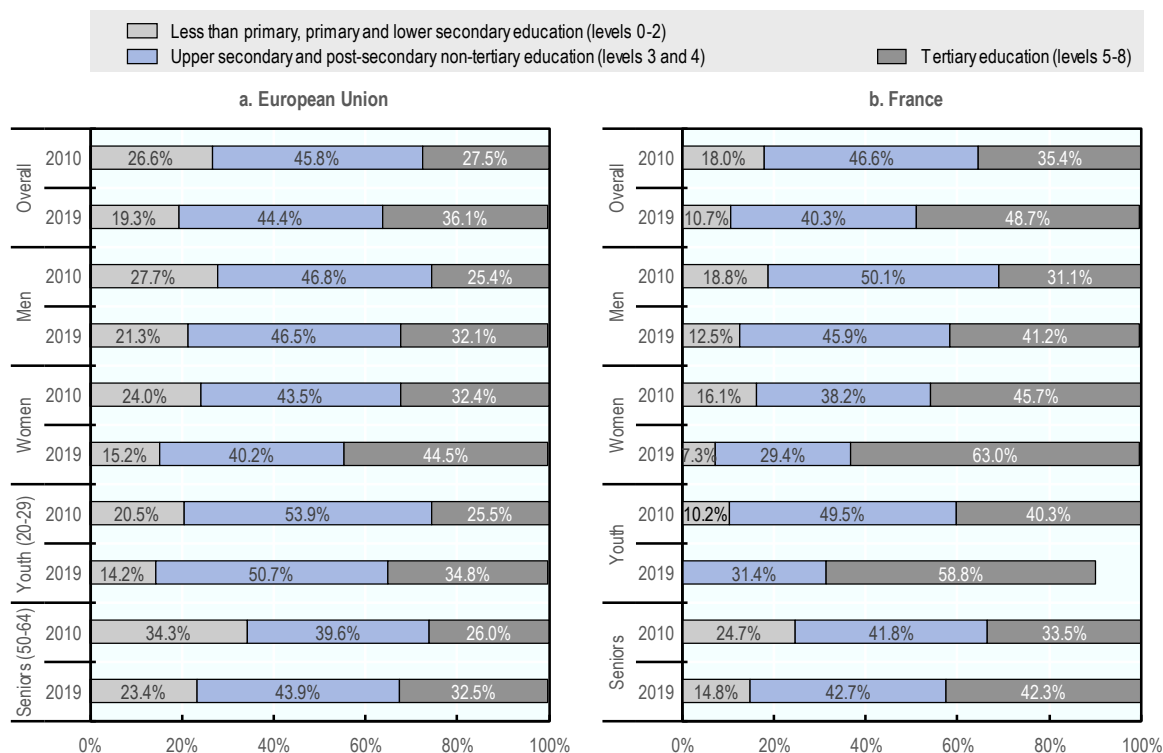
Note: Reliable estimates for Austrian youth are only available for 2 ISCO08 occupation out of 10.

Source: Eurostat (2020), Labour Force Survey, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs>.

In 2019, self-employed workers in France were more likely to have achieved a tertiary education level (48.7%) than the EU average (36.1%) (Figure 1.9). This was particularly true for self-employed women (63.0% had a tertiary education), whereas this rate was significantly lower for self-employed men (41.2%). This is consistent with gender differences in educational attainment observed in the French population as a whole.

**Figure 1.9. Self-employment by education level**

Proportion of the self-employed by educational attainment



Note: Reliable data is not available for youth for levels 0-2 in 2019. Data for youth for level 0-2 in 2010 contains data that is unreliable for some employer status. Break in time series in 2014.

Source: Eurostat (2020), Labour Force Survey, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs>.

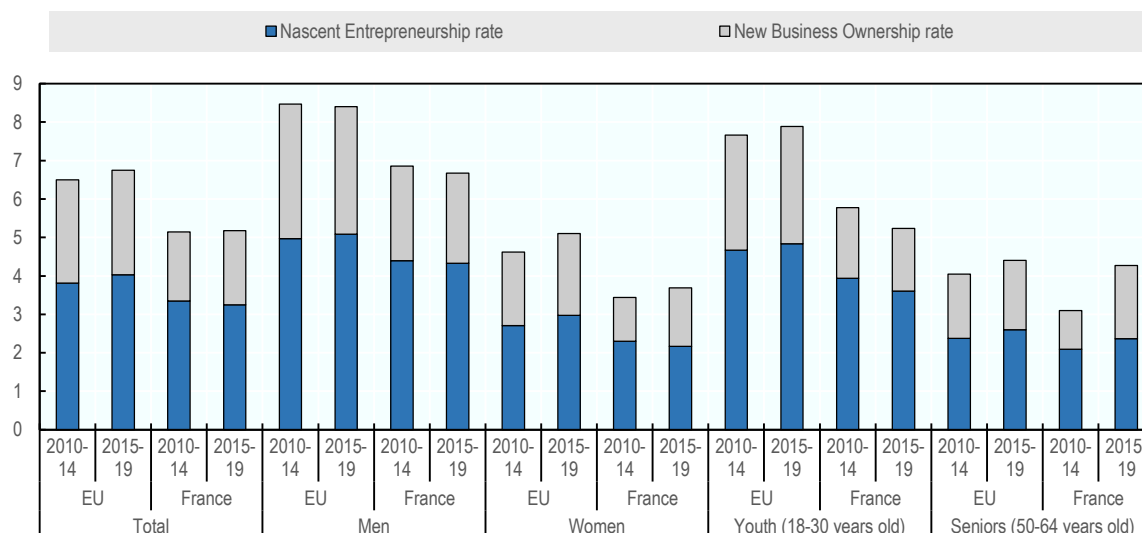
## Entrepreneurship activities

The proportion of the population that reports being engaged in creating or managing a new business was below the EU average (5.2% vs. 6.8%) (Figure 1.10). Whereas in France, this rate remained the same over 2010-14 and 2015-19, it increased slightly in the EU, widening the gap between the national and the EU averages. Men were more likely to be active in business creation than other groups. The second most active group was youth (5.2%) followed by seniors (4.3%) and women 3.7%). Involvement increased over time for women and seniors but men and youth.

These findings are consistent with the results of an analysis published by France Stratégie which found that women were about 20% less likely to be a business owner than men. The study finds the gender gap is explained by lesser entrepreneurial intentions, as women acted upon their intention at the same rate as men did, suggesting a possible self-censorship linked to social norms and gender stereotypes.

**Figure 1.10. Nascent entrepreneurship and new business owners**

Proportion of the population (18-64 years old) that self-report being engaged in nascent entrepreneurship activities or new business owners



Note: The nascent entrepreneurship rate is defined as the proportion of the adult population (18-64 years old) that is actively involved in setting up a business they will own or co-own; this business has not paid salaries, wages or any other payments to the owners for more than three months. The new business ownership rate measures the proportion of the population (18-64 years old) that is currently the owner-manager of a new business that has paid salaries, wages or any other payments to the owners for more than three months, but not more than 42 months. All EU countries participated in the GEM survey between 2015 and 2019 except the Czech Republic, Denmark, Lithuania and Malta. Several countries did not participate in the survey in every year (missing years noted): Austria (2015, 2017), Belgium (2016-19), Bulgaria (2014), Cyprus (2015), Denmark (2015-18), Estonia (2018-19), Finland (2017-19), France (2015, 2019), Hungary (2017-19), Latvia (2018), Lithuania (2015-18), Portugal (2017-18), Romania (2016-19).

Source: GEM (2020), Special tabulations of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Survey, prepared for the OECD.

### How many “missing” entrepreneurs are there?

Population groups do not participate in early-stage entrepreneurship at the same rate, which suggest that there may be many “missing” entrepreneurs, i.e. a pool of untapped talent of potential entrepreneurs among the groups that are less active in entrepreneurship. There are currently about 2.1 million early-stage entrepreneurs in France (i.e. those starting or managing a business that is less than 42 months old) and this number would increase by about 935 000 if the early-stage entrepreneurship rate for core-age males (30-49 years old) was applied to the whole population.

A similar exercise can be done for different population group by applying the rate for core-age males to each group (i.e. women, youth, seniors, immigrants). This shows that about 80% of these “missing” entrepreneurs are female, 45% are over 50 years old and 15% are youth.

Public policy should not seek to convert all of these “missing” entrepreneurs into actual entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is a labour market activity that involves risk and it is not suitable for everyone. There is also no evidence to suggest that the participation rate of core age makes is the optimal participation rate for men or other groups in a given country. Nonetheless, this exercise can illustrate the scale of entrepreneurship gaps and the potential benefits if some of the gaps in activity rates were reduced by interventions levelling the playing field.

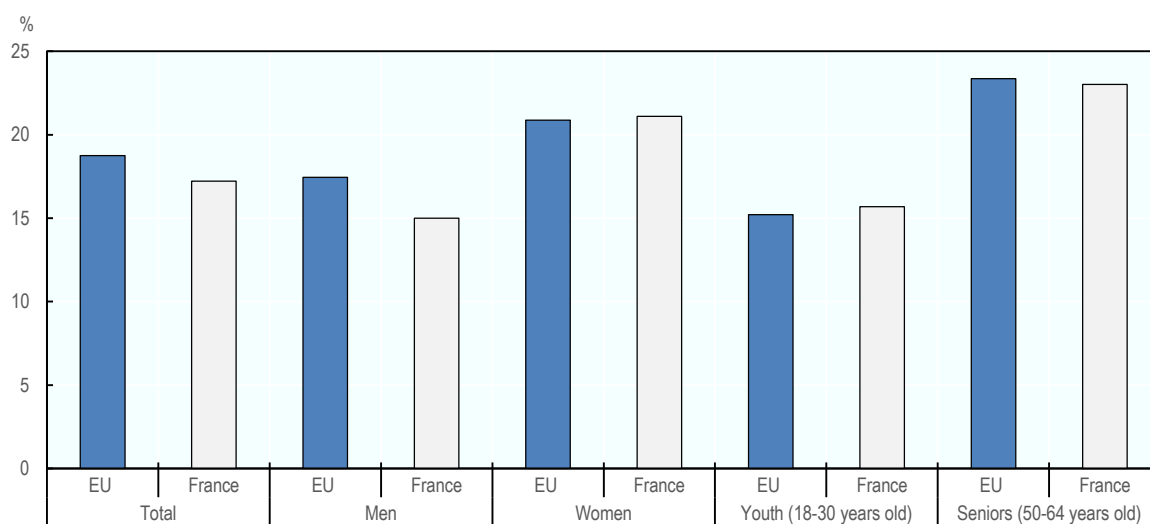


A significant share of people involved in starting and running new businesses in France did so because they had no other opportunities in the labour market (Figure 1.11). Over the period 2015-19, 17.2% of new entrepreneurs started their business because they could not find suitable employment. This figure was below the average for the EU during this period (18.8%). Women (21.1%) and older people (23.0%) were the most likely groups to be driven to entrepreneurship by necessity, yet both were below the EU averages for their group.

This is consistent with the findings of a recent study by the Ministry of Labour (DARES, 2019) which found that business creators are predominantly men (67%), and tend to be aged 25 to 49 years old. According to the authors, the typical profile of a business creator is quite similar to that of the unemployed creator who benefits from labour market policies and this profile has changed little since 2006.

### Figure 1.11. Necessity entrepreneurship

Proportion of nascent entrepreneurs and new business owners (18-64 years old) that self-report that their entrepreneurship is necessity-driven, 2015-19



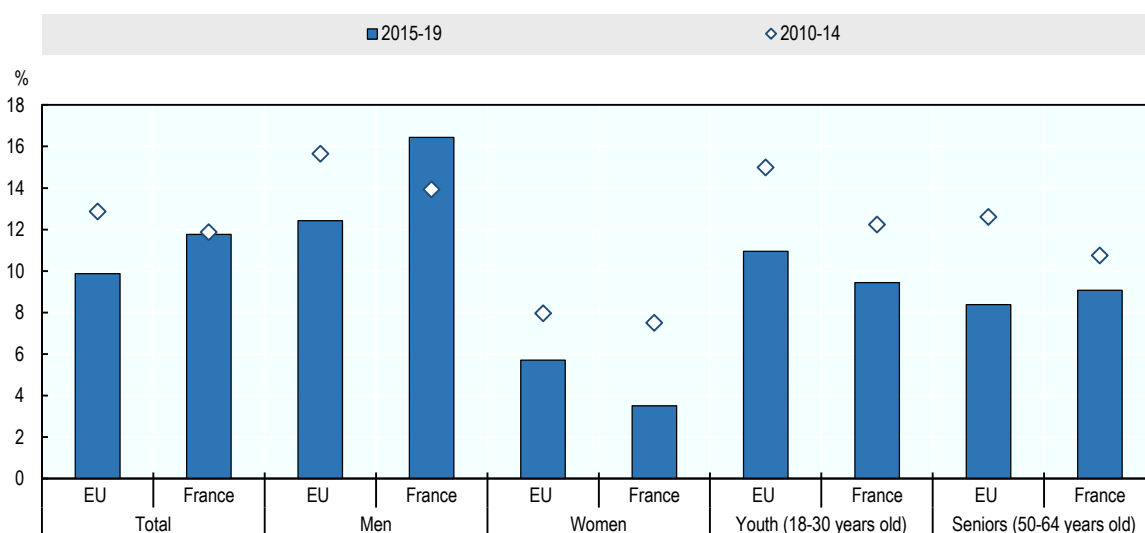
Note: Necessity entrepreneurship is defined as entrepreneurship activities that were launched because there were no other options in the labour market. All EU countries participated in the GEM survey between 2015 and 2019 except the Czech Republic, Denmark, Lithuania and Malta. Several countries did not participate in the survey in every year (missing years noted): Austria (2015, 2017), Belgium (2016-19), Bulgaria (2014), Cyprus (2015), Denmark (2015-18), Estonia (2018-19), Finland (2017-19), France (2015, 2019), Hungary (2017-19), Latvia (2018), Lithuania (2015-18), Portugal (2017-18), Romania (2016-19).

Source: GEM (2020), Special tabulations of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Survey, prepared for the OECD.

French entrepreneurs were slightly more likely than the EU average to indicate that they expected to create more than 19 jobs in the next five years over the 2015-19 period (11.8% vs. 9.9%) (Figure 1.12). Men were significantly more confident in their growth capacity than other groups. While older entrepreneurs were more confident than the EU average in their ability to generate high levels of employment (9.1% vs. 8.4%), women and youth were less optimistic than the EU average regarding their potential for job creation. Growth-oriented entrepreneurs are more likely to survive and be profitable. The share of entrepreneurs foreseeing creating a significant amount of jobs has remained stable in France, around 12%, whereas it decreased in Europe from 12.9% to 9.8%. This difference was driven by an increased confidence among men, as all other groups saw a decline in the share of potential high-job creators over the period.

**Figure 1.12. Growth-oriented entrepreneurship**

Proportion of nascent entrepreneurs and new business owners (18-64 years old) that expect to create at least 19 new jobs over the next five years



Note: All EU countries participated in the GEM survey between 2015 and 2019 except the Czech Republic, Denmark, Lithuania and Malta. Several countries did not participate in the survey in every year (missing years noted): Austria (2015, 2017), Belgium (2016-19) Bulgaria (2014), Cyprus (2015), Denmark (2015-18), Estonia (2018-19), Finland (2017-19), France (2015, 2019), Hungary (2017-19), Latvia (2018), Lithuania (2015-18), Portugal (2017-18), Romania (2016-19).

Source: GEM (2020), Special tabulations of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Survey, prepared for the OECD.

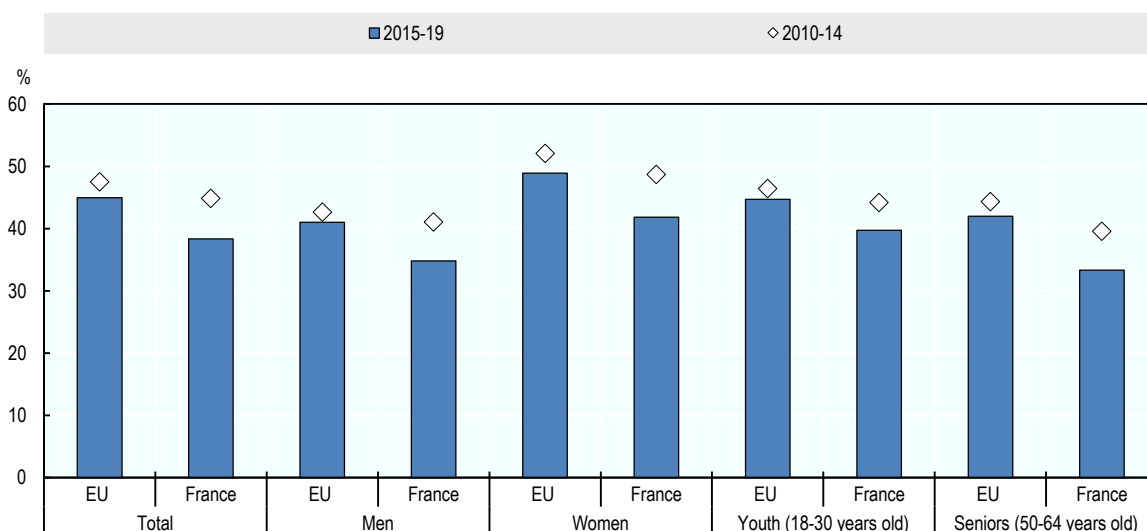
## Barriers to business creation

French people were less likely to report a fear of failure as a barrier to business creation relative to the EU average over the 2015-19 period (38.3% vs. 45.0%) (Figure 1.13). Women were more likely than men to report a fear of failure (41.8% vs. 34.8%), although both showed a decrease between the two periods. An interesting survey in that regard was conducted with 810 women entrepreneurs by the *Observatoire BNP Paribas de l'entrepreneuriat au féminin* (BNP Paribas women's entrepreneurship observatory). The survey found that among fears holding potential women entrepreneurs back, fear of financial failure was the most cited obstacle. This included concerns over the failure of the whole business or the fear of not being able to pay a salary.

The fear of failure among youth was lower in France than in Europe (39.7 vs. 44.7%). Older people (33.3%) were less likely than the national average to report this barrier to business creation, and more confident than their EU peers as well (42.0%).

**Figure 1.13. Fear of failure**

"Does a fear of failure prevent you from starting a business?"  
Percentage of population who responded "yes", 18-64 years old



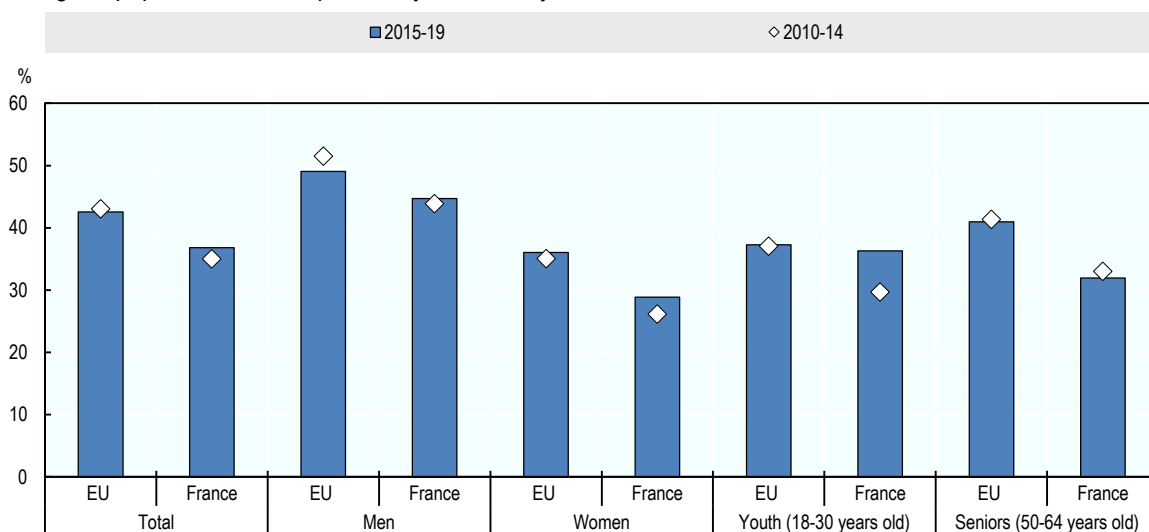
Note: All EU countries participated in the GEM survey between 2015 and 2019 except the Czech Republic, Denmark, Lithuania and Malta. Several countries did not participate in the survey in every year (missing years noted): Austria (2015, 2017), Belgium (2016-19) Bulgaria (2014), Cyprus (2015), Denmark (2015-18), Estonia (2018-19), Finland (2017-19), France (2015, 2019), Hungary (2017-19), Latvia (2018), Lithuania (2015-18), Portugal (2017-18), Romania (2016-19).

Source: GEM (2020), Special tabulations of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Survey, prepared for the OECD.

This confidence contrasts with the relatively low percentage of people responding that they have the required knowledge to start a business. On the whole, French people tend to be less confident than other European citizens in their entrepreneurship skills (36.8% vs. 42.5% in 2019) (Figure 1.14). Women reported the lowest confidence level (28.9%, under the 36.0% EU average) a low rate that contrasts with the higher rate exhibited by men (44.7%, although also under the EU average of 49.1%). Youth and seniors were slightly more confident than women: respectively 36.3% and 31.9% felt confidence in their skills for business creation. While this figure was close to the EU average for youth (37.2%), there was a significant gap with the seniors EU average (40.9%).

**Figure 1.14. Entrepreneurship skills**

“Do you have the knowledge and skills to start a business?”  
 Percentage of population who responded “yes”, 18-64 years old



Note: All EU countries participated in the GEM survey between 2015 and 2019 except the Czech Republic, Denmark, Lithuania and Malta. Several countries did not participate in the survey in every year (missing years noted): Austria (2015, 2017), Belgium (2016-19) Bulgaria (2014), Cyprus (2015), Denmark (2015-18), Estonia (2018-19), Finland (2017-19), France (2015, 2019), Hungary (2017-19), Latvia (2018), Lithuania (2015-18), Portugal (2017-18), Romania (2016-19).

Source: GEM (2020), Special tabulations of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Survey, prepared for the OECD.

# 2 Inclusive entrepreneurship policy framework

## Overview and assessment

Table 2.1. Characterisation of the inclusive entrepreneurship policy context

		Women	Immigrants	Youth	Seniors	Unemployed
1. Entrepreneurship policies for each target group are under the responsibility of the following level(s) of government (multiple levels can be checked)	National	✓		✓		✓
	Regional	✓		✓		✓
	Local	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. A group-specific entrepreneurship strategy has been developed (either stand-alone or embedded in another strategy)		✓		✓		✓
3. Clear targets and objectives for entrepreneurship policy have been developed and reported for different target groups						✓
4. Monitoring and evaluation practices for entrepreneurship support are strong and wide-spread						✓

Note: A check-mark indicates the level policy responsibility for tailored entrepreneurship policy (multiple selections are possible) and characteristics of the entrepreneurship policy framework.

### **Policy responsibility**

There is no single policy for inclusive entrepreneurship in France, nor for entrepreneurship in general. Measures supporting business creation respond to three distinct overarching policy objectives:

- i) reducing the number of unemployed people by encouraging them to create their own jobs;
- ii) encouraging the development of innovative companies, which are expected to create future jobs; and
- iii) supporting vibrant local economies, through micro- and small-sized companies.

In practice, measures promoting business creation overall and inclusive entrepreneurship are spread across more than ten national programmes as stated in the budget law, and fall under the remit of three national ministries. The Ministry of Economy and Finance is mainly responsible for business support. However, the Ministry of National Education and Youth is involved in supporting students-entrepreneurs and, more generally young people interested in becoming entrepreneurs and the Ministry of Overseas is involved in the implementation of special regimes in the overseas regions. Other ministries and agencies play a role in supporting specific groups.

Regions also have policy competences regarding support to SMEs and entrepreneurs. There is no strict division of responsibilities between the State and Regions, and practices vary depending on individual regional strategies.

There are numerous financial and non-financial support programmes for business creation<sup>1</sup>, managed by a wide array of actors. They are funded by the state budget and regional budgets. Direct subsidies are mainly distributed by Bpifrance, the French public investment bank, when they are funded by the state, or by the regional agencies or municipalities when they are funded at this level. Tax and social contributions exemptions represent a significant share of entrepreneurship support in France, and are managed by relevant agencies.

In some special cases, assistance to entrepreneurs is carried out by associations on behalf of the state. For example, *Association de Gestion du Fonds pour l'Insertion Professionnelle des Personnes Handicapées* (Agefiph, Association for Managing Funds for the Professional Integration of Persons with a Disability) offers grants to jobseekers holding the status of disabled worker who start a business. In addition, a wide array of non-governmental organisations are active in supporting entrepreneurs, especially with regards to certain groups such as youth and women.

Overall, co-ordination among the different entrepreneurship support schemes is limited, leading to potential overlap and a complex environment for entrepreneurs. While co-ordination of direct financial support at the national level could be envisaged, coordination of other measures (e.g. tax exemptions) and of support at the regional level would be difficult to implement, due to the autonomy of regions for economic intervention.

### ***Inclusive entrepreneurship strategies and objectives***

The general principles underlying inclusive entrepreneurship policies have not significantly changed since 2013. Three priority objectives were set by the previous government to stimulate an entrepreneurial spirit and mobilise untapped talent across the population (Assemblée Nationale, 2013):

- Improve awareness among youth about entrepreneurship and innovation;
- Facilitate access to business creation support for all and mobilise available talent; and
- Offer personalised entrepreneurship support on a long-term basis.

A National Plan on Female Entrepreneurship has been in place since 2013, and was extended to 2020 as part of the First Inter-ministerial Plan for Professional Equality. Multiple government programmes offer financial and non-financial support to female entrepreneurs and a number of non-governmental organisations also target this group.

While there are no dedicated strategic documents or quantitative objectives focused on entrepreneurship for other groups, there is also significant support for youth entrepreneurs and, to a lesser extent, seniors. A large share of entrepreneurship support targets jobseekers, which has drawn some criticism (Cour des comptes, 2012). Measures are designed by the national government but implemented at the local level.

An important priority for inclusive entrepreneurship policy in France is the territorial dimension. Many programmes designed to improve participation of disadvantaged citizens in entrepreneurship (and in the labour market) target people living in specific geographic areas (down to the level of neighbourhoods) rather than specific demographic groups. Created in 2016, the Entrepreneurship Agency (*Agence France Entrepreneur*) aims to promote and facilitate access to entrepreneurship by supporting all those who wish to create and develop their business, particularly in deprived regions, where the provision of support and funding is currently inadequate. There are also numerous incentives to increase the attractiveness of

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<sup>1</sup> A complete presentation is provided by the website [lesaided.fr](https://lesaided.fr). See also: <https://bpifrance-creation.fr/moment-de-vie/comment-my-retrouver-toutes-aides-a-creation-dentreprises>.

deprived neighbourhoods, rural areas, old industrial areas and other disadvantaged territories by financially supporting business creation and the re-location of already existing companies. Examples of such measures include *Zones Franches Urbaines* (ZFU), Entrepreneurial Territories, *Zones de Revitalisation Rurale* (ZRR), *Quartiers prioritaires de la Politique de la Ville* (QPV), most of which include fiscal subsidies for new business start-ups. For instance, very small and small businesses located in priority areas of the city (QPV) can benefit from exemptions from business property assessment and property tax on built properties.

### **Monitoring and evaluation practices**

Evaluations of inclusive entrepreneurship programmes are scarce and *ex ante* evaluations are not typically used to assess needs of different groups. When they exist, evaluations are generally done at the programme level on an *ad-hoc* basis, and tend to rely on descriptive metrics rather than econometric techniques. Notable examples of such evaluations include:

- a 2018 evaluation of companies created by job seekers carried out by the national employment agency, *Pôle Emploi* (Pôle emploi, 2018);
- a 2019 study reviewing the characteristics of the unemployed people recipients of a subsidy for business creation (Accre, Arce and Nacre) and their experiences (DARES, 2019).<sup>2</sup>

Evaluations based on descriptive statistics are also regularly done at the regional level (e.g. Ile-de-France Region, 2017).

In addition, some quantitative analysis of inclusive entrepreneurship programmes are sometimes conducted by academic institutions and through the national statistics agency (INSEE). For example, an in-depth reviews of the ACCRE subvention to unemployed business creators was conducted (Redor 2017 and 2019). An evaluation of the non-profit *Groupement de Créateurs*' support programme for disadvantaged youth was also carried out in 2016, using a randomised control trial design (CREST/J-PAL/Sciences Po, 2016). Another notable example is the non-profit Adie (*Association pour le droit à l'initiative économique*) that regularly measures the social and economic impact of its activities. Adie developed a score to monitor social and financial inclusion (i.e. making sure that the support focuses on the most deprived beneficiaries). Adie also conducted an impact study in 2017, measuring firm survival and labour market attachment of supported clients, as well as job creation, the economic impact of the programme is also measured regularly since 2016 (investment vs. value generated for the community)<sup>3</sup> (Adie/Audirep, 2017).

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<sup>2</sup> Dares (*Direction de l'animation de la recherche, des études et des statistiques*) is the Directorate of research, studies and statistics of the Ministry of Labour.

<sup>3</sup> In 2017, 63% of Adie clients were still in activity after three years, and an additional 21% were in employment. On average Adie clients create 1.3 jobs (including theirs). The latest estimate of the economic impact of the programme is that each euro invested generates EUR 2.38 of benefits for the community after 24 months.

## Recent developments

Policies supporting disadvantaged groups in entrepreneurship have not been significantly changed over the last three years.

### ***Policy measures in response to COVID-19 to support entrepreneurs and the self-employed<sup>4</sup>***

Following the public health measures taken to address the COVID-19 epidemic in March 2020 (shelter-in-place orders, mandatory closure of non-essential businesses), the State introduced a relief package to support companies through the crisis. The main measure was the *chômage partiel* (partial unemployment) subsidy, whereby the government covered 100% of the wages of furloughed workers. Decree No. 2020-325 of 25 March 2020 implemented this reform. The payment of taxes and social security contributions was also suspended to reduce the pressure on businesses (same decree).

Specific measures have been taken to support small businesses and entrepreneurs. The State and the Regions have set up a solidarity fund to help the most affected small businesses. The fund is accessible to companies, associations, self-employed workers, micro-entrepreneurs, liberal professions, farmers who are members of an agricultural co-operative and artist-authors. The amount allocated corresponds to the loss of turnover recorded for losses up to EUR 1 500, or to EUR 1 500 for losses at or above this level. Some inter-municipal authorities and large companies helped finance the fund. Very small companies, freelancers, micro-entrepreneurs and liberal professions with up to 10 employees and a turnover under EUR 1 million turnover are eligible for this support under certain conditions.<sup>5</sup> Some regions also grant additional exceptional support to firms, in addition to their participation in the solidarity fund. Since 2 March 2020, the public bank, Bpifrance, also launched exceptional measures funded by the State. These include the extension of credit guarantees to support the restructuring of loans operated by banks (without management fees) and the implementation of a new State Guaranteed Loan device (PGE), mobilising banking networks in order to ease businesses' cash flow. An emergency plan of EUR 4 billion was also introduced to support start-ups.

The Agefiph also implemented three exceptional measures to mitigate the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for entrepreneurs with disabilities: i) Exceptional "operating support" aid, amounting to EUR 1 500, targeted at entrepreneurs who have created or taken over a business with the support of Agefiph in the last three years under certain conditions; ii) a special financial assistance for periods of work stoppage, aimed at creators supported by Agefiph; and iii) an action diagnostic "support for the end of the crisis" for creators and buyers of businesses supported by Agefiph over the past three years. The total cost, estimated at EUR 23 million, is financed by the State.

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<sup>4</sup> Policy measures up to mid-July 2020 have been considered. However there might be changes in duration and amount of existing measures respectively new measures upcoming.

<sup>5</sup> For a complete presentation, see: [www.economie.gouv.fr/covid19-soutien-entreprises/fonds-de-solidarite-pour-les-tpe-independants-et-micro](http://www.economie.gouv.fr/covid19-soutien-entreprises/fonds-de-solidarite-pour-les-tpe-independants-et-micro).



# 3 Assessment of current and planned inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes

## Developing entrepreneurship skills

### Overview and assessment of policies and programmes

Table 3.1. Characterisation of schemes for developing entrepreneurship skills

		<b>Tailored:</b> Are public programmes tailored for the target group (i.e. dedicated)?	<b>Consultation:</b> Are the targeted entrepreneurs consulted during the design of programmes?	<b>Outreach:</b> Are appropriate outreach methods used for different target groups?	<b>Delivery:</b> Are specialist organisations used to deliver programmes?	<b>Take-up:</b> Does the support have high take-up among target group?	<b>Scale:</b> Is the scale of available support sufficient?	<b>Impact:</b> Does evaluation evidence show a positive impact?	<b>Integrated:</b> Is the programme delivered to linked other related supports?	<b>Links:</b> Do tailored programmes link to mainstream support programmes?
Women	1. Entrepreneurship training	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
	2. Entrepreneurship coaching and mentoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	3. Business consultancy, including incubators/accelerators				✓		✓			✓
Immigrants	1. Entrepreneurship training	✓			✓				✓	
	2. Entrepreneurship coaching and mentoring	✓			✓					
	3. Business consultancy, including incubators/accelerators				✓					
Youth	1. Entrepreneurship training	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
	2. Entrepreneurship coaching and mentoring	✓			✓	✓	✓			
	3. Business consultancy, including incubators/accelerators				✓		✓		✓	
Seniors	1. Entrepreneurship training	✓			✓					✓
	2. Entrepreneurship coaching and mentoring	✓		✓	✓					✓
	3. Business consultancy, including incubators/accelerators									
The unem- ployed	1. Entrepreneurship training	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	2. Entrepreneurship coaching and mentoring	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
	3. Business consultancy, including incubators/accelerators			✓	✓				✓	✓

Note: This table presents the characteristics of entrepreneurship schemes that are directly offered by national, regional and local governments, as well as those that are financed by the public sector but delivered by other actors. It considers the “typical” entrepreneur in each of the different target groups, in the “typical” region in the country. A check-mark indicates when the characteristic is typically fulfilled.

Non-governmental organisations and local governments play a central role in providing entrepreneurship support to under-represented and disadvantaged groups. Overall, there is a wide range of offers for different groups, especially youth and women. In addition to group-specific support programmes, a number of non-governmental organisations, often receiving some public funding, offer training programmes targeted more broadly at entrepreneurs from under-represented or disadvantaged groups, including with the aforementioned territorial approach. Notable examples include France Active and Adie, who both proposes mentoring programmes to very small projects presented by nascent entrepreneurs, and Initiative France, an association which provides entrepreneurs with financial and human resources to optimize their start-up development.

It should be noted that the purpose and content of skills and training programmes offered vary greatly. For example, programmes may include entrepreneurship as a small part of broader skills programmes (e.g. for youth skills development) rather than as a core focus, or may focus on awareness raising rather than provide training on skills for business development. The multiplicity of providers and foci may make the support landscape difficult to navigate for entrepreneurs.

### *Women*

Entrepreneurship training for women is well-developed and provided by a large number of organisations, mostly non-governmental. Some are approved by the State, others are private for-profit or non-profits. There is extensive offering and wide range of providers, some of them very small which may make it difficult for aspiring women entrepreneurs to identify all support available locally. Notable actors include the Women Entrepreneurs association, which organises training in partnership with training centres and co-working spaces. *Action'elles* is another approved training organisation, to provide courses, training and workshops to women. Bpifrance, the public SME investment bank, also proposes training sessions dedicated to women. Adie also offers training to women entrepreneurs.

### *Immigrants*

Entrepreneurship support for immigrants is primarily provided by non-governmental organisations. The sector is dynamic and new initiatives are regularly launched by associations mainly supported by local administration (regional or municipality level). However, coverage and capacity varies across locations and over time.

The non-profit FAIRE, offers training and labour market re-integration assistance for disadvantaged people. Some are dedicated to entrepreneurship and have been adapted to refugees and immigrants. Another example is SINGA<sup>6</sup> which offers support and training to immigrants who aim to create a business. SINGA also co-founded the acceleration programme *SINGA Acceleration* with the Edmond de Rothschild Foundation. The programme supports scaling up for companies led by disadvantaged entrepreneurs, including refugees, but also social benefit beneficiaries, former recipients of social support for students, and residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. To date, less than 100 projects benefited from support.

Another example of a recent initiative is Combo, a programme started in March 2019 by the international non-profit “makesense” and the French non-profit *Elan Interculturel*. It offers personal and professional support tailored to refugee entrepreneurs or entrepreneurs wishing to address issues related to immigration: 90 start-up projects have been incubated and about 130 hours of coaching have been organised<sup>7</sup>. La Ruche, a 10 years old entrepreneurship support organisation, also recently launched a new programme in Montreuil for refugee project leaders. Adie also supports refugee entrepreneurs through its

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.singafrance.com/entrepreneuriat>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://entrepreneurs.makesense.org/integration/>

AGIR programme which aims to help refugees access the labour market through self-employment and employment.

### Youth

Support to youth entrepreneurship tends to target students and non-students separately. The support system for student entrepreneurship consists mainly in the programme *L'esprit d'entreprendre*<sup>8</sup> which brought together several already existing actions. The most famous one is the establishment of a Student Centre for Innovation, Transfer and Entrepreneurship (PEPITE) in each higher education and research site. It organises training in entrepreneurship and innovation for students in all fields from undergraduate to doctoral level and delivers the "Student-Entrepreneur" status for students or young graduates having business creation projects.

For non-students, one of the largest support schemes is *CréaJeunes*. Launched in 2007 by Adie. It is offered free-of-charge to youth aged 18 to 32 years old. Between the establishment of this measure in 2007 and 2014, approximately 5 300 youth took part in the programme and 30% of them started their own business (École d'Economie de Paris, 2014). Another notable initiative targeting youth outside of the higher education system is the non-profit *Groupement de Créateurs*, which offers support to disadvantaged youth in business creation. *Groupement de Créateurs* offers two state-sanctioned diplomas. The first one is the *Entrepreneur TPE de niveau 4* certification, which is accessible to people without a high school diploma. The second diploma is awarded to people taking a second phase training course. The diploma is entitled *Diplôme d'Université de Créateur d'Activité* (DUCA, Business Creator University Diploma). An evaluation of the *Groupement des Créateurs*'s programme has shown a positive impact on employment and engagement in training among its beneficiaries.

A wide range of entrepreneurship skills programmes for youth are also available at the local level. These programmes may be run by national non-governmental organisations, or be managed locally by local authorities or local organisations.

### Seniors

Recent reforms have pushed back the retirement age in France.<sup>9</sup> Despite this increasing expectation that seniors will work longer, only 56% of those 55-64 were in work in 2018<sup>10</sup> and studies suggests employability declines after 45 years old (France Stratégie, 2018). The government considers entrepreneurship as a viable pathway out of unemployment for older experienced workers. Policies supporting seniors in business creations are delegated to associations or private initiatives.

Non-governmental training programmes for seniors include the following. Initiative France offers seniors (45+) a course on entrepreneurial culture, funded by insurance firm AG2R. Several networks dedicated to people 45 and over exist: the *Eustache* club promotes entrepreneurship among seniors, raises awareness about the potential of silver entrepreneurship and organises training and experience sharing events. Another notable initiative is being developed by *Foundation Entreprendre*, with the support of HSBC. They will launch a pilot support system dedicated to people over 45 wishing to become entrepreneurs in 2020.

<sup>8</sup> <https://slink-france.fr/esprit-dentreprendre>

<sup>9</sup> The statutory retirement age is gradually changing from 60 to 62 as per the 2010 pension reform, in force since July 1, 2011. In 2019, the average retirement age is 62.8 years: 62.5 years for men and 63 years for women. Excluding early retirement, the average age is 63.5 years (63.5 years for men and 63.5 years for women). According to projections by the Pensions Guidance Council, the average retirement age should be around 64 by the end of the 2030s ([www.statistiques-recherches.cnnav.fr/age-de-depart-a-la-retraite.html](http://www.statistiques-recherches.cnnav.fr/age-de-depart-a-la-retraite.html))

<sup>10</sup> Moreover, out of ten French people aged 60, four are employed, three are retired and three are unemployed or inactive. Source France Stratégie (2018).

The programme will help people over 45 to move from a business creation or takeover project to an implementation plan in six months. Successful applicants will be supported by a personalised team and a coach and / or a sponsor and receive a financial endowment of EUR 1 500 to support them in their training.

### *The unemployed*

*Pôle Emploi*, the national employment agency offers some measures to raise awareness of business creation as an option for jobseekers and help them start a business. The *Activ'Créa* service supports job seekers in their reflection and help them assess whether their entrepreneurial project is relevant and suitable. Once jobseekers are engaged in a project, *Pôle Emploi* also directs them to appropriate resources in its network of partners so they can benefit from expert support (e.g. *Adie*, *Initiative France*, *Chamber of Commerce and Industry*). In addition to these national programme, some local initiatives developed by local associations also help unemployed to become entrepreneurs. Most of them rely on public support.

### **Recent policy developments**

The non-governmental sector is quite active and a few new initiatives can be found (e.g. *Combo* and *HSBC* and *Foundation Entreprendre* programmes mentioned above). Nonetheless, there have been no significant change in the policies aiming to develop entrepreneurship skills for under-represented and disadvantaged groups, nor in the main delivery organisations providing this support. A trend that should be noted is a decreasing role of the Government and national agencies and an increasing role of non-profits, regional measures and networks or start-ups. This transition has been ongoing for a decade.

## Financing entrepreneurship

### Overview and assessment of policies and programmes

Table 3.2. Characterisation of schemes for facilitating access to finance

		Tailored: Are public programmes tailored for the target group (i.e. dedicated)?	Consultation: Are the targeted entrepreneurs consulted during the design of programmes?	Outreach: Are appropriate outreach methods used for different target groups?	Delivery: Are specialist organisations used to deliver programmes?	Take-up: Does the support have high take-up among target group?	Scale: Is the scale of available support sufficient?	Impact: Does evaluation evidence show a positive impact?	Integrated: Is the programme delivered linked to other related supports?	Links: Do tailored programmes link to mainstream support programmes?
Women	1. Grants for business creation									
	2. Loan guarantees	✓								
	3. Microfinance and loans	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
	4. Other instruments (e.g. crowdfunding, risk capital)									
Immigrants	1. Grants for business creation									
	2. Loan guarantees									
	3. Microfinance and loans	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
	4. Other instruments (e.g. crowdfunding, risk capital)									
Youth	1. Grants for business creation									
	2. Loan guarantees									
	3. Microfinance and loans	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	4. Other instruments (e.g. crowdfunding, risk capital)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Seniors	1. Grants for business creation									
	2. Loan guarantees									
	3. Microfinance and loans	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
	4. Other instruments (e.g. crowdfunding, risk capital)									
The unem- ployed	1. Grants for business creation	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
	2. Loan guarantees	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
	3. Microfinance and loans	✓								
	4. Other instruments (e.g. crowdfunding, risk capital)									

Note: This table presents the characteristics of entrepreneurship schemes that are directly offered by national, regional and local governments, as well as those that are financed by the public sector but delivered by other actors. It considers the “typical” entrepreneur in each of the different target groups, in the “typical” region in the country. A check-mark indicates when the characteristic is typically fulfilled.

A range of financial instruments are in place to support entrepreneurs in France, designed for and open to all. Direct subsidies are mainly distributed by Bpifrance at the national level, and regional agencies and municipalities also offer some support. Vouchers are also used. In addition, targeted financial support is provided for certain groups, notably women and youth. Similar to what is observed for skills development, the non-governmental sector is very active and provides a range of options targeted either at disadvantaged entrepreneurs in general or at specific target groups. A financial instrument that is very popular is *prêt d'honneur* (honour loan, based on personal engagement), whereby a personal zero interest

loan is offered without collateral to an entrepreneur upon promise of reimbursement. These loans are offered by selected authorised organisations (e.g, Initiative France) and can help entrepreneur raise additional funds from other sources. The amount of the honour loan depends on the nature of the project and the capital requirements. The national average of the Initiative France network's honour loans is EUR 9 700.

As for other types of support, some financial instruments rely on a territorial approach to promote inclusiveness. The *Garantie Égalité Territoire* (territorial equality guarantee) offers a loan guarantee to people living in disadvantaged urban or rural areas.

### *Women*

Some financial supports are available to women to set up or take over a business. *The Garantie Égalité Femmes* (Equality Women Guarantee<sup>11</sup>) set up by France Active is a loan guarantee designed to facilitate access to bank credit for women creating or taking over a business. This guarantee is open to unemployed and precarious women as well as women who have been working on the creation, takeover or development of a business for at least three years. This guarantee covers up to 80% of the amount of a bank loan (two years minimum) which does not exceed EUR 50 000 and no personal deposits are required. Like the *Garantie Égalité Territoire*, it also helps entrepreneurs access funding with more favourable conditions (lower rates).

Beyond this initiative, there is no specific public funding programme dedicated to female entrepreneurship but a number of small programmes managed by associations are supported or labelled by the Secretariat of State for gender equality.

In addition, since 2012, a framework agreement for women's entrepreneurship is in place between the State and the *Caisse des Dépôts* (public sector financial institution) and local and regional action plans for female entrepreneurship have been developed. They identify appropriate supports for the area based on input from the central administration (ministry of education, secretariat of state for equal status of women and men) and entrepreneurship support associations. They aim to support the creation and takeover of businesses by women in all sectors, including industry, construction, digital and innovation. Some local networks also offer specific supports to women entrepreneurs.

Bpifrance also organises events to promote various initiatives in support of access to finance for women entrepreneurs. There is also a specific (non-governmental) Business Angels network: *Femmes Business Angels* which encourages women to become business angels and promote access to funding for women entrepreneurs.

### *Immigrants*

There is limited dedicated funding available to immigrant entrepreneurs. The non-profit FAIRE, which provides skills support to immigrant entrepreneurs, also provides funding to projects of refugee or migrant entrepreneurs, via honorary loans of EUR 5 000 to EUR 30 000. A few non-governmental organisations providing immigrant entrepreneurs with skills support also provide assistance in connecting them with micro-loans opportunities.

### *Youth*

Many small initiatives offer tailored financial support to youth entrepreneurs. Most are organised by non-profit organisations, often carried out in public private partnerships, and they are often combined with non-

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<sup>11</sup> It replaces the former Fonds de garantie pour la création, la reprise ou le développement d'entreprises à l'initiative des femmes (FGIF)

financial support. Examples include *Cap'Jeunes* (France Active Network) tailored to young jobseekers and vulnerable youth, *Je deviens Entrepreneur* (Adie), a support programme for business creation leading to a micro loan or an interest-free honor loan. Another example is the *MoovJee Prize* entrepreneurship competition which offers financial support to its winners and the *Fondation de France* which awards each year 20 grants to support young people carrying an innovative project with public impact. The student-entrepreneur status (see section on regulation) also facilitate the access to bank credit and reduced interest rates.

### *Seniors*

Financial support for senior entrepreneurs is provided mainly by non-profit organisations. Some previously mentioned non-profit organizations (France Active Network, Adie) provide micro or honour loans to those over 45 year-olds, proposing similar services to different demographic groups under different brands. Some networks offering modules dedicated to senior entrepreneurs also offer micro loans to all (e.g. Initiative France).

### *The unemployed*

Two main programmes offer financial support to jobseekers creating a business. Aid for Resumption or Business Creation (ARCE) allows its beneficiaries to receive 45% of their future unemployment benefits as a lump sum to help start their business. Jobseekers need to be Return to Employment Assistance<sup>12</sup> beneficiaries to be eligible for ARCE.

A zero interest loan is also available as part of the *Nouvel Accompagnement à la Création ou la Reprise d'Entreprise* (NACRE – new support for business creation and take over) programme. The NACRE programme provides technical support in three phases: project development, financial planning, and business start-up and development.

### **Recent policy developments**

The main recent changes in the landscape of financial support for entrepreneurs have been introduced to mitigate the COVID-19 sanitary crisis in the form of an exceptional grant (EUR 1 500) to small companies. However, some young businesses and sole proprietors have not been able to qualify for the support.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The return to work assistance allowance (ARE) guarantees replacement income to employees involuntarily unemployed provided that certain conditions are met. See : [www.unedic.org/indemnisation/fiches-thematiques/allocation-daide-au-retour-lemploi-are](http://www.unedic.org/indemnisation/fiches-thematiques/allocation-daide-au-retour-lemploi-are)

<sup>13</sup> See: [www.toutsurmesfinances.com/argent/a/aide-exceptionnelle-independants-auto-entrepreneurs#Aide\\_financiere\\_de\\_1500\\_euros\\_liee\\_au\\_coronavirus\\_pour\\_qui\\_Les\\_conditions](http://www.toutsurmesfinances.com/argent/a/aide-exceptionnelle-independants-auto-entrepreneurs#Aide_financiere_de_1500_euros_liee_au_coronavirus_pour_qui_Les_conditions)

## Entrepreneurship culture and social capital

### Overview and assessment policies and programmes

**Table 3.3. Characterisation of public policy actions to promote entrepreneurship and develop networks**

		<b>Tailored:</b> Are public programmes tailored for the target group (i.e. dedicated)?	<b>Consultation:</b> Are the targeted entrepreneurs consulted during the design of programmes?	<b>Outreach:</b> Are appropriate outreach methods used for different target groups?	<b>Delivery:</b> Are specialist organisations used to deliver programmes?	<b>Take-up:</b> Does the support have high take-up among target group?	<b>Scale:</b> Is the scale of available support sufficient?	<b>Impact:</b> Does evaluation evidence show a positive impact?	<b>Integrated:</b> Is the programme delivered linked to other related supports?	<b>Links:</b> Do tailored programmes link to mainstream support programmes?
Women	1. Entrepreneurship campaigns, including role model initiatives	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
	2. Networking initiatives	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Immigrants	1. Entrepreneurship campaigns, including role model initiatives									
	2. Networking initiatives									
Youth	1. Entrepreneurship campaigns, including role model initiatives	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
	2. Networking initiatives	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Seniors	1. Entrepreneurship campaigns, including role model initiatives									
	2. Networking initiatives	✓			✓	✓			✓	
The unem-ployed	1. Entrepreneurship campaigns, including role model initiatives	✓			✓	✓			✓	
	2. Networking initiatives									

Note: This table presents the characteristics of entrepreneurship schemes that are directly offered by national, regional and local governments, as well as those that are financed by the public sector but delivered by other actors. It considers the “typical” entrepreneur in each of the different target groups, in the “typical” region in the country. A check-mark indicates when the characteristic is typically fulfilled.

Developing an “entrepreneurial spirit” throughout society has been a government priority in recent years. This is done primarily through the education system and through generic efforts open to all. Some tailored initiatives exist, in particular for women and youth. Most outreach initiatives aiming to develop an entrepreneurial culture are carried out in the non-governmental sector.

#### Women

Promoting entrepreneurship among women is a government priority. Awareness raising is one of the three priorities of the *Entreprendre au féminin* national plan. Activities promoting entrepreneurship among women are carried out by a range of non-governmental organisations and a number of networks are in



place. An example of such organisations is the *Bouge ta boîte* network<sup>14</sup>, which brings together women entrepreneurs in 60 French cities. The network conducted a survey on role models and found that almost one in two women was unable to name an inspiring female business creator. The network set out to address this through training sessions, meetings and mentoring. Another notable example is "*Entreprendre au féminin*", a network of local associations, which aims to support, promote and develop the creation (or takeover) of businesses by women.

Many events dedicated to promote female entrepreneurship are organised by networks of associations and support structures:

- the Business Angels network "Femmes Business Angels",
- the network of incubators and incubators of innovative companies "Les Premières",
- the Girlz In Web association for those who start businesses in the digital industry,
- the StartHer association, which supports women who work and create business in new technologies,
- the Professionn'L Salon,
- women's entrepreneurship week labelled by the ministry of education.

### *Youth*

Many initiatives are in place to promote entrepreneurship among youth. Most of these are carried out in the non-governmental sector, sometimes with public support. One example is the non-profit organisation *100 000 entrepreneurs* which aims to instil a culture of entrepreneurship to young people aged 13 to 25. It invites entrepreneurs to discuss their professional journey in middle schools, high schools, and higher education institutions. The aforementioned non-profit *Groupement des Créateurs* also promotes entrepreneurship among unemployed youth.

### *Seniors*

No public programmes have been implemented to promote business creation by seniors. However, several associations promoting entrepreneurship engage with entrepreneurs aged 45 years and over. For instance, two associations, *Seniors Entrepreneurs* and *Second Souffle*, are working to set up a partnership aimed at enabling failing entrepreneurs to take advantage of the experience of senior entrepreneurs to take a second chance. Another association named TIGcRE (*Tandem InterGénérationnel pour la Création et la Reprise d'Entreprise*) has been created to encourage business creation by pairs of entrepreneurs, one young and one senior.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.bougetaboite.com/>

## Regulatory measures

### Overview and assessment of regulatory environment

**Table 3.4. Characterisation of regulatory measures used to support entrepreneurship**

			Tailored: Are public programmes tailored for the target group (i.e. dedicated)?	Consultation: Are the targeted entrepreneurs consulted during the design of programmes?	Outreach: Are appropriate outreach methods used for different target groups?	Delivery: Are specialist organisations used to deliver programmes?	Take-up: Does the support have high take-up among target group?	Scale: Is the scale of available support sufficient?	Impact: Does evaluation evidence show a positive impact?	Integrated: Is the programme delivered linked to other related supports?	Links: Do tailored programmes link to mainstream support programmes?
Women	1. Support with understanding and complying with administrative procedures										
	2. Measures to address group-specific regulatory challenges	Maternity leave and benefits for the self-employed Access to childcare	✓						✓		
Immigrants	1. Support with understanding and complying with administrative procedures										
	2. Measures to address group-specific regulatory challenges	Entrepreneurship visa Administrative and tax obligations can be met in several languages	✓			✓				✓	
Youth	1. Support with understanding and complying with administrative procedures		✓								
	2. Measures to address group-specific regulatory challenges	Student business legal form Reduced tax and/or social security contributions for new graduates	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Seniors	1. Support with understanding and complying with administrative procedures		✓								
	2. Measures to address group-specific regulatory challenges	Medical leave schemes for the self-employed	✓								
The unemployed	1. Support with understanding and complying with administrative procedures										
	2. Measures to address group-specific regulatory challenges	Welfare bridge to support those moving into self-employment Mechanisms for regaining access to unemployment benefits if business is not successful	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓

Note: This table presents the characteristics of entrepreneurship schemes that are directly offered by national, regional and local governments, as well as those that are financed by the public sector but delivered by other actors. It considers the “typical” entrepreneur in each of the different target groups, in the “typical” region in the country. A check-mark indicates when the characteristic is typically fulfilled.

In order to facilitate entrepreneurship, several regulatory incentives previously targeted at under-represented or disadvantaged entrepreneurs (youth, the unemployed) have been extended to the whole population. For example, since January 2019 all new entrepreneurs receive social security taxes exemptions through the ACRE (formerly ACCRE) scheme, previously reserved to unemployed business starters. The exemption from social security contributions is valid for 12 months. The objective of this measure, which is included in article 13 of the Social Security Financing Law for 2018, is to strengthen the financial solidity of young businesses in the start-up phase and increase their chances of success. The benefit is granted automatically when the company is created.

An important regulatory tool for inclusive entrepreneurship is the *micro-entrepreneur* regime (formerly *auto-entrepreneur*) which makes entrepreneurship more accessible by offering tax and social security advantages. There were 1.36 million micro-entrepreneurs at the end of 2018, ten years after the establishment of the status. This represents a 15.4% increase compared to 2017, following an average of 8.5% of year-on-year increase between 2011 and 2017. The boom in 2018 follows the doubling of the turnover thresholds authorised for micro-entrepreneurs (URSSAF, 2020). According to AcoSS<sup>15</sup>, in 2019, 896 000 auto-entrepreneurs representing 57.2% of those registered, reported positive sales in the second quarter (13.0% more than the previous year). Quarterly sales were also on an upward because of the growing number of micro-entrepreneurs, and of the better performance of the top tier. Average quarterly sales reached EUR 4 325 euros in the second quarter of 2019, up 9.1% year-on-year (after +10.9% at the end of June 2018) (AcoSS, 2020). This is an encouraging development, but highlights that over 40% of micro-entrepreneurs still report a null turnover<sup>16</sup>. As such, the scheme remains somewhat controversial: while it has led to an increase in the number of entrepreneurs, these new businesses generate limited revenues. However, this scheme plays an important role in entrepreneurship development and social inclusion (for instance, 46% of jobseekers chose the micro-entrepreneur regime to start a business).

While most regulatory measures targeted at entrepreneurs are generic, some measures are more relevant for certain demographic groups.

### *Women*

Since 2019 and the merge of the different social security agencies, low-income self-employed women (or micro-entrepreneurs), affiliated to the General Social Security Scheme, are entitled to maternity leave. Before that, self-employed woman had to be affiliated to the RSI (Social Regime of the Self-Employed) for at least one year to be entitled to a maternity leave. The legal duration of maternity leave for micro-entrepreneurs is 56 days minimum and 112 days maximum, similar to this of employed women. It can be increased, in case of multiple or difficult pregnancy. As part of their maternity leave, self-employed workers can simultaneously receive a fixed daily allowance for business interruption and a fixed maternity rest allowance.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The Central Agency for Social Security Organizations (AcoSS) manages the cash flow for each of the branches of the French social security system and manages the recovery branch, notably with the Urssaf network. It is a public administrative establishment (EPA), under the supervision of the Ministry of Solidarity and Health and the Ministry of Action and Public Accounts.

<sup>16</sup> Previous estimates found that approximately half of the registered micro-entrepreneurs had a null turnover and only the top 10% only earned more than the minimum wage per month (Inspection Générale des Finances, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> A complete presentation is available at: <https://www.previsissima.fr/question-pratique/conges-maternite-pour-les-chefs-dentreprise-a-revenus-modestes.html>.

### *Immigrants*

There are no specific measures targeted immigrant entrepreneurs already residing in France. However, Non-European nationals wishing to come to France to start a business may be subject to different conditions, depending on their country of origin and place of residence<sup>18</sup>. Potential entrepreneurs have to justify the economic viability of the business creation project to obtain residence permits. For liberal professions, the level of resources possibly generated has to be at least equivalent to the legal minimum wage in France for a full-time worker.

The French Tech visa<sup>19</sup> is a simplified procedure for investors, founders and collaborators of non-European tech start-ups who want to settle in France. The visa automatically extends to the spouse and dependent minor children. It is valid for four years and renewable and is not conditioned by the diplomas.

### *Youth*

The "Student Entrepreneur" status, launched at the start of the 2014 academic year, offers a protective and incentive framework for students and young graduates under the age of 28 who want to create a business. The status allows student entrepreneurs to continue to benefit from their rights as a student with their parents' social security scheme if they are a student at the start of the school year. Recent graduates who have this status can continue to benefit from the same coverage as when they were a student.

### ***Recent policy developments***

Since the reform of the social security in 2018, social protection for self-employed persons is similar to the one for employees and civil servants. It is separated between the three entities of the general scheme:

- health insurance responsible for managing health cover and all self-employed health benefits,
- URSSAF for social security contributions (no change) and
- the pension insurance fund for the calculation of the basic pension and all the procedures related to the contributions.

Another recent development is the alignment of maternity leave for self-employed workers with that of employees since 2020, through Article L. 331-3 of the Social Security Code. This will be conducted as an experiment for a period of 3 years from January 1, 2020.

Since January 1, 2019, the ACCRE has been replaced by the ACRE (Aid for Business Creators and Takeovers). ACRE is an aid which can benefit all creators and buyers of businesses from January 1, 2019, and which consists of an exemption from social security contributions for one year, subject to income.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://accueil-etrangers.gouv.fr/demande-de-titre-de-sejour/vous-etes-ressortissant-e-non-europeen-ne/vous-etes-ressortissant-e-de-pays-tiers-non-algerien-ne/vous-etes-arrive-e-en-france-avec-un-visa-de-long-sejour-valant-titre-de-sejour/votre-vls-ts-arrive-a-expiration/vous-etes-entrepreneur/article/vous-etes-entrepreneur>

<sup>19</sup> <https://lafrenchtech.com/fr/la-france-aide-les-startups/french-tech-visa/>

# 4 Supporting people who experience disability in entrepreneurship

## Self-employment and entrepreneurship activities

In 2018, INSEE estimated there were 2.8 million people with disabilities of working age (15 to 64 years old) in France. This represents 8% of the French population of working age. In France, the unemployment rate of people with disabilities (18%) is twice as high as the national average but had been slowly improving prior to the crisis. There were around 500 000 jobseekers with a disability in 2018, representing 8.6% of all jobseekers (a 4% year-on-year decrease). 36% of people with disabilities of working age were in work in 2019, as compared to 65% of the total population of working age (Agefiph, 2020). People with administratively recognised disabilities who are able to work have a dedicated status of *travailleur handicapé* (disabled worker).

In 2015 there were 75 000 self-employed workers with disabilities in the country, compared to 35 000 ten years ago (INSEE, 2016). Around half were women and half were men. By contrast, in 2017, 489 100 disabled workers were employed in the 103 700 establishments subject to the employment obligation for disabled workers. This represents 359 900 full-time equivalent workers. There is overall limited recent information on self-employment and entrepreneurship among people with disabilities in France. Overall, participation in entrepreneurship is quite low. In 2019, it was estimated that 0,3% of the working age population with disabilities attempts to create a business every year, compared to 2,7 % of the working age population in general in France (INSEE & AGEFIPH, 2019). Many disabilities are acquired or developed during life. A 2015 estimate suggests that around 670 000 entrepreneurs become disabled every year (*Sécurité sociale des indépendants / MSA*, 2015). The first France-wide study on entrepreneurs with disabilities is expected to be published in late 2020<sup>20</sup>.

Reported obstacles to entrepreneurship include difficulties in accessing finance, notably regarding insurance for loans as well as difficulties navigating access to social benefits when moving to self-employment, as the support infrastructure is primarily designed to ensure a transition towards salaried employment.

When they do move on to entrepreneurship, the limited existing evidence suggests that people with disabilities create sustainable businesses. In 2015, their three-year survival rate is around 75%, above the national average of 63% (DARES/INSEE 2015).

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<sup>20</sup> This study, called « ENATIH », is financed by Fondation Malakoff Humanis Handicap, operated by Emicité (a consultancy) and H'up entrepreneurs, in close partnership with Agefiph and TIH Business.

## Policy framework

**Table 4.1. Characterisation of the entrepreneurship policy context for people who experience disability**

		People who experience disability
1. Entrepreneurship policies for each target group are under the responsibility of the following level(s) of government (multiple levels can be checked)	National	✓
	Regional	✓
	Local	✓
2. A dedicated entrepreneurship strategy has been developed (either stand-alone or embedded in another strategy)		
3. Clear targets and objectives for entrepreneurship policy have been developed and reported		

Note: A check-mark indicates the level policy responsibility for tailored entrepreneurship policy (multiple selections are possible) and characteristics of the entrepreneurship policy framework.

Improving the inclusion of people with disabilities in the economy is a national priority. The main goals of employment policy for workers with disabilities is to encourage businesses and administrations to directly employ people with disabilities, and to improve career paths and job security. This includes facilitating access to employment, preventing career gaps, managing professional transitions and fostering continued employment. Policies for the professional integration of disabled workers are mainly organised by three dedicated laws (1975, 1987 and 2005). Disabled workers can work either in an “ordinary” environment (traditional labor market) or in a “sheltered” environment, mainly in Work assistance establishments and services (*Établissements et services d’aide par le travail* – ESAT)<sup>21</sup> or Adapted companies (*Entreprises adaptées* – EA).

The main organisation supporting disabled entrepreneurs is Agefiph which manages some publicly funded supports scheme for entrepreneurs with disabilities. Agefiph is a national association responsible for managing the fund for the professional integration of disabled people. Its objective is to increase the resources devoted to integrating disabled people into the workplace. Its funding is aimed at companies in the private sector, people with disabilities, field operators (training and assessment organizations, integration and reclassification players, etc.). 3 985 businesses were supported by Agefiph in 2019 (11% year-on-year growth) (Agefiph, 2020).

<sup>21</sup> which replaced the Work assistance centres (Centres d’aide par le travail - CAT)

## Overview and assessment of policies and programmes

Table 4.2. Characterisation of the entrepreneurship schemes for people who experience disability

		Tailored: Are public programmes tailored for the target group (i.e. dedicated)?	Consultation: Are the targeted entrepreneurs consulted during the design of programmes?	Outreach: Are appropriate outreach methods used for different target groups?	Delivery: Are specialist organisations used to deliver programmes?	Take-up: Does the support have high take-up among target group?	Scale: Is the scale of available support sufficient?	Impact: Does evaluation evidence show a positive impact?	Integrated: Is the programme delivered linked to other related supports?	Links: Do tailored programmes link to mainstream support programmes?
Skills	1. Entrepreneurship training	✓	✓	✓						
	2. Entrepreneurship coaching and mentoring	✓	✓	✓						
	3. Business consultancy, including incubators/accelerators									
Finance	1. Grants for business creation	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
	2. Loan guarantees	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
	3. Microfinance and loans									
	4. Other instruments (e.g. crowdfunding, risk capital)									
Culture	1. Entrepreneurship campaigns, including role models									
	2. Networking initiatives	✓	✓	✓						
Regulations	1. Support with understanding and complying with administrative procedures									
	2. Measures to address group-specific regulatory challenges	Mechanisms to move back into disability benefit system if business is not successful			✓				✓	✓
		Mechanisms to move regain access to other social security supports (e.g. housing benefits) if business is not successful	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
	Medical leave schemes for the self-employed							✓	✓	

Note: This table presents the characteristics of entrepreneurship schemes that are directly offered by national, regional and local governments, as well as those that are financed by the public sector but delivered by other actors. It considers the “typical” entrepreneur in each of the different target groups, in the “typical” region in the country. A check-mark indicates when the characteristic is typically fulfilled.

A notable regulatory measure for entrepreneurs with disabilities in the status of *Travailleur Indépendant Handicapé* (self-employed worker with a disability - TIH). This status is recognized by the commission for the rights and autonomy of disabled people (*Commission des droits et de l'autonomie des personnes handicapées* - CDAPH). The main benefits of this status are that:

- The TIH's clients benefit from a financial incentive, in the form of a reduction of their financial contribution to Agefiph<sup>22</sup> (the clients of ESAT and Entreprises Adaptées also benefit from this incentive)

<sup>22</sup> Companies are required to make a financial contribution to Agefiph if they do not meet the target to employ 6% of people with disabilities in their workforce. Most organizations do not meet this objective.

- The TIH is eligible to financial and non-financial support provided by Agefiph and the organisations and services that operate on behalf of Agefiph, i.e. *Cap emploi* ( offers support for employment) and BGE (supports business growth)

To be eligible, the person must create or take over a business, whatever the legal form, enabling him or her to ensure lasting employment compatible with their disability. To be eligible the project must i) give the disabled person the status of owner of the company<sup>23</sup>, and, ii) be of an amount at least equivalent to EUR 7 500 including a personal contribution in equity of a minimum of EUR 1 500, the fixed-rate assistance from Agefiph of EUR 5 000 and other funding (common law, etc.) (Pôle Emploi, 2020).

Tailored financial support is also available. Agefiph manages two financial support schemes for entrepreneurs with a disability. First, a subsidy is granted to disabled people who wish to become an entrepreneur under certain conditions (being of French nationality or living in France for at least three years, having a room allowing them to exercise their professional activity, having the necessary diplomas to the exercise of the profession ...). It amounts to EUR 5000. Second, an aid is granted to disabled employees wishing to transition into self-employment following a marked decrease in their productivity due to their disability. This specific aid is not intended to help start an activity but to compensate for the severity of the handicap (Raffin, 2018). The amount of this aid is EUR 5000. Self-employed workers with disabilities are also eligible to a mobility subsidy, on the same terms as employed workers with disabilities. The subsidy aims to address transportation costs for commuting to work. Agefiph also provides non-financial support. For example, Agefiph partnered with the non-profit *Entrepreneurs de la cité* to create a toolkit for entrepreneurs with a disabilities focusing on insurance for business creation.

Several non-governmental organisations also provide support to entrepreneurs with disabilities. Notable actors include the H'up entrepreneurs association, the freelance and e-learning platform Linklusion (formerly TIH Business) and a dedicated crowdfunding platform, called *Les Handipreneurs*, launched in 2017. France also promotes Success4all, a new online course platform, designed by Erasmus + and 8 European players specializing in education, entrepreneurship and disability. Aimed at students, business creators or novice entrepreneurs, this platform provides the tools necessary for the implementation of a business project. It notably includes written content, videos, testimonials from entrepreneurs with disabilities and virtual coaching sessions.<sup>24</sup>

## Recent policy developments

Following the introduction of the option to work with a self-employed worker with a disability as an option to meet inclusive employment criteria for companies in 2016, no significant changes in policies targeted on disabled people dedicated to entrepreneurship have been introduced over the last few years. Non-governmental organisations have been very active, and there is scope to further develop public support building on this ecosystem. A notable recent request was recently made to the government by the non-profit H'up entrepreneurs and spin-off Linklusion. They suggested entrepreneurs with disabilities (TIH) be included in the Inclusive procurement guide for public organisations (*Guide sur les aspects sociaux de la commande publique*). This guide incentivises vendors to include more people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups in the way they deliver products or services to public organisations. Whereas *ESAT* and *Entreprises Adaptées* are currently in the list of organisations eligible to meet this obligation, TIH are not.

<sup>23</sup> Projects for the creation of seasonal activities, associations, Real Estate Civil Companies, Integration Companies through Economic Activity and de facto Companies are excluded from the benefit of the aid

<sup>24</sup> See <http://success4allstudents.eu/fr/> and <https://www.handirect.fr/entrepreneuriat-et-handicap/>. h'up entrepreneurs was the French NGO representative in the EU consortium of the project.



# 5 Policy recommendations

Inclusive entrepreneurship policy in France is relatively well-developed and has been stable for a few years. There is a wide offer of tailored schemes delivered by the national government, local governments and a very active non-government sector (including social enterprises). The following recommendations are put forward to further strengthen support to under-represented and disadvantaged groups in entrepreneurship.

1. ***Improve the governance and co-ordination of entrepreneurship support programmes, including through simplification.*** Mechanisms to promote business creation in general and inclusive entrepreneurship in particular are spread across more than ten national programmes and under the remit of three national ministries. France has a wide range of entrepreneurial support programmes delivered by various networks, agencies and non-governmental organisations. The multiplicity of policies and operators (public and non-governmental) at national and local levels generate a complex landscape that is sometimes difficult to navigate for entrepreneurs. To ensure that inclusive entrepreneurship policies are coherent and implemented effectively, it is important to develop a strategic vision (e.g. by setting specific objectives for supporting different groups in entrepreneurship) and improve co-ordination among actors. This would also help reduce duplication in programme delivery.
2. ***Improve sign-posting of support for different groups, for example by creating a central entry point (e.g. platform) to inform entrepreneurs and help them navigate the support offered.*** The large number of existing programmes, measures and subsidies makes it difficult for potential entrepreneurs to identify and access the support schemes they qualify for. Adopting a single window approach with differentiated paths for different groups could help direct people towards appropriate packages of support instead of having to sift through the large number of options on their own to identify which support correspond to their situation.
3. ***Strengthen evaluation and monitoring of inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes.*** Policy evaluation remains underdeveloped in France. All schemes that receive public funding could be required to undertake regular monitoring and evaluations. These should go beyond descriptive statistics on participation. Outcomes and impacts should be tracked so as to allow the government to identify effective approaches for scale-up and replication. Public availability of evaluation results would help to streamline inclusive entrepreneurship policies and better tailor them to entrepreneurs' needs. Specific funding could be earmarked for evaluation to ensure that smaller actors with more limited capacities can also monitor their activities, and appropriate methodologies should be used to reflect the scale and specificities of different types of intervention and allow for agility. Some government-led wider ranging evaluation efforts could also be envisaged, to monitor initiatives that are expected to have more long-term effects (e.g. on entrepreneurial culture).

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## Annex A. Methodology

Each country report was prepared by a national expert in co-operation with the OECD Secretariat. Information was collected through desk research and interviews (i.e. telephone, face-to-face, email) with policy officers, entrepreneurship support organisations and other stakeholders. The information was then verified by government ministries, programme managers and other inclusive entrepreneurship stakeholders, including through the circulation of draft reports for comment and online seminars that were organised between June and September 2020.

The reports are based on a common assessment framework that was developed by the OECD Secretariat. The framework contains five pillars:

1. Policy framework
2. Entrepreneurship skills
3. Financing entrepreneurship
4. Entrepreneurial culture and social capital
5. Government regulations

The reports provide an overview of the current inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes. They also notes assess programmes against the following international good practice criteria, considering the “typical” entrepreneur in each of the different target groups (i.e. women, immigrants, seniors, youth, the unemployed, people who experience disability), in the “typical” region in the country. It covers schemes that are directly offered by national, regional and local governments, as well as those that are financed by the public sector but delivered by other actors. The international good practice criteria used in the assessment are:

- **Tailored:** Are public programmes tailored for the target group (i.e. dedicated)?
- **Consultation:** Are the targeted entrepreneurs consulted during the design of programmes?
- **Outreach:** Are appropriate outreach methods used for different target groups?
- **Delivery:** Are specialist organisations used to deliver programmes?
- **Take-up:** Does the support have high take-up among target group?
- **Scale:** Is the scale of available support sufficient?
- **Impact:** Does evaluation evidence show a positive impact?
- **Integrated:** Is the programme delivered linked other related supports?
- **Links:** Do tailored programmes link to mainstream support programmes?

A focus is placed on the most commonly targeted population groups, namely women, immigrants, youth, seniors and the unemployed. Other groups such as the Roma are covered by the report when relevant. A special thematic section was added on entrepreneurship support for people who experience disability (Section 4) to highlight their potential as entrepreneurs and to showcase the variety of tailored entrepreneurship schemes that are in place around the European Union.