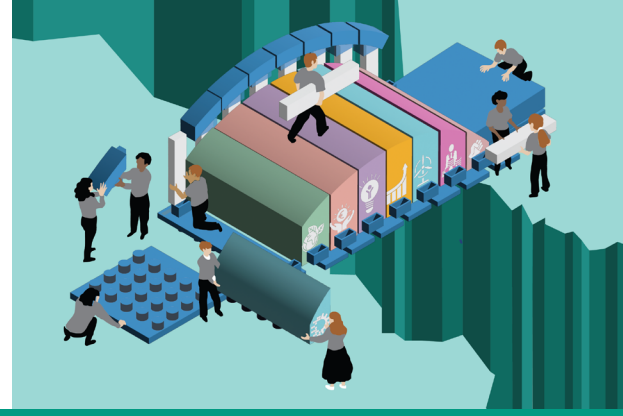


SME POLICY INDEX

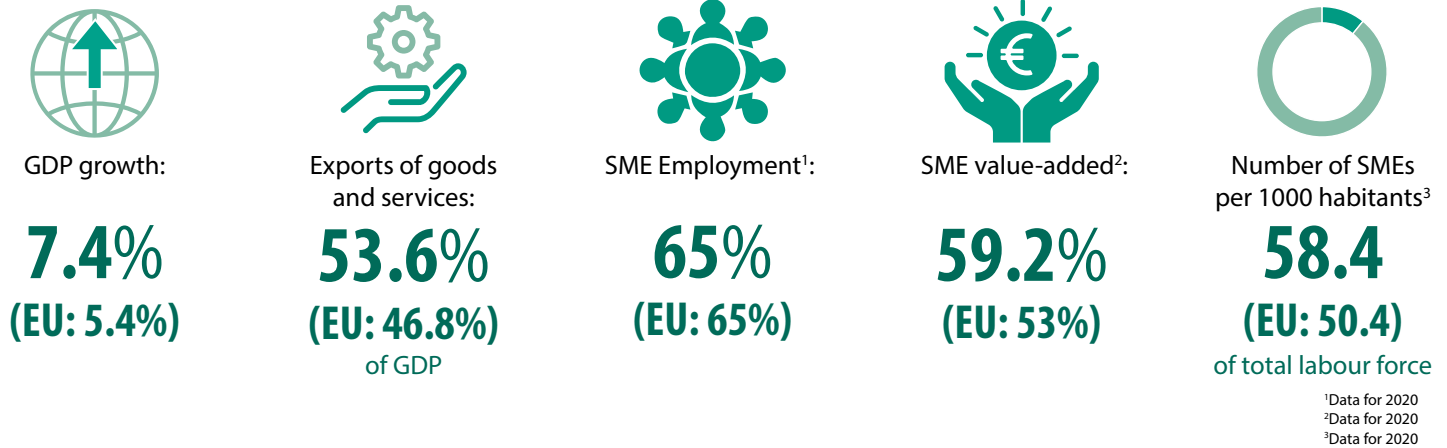
Western Balkans and Turkey 2022

Serbia

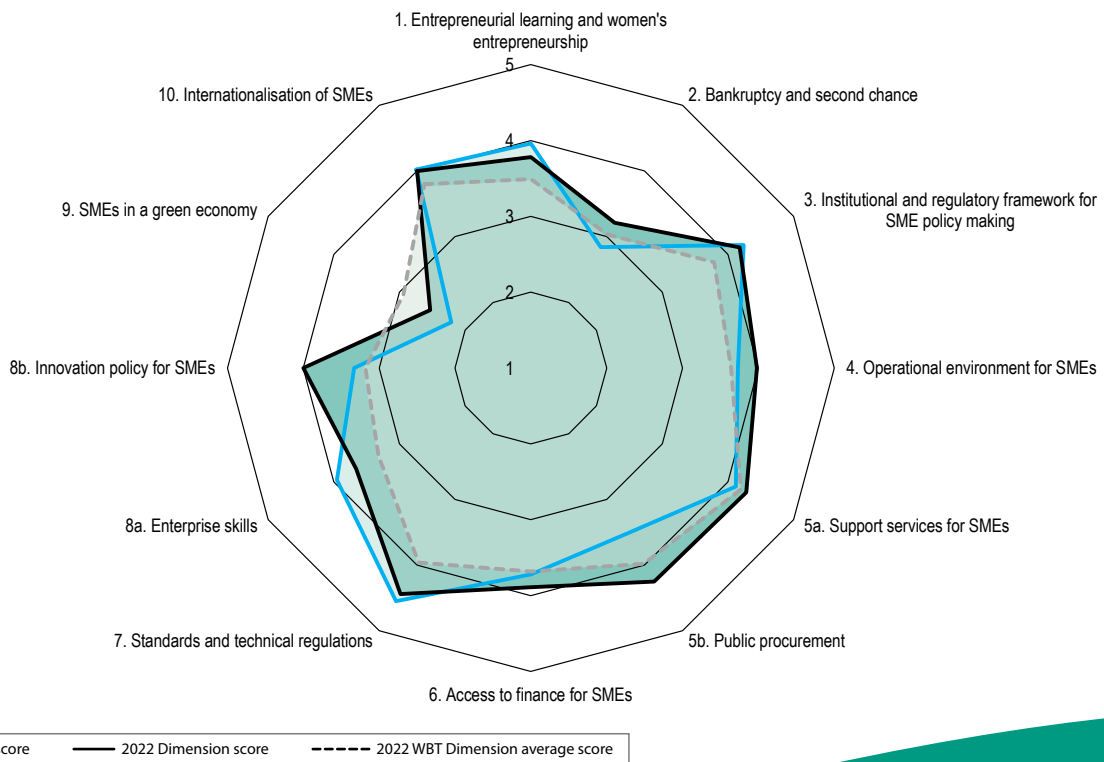


Since 2019, Serbia has improved its performance in 7 of the 12 policy areas scored in the assessment, reflecting the importance of SMEs in the government's policy agenda. Ensuring that implementation has impact is crucial in achieving governments' objectives, while monitoring and evaluation of all policy measures are essential for tracking efficiency and effectiveness.

Key facts (2021)



Serbia's SME Policy Index performance (2019 and 2022)



Main achievements

- ❖ **Serbia's new e-Uprava portal for digital services was launched in February 2020**, and the government made progress in rolling out digital services for businesses. Starting a business has become more accessible and transparent thanks to optimised electronic registration.
- ❖ **The government made considerable efforts to address challenges in accessing business support services (BSSs) faced by SMEs**, especially those in the early stages of development. The government intensified its collaboration with international partners to boost the scope and range of provided BSSs, which now include assistance in adhering to EU standards, greening and business expansion.
- ❖ **Access to finance for SMEs has eased in Serbia** owing to impactful regulatory measures to address legacy obstacles in the financial industry, including foreign-indexed loans and high levels of impaired loans.
- ❖ **The innovation policy framework and availability of financial support have been further strengthened.**
- ❖ **Serbia made noteworthy progress in reducing barriers to trade and conforming to EU standards.** Following the adoption of the new Customs Law, resulting in a significant simplification of customs procedures and the implementation of a centralised system of customs clearance, Serbia's trade legislation improved in its harmonisation with the EU acquis.

The way forward

- ❖ **Develop a fully fledged early warning system as an insolvency prevention measure.** The government should provide SMEs with access to an early warning tool to red flag identified financial distress signals and recommend adequate remediation.
- ❖ **Strengthen the legal framework for non-bank financial instruments.** Further amendments to the Law on Factoring, coupled with awareness-raising in partnership with the financial sector, would support the development of factoring.
- ❖ **Establish comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of all programmes related to entrepreneurial learning and SME skills**, including a strong gender focus.
- ❖ **Enhance financial support for SME greening and include green** criteria in existing financial instruments, such as the two dedicated SME credit guarantee schemes established in 2020.
- ❖ **Build trust in e-commerce practices among customers and SMEs.** Strengthening trust in e-commerce, by strengthening data protection and ensuring the security of online transactions, for instance, is key to the successful integration of customers and SMEs into online sales channels.

SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey 2022

This sixth edition of the SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey 2022 – Assessing the Implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe assesses SME-related policy reforms in Western Balkans and Turkey across 12 policy dimensions. It is designed to help policy makers develop and implement policies to support SMEs and entrepreneurs in their recovery from the pandemic and to boost their competitiveness based on good practices in OECD and EU member states. Economy-specific profiles complement the regional assessment and provide each economy with an in-depth analysis of the implementation status of the ten Small Business Act for Europe principles and monitors progress made since 2019.

