



BRICS MSME Forum 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are a cornerstone of the BRICS economies, contributing significantly to job creation, economic growth, and poverty reduction. According to the World Bank, MSMEs account for approximately 90% of formal businesses and around 50% of employment worldwide¹, a trend mirrored within the BRICS nations. These enterprises play a crucial role in driving inclusivity and innovation by addressing socio-economic disparities within and across regions.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Efforts to enhance discussions on MSMEs within BRICS have been ongoing for over a decade. The document [Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025](#) underscores the importance of collaboration to unlock the full potential of MSMEs within the BRICS bloc, promoting trade and integration into both regional and global value chains. The Strategy highlights the critical role of digital tools in enabling MSME participation in digital trade and improving their access to global markets. Updating this Strategy is one of the priorities of Brazil's Presidency to be discussed by the BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI).

The CGETI has laid the groundwork for collaboration on MSMEs through pivotal documents such as the *Final BRICS MSMEs Cooperation Framework*, established during South Africa's 2023 presidency and further developed by Russia's 2024 SME review, providing a robust foundation for sustained collaboration aimed at fostering SME integration. Additionally, the BRICS Forum on Partnership on New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR), which serves as a guiding platform for BRICS cooperation within the framework of the New Industrial Revolution, during the Russian presidency (2024) created seven working groups, including one dedicated to MSME discussions, set to be structured in 2025.

Each BRICS nation has implemented distinct approaches to supporting small businesses, including legislation to classify and categorize small businesses in their countries, programs to enhance access to credit, simplified taxation policies, and digitalization initiatives. All BRICS countries, including the new members, have been working on specific policies and legislation to support SMEs and have agencies dedicated to the development of the sector. These efforts also reflect a broader acknowledgment of the importance of MSMEs in the digital transformation era, particularly in leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) for modernization.

However, disparities exist within the BRICS in terms of institutional maturity, policy implementation, program scope, and resource availability for MSME support. Other critical challenges include the harmonization of MSME definitions, the evaluation of support program effectiveness, and the establishment of indicators to measure policy impacts. Among the challenges that deserve attention by the BRICS are the MSMEs definition, the evaluation of support programme effectiveness, and the establishment of indicators to measure policy impact of these policies (outputs and outcomes).

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sme/finance>

PROPOSAL: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE “BRICS MSME FORUM”

In response to these challenges, the Brazilian Presidency proposes the creation of a permanent mechanism dedicated to MSME discussions: the **BRICS MSME Forum**. This platform will bring together MSME stakeholders from all BRICS members to foster dialogue, enhance policy design, and improve impact assessment mechanisms for MSME development.

PROPOSED FIRST BRICS MSME FORUM AGENDA

The inaugural BRICS MSME Forum is proposed to take place on **May, 2025**, in **Brasília** during Brazil’s BRICS Presidency. The agenda will focus on:

- 1. Convene the inaugural BRICS MSME Forum to address the key challenges and opportunities outlined in this document.*
- 2. Establish the BRICS MSME Council to serve as a permanent body for policy coordination and strategic guidance.*
- 3. Create a BRICS SME Network, comprising SME Ministries and Agencies from member nations, to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing.*
- 4. Launch a dedicated digital platform to enhance information exchange, market access, and networking opportunities for MSMEs across the BRICS bloc.*
- 5. Develop joint institutional benchmarking initiatives and capacity-building programs to strengthen MSME ecosystems.*
- 6. Introduce climate transition support programs to help MSMEs adopt sustainable practices and technologies.*
- 7. Design integrated financial products tailored to the unique needs of MSMEs within the BRICS framework.*
- 8. Work towards harmonized regulatory frameworks to simplify cross-border operations and reduce barriers for MSMEs.*
- 9. Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework with standardized indicators and common indicators to measure the impact of MSME policies and programs.*

BRICS SME FORUM PROGRAMME

Date: **May**, 2025. 9:00 to 15:00 PM (Brasília time, GMT – 3)

Summary of time distribution (Total duration: 6 hours)

- **Welcome remarks and housekeeping announcements** – 5 min
- **Opening remarks** – 45 min
- **Introductory keynote** – 10 min
- **Panel 1: SMES Network presentation and considerations future** – 60 min
- **Panel 2: Digital Transformation in The Age Of Artificial Intelligence: Empowering SMEs in the BRICS for a competitive future** – 60 min
- **Panel 3: Market access of MSMEs between BRICS countries**– 90 min
- **Panel 4: Climate Transition** – 60 min
- **Wrap-up and closing remarks** – 10 min

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Panel 1: Building the BRICS SME Network – Perspectives and Future Directions

This panel invites representatives from SME Ministries, agencies, and other key stakeholders to share their perspectives on SME-related discussions within the BRICS framework. Participants will explore possibilities for collaboration, identify key areas for joint initiatives, and propose actionable recommendations for upcoming BRICS presidencies. Discussions will focus on shared challenges across BRICS nations and potential solutions, as well as exchanging experiences and best practices to strengthen cooperation.

Panel 2: Digital Transformation in the Age of Artificial Intelligence – Empowering SMEs for a Competitive Future

The Brazilian Presidency will present findings from AI-focused webinars conducted under the PartNIR SME Working Group. These results highlight practical insights into digital transformation for SMEs in the BRICS context, as well as collaborative strategies to accelerate progress. Participants will discuss key approaches to empower SMEs through digital tools, share policies to foster inclusive digital growth, and exchange ideas for creating a competitive future for BRICS SMEs in the AI era.

Panel 3: Enhancing Market Access for MSMEs within BRICS

This panel will focus on addressing the complex regulatory environments, limited cross-border trade facilitation, and digital infrastructure gaps that hinder MSME market access within the BRICS bloc. Discussions will cover the use of intra-bloc marketplaces, MSME integration into global value chains, and strategies to boost intra-bloc trade flows through trade agreements. BRICS countries are invited to present their experiences with existing e-commerce platforms—public, private, and those hosted by international organizations—and explore the potential benefits of establishing a dedicated SME Digital Platform to facilitate cross-border e-commerce.

Panel 4: Supporting MSMEs in the Climate Transition

BRICS countries will discuss the adoption of green technologies, reduction in carbon footprint, decarbonization strategies, and sustainable business practices for MSMEs. Key topics include creating green technology transfer programs, establishing sustainability standards and certifications, and sharing strategies for reducing MSME carbon footprints. Additional discussions will explore financing mechanisms to support MSMEs in addressing biodiversity loss, climate change impacts, environmental degradation, and pollution. Potential outcomes include the identification of collaborative green initiatives and tools to promote sustainability within MSME ecosystems.



COOPERATING FOR AN INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD