

2023



SME WORLD FORUM



Small and Medium Business
Development Agency of
the Republic of Azerbaijan

SME WORLD FORUM

BAKU, AZERBAIJAN

NOV NOV
13 – 16

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MESSAGE FROM KOBİA CHAIRMAN ORKHAN MAMMADOV

Dear Esteemed Guests, Colleagues, and Friends,

I am honored and thrilled to extend a heartfelt welcome to all the participants of the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises World Forum (SME World Forum) 2023, set against the backdrop of our beautiful and dynamic city, Baku. As we gather from November 13 to November 16, it is KOBİA's privilege to host this illustrious event in partnership with the International Council for Small Business (ICSB) and in collaboration with numerous global stakeholders dedicated to the growth and success of SMEs.

Since joining the ICSB in 2019, our Agency has been a proud member, actively engaged in and contributing to the international SME community. This membership has played a crucial role in broadening our perspectives, strengthening international ties, and enhancing our understanding of global SME dynamics. It is in this spirit of international cooperation and shared learning that we eagerly participate in and now host the SME World Forum in our nation's capital.

In reflecting on the kind words and ambitious vision set forth by Dr. Ayman ElTarabishy, President & CEO of ICSB, I am reminded of the vital role that small and medium businesses play in not just the economy, but in the fabric of our societies. Their agility, innovative spirit, and resilience form the cornerstone of sustainable development and economic prosperity.

This year's event promises an enriching experience with insightful discussions, interactive sessions, and networking opportunities that are designed to ignite passions, challenge conventional thinking, and encourage collaborative efforts. We are united in our belief that small and medium-sized enterprises are the engine of growth and a beacon of hope in these challenging times.



I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this global endeavor and for the support and confidence entrusted to us by all stakeholders involved. Your presence here not only enriches the event but also reinforces the solidarity and commitment of the SME community.

Let us seize this opportunity to build lasting partnerships, gain new perspectives, and chart a course that will lead us towards a resilient, innovative, and prosperous future for SMEs across the world.

Looking forward to productive and inspiring days ahead, I thank you for your valuable participation. Together, let's make the SME World Forum 2023 a landmark event that resonates with progress and shared success.

Warm regards,

Mr. Orkhan Mammadov
Chairman, Small and Medium Business
Development Agency of the Republic of
Azerbaijan

MESSAGE FROM ICSB PRESIDENT & CEO AYMAN EL TARABISHY

Dear SME World Forum Guests,

With immense pleasure and anticipation, we welcome you to the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises World Forum (SME World Forum) 2023, hosted in the vibrant city of Baku, Azerbaijan, from November 13 to November 16. Orchestrated in collaboration with The Small and Medium Business Development Agency (KOBİA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the International Council for Small Business (ICSB), this forum beckons businessmen, small business owners, legislators, researchers, educators, and various other sectors from across the globe to foster creativity and innovative ideas.

After our triumphant gathering in Rosario, Argentina, and drawing inspiration from our impactful event in Macao in 2019, we stand united, committed to nurturing even stronger connections within the SME community amidst the changing global landscape. The lessons from the past three years have illuminated the importance of resilience, adaptability, and innovation – qualities quintessentially represented by SMEs.

This year's inaugural forum promises a convergence of some of the most creative and emphatic world leaders from business, policy, academics, and youth. Our focus is heightened on creativity and innovation, deeply rooted in our belief that SMEs are pivotal to sustainable economic development, especially in these trying times where unity and collective work are paramount for forging a brighter future.

A special note of gratitude to H.E. Orkhan Mammadov, the Chairman of the Management Board of the Small and Medium Business Development Agency (KOBİA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, for his remarkable leadership and unwavering support, making this forum possible.



Together, let's embark on this new chapter in Baku, contributing to, learning from, and being inspired by the global SME community. Your presence and participation are immensely valued as we navigate through discussions, share insights, and construct a resilient and innovative pathway forward.

We look forward to making the SME World Forum 2023 a reservoir of knowledge, innovation, and collaborative success, shaping a prosperous future for SMEs worldwide.

Best Wishes,
Dr. Ayman ElTarabishy
President & CEO, ICSB



CONTEXT

The Small and Medium-sized Enterprises World Forum (SME World Forum), in collaboration with the International Council for Small Business (ICSB), summons a world reunion of businessmen, small business owners, legislators, investigators, and educators, among other sectors, to contribute with creativity and innovative ideas all around the world. The SME World Forum's inaugural will reunite some of the most creative and emphatic world leaders of the business world, policy, academics, and youth. The Small and Medium Business Development Agency (KOBİA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan is the main lead and will be the primary host, and this World Forum will take place from November 13 to November 16, 2023, in Baku, Azerbaijan.

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INFORMATION

The SME World Forum will target five key segments: Private Sector Companies, Startups, Policy Sector, Academic Sector, Education Sector, and Tourism & Hospitality with special dedicated sessions on youth and women entrepreneurship.

These 3 days of institutional immersion and the creation of networking and contact between business leaders, political leaders, and investigators will show why is that innovation, sustainability, and digital transformation are vital to face the growth of small and medium-sized businesses.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INNOVATION

In the past 10 years, innovation has become the keyword of all organizations because new technologies have rebuilt almost every aspect of our daily life.

Nevertheless, to understand what innovation means you have to know what its major goal is and who are the players. In our main purpose, the central role of innovation represents the long-term growth of the organization. For enterprises, the principal tool to achieve business competitiveness is effectiveness and efficiency.

Technological development and innovation are two fundamental forces that boost social, economic development, and environmental sustainability.

Achieve the goals of the sustainable development 2030 of ONU requires

rethinking our economic model, changing our way to produce and build where the capacity of innovation can positively impact the lives of millions of people.

The micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are undoubtedly the main characters of the productive framework of the world. Today, 95% of the business at the global level fits into this category represents 60% of the world's employment and contributes to 35% of the PIB in the developing countries and around 50% in developed countries, according to the World Trade Report 2016 (OMC, 2016).





BAKU

is in constant movement to build a path for the growth of regional businesses. The Small and Medium Business Development Agency (KOBİA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and ICSB has built this Forum in a joint form, to contribute to the growth of the economic and sustainable model. We need big ideas to change the world and, at the forefront of this transformation, there are the small and medium-sized enterprises that are ready to be involved in every sector of society.

SME WORLD FORUM

After the remarkable success of our last gathering in Rosario, Argentina, we are committed to fostering even stronger connections within the SME community. The world has changed, and it's now more crucial than ever to unite and work together towards a brighter future.

Drawing inspiration from our memorable event in Macao in 2019, we recognize the significance of maintaining and strengthening our bonds. The challenges of the past three years have underscored the importance of resilience, adaptability, and innovation, qualities that SMEs exemplify. Now, we embark on a new chapter in Baku, with a heightened focus on creativity and innovation, firmly believing that SMEs hold the key to sustainable economic growth.

SEE YOU IN BAKU



We look forward everyone to share their vision on how to support SMEs to lead the world in prosperity and economic vitality and a sustainable future.

NOVEMBER 13-16

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- NOV 13** **Monday: Cultural Day**
*Pre-conference City Tours to discover Baku *Note: Transportation to and from the Airport is not provided by ICSB.*
- NOV 14** **Tuesday: Entrepreneurial Education: Lemonade Day**
To take place at 21st Century School led by ICSB Experts to provide entrepreneurial training and development to students and teachers based on the Lemonade Day system.
- NOV 15** **Wednesday: SME Research and Workshop Day:**
Workshops and showcases for KOBİA small business owners, students and professors.
- NOV 16** **Thursday: Policy Day and Gala Reception:**
Panels with business leaders, policy makers and sessions, and sessions about SMEs.



NOVEMBER 14: ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION: LEMONADE DAY

Lemonade Day, as introduced at the 21st Century School in Baku, stands as a beacon of modern entrepreneurship education. This initiative goes beyond the simple act of selling lemonade; it's a comprehensive program designed to instill the core values, skills, and entrepreneurial mindset crucial for the 21st century. Here's how this initiative is reshaping the educational landscape at the school:

Practical Learning Experience:

In an era dominated by virtual simulations, Lemonade Day at the 21st Century School offers students a tangible, real-world entrepreneurial experience. They're absorbing theoretical concepts and actively applying them, understanding the intricacies of running a business firsthand.

Cultivating Creativity and Innovation:

Baku, and its forward-looking vision, is a hub of innovation. Lemonade Day encourages students to channel the city's innovative spirit through unique marketing strategies, inventive lemonade recipes, or standout stand designs.

Building Financial Acumen:

The program introduces students to foundational financial concepts, from budgeting to understanding profit and loss. Such early exposure ensures they're equipped with the financial literacy essential for navigating the complex economic landscape of the 21st century.

Development of Essential Soft Skills:

Beyond business tactics, students hone vital skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. These competencies, crucial for modern-day Baku's entrepreneurial ecosystem, are nurtured through fundamental interactions and challenges.

Promoting Community Engagement:

Baku's community spirit is strong, and Lemonade Day emphasizes this by teaching students about social responsibility and the role of businesses in community upliftment. They learn the importance of giving back and making a positive societal impact.

Teaching Adaptability and Resilience:

In the ever-evolving landscape of Baku, adaptability is critical. Through the challenges of setting up their lemonade stands, students learn the importance of resilience and adaptability, preparing them for the dynamic world of entrepreneurship.

Empowerment within the School

Community: Managing their ventures, however small, gives students a sense of achievement. This confidence boost, combined with the acquired skills, makes them potential future entrepreneurs ready to contribute to Baku's vibrant business scene.

In conclusion, Lemonade Day at the 21st Century School in Baku is not merely an event; it's a transformative educational experience. It's shaping young minds to think entrepreneurially and act ready to seize the opportunities of the modern business world right from the heart of Baku.



ENTREPRENEURIAL DAY AGENDA...

Registration and Gathering at the 21st Century School

Students sign in and receive their Lemonade Day kits tailored to their grade level.

Opening Ceremony:

The day's events will commence with a ceremony at the school's main auditorium. As attendees settle in, the school principal will take center stage to introduce the essence and objectives of Lemonade Day. This introduction will underscore the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial mindset from a young age and how Lemonade Day is a practical platform for students to experience the nuances of starting and managing a business. Following the principal's address, a local entrepreneur, perhaps an esteemed alumnus of the school, will share their journey in the business world. Their narrative, filled with challenges, triumphs, and invaluable lessons, will serve as a source of inspiration for the young attendees. This blend of formal introduction and real-world experiences will set the tone for the day, ensuring students are informed and motivated as they embark on their Lemonade Day journey.

ICSB Experts divided among Class Rooms:

ICSB experts will be assigned to different classrooms, ensuring each grade level has expert guidance tailored to their understanding and needs.

Interactive Sessions/ Lemonade Day:

Students engage in hands-on activities tailored to 6th to 9th grade levels:

- Basics Marketing, pricing, and customer service,
- Introduction to entrepreneurship concepts.
- Advanced topics like using social media for marketing and understanding target audiences.
- Creative and collaborative problem solving techniques.



Lunch Break with Networking Opportunities:

A chance allows students to relax, enjoy a meal, and interact with their peers and the ICSB experts to conduct "market research".

Group Activities and Pitch Session:

Divided by grade levels, students work in groups to design and create mock-ups of their lemonade stands. Representatives from each grade level present their lemonade stand ideas, getting feedback and suggestions.

Closing Ceremony, Baku Entrepreneurship Day

Declaration and Certificate Distribution:

Teachers, school officials, and ICSB experts provide feedback, highlight key takeaways from the day, announce the Baku Entrepreneurship Day Declaration which recognizes the critical role of youth-driven entrepreneurship in shaping a prosperous future, and distribute participation certificates to students.



NOVEMBER 15: SME RESEARCH AND WORKSHOP DAY

The SME Research and Workshop Day is designed to unravel the exciting future of education and entrepreneurship while aiming to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We welcome representatives from government and the corporate sector, as well as faculty members and students from universities. Here's a snapshot of the day's agenda:

Registration at ADA:

Begin your day with a seamless registration process. Pick up your event materials and seize the opportunity to connect with fellow attendees.

Plenary - Opening Remarks by Organizers:

The event kicks off with a captivating plenary session. Organizers will provide an overview of the day's program and set the stage for engaging discussions.

A New Path Forward: Achieving the SDGs through Entrepreneurship (Panel A):

Delve into a thought-provoking panel discussion focused on entrepreneurship as a catalyst for achieving the SDGs. Targeted at representatives of government and the corporate sector, this session will explore innovative approaches and strategies. Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in a Q&A session to delve deeper into the topic.

Networking Session:

Forge meaningful connections with fellow participants during this dedicated networking session. Engage in insightful conversations and build relationships that can drive change.

Lunch Break:

Relish a delectable lunch spread while continuing your discussions and networking with peers.

Emerging Trends for SMEs (Panel B):

Join an illuminating panel discussion on emerging trends for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). This session, tailored for faculty members and students from universities, will explore the evolving landscape of SMEs. Attendees can actively participate in a Q&A session to gain deeper insights.

Parallel Policy Presentations and Workshops:

These presentations will offer a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape and explore potential reforms and strategies.

Closing Remarks:

Conclude the event with closing remarks that encapsulate the day's highlights and underline the significance of education-entrepreneurship collaboration in achieving the SDGs. Reflect on key takeaways and prepare to carry the inspiration forward.

This event offers a unique platform to connect with thought leaders, policymakers, and academia. Together, we can ignite change, fostering a brighter and more sustainable future through the dynamic partnership of education and entrepreneurship.



NOVEMBER 16: ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICY DAY

On November 16, ICSB will take a monumental step forward by dedicating an entire day to the SME 2023 World Forum Entrepreneurship Policy. This day is not just about celebrating entrepreneurship; it's about understanding its intricate relationship with policy and its pivotal role in nurturing and supporting entrepreneurs and MSMEs.

The day will commence with panel discussions and workshops, bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs. These sessions aim to shed light on the current policy landscape, identify gaps, and discuss potential reforms to create a more conducive environment for entrepreneurial growth.

Summary of Agenda:

The event will take place at the Ritz-Carlton, Baku beginning with a registration process for attendees. This will be followed by:

Opening Welcome Speeches:

A formal introduction to the event, setting the tone and context. This session will include greetings from critical VIPs, organizers, or stakeholders, giving attendees an overview of the event's purpose and what to expect.

Coffee Break with Networking Opportunities:

A relaxed session where attendees can grab a coffee, interact with each other, and build connections. It's a chance for informal discussions and networking.



Panel Session 1: Policies impacting small businesses and entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan:

In the first panel session, the spotlight will be cast on the intricate policies shaping the landscape for Azerbaijan's small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures. This discussion promises to bring experts, policymakers, and stakeholders, each offering unique insights into the current regulatory environment's challenges and opportunities.

The session aims to delve deep into how these existing and proposed policies influence the growth, sustainability, and global competitiveness of Azerbaijani SMEs. The panel will provide a comprehensive overview of the policy framework, implications, and potential pathways for fostering a more conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem in Azerbaijan through case studies, data-driven insights, and experiential anecdotes.

Lunch Break with Networking Opportunities:

Another break where attendees can have lunch and continue networking. It's an extended opportunity for attendees to interact with panelists and other participants.

Panel Session 2: SMEs Digital Transformation and Foreign Trade:

This session delves into the digital transformation of SMEs and their evolving role in international commerce. The panel will provide an overview of what digital transformation entails for SMEs, highlighting the integration of technology and the significant shifts in business processes, culture, and customer engagement.

POLICY DAY CONTINUED...

As SMEs navigate the digital landscape, they are also redefining their approach to foreign trade, leveraging e-commerce platforms, digital payment systems, and data analytics to understand global markets. However, this journey has challenges, from cybersecurity concerns to navigating intricate international regulations and cultural market differences.

The discussion will also introduce pivotal tools and technologies, from CRM systems to AI-driven supply chain solutions. It will look ahead to emerging trends, such as blockchain's role in trade finance.



Panel Session 3: Empowering Women and Youth Entrepreneurship

Focused on empowering women and youth in entrepreneurship, this panel will discover innovative strategies, share inspiring success stories, and engage with a diverse array of experts, including entrepreneurs, policymakers, educators, and advocates.

Experts will discuss the role of women and youth in entrepreneurship and their contribution to economic growth. They will also explore actionable steps, policies, and initiatives that create an enabling environment for women and young entrepreneurs.

After attending this session you will gain a deeper understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and inclusive solutions that drive progress in the entrepreneurial landscape. Together, we can celebrate the potential of women and youth to shape a more inclusive and innovative future in business. Be part of the catalyst for positive change at our session.

Closing Remarks and Handover:

As we conclude today's event, our organizers and distinguished speakers will reflect on the day's rich discussions, emphasizing the key insights and takeaways, especially in the context of the Baku Entrepreneurship Day Declaration made on November 14th which recognized the critical role of youth-driven entrepreneurship in shaping a prosperous future. This declaration, which underscores our commitment to supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs in Azerbaijan, is a guiding beacon for our discussions and future endeavors. Our agenda's design, interwoven with formal dialogues, networking moments, and actionable strategies, has been meticulously curated to resonate with the essence of the Baku Entrepreneurship Declaration, emphasizing the challenges and prospects for Azerbaijan's entrepreneurial landscape.

GALA RECEPTION

The Gala Reception, the crowning jewel of the Entrepreneurship Policy Day, promises an evening of elegance and celebration. This grand finale is a momentous occasion designed to honor the dedication and commitment of all attendees, participants, and stakeholders in their joint mission to support Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and entrepreneurship.



As the sun sets over Baku, the Gala Reception will take place in a lavish setting within the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, where attendees will be treated to a sumptuous feast of Azerbaijani and international cuisine. The atmosphere will be one of sophistication and camaraderie, providing an opportunity for guests to unwind, network, and forge lasting connections with fellow enthusiasts of entrepreneurial growth.

The Gala Reception is not just an event; it's a testament to the unity of purpose and the determination to create a brighter, more collaborative, and prosperous future for MSMEs. It's an evening of joy, inspiration, and the forging of lasting connections, leaving attendees with memories that will resonate long after the event concludes.



WORLD WIDE



90%

of all firms are
formal and
informal MSMEs

70%

of all employment
are made
up of MSMEs

50%

of GDP comes
from MSMEs

7/10

of formal jobs are
generated by SMEs

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