OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities

The twin transition in action: what can urban policies do for retail SMEs in cities?

11 March 2025 | 10:00-12:00 CET

DIGITAL EVENT

AGENDA

European Commission

OECD

About

■ The project

The OECD-European Commission project on "The twin transition and the future of retail SMEs in urban and rural areas" supports the EU priorities of the digital and green transitions of retail SMEs, fostering a more innovative and competitive retail market. It aims to explore how retail SMEs, which account for a significant share of EU employment and are crucial to both urban and rural economies, manage these transitions in the context of wider challenges such as increasing market competition, labour shortages and the transformation of urban spaces. Key goals of this project include understanding of trends and disruptions in the retail sector, analysing the effects of the twin transition (green and digital) on retail businesses, and the identification of policies and practices that strengthen the competitiveness and resilience of retail businesses in the face of these transitions.

■ Peer learning events

This webinar is the fourth and last component of a series of peer learning events, aimed to share knowledge around retail SMEs throughout the EU and disseminate preliminary results from the project. A first introductory webinar (March 2024) explored policies and indicators through two panels "*Retail renaissance: green horizons, digital frontiers*" and "*Building internationally comparable indicators on retail SMEs*". A webinar "*Empowering retail SMEs for the twin transition*" (June 2024) detailed different national policies targeting retail SMEs in Austria, Germany, Japan and Luxembourg. Finally, another webinar, "*Addressing labour and skills shortage in Europe's retail sector*" (December 2024) invited various retail organisations (Eurocommerce, UNI Global Union, Handesradet and JA Europe) to discuss labour shortages retail SMEs are facing.

■ This webinar

This webinar analyses how urban, land-use and infrastructure policies, can help retail SMEs adapt to the digital and green transitions in urban areas while mitigating negative impacts. The first session will focus on policies that directly assist retail SMEs in navigating these transitions, enhancing their competitiveness, and fostering long-term resilience. The second session will explore strategies to boost the attractiveness of city centres, highlighting how these initiatives can create a positive environment for retail SMEs to thrive.

■ Format of the meeting

The webinar will be held virtually over Zoom. To participate, please register here. The link with log-in details will be sent to all registered participants. The meeting will be recorded and made publicly available.

■ Language

The meeting will be held in English with simultaneous interpretation into French.

■ Contacts

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Webinar

The twin transition in action: what can urban policies do for retail SMEs in cities?

*Moderator: **Thomas Kergonou Jimenez**, Inclusive Growth in Cities, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD*

10:00 - 10:05 Opening remarks

- **Camille Viros**, Head of the Inclusive growth in cities Unit, Centre for entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and cities, OECD
- **Giulia Del Brenna,** Head of the Food, retail and health Unit, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission

10:05 - 10:15 Scene setting: the transformations of retail and their implications for urban policies

10:15 – 11:05 Empowering retail SMEs: Policies and infrastructure to face green and digital transitions in cities

This session will explore policies support directly retail SMEs' competitiveness and resilience while enhancing digitalisation, energy infrastructure and urban logistics, aiming to improve retail SMEs capacity to adapt to the twin transition in cities and will discuss the following key questions:

- Which policy instruments can be used to improve the competitiveness of retail SMEs in the face of e-commerce and out-of-town shopping centres?
- Which urban policies and infrastructure investments can help retail SMEs adapt to the green and digital transition in cities?

11:05 - 11:55 Thriving city centres: Enhancing urban environments to support retail SMEs

This session will explore how urban policy instruments such as land use and spatial planning can improve accessibility and foster vibrant commercial activity in city centres, focusing on revitalisation initiatives that enhance urban environment, increase city centre's attractiveness and local foot traffic, ultimately supporting the growth of local retail SMEs. The session will discuss the following questions:

- How can public authorities make city centres attractive shopping destinations in a context of increased competition from online retailing?
- How can public authorities ensure the accessibility of city centre retail districts in a sustainable and inclusive manner, in a way that benefits retail SMEs?

11:55 - 12:00 Closing remarks

- **Camille Viros**, Head of the Inclusive growth in cities unit, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD

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4th webinar within the context of the project:
The twin transition and the future of retail SMEs in urban and rural areas
11 March 2025 | DIGITAL EVENT

VENUE
Virtual meeting over ZOOM

INFORMATION
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About the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions, and Cities

The OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions, and Cities provides comparative statistics, analysis and capacity building for local and national actors to work together to unleash the potential of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises, promote inclusive and sustainable regions and cities, boost local job creation, and support sound tourism policies.

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