

Promoting SME Competitiveness in Togo

A resilient foundation for
transformative growth



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About the paper

Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises in Togo can protect them from the effects of crises and unleash their potential to trigger economic transformation.

Drawing on data from the SME Competitiveness Survey, this report shows that Togolese businesses that fared better during the COVID-19 crisis shared certain characteristics: better human resource matching and management, stronger connections to business support organizations and higher productivity. Yet access to skilled labour, electricity and other key competitiveness factors is unequal across regions, and also varies according to the age and gender of the business owner.

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For more information on the SME Competitiveness Survey, see: <http://www.intracen.org/SMEintelligence/>

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Foreword

The health crisis triggered by COVID-19 has paralysed economic activities around the world since the beginning of 2020. Like most countries, Togo has not been spared by this crisis.

While all parts of the economy have suffered, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and industries (SMI) have been at the front line of this crisis. They generate 80% of gross domestic product in Togo and account for a significant share of employment. Yet 93% of them report that their turnover has decreased because of the pandemic.

SMEs, like the private sector in general, play a key role in the implementation of the National Development Plan as well as the new governmental roadmap 2020-2025, in order to structurally transform the Togolese economy for strong, sustainable, resilient, inclusive growth that creates decent jobs and induces improvements in social well-being.

To this end, the Government has put in place accompanying measures for the private sector, notably fiscal, customs and social measures, which target the resilience of the national economy. The government has also launched several reforms, including a reform that aims to reinforce support mechanisms for SMEs.

To support the recovery of these enterprises, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Togo (CCIT) collaborated with the International Trade Centre (ITC), under the aegis of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Local consumption promotion, to evaluate the competitiveness of Togolese SMEs/SMIs and examine how they experienced the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report from the surveys reveal that the economic damage brought by the COVID-19 pandemic has generated an unprecedented shock to Togo's business activities, with a slowdown of the economy and a consequent growth rate of 0.7% in 2020, according to the IMF.

The Government, through the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Local consumption promotion, shares a vision with all the private sector actors in general and in particular the Chamber of Commerce and Industry as well as the International Trade Centre to strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs so they can withstand shocks and compete on national, regional and international markets.

This report summarizes the key aspects of responses received from 570 enterprises visited for the SME Competitiveness Survey in Togo and the survey on the impacts of COVID-19 on the national economy.

Trade can facilitate the structural transformation of the economy and the reduction of poverty in particular when well-targeted policies are in place. This report will, without a doubt, contribute to making our vision a reality.

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and Industry of Togo

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The staff of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Togo conducted the interviews. Essohouna Germain Meba, former CCIT President, and Karine Adotevi Edoh, Executive Director, provided executive guidance to the project. Yawo Gilbert Josias S. Kavege, Director of the business assistance department, led the interview team. Mandamili Semdatcha, Sennyka Amessiemenou, Yao Sodjavi, Essi Massan Amegee and Akpedje Doleagbenou each supervised regional interview teams.

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The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Togo supports private sector development in the country as a consultative and representative interface between business and government. It provides advice, support, information, training and management of industrial and commercial services to Togolese firms. CCIT also promotes Togolese businesses and facilitates their cooperation with the rest of the world, including as a member of the Regional Consular Chamber of the West African Economic and Monetary Union and the International Chamber of Commerce.

ITC was established in Geneva, Switzerland, as a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization dedicated to strengthening the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises to build vibrant, sustainable export sectors that provide entrepreneurial opportunities, particularly for women, young people and poor communities.

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