

International Conference

Innovation in Skills Development for SMEs Competitiveness

*Jointly organised by KOSGEB (the Small and Medium Size Enterprises Development Organisation) and
the OECD LEED Programme*

14 December 2012

Ankara - Turkey

Agenda

BACKGROUND

Innovation in skills development provides new ways of talent development for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). While SMEs are crucial for economic development, employment and job creation they face continuing barriers to developing their human resources. Training & skills development is significantly lower in SMEs than in large enterprises – with SMEs involved in up to 50% less training than larger firms. The pool of SME workers requiring further education and training is significant. However, SMEs often find it difficult to support formal learning activities due to their small size.

This conference will present the results of a project on Leveraging Training and Skills Development in SMES. The study examines access to training by SMEs across seven regions in six OECD countries. The seven regions participating in the project are East Flanders (Belgium), the industrial zone OSTIM in Ankara (Turkey), Canterbury (New Zealand), the Zagłębie sub-region (Poland), the West Midlands region (United Kingdom), and Quebec and Manitoba in Canada. The project contributed to the OECD Skills Strategy.

Key policy and research issues to be addressed at the conference include:

- SMEs use both formal and informal training but they get better outcomes from informal training through use of knowledge intensive service activities (KISA). Significant variations exist across regions and employee skill levels.
- Training for highly skilled employees focused on productivity-enhancing skills (e.g. technical and management skills, entrepreneurship), and, to the extent that they are undertaken at all, green skills. This applies to both manufacturing and service firms.
- Market forces are the main drivers for skills development in firms, particularly informal skills development. They result from in-house demands arising from product development or production needs, or as the result of financial adjustments.
- “Growth potential” SMEs are most likely to take up opportunities in the green economy. Highly innovative firms are more likely to participate in innovative activity for the “green” economy, and also have a stronger focus on entrepreneurial skills.

The conference will discuss the results of the project as well as policy recommendations on training and skills development for the creation of an innovative and competitive SME sector in OECD countries.

More information about the event can be found at:

<http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/tsmeconferenceturkey.htm>

More information about the project could be found at:

<http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/leveragingtrainingskillsdevelopmentinsmes.htm>

Venue: Small and Medium Size Enterprises Development and Support Organisation, Harman Mah. Abdülhak Hamit Cad. No:66, Altmisevler / Mamak Ankara - Turkey

■ Friday, 14th December 2012

Morning Session

9:30 – 10:30 *Registration and coffee*

10:00 – 10:30 **Opening Remarks**

[Mr. Mustafa Kaplan](#), President, KOSGEB

[Mr. Orhan Aydin](#), President of OSTIM Organised Industrial Zone

[Mr. Sergio Arzeni](#), Director, OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SME's and Local Development and Head, OECD LEED Programme

10:30 – 11:15 **Accelerating Skills, Innovation and Competitiveness in SMEs**

Skills are a vital aspect of economic development. Strategies and policies for industry innovation and local development need to consider talent at the core of its efforts. This session will present the results and policy recommendations of an OECD study conducted in several regions across six countries (Belgium, Canada, New Zealand, Poland, United Kingdom and Turkey). Entrepreneurs will present their approaches to building talent. How do firms and regions develop skills and training activities? What is the return on investment? What best practices exist at the firm and local ecosystem level?

Chair: [Mr. Orhan Aydin](#), President of OSTIM Organised Industrial Zone

[Dr. Cristina Martinez-Fernandez](#), Senior Policy Analyst, OECD LEED Programme

Building Talent – Entrepreneurs' Approaches

[Mr. Marc Van Hulle](#), Sylva Boomkwekerijen bvba, Belgium

[Mr. Bulent Aslan](#), TRANS Medikal Aletler A.S., Turkey

Discussant: [Mr. Jaap Sprey](#), Head of the Regional Programme for Turkey and the South Caucasus at the Small Business Support (SBS) Team, EBRD

11:15 – 11:30 *Coffee break*

11:30 – 12:30 **International Experiences in Skills Development in SMEs**

This session will explore the findings from regional studies conducted within the framework of the project. Key questions to be addressed include:

- What is the impact of knowledge intensive/productivity enhancement activities on skills development in SMEs?
- How can SMEs increase the participation of the low-skilled and low-qualified, older workers in their knowledge intensive service/productivity enhancement activities?
- How can the different elements of the networking of SMEs with their supply chain and organisations from the local skills ecosystem where they are embedded, contribute to a greater participation of the labour force in training and skills development activities?
- What are the policy recommendations suggested for increasing investments in training and skills development in SMEs?

Chair: [Mr. Ismail Nusret Özgünaltay](#), Director, Regional and Local Development Directorate, KOSGEB

[Ms. Sirin Elci](#), Director, Technopolis Group Turkey

[Prof. Jose Albors](#), University Polytechnic Valencia, Spain

[Prof. Paul Dalziel](#), AERU Research Unit, Lincoln University, New Zealand

12:30 – 14:00 *Lunch*

Afternoon Session

14:00 – 15:00 **International Experiences in Skills Development in SMEs (continued)**

Chair: **Mr. Ismail Nusret Özgünaltay**, Director, Regional and Local Development Directorate

Prof. Anne Green, University of Warwick, UK and **Dr. Laura E. Martinez**, CIMMYT, Mexico

Prof. Paul Belanger, Director, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research and Development on Lifelong Learning (CIRDEP), Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Canada

Discussant: **Dr. Samantha Sharpe**, Research Principal, Institute for Sustainable Futures
University of Technology Sydney, Australia

15:00 – 15:15 *Coffee break*

15:15 – 16:30 **Policy Innovation to support better skills for better jobs in SMEs**

In this session, policy-makers from the OECD countries who have participated in the study will reflect on the policy recommendations presented in the previous sessions and questions raised by participants and new policies and programs for skills development in SMEs in their countries.

The session will discuss:

- What should be the focus of SME policies and policy measures for increased investments in training and skills development in SMEs?
- How can the policy governance be improved for more effective design and delivery of SME skills development policies and programmes?

Chair: **Mr. Sergio Arzeni**, Director, OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SME's and Local Development and Head, OECD LEED Programme

Ms. Ann Van den Cruyce, Head, Division of Employment Policy, Department of Work and Social Economy, Flemish Government, Belgium

Ms. Laurie Goldman, Director, Coordination, Planning and Program Development, Employment Programs and Partnerships Directorate, SEB, HRSDC, Canada

Mr. Pawel Chorazy, Director, Department for the ESF Management, Ministry of Regional Development, Poland

Mr. Sinan Ok, Turkish Employment Agency, Labour Market and Statistics Department, Turkey

16:30 – 16:45 **Closing Remarks**

Mr. Sergio Arzeni, Director, OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SME's and Local Development and Head, OECD LEED Programme

Ms. Selma Tezyetiş, Vice President, KOSGEB

16:45 **Cocktail reception**