

Driving global competitiveness through trade-enabled growth for entrepreneurs.

Progress report **2025**



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The ICC Centre of Entrepreneurship is committed to empowering small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs across the globe.

Through our global network, including the ICC World Chambers Federation and ICC national committees, the ICC Centre of Entrepreneurship bridges international expertise with local entrepreneurial ecosystems, ensuring SMEs have access to the tools, training and networks required to thrive in a rapidly evolving and complex business landscape.

Our approach is anchored in four strategic pillars:

1. Export-readiness
2. Sustainability
3. Women entrepreneurs
4. Digital enablement



Introduction

In 2025, the environment for SME growth was shaped by:

- Geopolitical shifts and investor sentiment affecting SME growth strategies.
- Technological evolution, particularly in artificial intelligence and digital trade.
- Regulatory complexity, with SMEs needing to navigate frameworks, such as the European Union Green Deal.

SMEs now seek balanced growth, combining profitability with sustainability and social impact. Expanding into international markets requires entrepreneurs to navigate complex, ever-evolving regulatory frameworks, as expressed by our community.

Our programming reflects this shift by focusing on sustainability, market access and capacity-building.

Through initiatives such as the ICC One Click Roadshow, thousands of SMEs gained easy access to ICC's trade tools, such as the Incoterms® 2020 rules and ICC model contracts, helping small business owners navigate complex regulatory landscapes.

“In today’s interconnected markets, understanding sanctions and upholding integrity are not just regulatory requirements – they are essential for building trust and long-term success in global trade.”

Víctor Hugo Guerra Hernández, Chair of the ICC Institute of World Business Law Compliance Task Force and ICC One Click Roadshow speaker

“The key concerns for SMEs include the high complexity and administrative burden of the new requirements, as well as the limited transitional time. The EU Green Deal also creates opportunities for environmentally ambitious SMEs and opens a new market for SME service providers.”

Tetyana Payasova, trade specialist and CoE Sustainability Pathways initiative speaker

Digital enablement is especially important.

Digitisation enables SMEs to comply with new regulations by making supply chains more transparent and facilitating timely sustainability reporting.

“Digitisation can help the industry meet demands resulting from the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive. It has the power to make supply chains more transparent, enabling real-time sustainability reporting and automating due diligence. With better data, companies can mitigate risks, support ethical sourcing and build trust with stakeholders.”

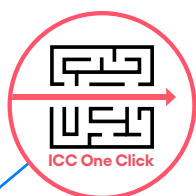
Jothi Kanayalal, Head of Business at Clothing Connected and panellist in the CoE EU Green Deal webinar series

Taking these perspectives into account, our programmes are designed to address the real-world challenges and opportunities facing SMEs today. At the same time, they foster the conditions that enable their growth and international expansion.

Who is this report for?

This year’s progress report provides a comprehensive overview of activities, achievements and strategic direction in 2025. It serves as a resource for stakeholders interested in understanding the evolving role of the ICC Centre of Entrepreneurship in the global entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Highlights of 2025



In 2025, we continued to expand our global presence and deepen strategic partnerships, delivering initiatives that make a real difference for SMEs and entrepreneurs worldwide.

We launched new flagship programmes.

The programmes of the ICC Centre of Entrepreneurship engaged more than 3,000 SMEs.

The **ICC One Click Roadshow** became a cornerstone of engagement, introducing SMEs, chambers of commerce and our network to ICC's tools and services. Delivered in English, Arabic, French and Spanish, the event series is inclusive and accessible. ICC One Click went live in 36 countries, with additional releases planned for 2026.

Complementing these efforts, the **Sustainability Pathways** webinar series equipped SMEs with practical knowledge to align their operations with global sustainability standards.

Equally important, we launched **TradeRoots Africa**, a B20 Legacy Initiative aimed at advancing the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area and enabling more small-, women- and youth-led enterprises to trade across Africa. We will continue this vital work in 2026.

We enabled broader SME access to trade resources and expertise, in partnership with leading organisations, including the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), International Trade Centre (ITC), ConnectAmericas and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA).

In keeping with our commitment to gender-responsive business support, we worked with chambers of commerce to build programmes that empower women in entrepreneurship.

Lastly, thanks to our presence at several major global events, including the World Chambers Congress and World Investment Conference, we were able to expand our reach to a wider audience and engage in live conversations with them.

These engagements strengthened ICC's leading role in shaping inclusive and innovative trade ecosystems, while positioning the ICC Centre of Entrepreneurship as a global hub empowering SMEs and driving sustainable growth.

Our key activities and outputs globally and locally

Global initiatives

1. Enabling SME growth beyond borders

Expanding internationally can be challenging for small businesses. [ICC One Click](#) helps by simplifying access to resources and expert guidance to trade across borders.

The **ICC One Click Roadshow** is a series of free webinars running through 2025 and 2026. The webinars are designed to help SMEs grow their business beyond borders using practical tools and resources available on [ICC One Click](#). Every webinar focuses on a specific tool, making it easy for participants to learn and apply what they need to grow globally.



Webinar

What's in it for participants?

Introduction to Incoterms® 2020

Participants explored the fundamentals of Incoterms® 2020 rules, why they matter in global trade and how SMEs can use them to streamline international transactions and mitigate risks. The session traced the history and evolution of the Incoterms® rules created by ICC, unpacked key principles and provisions and demonstrated practical applications in trade contracts.

Certificates of Origin Essentials

Attendees learned about Certificates of Origin, their importance in international trade and how businesses can obtain them. The session explained the definition and types of Certificates of Origin, their role in facilitating cross-border transactions, and step-by-step guidance on how to obtain them.

ATA Carnet Essentials

This webinar explained how ATA Carnets simplify the temporary import of goods. It highlighted their purpose, benefits for SMEs, and provided an overview of the ATA Carnet system, along with practical tips for obtaining and using them.

Advertising and Marketing Communications Code

Participants gained insights into the ICC Advertising and Marketing Communications Code – the internationally recognised gold standard for advertising self-regulation. The session showed how the Code applies to influencer marketing, AI-generated content and sustainability claims, helping businesses build consumer trust and avoid reputational and legal risks.

Anti-Corruption: An Introduction to Corruption Avoidance

This webinar offered practical approaches to preventing and avoiding corruption. Through real-life examples and tips, SMEs learned how to increase their income long-term and reduce risks – all while avoiding corruption., while chambers discovered ways to support their members in this critical area.



Webinar

What's in it for participants?

Sanctions:

A Basic Guide for SMEs

This session unpacked the fundamentals of sanctions, their impact on global trade and how businesses can stay compliant. Participants learned about different types of sanctions, reasons for imposing them and gained an overview of global sanctions regimes.

Introduction to the

ICC SME Toolkit on Antitrust Compliance

Participants discovered a practical resource for building robust antitrust compliance programmes. The session explained antitrust laws, the importance of compliance and how to use the toolkit effectively.

An Introduction to

Business Integrity

This webinar highlighted why anti-corruption measures are vital for business operations and how to implement these practices to ensure compliance. The session covered global frameworks, practical steps SMEs can take and strategies to build a reputation for integrity.

Introduction to ITC

Export Potential Map and Global Trade Helpdesk

This webinar introduced participants to two powerful tools developed by the International Trade Centre (ITC) that help businesses identify promising export markets, understand market access conditions and make informed decisions to enhance international trade operations.

Introduction to WIPO IP

Diagnostic Tool

This webinar introduced participants to a self-assessment tool developed by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) designed to help SMEs identify, protect and manage their intellectual property (IP) assets. The session covered the tool's features and practical application, and emphasised why IP management drives business growth and innovation.

2. Navigating compliance challenges

From EU regulations to single-use plastic bans and circular economy models, SMEs face compliance challenges, but are also presented opportunities for innovation and growth. We launched the Sustainability Pathways series to help SMEs navigate this rapidly changing regulatory and market landscape.

The series brought together leading practitioners, policy experts and award-winning entrepreneurs to share practical guidance, facilitate peer learning and provide tools to remain competitive, compliant and sustainable in global markets.



Webinar

What's in it for participants?

European Green Deal for SMEs

This series of webinars was designed to help SMEs worldwide – especially those in EU supply chains – understand and prepare for key European regulations, including the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). The series addressed the compliance challenges and innovation opportunities these regulations present, highlighting how early preparation can reduce costs and open new market opportunities. Each session featured sector-specific insights into the textiles and agribusiness sectors and introduced practical tools, such as the ITC's Deforestation-Free Trade Gateway.

Navigating Plastic Regulations for SMEs: Insights from Nigeria, Kenya, and Beyond

This webinar addressed the challenges and opportunities for SMEs in Africa and beyond in responding to plastic pollution and evolving plastic regulations. With Nigeria's national ban on single-use plastics taking effect in 2025 and Kenya's established regulatory framework, the session provided practical information for SMEs to comply, innovate and transition to circular business models. The event featured real-world case studies in plastic waste management, with a focus on how SMEs can turn compliance into a competitive advantage.

Circular Economy in Action: Innovation Insights from the 2025 Small Business Champions Award

This session showcased circular economy innovations from the winners of the 2025 Small Business Champions Award, an initiative by ICC, ITC, the World Trade Organization (WTO) Informal Working Group on MSMEs and UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The panel discussion highlighted how SMEs are pioneering circular business models – reducing waste, reusing resources and redefining growth. Award-winning entrepreneurs shared practical strategies, challenges and lessons learned, while ICC policy experts provided guidance on scaling circularity and accessing green finance.

3. Empowering women entrepreneurs

Imagine a world where women, though half the population, own only a small share of businesses due to systemic barriers. This is the reality, though it does not need to be.

We created and delivered programmes tailored to the needs of local businesswomen for chambers of commerce and leading business support organisations. First meeting in-person at the 14th World Chambers Congress and later online, we explored the business case for supporting women entrepreneurs, strategies for inclusive programme design and approaches to integrate gender equity into organisational culture and advocacy efforts. By focusing on actionable steps such as flexible scheduling, mentorship, data-driven storytelling and impact measurement, it demonstrated how small, deliberate choices can unlock significant opportunities for women entrepreneurs and reinforce the role of chambers of commerce as catalysts for inclusive growth.

Regional initiatives



Africa

Shaping the future of trade in Africa

Held in Nairobi, the roundtable **Africa Business Talks**, featuring M&CO Legal, addressed the evolving needs of the African business community. The moderated discussions between experts from the public and private sectors focused on strengthening strategic links between Asia and East Africa, driven by growing demand for efficient trade routes and economic cooperation. Key themes included the rise of eastern economies, the pivotal role of ports such as in Singapore, Dubai and Mombasa in shaping new logistics supply chains, the need for standardised customs clearance, the strategic importance of special economic zones and regional trade financing to support emerging markets.

Latin America and francophone countries

Driving SME expansion into Europe

We partnered with ConnectAmericas on a free, virtual training for companies looking to expand into the European market. The programme **Ciclo Comex 2025: Destino Europa**, attracting over 4,000 registrations, focused on helping SMEs to identify real business opportunities in Europe, understand sustainability regulations and export requirements, access green financing tools and adapt their strategy to enter key European markets.

Protecting small businesses online

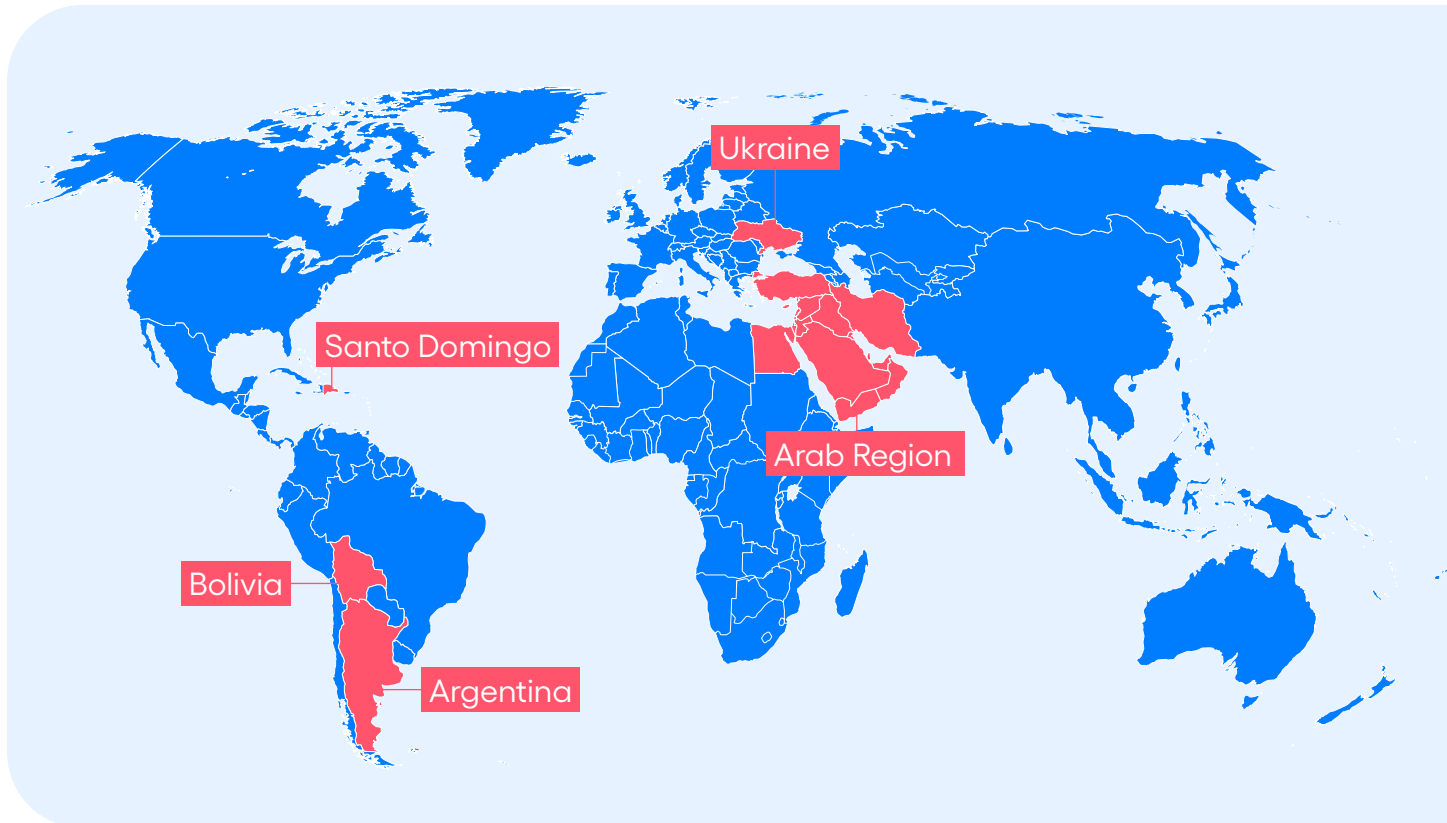
The webinar series **Global Cybersecurity Toolkit for SMEs**, organised in partnership with the Global Cyber Alliance (GCA) in French and Spanish, introduced smaller businesses to the GCA Cybersecurity Toolkit for Small Business. Both workshops focused on practical measures such as two-factor authentication, secure communications, phishing prevention and data backup, emphasising the importance of basic cybersecurity hygiene for business continuity and reputation.

Initiatives of our network partners

By making change possible at a local level, chambers of commerce, ICC national committees and affiliated organisations played a vital role in advancing our mission to make business work for everyone, every day, everywhere.

We value the dedication and innovative spirit of every single network partner who contributed to our impact in 2025.

Discover selected highlights from our global network:



Argentina



Artificial intelligence and open innovation in Argentina

Since 2024, the programme has supported Argentinian small- and medium-sized businesses in optimising processes and customer experience with the help of artificial intelligence (AI). Entrepreneurs are guided through a comprehensive four-stage process from discovery to AI implementation.

Programme leads: Camara Argentina de Comercio y Servicios and Usina de Emprendedores.

Empower your future: Supporting young entrepreneurs in Santo Domingo

In partnership with the City Council of the National District and its Centro Futuro programme, this initiative accompanies young entrepreneurs from Cristo Rey, strengthening their technical, business, and personal skills to boost employability and ensure sustainable ventures.

Programme leads: Cámara de Comercio y Producción de Santo Domingo (host of the ICC Centre of Entrepreneurship Santo Domingo) in partnership with the city council of Cristo Rey.



CAINCO and Santa Cruz Innova Innovation and Impact Investment

The programme is designed to make Bolivia's entrepreneurial ecosystem more competitive. Bringing together startups, investors, corporations and ecosystem leaders, it aims to promote knowledge sharing, facilitate access to financing and foster more sustainable and innovative business models in Bolivia and beyond.

VCILAT 2025 strengthened connections between entrepreneurs and global investors, generating meaningful opportunities for early-stage and growth-stage startups. Participants reported increased access to investment networks, improved understanding of emerging trends in Climatech, Fintech, Social Innovation and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems, and greater visibility for Bolivian and regional ventures. In addition, the summit enabled corporations and support organisations to identify potential partnerships and explore innovative, long-term collaboration models within the regional ecosystem.

Programme leads: Cámara de Industria, Comercio, Servicios y Turismo de Santa Cruz (CAINCO), Santa Cruz Innova (funded by the European Union under the regional EU-LAC Social Accelerator program and the Emprende Verde Bolivia programme).

Bringing trade resources to regional chambers and business in Ukraine

The session introduced regional chambers in Ukraine to ICC One Click simplifying cross-border trade for SMEs. The session highlighted tools for drafting contracts, ensuring compliance and protecting intellectual property, and reinforced the role chambers play as trusted partners helping local businesses thrive and compete internationally.

Programme lead: Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (host of the ICC Centre of Entrepreneurship Ukraine).

Narratives that matter: creativity with purpose and impact in the Arab region

The six-part interactive webinar series offered a learning space for entrepreneurs to share personal experiences, build confidence and discover practical tools to strengthen their creative businesses. The series focused on storytelling, emotional intelligence, purpose-driven marketing and resilience in the creative sector.

Programme lead: UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (UN ESCWA) in collaboration with Creativity Lab.

Co-creating tech-driven solutions for inclusive development in the Arab region

This regional initiative empowered participants to co-create technology-driven solutions that address socio-economic and environmental challenges. Over the course of 10 interactive sessions, participants applied human-centred design, systems thinking and rapid prototyping to transform community needs into scalable digital solutions. The series addressed professionals from a range of sectors, including food security, agri-tech, water scarcity, renewable energy, climate resilience, education, health and civic tech.

Programme lead: UN ESCWA in partnership with Creativity Lab.

On the global and local stage



14th World Chamber Congress, Australia

An international forum that brought together more than 1,000 business, chamber and government leaders from 100 countries.

Our highlights:

- Showcased the ICC One Click Roadshow to an in-person audience of chambers, businesses and governments – our strategic partners in unlocking global growth opportunities
- Brought our network's voice to discussions on balancing profit and purpose together with the Good Business Foundation at the Melbourne Business School
- Supported a workshop with the Goodman Sustainability Group, challenging chambers to evolve from networks to network orchestrators, driving sustainability transformation for their SME members



Iraqi Techopreneurship Forum, Iraq



A landmark conference bringing together the public and private sectors alongside embassies and international organisations to advance local innovation, policy dialogue and business growth.

Our highlights:

- Contributed virtually, introducing the ICC One Click ecosystem and its official Arabic launch, designed to empower SMEs to expand globally

29th WAIPA World Investment Conference, United Arab Emirates



The flagship event of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA), dedicated to investment promotion, facilitation and innovation and attracting more than 12,000 delegates.

Our highlights:

- Presented network insights on how investment promotion agencies can embed ESG principles into their strategies to drive competitiveness and long-term value

ECOSOC Youth Forum, United States

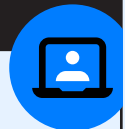


An annual event organised by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) bringing youth leaders and UN Member States to one table.

Our highlights:

- Amplified real-world insights on the role of youth leadership in driving economic development and partnership approaches for sustainable, inclusive growth at a side event hosted by Junior Chamber International

Women Leading the Green Transition in Latin America, Virtual



A webinar, organised by AI Invest Verde, to showcase initiatives led by women that promote environmental and social sustainability in Latin America:

- Spotlighted women entrepreneurs who shape the green transition in a session co-led with AL-INVEST Verde on gender-responsive business models

Makers Festival, Virtual



The festival, hosted by Impact Hub, celebrates creativity, innovation and craftsmanship:

- Emphasised the persistent underfunding of SME development, the growing importance of entrepreneurship ecosystems and the evolving role of enterprise support organisations in a panel discussion on investing in SMEs for social impact and building ecosystems for long-term change

Impact and outcomes we are proud of

Our growing reach is a testament to our relevance and role in enabling SMEs to succeed, innovate and grow beyond borders – every day, everywhere.

Global footprint expanded across **five** continents.

+3,000

SMEs from **+150** countries engaged.

36 workshops organised (**112%** increase from 2024).

Present in **16** countries and growing.



From enabling global trade...

An initiative of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the ICC Centre of Entrepreneurship closely aligns its activities with the strategy of ICC, the world's business organisation.

We are united by a common vision to:

- enable global trade and international cooperation and
- establish a level playing field for all businesses – regardless of their size.

Inspired by this vision, we engaged **+3,000 SMEs** worldwide this year, giving them the tools and resources to navigate increasingly complex regulatory environments and become export ready. Through one of our flagship programmes alone, the ICC One Click Roadshow, we attracted **+1,600 SMEs**.

...to accelerating action on climate and sustainability

In a year marked by new climate records, we knew the huge value in giving SMEs the tools and knowledge they need to align with sustainability trends and the global climate agenda. Workshops on regulations, circular economy showcases and more – we supported **+1,000 SMEs** in going green thanks to our Sustainability Pathways series and ensured small businesses are well-positioned to thrive no matter how fast things around them evolve.

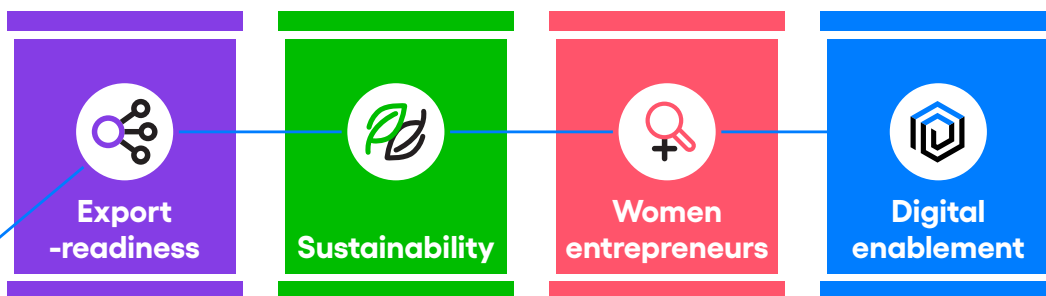
Expanding our scope to stay ahead

Committed to help businesses spot challenges and trends early on, we broadened our focus and included new thematic areas: gender and EU regulatory compliance. These additions ensure that our programming remains relevant and forward-looking, equipping SMEs to address the latest developments in the global business environment.

What's more, by making our webinars available in Arabic, French and Spanish, we upheld our commitment to make our content accessible and inclusive to a much broader and diverse audience.

Priorities for 2026

In 2026, our strategic focus will continue to centre on four key pillars:



We believe they are essential for inclusive growth and form the foundation for businesses to stay competitive in an ever-evolving global landscape.

Our priorities for 2026 reflect this belief:

1. We will expand the **ICC One Click Roadshow** by introducing new sessions on key trade tools available on [ICC One Click](#).
2. We will place even greater emphasis on regulatory compliance through our **Sustainability Pathways** series, with additional trainings planned for SMEs that seek to export to the European Union.
3. We will strengthen market access and foster trade opportunities across the continent as part of the B20 Legacy Initiative, **TradeRoots Africa**.
4. We will remain a strong advocate for women in business and provide training for building women's entrepreneurship programmes that make a real difference.
5. We will launch new initiatives: The **AI Accelerator** will drive digital transformation of SMEs, while the **Impact Measurement Masterclass** will provide practical frameworks for responsible business practices and performance tracking.

How to get involved

Collaboration unlocks greater opportunities, reach and most importantly, impact for entrepreneurs and SMEs.

Partner with us to create trainings that address real, local needs and integrate ICC tools to strengthen programmes.

Email: icccoe@iccwbo.org

If you are an alumni or stakeholder, **share your feedback** to help shape our content and ensure our initiatives deliver real value to business communities.

Acknowledgement

We thank our partners and team:

Network partners



Ecosystem partners



The team

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About the ICC Centre of Entrepreneurship

Launched in 2020 by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the ICC Centre of Entrepreneurship is a global programme designed to empower chambers of commerce and ICC national committees to build thriving entrepreneurial ecosystems.

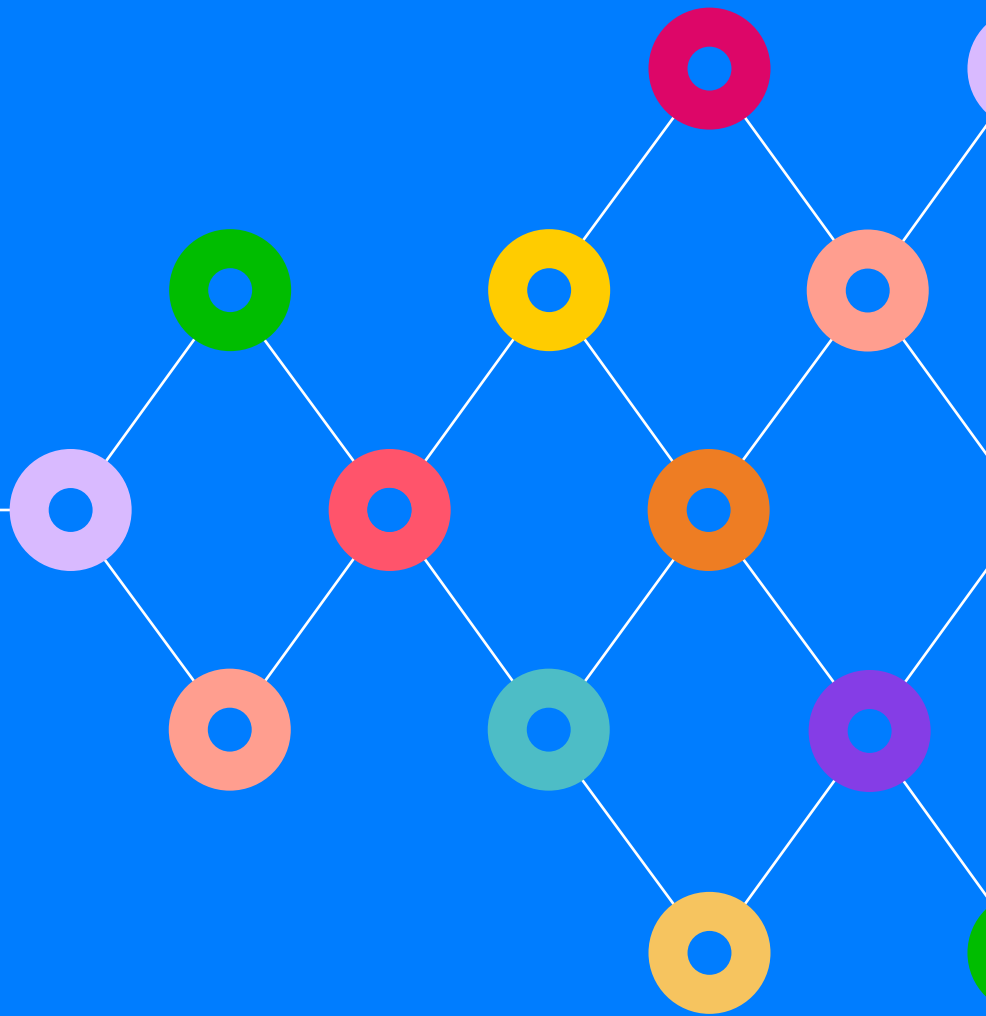
The ICC Centre of Entrepreneurship operates globally and has a network of partners across five continents, offering support to SMEs and entrepreneurs through four practice areas: digital enablement, export readiness, sustainability and gender.



About the International Chamber of Commerce

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) is the institutional representative of more than 45 million companies in over 170 countries. ICC's core mission is to make business work for everyone, every day, everywhere.

Through a unique mix of advocacy, solutions and standard setting, we promote international trade, responsible business conduct and a global approach to regulation, in addition to providing market-leading dispute resolution services. Our members include many of the world's leading companies, SMEs, business associations and local chambers of commerce.



Join our WhatsApp channel for instant updates on practical trade tools, upcoming workshops and expert insights for SMEs – all designed to help your business thrive.