

The CNMC proposes a comprehensive reform of the regulations affecting SMEs to boost their activity

- Tackling regulatory fragmentation, administrative burdens and late payments is crucial for these companies.
- Public authorities should simplify public procurement procedures and encourage SMEs to participate in tendering processes.
- SMEs drive competition, economic growth, and innovation.

Madrid, February 17, 2026.- There are more than 3 million SMEs in Spain. They account for 99.8% of the Spanish business fabric and generate 65% of employment and 55% of the GDP contributed by the private sector. Although they are essential to our economy, bureaucratic burdens, regulatory fragmentation and difficulties in accessing public tenders hinder their creation and activity.

The *Study on barriers to the creation and growth of SMEs and their participation in public procurement* ([E/CNMC/004/23](#)) analyses the main obstacles in Spain and puts forward solutions.

Potential barriers

One of issues analysed is the limited presence of SMEs in public procurement. They face difficulties in accessing information, and the complexity of the regulations or the very design of tenders reduces their chances of being awarded contracts and discourages participation. This occurs especially when there are unnecessary or disproportionate requirements that generate excessive costs.

These dynamics also harm public authorities, as they receive fewer bids (in terms of quality and price) when awarding contracts. The situation has an impact on public spending and on the services available to citizens.

Recommendations

To reduce barriers and foster competition, the CNMC proposes adopting the following measures:

- **To facilitate the creation and growth of SMEs:**
 - Promote a more integrated and pro-competitive market:

- Reduce regulatory fragmentation and promote regulatory simplification and coordination through measures such as standard municipal by-laws.
- Facilitate business creation:
 - Extend the use of self-declarations and streamline licensing procedures.
 - Strengthen the CIRCE system as a one-stop shop for business creation and Entrepreneur Service Points (PAEs), and promote regulatory sandboxes, as they facilitate innovation.
- Promote rules that encourage business growth:
 - Adjust obligations for SMEs while avoiding the "threshold effect" through more gradual transitions based on company size.
- Reduce administrative burdens:
 - Ensure compliance with the "once- only" principle in the submission of documentation and procedures.
 - Provide proactive support for SMEs and design aid schemes that are efficient, pro-competitive and easily accessible.
- Tackle late payments:
 - Consider promoting the automatic payment of late-payment interest and penalties in cases of non-payment.
- **To improve SMEs' access to public procurement:**
 - Thoroughly reform the public procurement framework:
 - Simplify it with a pro-competitive approach to streamline procedures and facilitate SME participation.
 - Improve the accessibility and usefulness of information on tenders.
 - Promote active support and training initiatives to familiarise SMEs with public procurement.
 - Strengthen planning, prior market analysis and tender design, and facilitate the submission of bids.
 - Promote the division of contracts into lots to foster competition and SME participation, avoid disproportionate or unnecessary

requirements, adjust deadlines, and reduce the burdens involved in submitting bids and during contract execution.

- Provide contracting authorities with sufficient resources and capabilities.

The CNMC is the independent regulatory body responsible for overseeing markets and ensuring and promoting effective competition for the benefit of consumers and users. This Study is carried out as part of its competition advocacy functions.

Related content:

- [E/CNMC/004/23](#): Study on barriers to the creation and growth of SMEs and their participation in public procurement