

Generali: supporting sustainable SMEs for a resilient and competitive Europe

- At the 2025 SME EnterPRIZE event, Generali will unveil the 10 ‘Sustainability Heroes’, selected from more than 8,900 European SMEs, as true leaders in developing sustainable businesses
- The Group will also present the fourth edition of the White Paper on sustainable SMEs, developed in collaboration with SDA Bocconi
- Generali reaffirms its ongoing commitment to European SMEs with dedicated insurance solutions, advisory and investments

Brussels – Generali is today hosting the closing event of the fourth edition of **SME EnterPRIZE**, the Group’s flagship initiative to **promote sustainability among European small and medium-sized enterprises** (SMEs) and support them in integrating sustainable practices in their businesses. This is also an opportunity to celebrate the 10 “Sustainability Heroes” selected from over 8,900 SMEs across Europe and to unveil the new edition of the **White Paper**, developed in collaboration with **SDA Bocconi – School of Management Sustainability Lab**.

The event is further recognised with the **Patronage of the Polish presidency of the EU Council** and will see the attendance of **Martin Hojsík, Vice-President of the European Parliament**, as well as academic leaders and Generali’s senior leadership. Furthermore, the 2025 edition will include speeches from **Raffaele Fitto, Vice-President of the EU Commission for Cohesion and Reforms**, from **Valdis Dombrovskis, EU Commissioner for Economy and Productivity, Implementation and Simplification**, and from **Marcos Neto, Assistant Secretary General and Director of UNDP’s Bureau of Policy and Programme Support**.

Philippe Donnet, Generali Group CEO, said: *“It has been four years since Generali launched SME EnterPRIZE, and amid global financial fluctuation, geopolitical tensions, and rapid technological change, small and medium-sized enterprises continue to face significant daily challenges. Against this backdrop, we remained convinced of the benefits that the sustainable transition can offer to all these companies, and we maintain the greatest commitment to accompanying and supporting them on this journey. Moreover, one of the key goals of SME EnterPRIZE has always been to foster the debate with Europe’s policymakers and financial services professionals to ultimately build a regulatory framework that truly allows SMEs to embrace sustainability. This complex process will require time, but we see good alignment also with the priorities of the European Commission, and so I am confident that together we will advance towards a more competitive, resilient, and sustainable Europe.”*

Generali Group General Manager, Marco Sesana said: *“Our SME EnterPRIZE initiative underscores the importance of integrating sustainability considerations into the business activities of European small and*



medium-sized companies. The fourth White Paper by Generali and SDA Bocconi places a special focus on the need to foster the climate resilience of SMEs, and the timing could not be more pertinent as extreme weather events continue to increase in frequency and magnitude. At Generali we remain fully committed to supporting the just sustainable transition and doing our part to make this a reality with targeted support through financing, investments, as well as tailored advice and insurance solutions.”

A roadmap to foster the just sustainable transition of European SMEs

The **White Paper**, based on discussions with 1,260 SMEs from across Europe, demonstrates the **resilience of European SMEs** in their sustainable transition journeys while highlighting areas that require **targeted support**.

The research reveals a **consolidation in sustainability adoption**, with the combined implementation rates of “Heroes” and “Soon-to-be” holding steady at 44% despite growing challenges, marking significant progress from 34% in 2020.

The sustainability business case remains robust despite fluctuations in perceived benefits, with 83% of surveyed SMEs reporting better environmental impacts. Around 75% of SMEs declare an increase in employee and customer satisfaction, while 67% report improvements in their competitive advantages. The biggest improvements are observed in financial benefits, with 63% of SMEs reporting better credit conditions, an 8% increase compared to 2023.

However, while SMEs demonstrate commitment to sustainability, they also face **increasing implementation challenges**, including a lack of public incentives (54%), institutional support gaps (53%), and limited access to sustainable finance (53%) as the key areas requiring attention.

A special section of the White Paper is dedicated to climate resilience, which highlights that **climate risk awareness** varies significantly across the SME landscape, with sustainability leaders showing 69% risk recognition compared to the 50% average. Price volatility emerges as the primary climate-related concern (47%), while companies prioritise operational responses such as local sourcing (33%) and renewable energy adoption (27%) over more complex strategic solutions.

The White Paper calls for **policymakers** and **financial institutions** to engage with and empower small and medium-sized enterprises, emphasising the need for simplified regulatory frameworks, enhanced public incentives, tailored financial instruments, and proactive advisory support to accelerate the just sustainable transition of European SMEs.

Francesco Perrini, Associate Dean for Sustainability at SDA Bocconi School of Management, said: “Our analysis of 1,260 European SMEs reveals remarkable resilience in their green transition, with sustainability adoption rates holding steady at 44% despite growing implementation challenges. What emerges with particular clarity is the evolution of the sustainability business case, where financial benefits are increasingly complementing well-established environmental and social advantages. Companies that have adopted sustainable practices are experiencing significant improvements in credit conditions (+8%) and insurance terms (+10%), signalling growing market recognition of sustainability value. However, significant barriers persist that require targeted interventions, particularly for smaller SMEs that show lower adoption rates compared to medium-sized enterprises. Our study highlights the urgent need for proportionate and



differentiated support mechanisms that can effectively address the diverse needs of the European SME ecosystem."

The full White Paper, which includes deep dives on each country taking part in Generali's SME EnterPRIZE initiative, can be downloaded [here](#).

Generali for SMEs

One of the aims of the newly launched 'Lifetime Partner 27: Driving Excellence' plan of Generali is to solidify the Group leadership in Europe for individuals, professionals, and SMEs. Generali will keep developing offerings tailored to the specific needs of the customers, and innovating prevention, assistance, and protection services using the latest digital tools and platforms.

Supporting the resilience of SMEs against climate risks is a key focus area given the crucial role of SMEs for the stability of the global economy and the financial system. As a responsible insurer, building on the experience from the previous strategic cycle and the dedicated activities carried out in 2024, the new strategic plan will bolster Generali's efforts to strengthen the value proposition for climate change adaptation. This will be achieved by leveraging the expertise of several markets particularly affected by climate issues, as well as by increasing the knowledge of SMEs' needs regarding climate and other emerging risks through dedicated research activities. Generali will also continue to develop solutions that combine risk transfer and mitigation tools, integrating insurance products with new technologies and utilising alternative distribution partners to effectively reach companies.

Recognising that no single entity can address these global challenges independently, Generali remains fully committed to the SME EnterPRIZE initiative to foster a culture of sustainability. The Group has also established **public-private partnerships**, including collaborations with the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Insurance Development Forum**, with the aim to develop insurance and investment solutions that strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities in emerging and developing economies against climate change and natural disasters.

Furthermore, **direct investments in companies and real assets**, for example infrastructures, are one of the most important trends allowing institutional investors, such as Generali, to further contribute to sustainability and the energy transition, whilst aligning with the need to generate increasingly competitive returns for policyholders and shareholders that are less correlated to financial market trends. Generali has so far **invested more than €20 billion** in infrastructure projects or in direct financing for businesses with both private debt and private equity. This includes **more than €6 billion in EU projects**, for example through the [Fenice 190](#) fund initiative, which is providing **SME financing** in different European countries.

Celebrating the Sustainability Heroes

Generali's fourth SME EnterPRIZE event celebrates the 10 "**Sustainability Heroes**", selected from over 8,900 SMEs across Europe as true leaders in developing sustainable business models. Together with an **expert advisory board** with members from academia, businesses and think-tanks, Generali assessed applicants on the grounds of their **social and environmental commitments**, including the implementation of notable sustainability initiatives in their business activities.



The companies presented in Brussels are from the 10 European countries that have joined the initiative, in detail Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain:

- **O.K. Energie Haus (Austria)**, which excels in the planning, production, and assembly of energy-efficient timber buildings such as houses, schools, and medical centres.
- **Hrvatski Kišobran (Croatia)**, an umbrella manufacturer with a strong commitment to inclusion and social responsibility that actively integrates people with disabilities into their workforce.
- **Ameba Production (Czech Republic)**, which organizes an annual festival with awareness-raising initiatives to educate visitors about the importance of environmental and social sustainability.
- **CréaWatt (France)**, a producer of ultra-light solar panels that can be adapted to various roofs without the need for structural reinforcement. In addition to organising training and awareness-raising initiatives on renewable energy, they also support the professional reintegration and employment of detainees.
- **vomFASS (Germany)**, an online and physical shop whose refill initiative allows customers to buy vinegars, oils, spirits, and wines selecting the quantity and container for their purchases, while also committing to CO₂-neutral production processes and to preserving biodiversity.
- **Compocity (Hungary)**, a pioneer in the urban circular economy which has developed an indoor community composting robot, CompoBot, to transform waste into soil-regenerating material.
- **Fedabo (Italy)**, a consulting B Corp dedicated to enhancing the energy, economic, and environmental performance of both private and public companies.
- **EcoXperience (Portugal)**, which has developed innovative cleaning solutions by transforming used cooking oil into environmentally friendly detergents.
- **Pribinovina-Korenika (Slovenia)**, a social farm blending organic production, rural development, and social inclusion, providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities and other vulnerable social groups through sheltered employment.
- **Adopta un Abuelo (Spain)**, a social enterprise offering corporate volunteering programmes to companies, connecting them to the elderly care and residential sector, helping to prevent exclusion for the elderly.

The 2025 Sustainability Heroes and the ones of the previous editions are featured on <http://www.sme-enterprize.com/>.

THE GENERALI GROUP

Generali is one of the largest integrated insurance and asset management groups worldwide. Established in 1831, it is present in over 50 countries in the world, with a total premium income of €95.2 billion and €863 billion AUM in 2024. With around 87,000 employees serving 71 million customers, the Group has a leading position in Europe and a growing presence in Asia and Latin America. At the heart of Generali's strategy is its Lifetime Partner commitment to customers, achieved through innovative and personalised solutions, best-in-class customer experience and its digitalised global distribution capabilities. The Group has fully embedded sustainability into all strategic choices, with the aim to create value for all stakeholders while building a fairer and more resilient society.