

Closing the Trillion-Dollar SME Impact Finance Gap: New Taskforce Blueprint for Success

Impact Disclosure Taskforce SME Subgroup Unveils Game-Changing Whitepaper to Help Close Trillion-Dollar Sustainable SME Funding Gap at Climate Week NYC

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EINPresswire.com/ -- In a seismic moment for global impact finance, the SME Subgroup of the Impact Disclosure Taskforce (IDT)—a mission-driven, [fiscally sponsored program](#) of Legacy Global Programs (a public 501(c)3 organization), and a multi-stakeholder initiative committed to advancing best practices in impact, sustainability and SME disclosure —has released a groundbreaking Whitepaper with actionable strategies at the NEST Climate Summit, the flagship event of Climate Week NYC with a panel moderated by S&P Global Sustainable1.

Titled "Scaling Private Company Impact Finance", the Whitepaper issues an urgent rallying cry: the world cannot meet its climate and sustainability goals without unleashing SMEs—the true engines of the global economy, yet largely invisible in the impact finance conversation.



The IDT SME Subgroup



The Whitepaper

The Stark Reality:

- SMEs make up over 90% of all businesses globally and employ more than half the world's workforce, but less than 10% of climate finance reaches SMEs

— Source: OECD, IFC, Climate Policy Initiative

- They remain sidelined in impact finance, facing regulatory gridlock, systemic bias, and a lack of tools to prove and scale their impact. “The drop in global impact funding amounted to \$33 billion in 2024, representing a 28% drop from the previous year. This decline notably outpaced the 4% decrease seen in overall global VC funding,” per Impact City.



The time for scale is now!
This is a call for governments, banks, corporates, and investors to finance this overlooked SME segment —& unlock the next wave of global sustainable innovation.”

Michele Bongiovanni, Founder & Co-Chair, IDT SME Subgroup

- The funding gap for achieving the UN SDGs exceeds \$4 trillion per year, and SMEs are on the wrong side of the capital flow.

“Our planet is on fire—literally and economically. We must unlock capital for sustainable SMEs now, or risk losing the very innovators who can make the difference,” declared Michele Bongiovanni, Founder & Co-Chair of the SME Subgroup and CEO of HealRWorld, who authored the report alongside the SME Taskforce and Seton Hall University’s Stillman School of Business led by Dean Joyce Strawser.

“Empowering sustainable SMEs isn’t charity, it’s one of the most powerful economic and climate resilience strategies we have,” said Matt Helgeson, Co-Chair of the SME Subgroup and former Fortune 500 Chief Sustainability Officer.

A Blueprint for Disruption and Inclusion:

Both HealRWorld and Federated Hermes have conducted analyses that refute the notion that sustainably committed SMEs are underperformers. A series of studies from Federated Hermes starting in 2017 showed that firms with strong ESG credentials exhibited tighter spreads, reflecting greater credit resilience and better performance.

The Whitepaper goes beyond identifying the problem, it delivers scalable, transformative



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The Nest Climate Campus

solutions developed by leading experts across finance, academia, business, and impact innovation.

Specific solutions from the Subgroup include:

- Regional impact innovation labs to incubate sustainable SMEs and fast-track their access to capital and procurement pipelines.
- AI-driven fintech data and tools that remove bias, automate impact tracking, and democratize access to credit and investment for sustainable SMEs.
- Global education and disclosure tools like Mastercard's Digital Doors[®], and HealRWorld's SPEC[®] and SDID frameworks, which empower SMEs to digitize, disclose, and compete on a global scale.

Spotlight on Africa: A Global Model Emerges-

At the heart of the report lies the Africa Impact Scale-Up Program, a bold pilot initiative chaired by Her Excellency Ramatoulaye Diallo NDIAYE, CEO of the Great Green Wall of Africa Foundation. Designed to mobilize capital, strengthen local banks, and build replicable models, the program is poised to shift paradigms across emerging markets. "Africa is not a funding gap. It is a global catalyst, a bridge to the future. When capital meets creativity, Africa leads," said Her Excellency Diallo NDIAYE.

Global Investors Answer the Call-

"Small and medium-sized startups are essential drivers of innovation, yet they face persistent systemic barriers such as limited access to capital, inequities in funding, and a lack of targeted support. To unlock their full potential, we must reimagine financing—mobilizing capital toward ventures that deliver competitive returns while transforming communities and industries for the better. Aurion Capital is proud to join forces with the Impact Disclosure Taskforce SME Subgroup, as well as other visionary partners to help build a more inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem," remarked Ali Diallo, Founder, Aurion Capital.

Drawing from six focused global workstreams, Impact Finance Ecosystems, Sustainable Data & AI, SME Tools & Education, Innovation Labs, Sustainable Fintech, and Impact for Africa—the Whitepaper delivers actionable strategies to drive inclusive, AI-enabled, and SDG-aligned capital flows.

Why This Moment Matters-

A Call to Action:

This is more than a report. It's a blueprint for global economic transformation powered by sustainable SMEs.

Download the Whitepaper and join the movement:

<http://www.idtsme.org>

About the SME Subgroup of the Impact Disclosure Taskforce

The [IDT SME Subgroup](#) is a fiscally sponsored initiative of Legacy Global Programs, convening top leaders across banking, fintech, academia, and impact entrepreneurship to unlock climate-aligned capital for SMEs. Co-chaired by Michele Bongiovanni and Matt Helgeson, the Subgroup was launched as a response to the Impact Disclosure Taskforce's guidance released last year to align the interests of SMEs.

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