



# A springboard to recovery: Building back better together

**1.4 million**  
SMEs employ  
**43%**  
of the private-  
sector workforce.

Boosting SME  
productivity and  
growth could add  
**£140 billion**  
GVA to the UK  
economy by 2030:

Boosting the  
productivity of  
~900k SMEs  
would unlock

**£35  
billion.**

Increasing the number of  
female-led businesses and  
their productivity would add

**£50 billion.**

And add 50,000 female  
entrepreneurs and 260,000  
women-led businesses.

Improving Black, Asian and  
Ethnic Minority workforce  
participation could result in

**£20 billion**

and add  
**310,000**  
new SME workers.

Shifting toward sustainable business  
operating models would reduce the UK  
carbon footprint and increase GVA.

Transforming more SMEs into  
high-performing 'scaleups'  
would increase GVA.

Scaleups are **50% more productive** than other SMEs.

**But**

there are challenges  
to overcome:

- SMEs in many sectors are up to **60%** less productive than the UK average.
- Only **20%** of UK SMEs participate in programmes to help them scale up.
- Less than **5%** see real productivity gains as a result of such programmes.
- Women, Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority & regional entrepreneurs are underrepresented.

NatWest's SME analysis  
sought insights from:

- Survey of **1,000** UK SMEs
- Review of **100+** reports
- Analysis of **50** SME support programmes
- Interviews with more than **20** support programmes and organisations
- Focus groups with more than **20** SME leaders

# 8 **golden** principles

to personalise SME support programmes and unlock growth:

- 1.** Leverage multiple channels to drive awareness and enrolment.
- 2.** Speak the language of the SME.
- 3.** A high-quality team builds trusted relationships.
- 4.** Simplicity and flexibility are key.
- 5.** Ensure commitment, especially in blended programmes.
- 6.** “One-stop shop” implementation support.
- 7.** Support SMEs beyond the formal programme scope.
- 8.** Invest in building engaged SME networks.

Understanding the **diversity** of UK SMEs is key:

#### **Business context:**

Just **37%** of female owners believe digitisation can improve productivity vs 46 percent of male owners.

#### **Markets served:**

SMEs with high growth targets have **twice** the export turnover of less ambitious SMEs.

#### **Management mindset:**

Older businesses are **1.5 to 2 times less likely** to plan to grow and transform.

#### **How SMEs are run:**

Best performing businesses are greener and more tech-savvy.

## **Our commitment:**

NatWest is investing **£6 billion\*** in the growth of SMEs, £4bn outside London

We will support personalised programmes will enhance productivity in four areas:

- 1. Scaling up micro businesses**
- 2. Unlocking potential outside London**
- 3. Boosting managerial skills and practices**
- 4. Supporting technology adoption**

This commitment will include:

- 1. Refocusing of our award winning accelerator network - 75% of the programme will focus on high growth potential businesses**
- 2. Scaling-up of 1.2 million micro businesses  
Creation of dedicated Growth Consultants**
- 3. 10,000 NatWest customers connected to training and growth opportunities**
- 4. Partnerships with the Government, charities and business community**
- 5. A new partnership with Digital Boost - supporting the goal of mentoring 500,000 women in tech skills and practices**

\*Available to UK residents aged 18 or over. Security and Director's guarantee may be required. Product fees may apply. Subject to status, for businesses only.