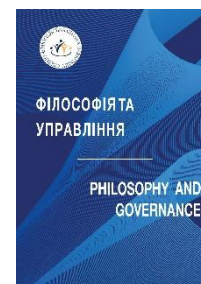




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State Mechanisms for Managing the Activation of the Business Sector in the Post-War Period

Oleksandr Dorofyeyev ¹ • Tetiana Vlasenko ^{2*} • Valerii Dolia ³ • Andrii Dorohan ³

¹ *Poltava State Agrarian University (Ukraine). Professor at the Department of Public Management and Administration Doctor of Sciences in Economics, Professor.*

² *Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics (Ukraine). Head of the Enterprise Economics and Business Organization Department, Doctor of Sciences in Economics, Professor.*

³ *Poltava State Agrarian University (Ukraine). Postgraduate Student at the Department of Economics and Public Management.*

* **Corresponding Author**, e-mail: t.vlasenko@hneu.net

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ABSTRACT

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The article focuses on the role of the entrepreneurial sector in full-scale war and post-crisis recovery, and on the development of mechanisms to activate it. The purpose of the article is to analyze the current state of entrepreneurship, identify the challenges it faces, and systematize existing support mechanisms for small and medium-sized enterprises. The article defines the role of small and medium-sized enterprises in contributing to GDP growth, providing employment, and maintaining the country's economic resilience amid deep structural shocks. The scale of losses and destruction in the entrepreneurial sector, caused by hostilities, disruptions to production and logistics chains, energy instability, and declining effective demand, is examined. It is substantiated that the combined impact of military, institutional, and market factors has shaped a multidimensional operating environment for small and medium-sized enterprises, characterized by the coexistence of financial, human resource, infrastructural, regulatory, and socio-psychological challenges. The most affected sectors of the economy and the key points of their vulnerability are systematized, and the consequences of destructive processes for the financial sustainability and managerial capacity of enterprises are analyzed. It is revealed that, despite significant losses, a portion of small and medium-sized enterprises has demonstrated the ability to adapt through product diversification, business process optimization, and the active adoption of digital technologies. The analysis of practical business cases enabled the identification of the effectiveness of combining digital management tools, accounting automation, and strategic diversification as mechanisms for maintaining operational resilience under high-risk conditions. It has been determined that, to support the small and medium-sized enterprises sector in Ukraine, a national strategy for recovery, sustainable development, and digital transformation has been adopted at the state level. The implementation of its key directions (financial support, innovative and digital development, human capital development, and expansion of export potential) will form a comprehensive model for activating the entrepreneurial sector in conditions of wartime and post-crisis development. Systemic synchronization of public policy, digital transformation, and institutional reforms is a decisive prerequisite for enhancing the resilience and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises in Ukraine.



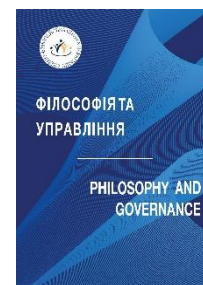
KEYWORDS

entrepreneurship, small and medium-sized enterprises sector, enterprise economic potential, development, digital transformation, state support, resilience.



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Державні механізми управління активізацією підприємницького сектору у повоєнний період

Олександр В. Дорофєєв ¹ • Тетяна А. Власенко ^{2 *} •Валерій В. Доля ³ • Андрій С. Дорогань ³¹ Полтавський державний аграрний університет (Україна). Професор кафедри публічного управління та адміністрування, д-р екон. наук, професор.² Харківський національний економічний університет імені Семена Кузнеця (Україна). Професор кафедри економіки підприємства та організації бізнесу, д-р екон. наук, професор.³ Полтавський державний аграрний університет (Україна). Здобувач наукового ступеня доктор філософії кафедри економіки та публічного управління.* Автор-кореспондент, e-mail: t.vlasenko@hneu.net

СТАТТЯ

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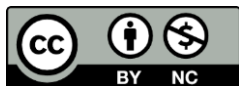
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Статтю присвячено дослідженню ролі підприємницького сектору в умовах повномасштабної війни та післякризового відновлення та питанням формування механізмів його активізації. Стаття має на меті проаналізувати сучасний стан та виклики, що постають перед підприємництвом та систематизувати наявні механізми для малих та середніх підприємств. В статті визначено роль малих та середніх підприємств у формуванні ВВП, забезпеченні зайнятості та підтриманні економічної стійкості країни в умовах глибоких структурних шоків. Досліджено масштаби втрат і руйнувань підприємницького сектору, зумовлених бойовими діями, порушенням виробничих і логістичних ланцюгів, енергетичною нестабільністю та зниженням платоспроможного попиту. Обґрунтовано, що сукупний вплив воєнних, інституційних та ринкових факторів сформував багатовимірне середовище функціонування малих та середніх підприємств, де поєднуються фінансові, кадрові, інфраструктурні, регуляторні та соціально-психологічні виклики. Систематизовано найбільш постраждалі галузі економіки та основні точки їх вразливості, проаналізовано наслідки руйнівних процесів для фінансової стійкості та управлінської спроможності підприємств. Виявлено, що попри значні втрати частина малих та середніх підприємств продемонструвала здатність до адаптації шляхом диверсифікації продукції, оптимізації бізнес-процесів та активного впровадження цифрових технологій. Дослідження практичних кейсів функціонування підприємств дозволило виявити ефективність поєднання цифрових інструментів управління, автоматизації обліку та стратегічної диверсифікації як механізмів збереження операційної стійкості в умовах високих ризиків. Визначено, що для підтримання сектору малих та середніх підприємств в Україні, на державному рівні було ухвалено стратегію відновлення, сталого розвитку та цифрової трансформації. Реалізація її напрямів (фінансової підтримки, інноваційного та цифрового розвитку, розвитку людського капіталу й розширення експортного потенціалу) сформує модель активізації підприємницького сектору в умовах воєнного та післякризового розвитку. Системна синхронізація державної політики, цифрової трансформації та інституційних реформ є визначальною передумовою підвищення стійкості та конкурентоспроможності малих та середніх підприємств в Україні.



КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

підприємництво, сектор малих та середніх підприємств, економічний потенціал підприємства, розвиток, цифрова трансформація, державна підтримка, стійкість.

1. Introduction

The current state of the socio-economic system in Ukraine is characterized by a high level of turbulence, which is caused by a combination of global financial and economic crises, epidemiological shocks, military aggressions, geopolitical instability, structural imbalances of national economies. At present, the business sector suffers significant losses, which are accompanied by a decrease in business activity, a reduction in investments, an increase in the level of insolvency of business entities and a weakening of innovation potential. Small and medium-sized enterprises are especially vulnerable to crisis phenomena. The relevance of the study is due to the fact that the future post-crisis development of the economy objectively requires a transition from short-term anti-crisis measures to the formation of systemic mechanisms for intensifying entrepreneurial activity, capable of ensuring the restoration of production processes, increasing the stability of business and its adaptation to new operating conditions.

2. Literature Review

Studies on the activation of the entrepreneurial sector in times of crises are mainly focused on the adaptation of business to military challenges, the transformation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the role of state support. In her research, Murovana [10] emphasized the importance of financial and regulatory instruments for stabilizing entrepreneurship under martial law. Konstantynovskiy [5] focused on structural changes and digital transformation of SMEs as factors for the recovery of their business activity. Scientists Loiko and Oleksandrov [8] studied state and international business support programs. Regional aspects of entrepreneurship activation through financial and economic instruments were studied by Ilchuk [4], while Korohod [6] and Rudyk [11] analyzed the main barriers to the activities of SMEs and determined their role in the restoration of territorial communities. Andriienko [1], Demianyk [3], Tsymbala [14], Levchynskiy [7] and others devoted their works to the study of aspects of entrepreneurial activity in the conditions of war in Ukraine. Despite the completeness and validity of the scientists' conclusions, in the context of the post-crisis transformation of the economy, it is necessary to pay attention to mechanisms aimed at reducing regulatory barriers, expanding access to financial resources, supporting innovative activities, digital transformation of business processes and human capital development. The problem lies in the lack of a comprehensive justification of mechanisms for activating the entrepreneurial sector in the context of post-crisis development, which would integrate institutional, financial, economic, innovation, organizational and social components.

3. Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to analyze the current state and challenges facing entrepreneurship, as well as to systematize the adaptation mechanisms of SMEs in the context of post-crisis development.

To achieve this goal, the study outlines the following tasks:

- to analyze the role of small and medium-sized businesses in the formation of Ukraine's economic potential in the context of war and post-crisis development;
- to assess the scale of losses and structural deformations of the business sector caused by a full-scale invasion, taking into account industry specifics;
- systematize the key challenges and limitations of the functioning of SMEs in wartime;
- to investigate adaptation mechanisms for maintaining the operational stability of enterprises;
- to analyze the available tools for the recovery and digital transformation of small and medium-sized businesses;
- to substantiate the directions of activation of the entrepreneurial sector in the context of post-crisis development.

4. Methods and Materials

The methodological basis of the study was a set of general scientific and special methods of scientific knowledge. The method of analysis and synthesis is used to summarize theoretical approaches

to the development of the business sector and interpret empirical data on the impact of the war on the activities of SMEs. Statistical methods are used to analyze the dynamics of quantitative indicators of the development of small and medium-sized businesses, the level of employment, the scale of losses and digitalization of business. The comparative method made it possible to compare the state and conditions of functioning of enterprises in different sectors of the economy. The systematic approach is used to consider the entrepreneurial sector as an integral socio-economic system that functions under the influence of military, market, institutional and technological factors. The structural-functional method is used to analyze the mechanisms of state support for SMEs and their role in the recovery, modernization and digital transformation of business. The method of generalization and grouping is used to classify challenges, public policy instruments and directions for activating the business sector. The abstract-logical method made it possible to form scientifically grounded conclusions about the prospects for the development of SMEs in Ukraine in the context of post-crisis recovery. The application of these tasks and methods ensured the comprehensive nature of the study, the objectivity of the results obtained and the possibility of forming practically-oriented recommendations for the activation of the entrepreneurial sector of the economy of Ukraine.

5. Results and Discussion

The entrepreneurial sector of Ukraine's economy has a significant impact on the formation of GDP, employment and investment activity, it was, is and will be the foundation of the national economic system. Before the start of the full-scale invasion, small and medium-sized enterprises (hereinafter referred to as SMEs) dominate among all registered business structures (Fig. 1): the share of SMEs is more than 99% of the total number of enterprises, provides more than 70% of employment in the economy and generates a significant part of sales and added value.

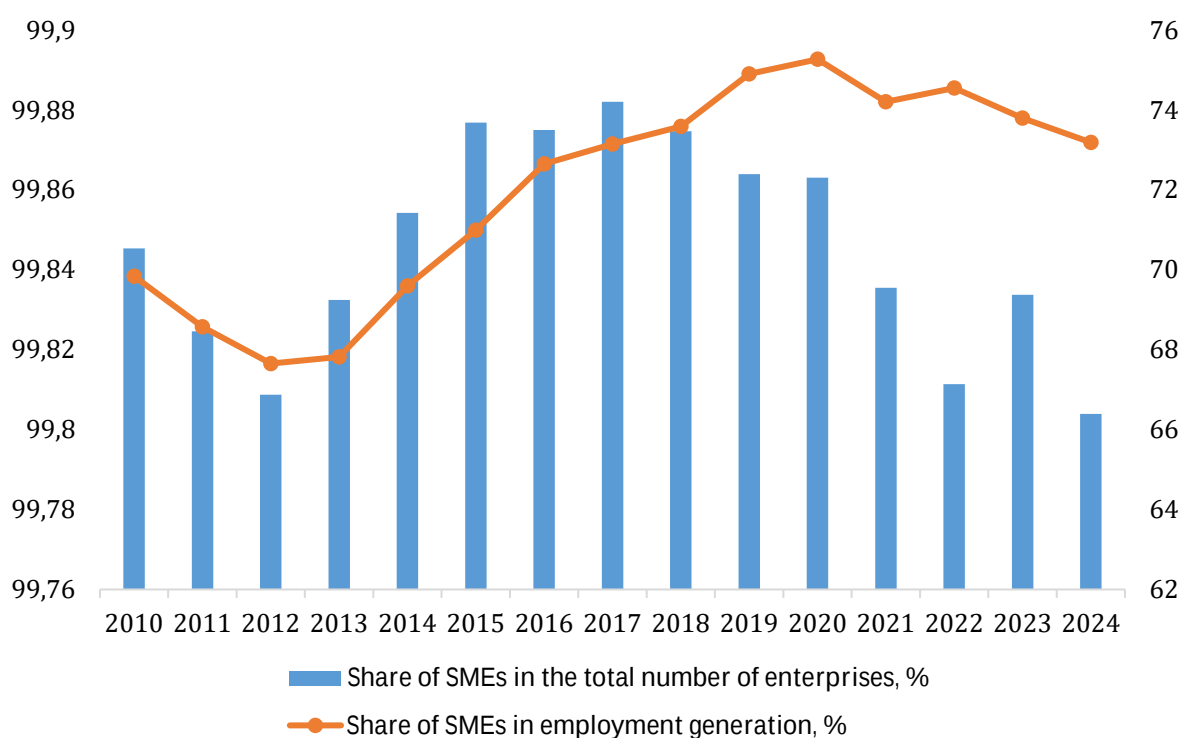


Figure 1. Dynamics of the share of SMEs in the total number of enterprises and in the formation of employment, 2010-2024

Source: Built by the authors according to [12; 13].

However, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine has significantly affected the quality of entrepreneurial activity. The war caused a decrease in business activity, a reduction in the number of fully functioning enterprises, the destruction of infrastructure and a drop in production volumes in certain sectors of the economy [11]. The most vulnerable to this were enterprises in the field of construction, transport, industry and agriculture, which negatively affected their ability to stable functioning (Table 1).

Table 1. The impact of the full-scale invasion on the activities of enterprises in various industries

Sector of the economy	Points of vulnerability	Consequences for enterprises	Managerial manifestations
Construction	Destruction of industrial and residential infrastructure, shortage of materials, increase in the cost of resources, reduction of investment	Stopping or postponing projects, reducing the volume of work performed, falling solvent demand	Violation of financial stability, reduction of employment, increase in bankruptcy risks
Transport and logistics	Damage to transport routes, blocking of ports, rising fuel and insurance costs, security risks	Decrease in cargo and passenger flows, disruption of logistics chains	A drop in operational efficiency, an increase in the cost of services, the need to reorganize routes
Industry	Destruction of production capacities, shortage of energy resources, disruption of the supply of raw materials, personnel losses	Production cuts, shutdown of individual enterprises, decline in exports	Deterioration of financial results, decrease in investment activity, technological degradation
Agriculture	Land mining, occupation of territories, logistical constraints, shortage of labor and resources	Decrease in sown areas and yields, export restrictions, loss of production assets	Disruption of production cycles, reduced profitability, increased financial risks

Source: Systematized by the authors according to the data given in [1; 3].

According to the results of a study by the Kyiv School of Economics [1], at the end of 2024, the total direct damage caused to Ukraine's infrastructure as a result of the war exceeded 170 billion hryvnias. USD. Compared to the value at the beginning of the year, this figure increased by UAH 12.6 billion. USD. as a result of continued systemic destruction of infrastructure and production assets due to hostilities and massive missile strikes. The industrial, construction and service sectors of the economy suffered losses of about UAH 14.4 billion. USD. According to experts, almost 500 large and medium-sized enterprises, both private and state-owned, were damaged or destroyed to the ground, which led to serious disruptions in production and logistics chains and a decrease in the operational capacity of the entrepreneurial sector of the highest technological level. Losses in the transport sector are estimated at about 38.5 billion. USD. In particular, damage to roads is 28.3 billion. dollars, and the total length of damaged or destroyed tracks exceeded 26 thousand km. km. Rail transportation suffered losses in the amount of 4.3 billion. dollars, port infrastructure in the amount of 0.85 billion. dollars, and the aviation sector by 2 billion. USD. In addition, 260 thousand. od. cars were destroyed or damaged in the amount of about 2.2 billion. USD. The agro-industrial complex also suffered significant losses: KSE experts estimate losses in the amount of 10.3 billion. USD. More than 130 thousand were disabled. od. agricultural machinery, 4 million. tons. raw materials in granaries and 16 thousand tons. ha. perennial crops.

In addition, the energy sector was significantly damaged: about 14.6 billion cubic meters. USD. as a result of the destruction of large generating capacities, high-voltage substations and oil and gas infrastructure; educational infrastructure for about 7.3 billion. USD. more than 4000 educational institutions were damaged or destroyed; The healthcare sector suffered losses of about 4.3 billion hryvnias. USD. with more than 1554 damaged medical institutions; The cultural, sports and tourism sectors lost about 4 billion. USD; there were harmful losses at the level of 4.5 billion. USD. due to damage to 298 thousand. ha. forests; Digital and telecommunications infrastructure suffered losses of more than USD 1.2 billion.

Therefore, military actions by the aggressor country have caused large-scale destruction of Ukraine's production and infrastructure assets in all sectors of the economy. Significant damage has reduced current production capacity and created long-term obstacles to economic recovery and business activity.

A UNDP study in Ukraine [15] outlined the challenges that the SME sector is currently facing. The totality of the identified problems indicates both the presence of individual situational constraints and the formation of a complex multidimensional environment for the functioning of SMEs (Table 2).

As we can see, the following have been and remain significant obstacles: demand instability and market uncertainty, labor shortages, energy risks, limited access to finance, infrastructure and logistical disruptions, regulatory barriers, and psychological burden on personnel. The cumulative impact of the identified factors hinders the recovery and development of SMEs.

However, despite such terrible losses, constant obstacles and high risks of destruction, some small and medium-sized businesses were still able to maintain part of the production and employment volumes and adapted to the new conditions due to product diversification and the use of digital

technologies. An illustrative example of the adaptation of small and medium-sized businesses in the agri-food sector in the conditions of crisis and martial law is Kharkiv Dairy Plant LLC, known under the Agromol brand, which specializes in the production and processing of dairy products. The company was significantly affected by the disruption of supply chains, an increase in the cost of raw materials, energy risks and a decrease in solvent demand.

Table 2. Challenges faced by SMEs during the war

Challenge	Manifestation	Impact on SMEs	Consequences
Market instability and demand	Decline in the purchasing power of the population; reduction in domestic demand; high uncertainty of market conditions	Decrease in sales volumes; difficulty in forecasting income; abandonment of long-term planning	Reorientation of SMEs to short-term survival strategies; decrease in investment activity
Personnel shortage	Mobilization; labor migration; Shortage of skilled workers	Decreased labor productivity; increase in the workload on personnel; Limitations of business scaling	Weakening of human capital; Slowing down innovation and digital transformations
Energy risks	Interruptions in electricity and gas supply; power system instability	Production stoppages; cost growth; the need for backup energy sources	Increased costs; Actualization of energy-efficient and autonomous solutions
Financial constraints	Limited access to credit; shortage of working capital; high credit risks	Inability to restore and modernize; Restrictions on investment in development	Technological level conservation; growing financial vulnerability of SMEs
Infrastructure and logistics risks	Destruction of transport infrastructure; disruption of supply chains; Security threats	Delays in deliveries; growth in logistics costs; Production interruptions	Decreased operational stability; the need to diversify logistics routes
Regulatory uncertainty	Frequent changes in regulations; Administrative barriers	Growth in transaction costs; Difficulty accessing support programs	Decreased trust in institutions; Curbing business formalization
Psychological and social factors	High levels of stress; emotional burnout; decreased staff motivation	Drop in labor productivity; Increased staff turnover	Long-term losses of human capital; weakening of entrepreneurial initiative

Source: Summarized by the authors according to the data given in [15].

Kharkiv Dairy Plant LLC has demonstrated the ability to adapt and maintain operational resilience by diversifying its product range, optimizing production processes and implementing digital management tools. In particular, the company has intensified the use of digital accounting systems for raw materials and finished products, elements of automated production planning, as well as electronic channels of interaction with retail chains and suppliers of raw milk. At the same time, the company focused on improving the quality and safety of products, which contributed to maintaining consumer loyalty in an unstable market [2].

The example of the enterprise showed that even in high-risk conditions, agricultural SMEs are able to maintain economic activity under the condition of a combination of technological modernization, adaptive management and strategic diversification. However, the fragmentation of individual adaptation solutions, limited financial and human resources, uneven access to digital tools objectively determine the need for a systematic, coordinated and long-term state policy aimed at supporting and developing small and medium-sized businesses.

To support the SME sector, it is necessary to form and implement comprehensive strategic documents that can ensure the synchronization of measures for recovery, modernization and digital transformation of the business sector. Such an instrument of state economic policy is now the "Strategy for Recovery, Sustainable Development and Digital Transformation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises for the Period up to 2027", which defines priorities, goals and mechanisms for supporting SMEs, taking into account post-crisis challenges, structural changes in the economy and the needs of Ukraine's integration into the European economic space [9]. The main areas of recovery, sustainable development and digital transformation of SMEs outlined in the document are presented in Table 3.

The document presents an operational plan of specific measures for the period up to 2027, in particular:

1. Expanding SMEs' access to financial resources through mechanisms of preferential lending and grant support and further development of the state program "5-7-9%", which has already proven its effectiveness. As of the summer of 2025, Ukrainian entrepreneurs received more than UAH 52.8 billion. UAH. soft loans for 17.6 thousand hryvnias. od. loan agreements, of which: more than 13 billion. UAH.

was directed to the implementation of investment projects, about 12 billion. UAH. to support businesses in the affected regions. About 10 thousand. entrepreneurs took advantage of grant programs within the framework of the eRobota initiative to start or scale their businesses.

Table 3. Areas of recovery, sustainable development and digital transformation of SMEs

Direction	Main tasks	Implementation tools	Expected effect
Restoring and facilitating business	It is aimed at stabilizing the activities of SMEs in the context of post-crisis development, reducing regulatory pressure and eliminating financial constraints. It provides for the formation of a favorable business climate, the restoration of production capacities, the preservation of employment and the reduction of transaction costs.	preferential lending (state programs, portfolio guarantees); grant programs for SMEs; deregulation and simplification of permitting procedures; compensation of interest rates; expanding SMEs' access to government support and procurement programs	increasing the financial stability of SMEs; growth of business activity; reduction of barriers to entry into the market; Resumption of production and employment
Innovative development, digital transformation and green transition	It is focused on the modernization of business models of SMEs, the implementation of digital and environmentally oriented solutions, and the improvement of the technological level of enterprises. It involves the integration of innovations into production and management processes.	support for innovative projects; digitalization of business processes; implementation of automation and AI; development of clusters and technology parks; green investments and ESG tools	growth of labor productivity; increasing the innovation capacity of SMEs; reducing the environmental burden; Formation of digitally mature enterprises
Development of human capital and entrepreneurial culture	It is aimed at improving the quality of human capital, the formation of modern managerial and digital competencies, the development of entrepreneurial thinking and inclusiveness.	advanced training programs; entrepreneurial and digital education; dual professional training; specialized programs for women, veterans, IDPs, persons with disabilities	growth of the management capacity of SMEs; increasing the adaptability of enterprises; expanding social inclusivity; Formation of a sustainable entrepreneurial culture
Increasing competitiveness and expanding exports	It is focused on integrating Ukrainian SMEs into global markets, diversifying sales and increasing export potential.	participation in international business support networks; development of export infrastructure; development of "Made in Ukraine" brands; Credit and export support	export growth; increasing international competitiveness; diversification of sales markets; integration into global value chains

Source: Systematized by the authors according to the data given in [9].

2. Support for the relocation of enterprises from zones of active hostilities, so according to the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, as of 2023, more than 800 enterprises were moved from dangerous regions to the central and western parts of the country. The state provided financing for relocation costs, provided logistical support, and formed the prerequisites for the creation of industrial parks for displaced industries.

3. Development of human capital and entrepreneurial competencies, according to which by 2027 it is planned to attract more than 1.7 million. os. to training programs in entrepreneurship, digital skills and export management. Educational initiatives are implemented in partnership with international organizations that finance business schools, mentoring and consulting programs. More than 100 units have already been launched on the basis of the Diia.Business platform. training courses in financial literacy, marketing, e-commerce, and export.

4. Ensuring the digital transformation of the business sector, which would reduce the regulatory and tax burden on SMEs by at least 25% by 2027 through the introduction of electronic services, automated reporting and expansion of the functionality of the Diia.Business platform. Currently, the platform serves more than 1.5 million users and provides more than 30 units. online services (registration of a sole proprietorship, submission of tax reports, business consultations, etc.).

Ukrainian SMEs demonstrate the active implementation of digital solutions [14]. In 2024, the volume of online consumption of goods and services reached 239 billion. UAH, which is 25% higher than in 2023, and the share of e-commerce in retail turnover reached 10%. The number of online shoppers has increased to 11 million. OS, with an average frequency of 17 purchases per year. The use of electronic public services is also growing: in the first quarter of 2024 alone, 57665 new sole proprietorships were registered through the Diia portal. About 28% of Ukrainian companies use cloud

technologies, and another 32% use data analytics tools and artificial intelligence elements to optimize business processes.

Therefore, the existing mechanisms for activating the enterprise are complex and systemic in nature and combine the tools of financial support, deregulation, human capital development, digital transformation and institutional promotion of innovations. The implementation of such mechanisms ensures an increase in the adaptability and sustainability of enterprises, stimulates investment and innovation activity, contributes to the preservation of employment and the expansion of sales markets.

6. Conclusions

During the current study, we came to the conclusion that SMEs provide a dominant share of employment, make a significant contribution to the formation of gross value added and support investment activity. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine caused unprecedented destruction of the production and infrastructure base, which significantly reduced the operational capacity of enterprises in various fields. The cumulative impact of market instability, staff shortages, energy risks, financial constraints, logistical disruptions, regulatory uncertainty and psychological burden forms a complex multidimensional environment for SMEs to operate, which hinders their investment and innovation activity. However, analyzing practical examples, we found that there is a significant adaptive potential of SMEs, which is manifested in the diversification of activities, optimization of business processes and the active introduction of digital technologies. On the other hand, fragmented individual decisions of enterprises are insufficient for the long-term recovery of the SME sector, which necessitates a systematic and coherent public policy.

To support the SME sector in Ukraine, a strategy for recovery, sustainable development and digital transformation was adopted, which will ensure the synchronization of financial support measures, business relocation, human capital development, innovative and digital renewal of enterprises. The implementation of the directions identified in the strategy will create prerequisites for increasing the financial stability of SMEs, accelerating digital transformation, increasing labor productivity, expanding export potential and integrating Ukrainian enterprises into European and global value chains.

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