
THE ROLE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND EXTERNAL TRADE THE CASE OF ALGERIA DURING THE PERIOD 2000-2018

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Abstract:

The topic of medium and small-sized enterprises presents itself for study due to the ambiguity surrounding it at several levels, in terms of its definition and characteristics, as it is the engine supporting the economies of many developed countries due to the special interests given to them by the latter. Algeria is a distinguished place, and this is what reality reflects in terms of laying out several programs to support and promote it, and in return, and what is the role that these institutions played in attracting foreign investments and promoting external trade.

We note that small and medium enterprises do not represent a great temptation for the foreign investor due to their small size in exchange for their low profitability, and we do not forget the investment climate surrounding them, while we find that they have a distinct role in exports outside of hydrocarbons.

Key words: small and medium enterprises, foreign investment, external trade, export, hydrocarbons.

Introduction:

Small and medium enterprises are characterized by several characteristics that make them the focus of attention by the state in an attempt to develop them and activate their role in the national economy through active participation in the economic variables of the economy such as employment, national product, added value, foreign investment and foreign trade.

Within the framework of the programs set by the state, which aim primarily to qualify small and medium enterprises to live up to their aspirations and gain an international competitive advantage that will give them the ability to export their products in the international market and make them a fertile field for foreign investment. Have small and medium enterprises made an effective contribution to attracting foreign investment and increasing the volume of foreign trade?

1- The concept and characteristics of small and medium enterprises

There are many definitions of small and medium enterprises due to the different commercial activities and service, and what distinguishes each type over the other in terms of the requirements of workers, capital and annual profits expected from it, in addition to the distinctive characteristics of these institutions.

1.1 The concept of small and medium-sized enterprises

There is no specific definition of medium and medium enterprises, and this is due to the difficulty of determining the appropriate definition and the different criteria used in determining their concept, and the following is an explanation of this:

Difficulty in defining the definition

This difficulty lies in the difference and disparity between countries in terms of economic growth as well as between sectors in terms of capital use, in addition to the multiplicity of terms for small and medium enterprises:

- **Disparity in economic growth:**

The difference in the degree of growth between the industrialized countries and the developing countries reflects the development reached by each country in addition to the weight of the economic structures (institutions, economic units) in them.

A small enterprise in Japan, the United States of America or in any manufacturing country can be considered a medium or large enterprise in a developing country such as Algeria, depending on its different economic and monetary situation, that is, it can be said that the definition of small and medium-sized enterprises varies from one country to another depending on the extent of growth and development of its economy. (Yusuf Qureshi, 2005, p. 15)

- **Diversification of economic activity:**

When comparing institutions for different branches, we find that some sectors of activity are characterized by less capital intensity than other sectors, and therefore the element of work is reduced, for example, an institution with 500 workers is considered as a large enterprise in the textile sector, while it is considered a small enterprise in the automotive sector, so it is difficult in front of the difference in economic activity to find a unified definition of small and medium-sized enterprises based on the number of workers. (Yusuf Qureshi, 2005, p. 16)

- **Multiplicity of the branch of economic activity:**

Each institution varies according to the branches of activity to which it belongs, for example, industrial activity is divided into extractive industrial institutions and manufacturing institutions, the latter in turn includes a number of industrial branches, and therefore each institution differs in terms of labor intensity and the volume of investments required by the activity. (Yusuf Qureshi, 2005, p. 16)

- **Technical factors:**

The technical factor is summarized in the level of integration between institutions, where the latter is more integrated, this leads to the unification of the production process and its concentration in one factory, and therefore the size of the institutions tends to be larger, while when the production process is fragmented and distributed to a large number of institutions, this leads to the emergence of several small and medium enterprises. (Rabeh Khouni Warqia Hassani, 2008, p. 18)

- **Political factors:**

It is represented in the extent of the interest of the state and its institutions in the small and medium enterprises sector and trying to provide various assistance to it and overcome the difficulties that stand in its way in order to direct, promote and support it, and in the light of the political factor can determine the definition and indicate its limits and distinguish between institutions according to the vision of policymakers and development strategies and those interested in the affairs of this sector.

(Rabeh Khouni Warqia Hassani, 2008, p. 18)

B. Criteria for the definition of small and medium-sized enterprises

The attempt to give a comprehensive definition of medium and small enterprises is hindered by the multiplicity of criteria on which these definitions are based, some of which depend on the size of labor and the others on the volume of sales, and another definition goes to depend on the size of the funds used, but the most common criteria in the definition of small and medium-sized enterprises, which were signed by a semi-general consensus between writers, institutions, government agencies, research centers and all departments interested in the small and medium enterprises sector are as follows:

- **Quantitative criteria:** which are:
 - The criterion of the number of workers (**the size of employment**): This criterion is considered the most common criterion for defining small and medium enterprises, as each of them uses a specific number of workers, and this number varies from one country to another according to the degree of economic development. (Ziad Abu al-Fahm, 2009, p. 20)
 - **Turnover criterion:** It is considered one of the modern criteria used in classifying the size of an enterprise, as small and medium enterprises are classified according to this criterion in both the United States of America and Europe. The enterprise with a turnover of one million dollars or less is classified as a small and medium enterprise. One of its shortcomings is that it does not reflect the performance of the institution, in the case of a continuous rise in the prices of goods sold, followed by a rise in the turnover, and therefore there is a belief in the development of the institution's performance, so it is considered necessary but not sufficient. (Delilah Masdoodi, 2011, p. 37)
 - **Capital criterion:** It is considered one of the common criteria as it represents an important element in determining the production capacity of the enterprise, as some Asian countries (the Philippines, India, South Korea, Pakistan) have relied on it to classify small and medium enterprises as those with a capital ranging from 35 to 200 thousand dollars, while France is considered a small and medium enterprise that does not exceed 5 million francs or its equivalent in euros. (Delilah Masdoodi, 2011, p. 37)
 - **Double Criterion:** This criterion is adopted in determining the various industrial and commercial projects by combining the first criterion and the third criterion, which sets a maximum number of workers in addition to a certain amount of fixed capital investments in small and medium enterprises. (Rabeh Hamida, 2011, p. 03)
 - **Qualitative Criteria:** (Rabeh Khouni Warqia Hassani, 2008, pp. 21-23)
In addition to quantitative standards, qualitative standards are used to define and develop a comprehensive definition of small and medium enterprises due to the difference in their relative importance, different degrees of growth and different technological level. There was a clear variation in the definition of small and medium-sized enterprises based on quantitative standards alone, which necessitated the development of qualitative standards in order to clarify more of the limits of the definition, the most important of which are the following:
 - **Independence:** It is the independence of the project from any economic blocs, thus excluding the branches of major institutions, and we can call this criterion the name of the legal standard and also the independence of management and work and that the owner is the manager without the interference of external bodies in the work of the institution, meaning that it carries a personal character and the uniqueness of the manager in making decisions and that the owner or owners of the institution bear full responsibility for the obligations of the project towards others.

- **Ownership:** Small and medium enterprises are characterized by individual ownership and are not affiliated with any major institution, i.e. most of them are affiliated with the private sector in the form of financial institutions or companies, and their ownership may be public property such as local institutions (state institutions, municipality... etc) and may be mixed property.
- **Market Share:** The market share of an small and medium enterprises is small for the following reasons:
 - The small size of the enterprise and the volume of its production;
 - The small size of the capital and the locality of activity;
 - Production is geared towards domestic markets, which are characterized by their narrowness;
 - Intense competition between small and medium enterprises for similarity in possibilities and conditions.
 - Local activity: It means that the activity is limited to one known area or place, and that it does not practice its activity through several branches, with its relatively small size in its productive sector to which it belongs in the region, and this does not prevent the extension of marketing activity of products to other areas at home and abroad.

C. Definition of small and medium enterprises in Algeria: (Article 05, 08, 09, 10, 2017, pp. 05-06)

The Algerian legislator defines small and medium enterprises as follows:

A small and medium enterprise, whatever its legal nature, is defined as an enterprise for the production of goods and services:

- Operates from 01 to 250 people;
- Its annual turnover does not exceed 4 billion Algerian dinars or its total annual turnover does not exceed one billion (1) Algerian dinars;
- Meets the criteria of independence.

Within the meaning of this law, the following terms shall mean:

- **Users:**

The number of wage employees corresponding to the number of annual work units permanently during one year, while temporary work or official work is considered part of the annual work units, the year on which it depends is that related to the last closed accounting activity.
- **Limits considered to determine turnover or total proceeds:**

They are those related to the last activity closed for a period of twelve months.
- **Independent Foundation:**

Any enterprise that does not own a capital of 25% or more by another enterprise or group of enterprises that does not meet the definition of small and medium enterprises.

"A medium enterprise is defined as an institution employing between 50 and 250 people, with a turnover between four hundred (400) million Algerian dinars to four (4) billion Algerian dinars, or with a total annual proceeds between two hundred (200) million Algerian dinars to one billion (1) Algerian dinars."

"A small enterprise is defined as an enterprise that employs between 10 and 49 people, and its annual turnover does not exceed four hundred (400) million dinars or its total annual proceeds do not exceed two hundred (200) million dinars."

"Micro-enterprises are an enterprise that employs from one to nine workers and achieves a turnover of less than forty (40) million dinars or whose total annual proceeds do not exceed twenty (20) million dinars."

The definition of small and medium enterprises according to the Algerian legislator can be summarized in the following two tables:

Table 01: Definition of small and medium enterprises in Algeria according to the criterion of number of workers, turnover and ownership of capital

Enterprise \ Criterion	Number of workers	Business Number	Capital Ownership
Mini	01 to 09	Less than 40 million dinars	Acquisition of 25% or more of the capital by an institution or group of other institutions
Small	10 to 49	Not exceeding 400 million dinars	
Medium	50 to 250	Between 400 million and 4 billion dinars	

Source: Article No. 05, 08, 09, 10, Law No. 17-02 dated 11 Rabi' Al-Thani 1422 AH corresponding to January 10, 2017, containing the Directive Law for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises, Official Gazette, Issue 02, Date: 12 Rabi' Al-Thani 1438 AH corresponding to January 11, 2017, pp. 05-06.

Table 02: Definition of small and medium enterprises in Algeria according to the criterion of the number of workers, annual earnings and ownership of capital:

Enterprise \ Criterion	Number of workers	Annual Toll	Capital Ownership
Mini	01 to 09	Not to exceed 20 million dinars	Acquisition of 25% or more of the capital by an institution or group of other institutions
Small	10 to 49	Not exceeding 200 million dinars	
Medium	50 to 250	Between one million 200 and one billion dinars	

Source: Article No. 05, 08, 09, 10, Law No. 17-02 dated 11 Rabi' Al-Thani 1422 AH corresponding to January 10, 2017, containing the Directive Law for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises, Official Gazette, Issue 02, Date: 12 Rabi' Al-Thani 1438 AH corresponding to January 11, 2017, pp. 05-06.

We conclude from the above that the Algerian legislator relied in his definition of small and medium enterprises on four criteria, namely the number of workers, the number of turnovers, the annual proceeds as well as the ownership of capital, but they are not fixed in the eyes of the legislator, if the financial and economic variables that have a direct impact on the exchange rate call for changing them, they will change in terms of quantity, and this is what the legislator stipulated in the same law under Article No. 09.

1.2 Characteristics of small and medium enterprises:

Small and medium enterprises are characterized by several characteristics that distinguish them from other institutions, especially large ones, the most important of which are:

A- Low levels of capital/labor coefficient:

Small enterprises typically specialize in a limited number of manufacturing processes, resulting in the use of less capital-intensive technology, which in turn leads to relatively low capital/labor factor levels in small enterprises, resulting in additional capacity to absorb surplus labor. **(Abdul Muttalib Abdul Majeed, 2009, p. 40)**

B- Decrease in the absolute volume of capital required to establish and operate small projects:

This characteristic indicates that small enterprises are more attractive to small savers who are not inclined to investment and employment patterns that deprive them of direct supervision of their investments, hence it can be said that the establishment of small enterprises tends to be established with relatively small capitals that use at the same time the modern production method. **(Abdul Muttalib Abdul Majeed, 2009, p. 41)**

C. Ownership Patterns:

The low absolute volume of capital required to establish and operate small enterprises is associated with certain forms of ownership, which are often represented by individual and family ownership or in companies of persons, and these types of ownership help to attract and highlight organizational and administrative expertise and skills in the local environment and its development. **(Othman Khalaf, 2003-2004, p. 30)**

D. Centralization:

These institutions are characterized by centralization in the conduct of their work, where the project owner himself, or with the help of a limited number of assistants, performs various activities in the institution, where these institutions often use a simple structure, and as noted the independence of management in decision-making, but in most cases, the owners are the ones who manage the project. **(Fayez Juma Saleh Al-Najjar and Abdul Sattar Muhammad Al-Ali, 2006, p. 67)**

E - Easy configuration:

Small business organizations are easy to find legally and effectively, and this is embodied in most countries and their laws for doing business and commercial and service activities, that the requirements for training are usually simple, easy, clear and specific, the small individual or collective incentive is sufficient to be behind the establishment of small businesses that are later launched into medium-sized companies and institutions. **(Taher Mohsen Mansour Al-Ghalbi, 2009, p. 27)**

F - Flexibility and speed of response:

The speed of response in small and medium enterprises is due to the simplicity of the organizational structure, the coherence of work vocabulary, the absence of rigid formal bureaucratic mechanisms that make the process of change for the better and better take place in a better and faster way, as well as these characteristics enable small and medium enterprises to adapt quickly and flexibly to events and surprises in the competitive environment. **(Taher Mohsen Mansour Al-Ghalbi, 2009, p. 27)**

G. Effectiveness and efficiency:

The effectiveness and efficiency of small and medium enterprises is reflected in their ability to achieve the economic and social goals of their owners and satisfy the desires and needs of customers significantly. **(Rabeh Khouni Warqia Hassani, 2008, p. 45)**

H. Customer Relationship:

It brings together the personal relationship between small and medium enterprises and their customers, which creates a kind of familiarity between the customer and the owners of the institution, which gives it the advantage of detailed knowledge of customers and the market due to this personal relationship and the limited market of small and medium enterprises. (Rabeh Khouni Warqia Hassani, 2008, pp. 41-42)

I.Intensity of work:

Small enterprises use simple techniques that depend on the intensity of the operation of the labor element and its skill, especially in the industrial sector, so the link is made between their expansion and the rationalization of job opportunities at an appropriate cost, as the small enterprises sector depends on labor as one of the most important productive elements in these institutions. (Othman Khalaf, 2003-2004, p. 31)

2- The contribution of small and medium enterprises in the promotion of foreign investment and foreign trade:

small and medium enterprises have contributed to the promotion of foreign investment and foreign trade at low rates as follows:

2.1 Contribution of small and medium enterprises to the promotion of foreign investment:

Small and medium enterprises are not of great importance to the foreign investor, and this is due to the fact that he prefers to invest in major projects due to the expected profits from them, and despite that, there are a number of foreign investments in the field of small and medium enterprises, according to the following tables:

Table (04) Distribution of Investment Projects Completed during the Period from 2002 to 2017 by Source of Capital

Total	Foreign Investment	Local Investment	Investment Type
63235	901	62334	Number of Projects
100	1.42	98.58	%
14300664	2519831	11780833	Value Million JD
100	17.62	82.38	%
1231594	133583	1098011	Jobs
100	10.85	89.15	%

Source: www.andi.dz Date: 28/08/2020 at: 11: 48.

We note from the above table that the percentage of foreign investment in small and medium enterprises is very weak compared to the local investor, as it did not exceed 1.42% for the total number of projects authorized by the National Agency for Investment Development, while it reached 17.62% for the total value and 10.85% for the total number of positions, and this is due to the small size of small and medium enterprises, as can be seen through the table that the average employment for the project amounted to a total of about 19 workers for the project and 17 workers for the local investor. While it reached 148 workers for the foreign investor, which confirms that the foreign investor is interested in larger institutions.

Table 05: Distribution of Investment Projects Completed during the Period 2002 to 2017 by Projects involving Foreigners

Jobs	The value in million DZD	Number of Projects	Areas
78415	1148208	472	Europe
44646	666499	332	Among other things the European Union
11761	169732	114	Asia
3737	68813	18	America
34462	1057257	262	Arab Countries
609	39686	6	Africa
264	2974	1	Australia
4335	33160	28	Multinational
133583	2519831	901	Total

Source: www.andi.dz Date: 28/08/2020 at: 11:48.

The above table represents the distribution of foreign investment projects during the period from 2002 to 2017, through which we note that the majority of small and medium enterprises are acquired by Europe, including the European Union countries, by an estimated 52.39%, followed by the Arab countries by 29.08%, and this is due to the historical backgrounds and mutual relations between the state and neighboring countries.

Table 06: Distribution of Investment Projects Completed during the Period from 2002 to 2017 by Foreign Laid Investment Projects by Sector of Activity

%	Jobs	%	The value in million DZD	%	Number of Projects	Sector of activity
0.48	641	0.23	5768	1.44	13	Agriculture
17.91	23928	3.28	82593	15.76	142	Construction
60.95	81413	81.37	2050277	61.93	558	Industry
1.64	2196	0.54	13572	0.67	6	Health
1.81	2407	0.75	18966	2.89	26	transportation
5.73	7656	5.09	128234	2.11	19	Tourism
10.36	13842	5.2	130980	15.09	136	Services
1.12	1500	3.54	89441	0.11	1	Telecommunications
100	133583	100	2519831	100	901	Total

Source: www.andi.dz Date: 28/08/2020 at: 11: 48.

The above table shows us the distribution of foreign projects to various sectors during the period from 2002 to 2017, which constituted eight basic sectors, and it is noted that the industrial sector has the largest number of projects by 61.93%, followed by the construction sector 15.76%, then the services sector 15.09%, while the rest of the percentage was distributed to the remaining sectors, through the table we noticed that there is one foreign project in the telecommunications sector and the reason for this is due to the monopoly that characterizes this sector, as we noticed through The table is that all projects are either medium projects (agriculture, construction, industry, transportation, services) or

major projects (health, tourism, communications), and the reason for this, as mentioned earlier, is due to the nature of the foreign investor.

2.2 Contribution of small and medium enterprises to foreign trade

Small and medium enterprises contribute to foreign trade by exporting their products to other countries, and their contribution to export during the period from 2004 to 2018 was according to the following table:

Table 07: Contribution of small and medium enterprises to exports during the period from 2004 to 2018 Million US Dollars

Percentage of small and medium enterprises exports contribute to non-hydrocarbon exports (%)	Contribution of small and medium enterprises exports to total exports (%)	small and medium enterprises Exports	Exports outside the hydrocarbon sector	Total Exports	Years
40.39	0.99	315.44	781	31713	2004
88.94	1.82	806.72	907	44395	2005
54.39	1.18	644	1184	54613	2006
77.49	1.73	1032.22	1332	59518	2007
67.56	1.67	1308.56	1937	78233	2008
75.56	1.84	805.45	1066	43689	2009
80.14	2.16	1223	1526	56665	2010
85.89	2.41	1771	2062	73390	2011
92.58	2.58	1909	2062	73981	2012
87.98	2.69	1772	2014	65917	2013
92.64	3.80	2392	2582	62886	2014
92.01	4.79	1811.58	1969	37787	2015
89.81	5.61	1621	1805	28883	2016
85.49	4.44	1650	1930	37191	2017
86.54	5.95	2449	2830	41168	2018

Source: (Bulletin d'information Economique, N°8, N°10, N°12, N°14, N°16, N°18, N°20, N°22, N°24, N°26, N°28, N°30, N°32, N°34, P45, P40, P47, P51, P53, P35, P50, P48, P55, P54, P50, P54, P38, P38)

The above table reflects the clear picture of the Algerian economy during the period from 2004 to 2018, as the average contribution of small and medium enterprises to the total exports was estimated at 2.91%, reaching in 2018, the maximum of which was 5.95% and the lowest in 2004 by 0.99%, although the percentage developed slightly, but it is still very weak compared to developed countries, as for the contribution of small and medium enterprises to exports outside the hydrocarbon sector, it averaged 79.83%, and this percentage reached its lowest in 2004. With 40.39% in 2004 and a maximum of 86.54% in 2018, the contribution of small and medium enterprises to non-hydrocarbon exports is high, which indicates the presence of an important fabric of small and medium enterprises in the Algerian economy, but still in need of more attention and development.

3- Conclusion:

- First of all, since small and medium enterprises have different activities, including commercial, industrial and service, they contribute to raising the rate of economic growth and have an important role in supporting exports outside hydrocarbons in addition to the agreements they make with investors on the side, all of which reflects positively on the country's economy.
- Small and medium-sized enterprises have contributed to a weak percentage in attracting foreign investment, due to their limited capital and the size of the employed workforce, which is reflected in the size of the expected profits.
- In view of the investment climate in Algeria, it is still not encouraging foreign investment in general, and this is due to administrative obstacles, especially the large number of documents required for the foreign investor, as well as the lack of tax privileges granted at the beginning of the activity to the foreign investor.
- The national economy is still primarily dependent on the exports of the hydrocarbon sector, but if we analyze exports outside the hydrocarbon sector, we find that small and medium enterprises control the majority of them;
- It can be said that small and medium enterprises have the potential to be able to compete in the international market and be an important sector for the advancement of the national economy within the framework of getting out of dependence on the rentier economy, but they need continuous guidance and monitoring by the auxiliary agencies established by the state.

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