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265/3

What is the financial position of French SMEs and ISEs following the 2022-2025 interest rate cycle?

This study draws on 1.5 million 2025 tax returns to shed light on the financial position of French small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and intermediate-sized enterprises (ISEs). The fundamentals of SMEs and ISEs remained robust at the end of 2025 – despite positions varying widely at an individual level – notably with high profit shares, well-controlled debt levels and continued strong cash positions. However, SME and ISE activity grew slowly for the second year running, and their repayment capacity, based on Banque de France ratings, deteriorated. Furthermore, the interest rates actually incurred by firms on their overall outstanding debt adjusted more slowly for SMEs than for ISEs, with the result that the apparent cost of debt of SMEs continued to rise slightly in 2025 on average, while that of ISEs fell sharply.

Benjamin Bureau, Valentin Georges
Companies Directorate
Companies Observatory

JEL codes
E22, G30,
L25

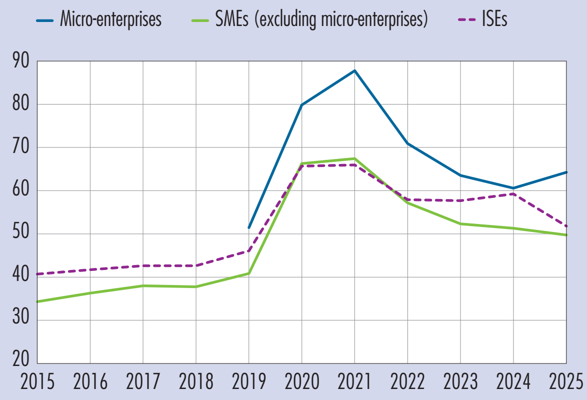
The authors would like to thank Franck Lemaire for his help with the data.

+1.2%
the turnover growth rate of ISEs in 2025, compared with an average of 3.6% over the 1997-2019 period

44%
the proportion of SMEs that reported a decrease in their apparent cost of debt in 2025, compared with 32% in 2024

58%
the proportion of ISEs that were given a top (1+ to 4+) Banque de France rating in 2025, compared with 66% in 2019

Cash position of French SMEs and ISEs
(median, in days of turnover)



Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.
Notes: SMEs, small and medium-sized enterprises; ISEs, intermediate-sized enterprises.

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This bulletin draws on data from the Banque de France's FIBEN company database to present an analysis of the financial position of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and intermediate-sized enterprises (ISEs) in 2025. The scope of the study covers SMEs and ISEs with a head office registered in France, subject to corporate tax, and not operating in the financial sector.

The study bases its analysis on the 2025 annual financial statements of 1.5 million legal units,[1] grouped into 1.3 million firms as defined by the French Law on the Modernisation of the Economy (LME). Within the category of SMEs, and in line with the LME classification, micro-enterprises are separated out from other SMEs.[2, 3] In total, the study sample covers approximately 90% of the workforce of French SMEs and ISEs and 85% of the value added they produce.

1 Activity grew slowly in 2025 but the profit share continued to hold up

Growth in business activity remained significantly below its long-term average

For the second year running, the turnover growth rates of SMEs (excluding micro-enterprises) and ISEs were significantly below their long-term averages. The turnover of SMEs (excluding micro-enterprises) rose by only 1.5% in 2025, following 1.8% in 2024, compared with an average of 4.2% over the 1997-2019 period. The turnover of ISEs rose by only 1.2% in 2025, following 0.8% in 2024, compared with an average of 3.6% over the 1997-2019 period (see Chart 1a). Nevertheless, as in previous years, the turnover growth of micro-enterprises was more dynamic, at 3.4% in 2025, following 2.9% in 2024.[4]

In 2025, the slowdown in turnover growth hampered growth in value added, which was consequently well below its long-term average, both for SMEs excluding micro-enterprises (2.1% in 2025 compared with an average of 4.0% from 1997 to 2019) and for ISEs (2.6% compared with 3.2%). Again, however, as with turnover, growth in value added was more dynamic for micro-enterprises, at 3.5% in 2025 (see Chart 1b).

C1 Rate in change of turnover and value added
(average, %)

Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.
Notes: SMEs, small and medium-sized enterprises;
ISEs, intermediate-sized enterprises.
The changes are calculated for a sample of companies whose financial statements are available in the FIBEN database over two consecutive years (cylindered population). The size adopted is that of year N-1, regardless of the firm's size in year N (for example, the size in 2024 for a comparison between 2025 and 2024).

1 A legal unit is a legal entity identified by a SIREN number.

2 This study uses the statistical notion of the micro-enterprise as defined by the LME and applied by INSEE. It is a different concept to that of the micro-entrepreneur (previously known as an *autoentrepreneur* in France) and refers to a specific tax regime. In practice, micro-entrepreneurs (within the meaning of a tax perspective) are not included in this study, mainly due to a lack of detailed financial data.

3 Appendices 1 and 2 define the firm sizes and data used.

4 Data for micro-enterprises are only available in the FIBEN database from 2019 onwards. Consequently, comparisons with a long-term average are impossible.

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Growth in business activity in 2025, measured in terms of turnover or value added, was below or equal to its long-term average in all the major sectors of the economy.

However, the profit share continued to hold up

The profit share, defined as the ratio of gross operating surplus (GOS) to value added, reflects the proportion of a firm's value added that remains after payment of personnel costs and production taxes. It continued to hold up in 2025 and increased compared with 2024 for all firm sizes (see Chart 2).[5] The profit share was up in 2025 across the majority of the main sectors of activity, except for ISEs in the construction sector, where it declined slightly.

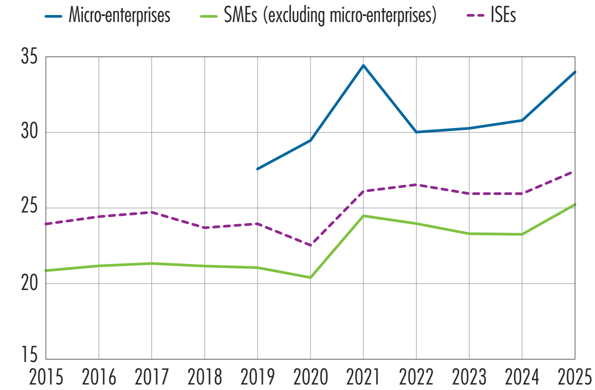
However, these average results must be interpreted with caution as they can conceal a wide range of individual positions. For example, while the profit share of micro-enterprises improved significantly on average in 2025, nearly half (49%) of them recorded a deterioration in their profit share, as in 2024 (see Appendix 4, Chart A1). Similarly, 50% of SMEs excluding micro-enterprises and 48% of ISEs saw their profit shares decline in 2025, compared with 55% and 56%, respectively, in 2024.

Notwithstanding, the overall resilience of the profit share in 2025 was primarily due to the decline in the weight of personnel costs in value added, against a backdrop of relative employment stability in France[6] and moderate wage growth.[7] The reduction in the weight of the personnel costs of micro-enterprises was particularly striking over the medium term, falling from 69% of value added in 2019 to 64% in 2025 (down 5 percentage points). The decline for SMEs excluding micro-enterprises and ISEs over the same period was limited to 2 percentage points (from 74% to 72% and 69% to 67%, respectively, between 2019 and 2025).

ISEs, for their part, have benefited more from the production tax reform than SMEs, as the weight of these taxes in value added fell by 1.5 percentage points between 2019 and 2025, from 6.9% to 5.4%. The reduction for SMEs excluding micro-enterprises was 1.1 percentage points from 4.1% to 3.0%, while the decline for micro-enterprises was only marginal (down 0.1 percentage point to 3.7% in 2025).[8] The Institute for Public Policy (see Bach et al., 2025) has also highlighted the link between firm size and the benefits derived from the reform.

C2 Profit share

(average, %)



Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.
Notes: SMEs, small and medium-sized enterprises; ISEs, intermediate-sized enterprises.
The profit share is the ratio of gross operating surplus to value added.

5 However, the national accounts report a very slight fall in the profit share in 2025 (INSEE, 2026c) but these figures include large enterprises, which are not taken into account in this study.

6 Note that salaried employment in the private sector fell by 0.3% in 2025, but rose in the public sector by 0.2% (INSEE, 2026a).

7 On average for the whole of 2025, the increase in hourly wages continued to slow (up 2.1 in 2025 compared with 3.0% in 2024 and 4.1% in 2023) against a backdrop of declining inflation (INSEE, 2026b).

8 This is due in particular to the fact that firms with a turnover of less than EUR 500,000 – very common among micro-enterprises – were exempt from the *cotisation sur la valeur ajoutée des entreprises* (CVAE – corporate value added contribution) prior to 2021 and therefore did not benefit from the reform.

2 SMEs and ISEs benefited in 2025 from a fall in interest rates on new bank lending

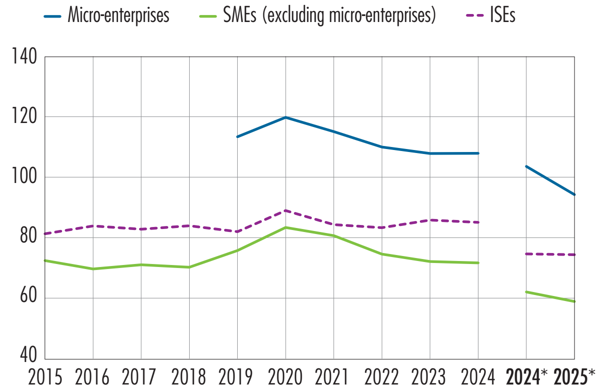
The debt levels of SMEs and ISEs remained well-controlled in 2025

Data available at this time[9] suggest that the debt levels of French SMEs and ISEs continued to be well controlled in 2025. The gross debt ratio, which compares financial debt to equity, even fell slightly in the case of SMEs (see Chart 3). This decline is due both to a strengthening of equity (up 7% for micro-enterprises and 4% for other SMEs) and a slight reduction in debt (down 3% and 1%, respectively), and is consistent notably with the context of the ongoing repayment of state-guaranteed loans.[10] The fact that interest rates are generally higher than before 2022 (despite falling in 2025 compared with 2024, see below) also encourages firms to keep their debt levels under control.

The debt ratio of ISEs remained virtually stable[11] as both their debt and their equity increased slightly and in similar proportions (up 1.9% and 2.4%, respectively). A decline in debt ratios was also observed across the majority of the main sectors of the economy.

However, these average results conceal significant variability between firms: although the debt ratio is down on average, one-third of SMEs and more than 40% of ISEs saw a deterioration in their debt-to-equity ratio in 2025. Furthermore, these proportions are up slightly compared with 2024 (see Appendix 4, Chart A2).

C3 Debt ratio
(average, %)



Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.
Notes: SMEs, small and medium-sized enterprises;
ISEs, intermediate-sized enterprises.
Debt ratio = financial debt/equity.
For the years 2024* and 2025*, marked with an asterisk, ratios are calculated using a sample of companies whose balance sheets are recorded in the FIBEN database in both 2024 and 2025 (cylindered population). Furthermore, ratios have not been adjusted for double counting, meaning that the debt ratios are not directly comparable with those published by Bureau (2025) or the Banque de France (2025). The definitive figure for 2025 (non-cylindered) will be published in a second study at the end of the year.

The apparent cost of debt of ISEs adjusted more rapidly than that of SMEs

Against a backdrop of inflation returning towards its 2% target, the European Central Bank (ECB) cut interest rates four times during 2025, after already making three rate cuts in 2024. This easing was particularly reflected in a significant reduction in interest rates on new loans to businesses. Between the end of 2024 and the end of 2025, the average rate on these types of loans dropped by 61 basis points for SMEs and 57 basis points for ISEs.[12] Market rates remained relatively stable (up 3 basis points) over the same period.[13]

9 The findings presented in this annual study on SMEs and ISEs are normally updated in a second study, which also covers large enterprises, published at the end of the year (see Banque de France, 2025). Experience has shown that the findings of the SME-ISE study (published in July) are robust and vary only marginally when updated at year-end. However, findings on changes in debt levels are an exception and are generally only fully robust at the end of the year. As such, experience has shown that it is helpful, in the SME-ISE study, to work with a cylindered sample from the last two available years. The final data points in Chart 3 therefore only concern firms present in the sample in both 2024 and 2025.

10 At the end of 2025, 82% and 81% of outstanding state-guaranteed loans to SMEs and ISEs, respectively, had been repaid, compared with 72% and 73% at the end of 2024.

11 These figures are not directly comparable with those drawn from monetary statistics, as their scope extends beyond SMEs and ISEs alone. These macroeconomic statistics show that non-financial corporations' gross-debt-to-GDP ratio remained stable in 2024 and 2025 (72%).

12 Most of this decline occurred during the first half of 2025, before rates stabilised in the second half of the year.

13 Details of market rates are available at *https://webstat.banque-france.fr/en/catalog/mir1/MIR1.M.FR.B.A30.K.R.1.2240.EUR.N*

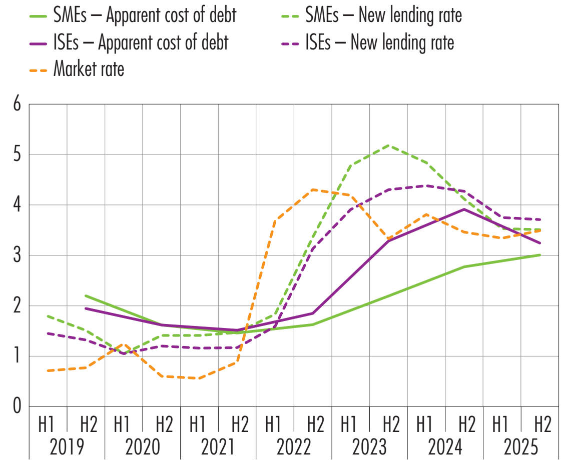
Given the lag in the transmission of these rate cuts,[14] the interest rates actually incurred by firms on their overall outstanding debt continued to rise slightly in 2025 for SMEs (see Chart 4). However, the proportion of SMEs that reported a fall in the apparent cost of debt (the ratio of a firm's actual annual interest paid to its debt) was higher in 2025 than in 2024, at 44% compared with 32% (see Appendix 4, Chart A3). Furthermore, the weight of interest expenses in SMEs' value added dropped significantly in 2025 to return to a level close to that observed before the peak in inflation in 2022-23 (around 3.5% in 2025 compared with 3.0% before 2022 – see Chart 5).

By contrast, the apparent cost of debt of ISEs fell significantly in 2025, consistent with the fact that, compared with SMEs: (i) ISEs take on more short-term financing and therefore renew their outstanding debt more quickly;[15] (ii) ISEs are better equipped to manage interest rate risk and are therefore more likely to borrow at variable rates;[16] and (iii) ISEs raise more financing on the markets than SMEs,[17] and market rates began to fall much earlier than bank rates (see Chart 4).

Against this backdrop, the proportion of ISEs that recorded a fall in their apparent cost of debt rose sharply from 29% in 2024 to 67% in 2025 (see Appendix 4, Chart A3). Furthermore, the weight of interest expenses in ISEs' value added fell from 13% in 2024 to 10% in 2025, but nevertheless remained significantly higher than the approximately 7% observed before the peak in inflation.

C4 New lending rate and apparent cost of debt

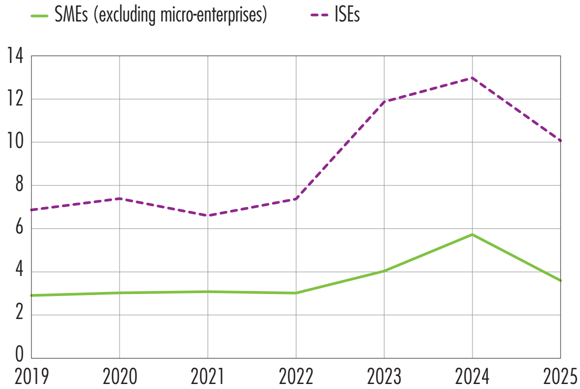
(median, %)



Source: Banque de France, June 2026.
Scope: SMEs excluding micro-enterprises, ISEs.
Notes: SMEs, small and medium-sized enterprises;
ISEs, intermediate-sized enterprises.
New lending rate: interest rate on new bank loans (all maturities, excluding micro-enterprises; data for June and December).
Market rate: debt securities (excluding financial derivatives) issued by non-financial corporations (all sizes, data for June and December).
Apparent cost of debt: interest payments in year *t*, relative to the average outstanding financial debt in years *t-1* and *t*.

C5 Weight of interest expenses in value added

(average, %)



Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.

14 Note that two-thirds of the debt of French firms is fixed rate (65% at the end of 2024 – source: ECB, AnaCredit database), and is renewed over several years.

15 According to figures from the Banque de France's *Centrale des risques*, the proportion of short-term bank loans (less than one year) is higher for ISEs (13%) than for SMEs (8%).

16 Based on a sample of 377,000 loans granted by 150 banks to 170,000 firms over the 2022-24 period, we find that the use of variable-rate loans increases with firm size (controlling for loan amount, maturity and type). By way of indication, a 10% increase in a firm's balance sheet size is associated with an increase of approximately 0.5 percentage point in the probability of taking out a variable-rate loan rather than a fixed-rate loan, bearing in mind that this probability is of the order of 10% in the sample (authors' estimates based on AnaCredit data, using the sample of firms defined in the study by Berardi et al., 2026).

17 The proportion of bank debt and bond debt is ⅔ to ⅓ for ISEs, and 93% to 7% for SMEs.

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3 The cash position of micro-enterprises improved, but deteriorated slightly for other SMEs and ISEs

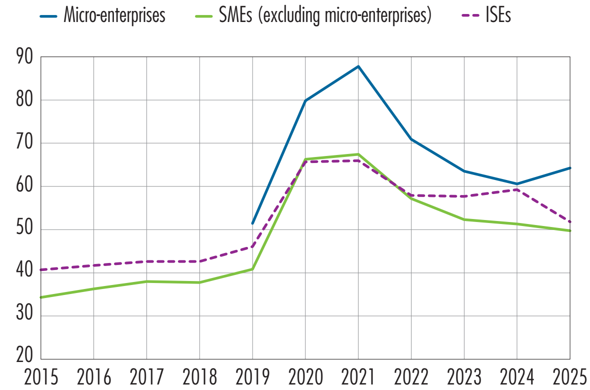
Changes in cash positions between 2024 and 2025 varied depending on the size of the firm. The median cash position of micro-enterprises, expressed in days of turnover, increased from 61 days in 2024 to 64 days in 2025, but contracted slightly for SMEs excluding micro-enterprises from 51 days to 50 days. Meanwhile, the cash position of ISEs contracted more sharply, from 59 days in 2024 to 52 days in 2025 (see Chart 6).

At the end of 2025, cash levels, overall, remained higher than prior to the Covid crisis: the median cash position, expressed in days of turnover, increased by 25% between 2019 and 2025 for micro-enterprises (up 13 days of turnover); 22% for other SMEs (up 9 days); and 12% for ISEs (up 6 days).[18] Determining whether this is the result of a simple cyclical trend or a more structural transformation of firms' cash management falls outside the scope of this study, but we would simply note that the persistence of relatively high cash levels is potentially consistent with the hypothesis proposed by Buthiot et al. (2024), that firms may have significantly revised the cash position they deem satisfactory to carry out their activities upwards.[19]

Lastly, from a sectoral perspective, the position of accommodation and food services stands out considerably from other sectors. During the Covid crisis, firms operating in the accommodation and food services sector were the main beneficiaries of solidarity fund subsidies and thus reported the sharpest relative increase in cash holdings in 2021. However, this cash cushion was quickly depleted and, in 2025, the accommodation and food services sector was the only major sector of the economy in which cash positions of SMEs (excluding micro-enterprises) and ISEs had returned to pre-Covid levels.[20]

C6 Cash position

(median, in days of turnover)



Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.
Notes: SMEs, small and medium-sized enterprises;
ISEs, intermediate-sized enterprises.
This chart shows the median cash position expressed as a number of days of turnover for the year. For 2020 alone, the cash position is compared with 2019 turnover so as not to artificially overestimate the increase in the cash position expressed as a number of days of turnover.
The cash position is defined as the sum of cash at hand, marketable securities and net short-term receivables and payables within the group and affiliated companies, minus unmatured discounted bills and short-term bank borrowings.

18 Monetary statistics, whose scope exceeds SMEs and ISEs alone, also show that the cash positions of non-financial corporations, as a proportion of GDP, remained higher in 2025 than they were prior to the Covid crisis.

19 In this context, Gonzalez and Lê (2026) also show that the median cash levels of defaulting firms were higher in 2025 than those observed in 2019.

20 Micro-enterprises, on the other hand, recorded a 15% increase in their cash position between 2019 and 2025, although this remains well below the 25% increase recorded across all sectors combined.

4 The repayment capacity of SMEs and ISEs deteriorated in 2025

As noted above, 2025 saw a slowdown in activity for the second year running, a slight increase in SMEs' financing cost, and an erosion of the cash positions of SMEs (excluding micro-enterprises) and ISEs. Conversely, profit shares held up, and debt ratios generally continued to be well controlled. In this context, Banque de France ratings serve as a valuable tool for aggregating and weighing up these contrasting factors, in order to assess whether firms' capacity to repay their debt changed one way or the other in 2025. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the sample considered in this section differs from that used in the previous sections, which was based on 1.5 million 2025 tax returns, representing approximately 80% of the SME and ISE tax returns that will be available to us at the end of the year. This current analysis of ratings is based on definitive 2025 data for the 275,000 micro-enterprises, SMEs (excluding micro-enterprises) and ISEs rated as at this date.

The proportion of highly Banque de France-rated firms has fallen

The Banque de France rating is based on an assessment of a given firm's ability to honour its financial commitments over a one to three-year horizon.[21] The ratings are reviewed annually on the basis of a firm's accounting records, and may also be adjusted throughout the year if significant non-accounting events arise (payment incidents, judicial proceedings, etc.). The rating has two major advantages: first, it is not based on one single aspect of financial analysis, but is instead a synthesis of several (business activity, liquidity, solvency, etc.); second, the Banque de France rounds out its quantitative analysis with qualitative information gathered during interviews with business leaders.

Chart 7a (see below) shows the change in the proportion of firms with a high repayment capacity (rated from "1+: Excellent ++" to "4+: Good +") out of all firms rated by the Banque de France for monetary policy purposes.[22] Regardless of the size of firm considered, the proportion of these "top ratings" has fallen for the third year running: from 66% in 2022 to 59% in 2025 for micro-enterprises (down 7 percentage points); from 66% to 58% for other SMEs (down 8 percentage points); and from 68% to 58% for ISEs (down 10 percentage points). More specifically, for the most recent year for which data is available – 2025 compared with 2024 – the decline is more pronounced for ISEs (4.5 percentage points) than for micro-enterprises and other SMEs (3.2 percentage points and 2.9 percentage points, respectively).

Chart 7b also reveals a decline in the proportion of "top ratings" across all sectors in 2025. For several years, the sharpest declines have been recorded in transport, construction and real estate activities.

The proportion of highly vulnerable firms has increased

To refine the analysis, Chart 8a (see below) focuses on the group of firms facing the greatest difficulties, namely those rated "6: Faces major uncertainties" to "8: Extremely vulnerable" (see Chart 8a). These denote the most critical positions prior to insolvency proceedings. The proportion of vulnerable SMEs and ISEs rose in 2025 for the fifth year running, with, again, a slightly more pronounced deterioration in the case of ISEs than SMEs. From a sectoral perspective, Chart 8b also confirms the difficulties facing the transport sector. The sector's situation was already precarious at the end of 2025, before having to confront the increases in fuel prices linked to the conflict in Iran and the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz in 2026. The situation in the construction sector has improved slightly year-on-year, although it continues to be very poor as it has been for several years.

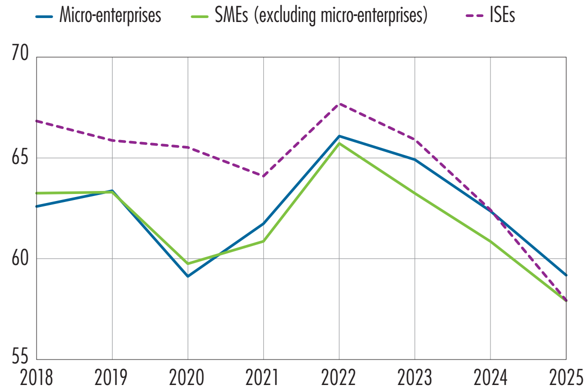
21 A detailed presentation of Banque de France ratings can be found in *The Banque de France rating – Reference guide*.

22 "Rating" and "rated company" are terms commonly used by the Banque de France in its analysis of credit risk for non-financial companies. There is no connection with a stock market "listing": a company "listed" by the Banque de France is not necessarily "listed" on the stock market.

C7 Proportion of "top ratings" in the population of firms rated by the Banque de France

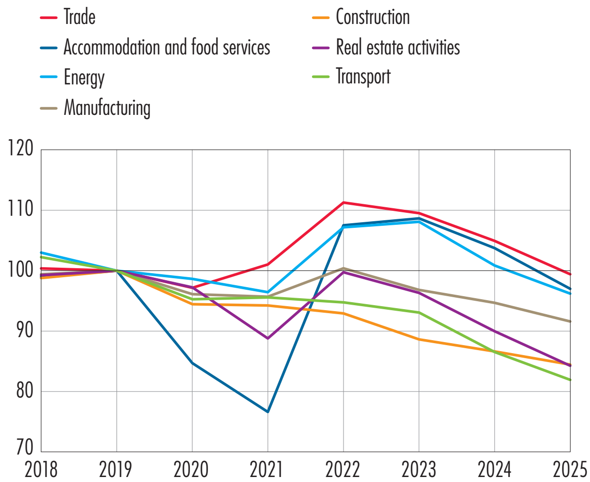
a) By size of firm

(%)



b) By sector

(2019=100)

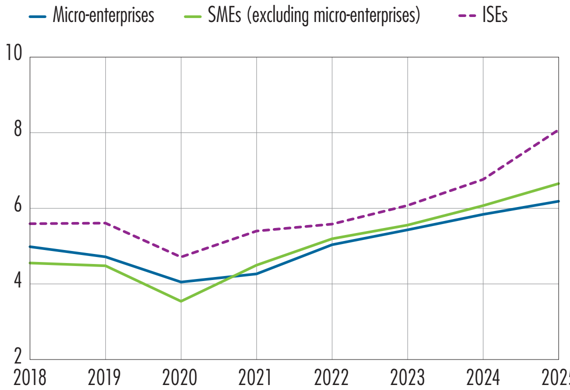


Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.
Key: At the end of 2025, 58% of ISEs rated by the Banque de France had been allocated a "top rating". For all sectors across all sizes of firm, the proportion of "top ratings" has fallen the most since 2019 in the transport sector.
Notes: SMEs, small and medium-sized enterprises;
ISEs, intermediate-sized enterprises.
The top ratings here correspond to Banque de France ratings from "1+: Excellent + +" to "4+: Good +". Ratings from "1+: Excellent + +" to "2 : Very satisfactory" correspond to credit risks that are low enough to be eligible as collateral for refinancing operations with the central bank. Ratings from "3+: Strong + +" to "4+: Good +" were eligible until mid-December 2024.
The ratings are as at 31 December of the relevant year.
Results for the post-Covid years, particularly the peak in 2022, should be interpreted with caution, as state aid as part of the "whatever it takes" policy, had a significant impact on ratings.

C8 Proportion of Banque de France-rated firms with very vulnerable repayment capacity

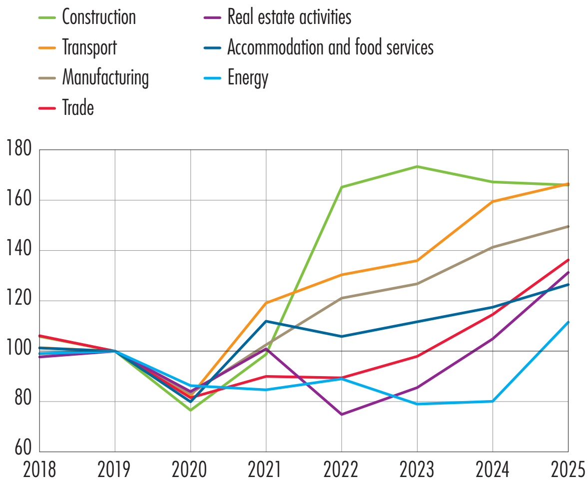
a) By size of firm

(%)



b) By sector

(2019 = 100)



Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.
Key: At the end of 2025, 8.4% of ISEs rated by the Banque de France had a "very vulnerable" repayment capacity. Across all sizes of firm, the proportion of "very vulnerable" ratings has risen the most since 2019 in the construction and transport sectors.
Notes: SMEs, small and medium-sized enterprises;
ISEs, intermediate-sized enterprises.
Firms with a "very vulnerable" repayment capacity correspond to the Banque de France ratings "6: Faces major uncertainties" to "8: Extremely vulnerable". They are the most critical positions prior to insolvency proceedings. The ratings are as at 31 December of the relevant year.

⁂

In conclusion, French SMEs and ISEs have demonstrated a considerable capacity to absorb shocks over recent years. However, on the eve of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz in early 2026, their financial position appeared more mixed than it had been a year previously. Certainly, in 2025, SMEs and ISEs continued to show signs of resilience in terms of their profit share, debt and cash positions. But their activity grew slowly for the second year running and their repayment capacity deteriorated. Furthermore, the interest rates actually paid by firms on their overall outstanding debt adjusted more rapidly for ISEs than for SMEs, with the result that the apparent cost of debt of SMEs continued to rise slightly in 2025, while that of ISEs fell sharply.

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Appendix 1
Method, FIBEN data and scope of study

Methodology

Unless otherwise stated in the text, the financial analysis methodology and definitions of the ratios used are those set out in the note *La situation financière des entreprises en France – Méthodologie*, available in French online at: *https://www.banque france.fr/fr/publications et statistiques/statistiques/outils statistiques/les methodologies.*

FIBEN data

Unless otherwise stated, the data used in this study are taken from the Banque de France's FIBEN company database. More specifically, the following data sources are used.

- The **database of company accounts**: until 2018, the Banque de France mainly collected company accounts from legal units with turnover in excess of EUR 0.75 million. This collection threshold was waived in 2019. Thereafter, data have been collected from firms based in France, regardless of turnover.

- **Financial links**: the Banque de France identifies financial links and analyses the size of equity stakes held by other firms, classifying shareholders as non-financial corporations (including holding companies), financial institutions (banks, mutual funds or insurance companies), natural persons (individuals or employees), the government, or foreign companies. Independent firms are distinguished from those that belong to a group.

Scope adopted

The study covers firms subject to corporation tax and listed in the Banque de France's FIBEN database. Sectors KZ (financial and insurance activities, excluding holding companies) and O (public administration) are excluded.

Appendix 2
The size and activity sector of enterprises

Decree No. 2008-1354 implementing the LME, which provides a statistical definition of an enterprise, specifies, in line with the European Commission definitions, the size categories for companies and the criteria used to establish them. There are four criteria: headcount, turnover, balance sheet total and, implicitly, the financial links between legal units. Note that a legal unit is a legal entity identified by a SIREN number.

The first three criteria are drawn up for each company, understood as the smallest combination of legal units that make up an organisational unit producing goods or services, which benefits from a certain degree of decision-making autonomy (defined on the basis of financial links). A financial link is recognised where it corresponds to a holding of at least 50% of the capital of a legal unit.

Firms can thus consist of a single legal unit, or be a combination of several legal units. Where a firm comprises several legal units, the financial statements of the constituent legal units are aggregated to define the "firm". This approach does not involve the consolidation of accounts and may result in double counting between units within the same firm. However, certain variables are statistically adjusted to eliminate double counting (see the methodological note in Appendix 1).

The sizes of firms are defined as follows:

- **micro-enterprises** are firms that have up to 10 employees and annual turnover or a balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 2 million;

- **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), excluding micro-enterprises**, are firms that are not micro-enterprises and that have up to 250 employees and annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million or a balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million;

- **intermediate-sized enterprises (ISEs)** are firms that are not SMEs and that have up to 5,000 employees and annual turnover not exceeding EUR 1.5 billion or a balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 2 billion;

- **large enterprises (LEs)** are firms that cannot be classified under any of the above categories.

The **sector of activity** is based on the 2008 aggregate nomenclature, itself based on the NAF (French nomenclature of activities) Rev. 2.

In the case of a multi-unit company, the sector is determined by grouping the different legal units into corresponding sectors. The overall sector of a multi-unit company is decided by the "grouping" of legal entities that generates the highest annual turnover for the company, provided the turnover of the grouping exceeds 50% of total turnover. Otherwise, the classification by sector of the various "groupings" of legal units is based on the number of employees, again provided that this accounts for more than 50%. Failing that, classification is based on turnover, using the sector of the legal units with the largest share.

Appendix 3
Characteristics of the study sample

TA1 Main characteristics of micro-enterprises, other SMEs and ISEs in 2025

(turnover, value added, liabilities in EUR millions)

	Number of balance sheets	Number of firms (LME)	% of firms with multiple legal units[a)]	Average headcount	Average turnover	Average value added	Average liabilities
Micro-enterprises	1,169,869	1,122,618	3	1.4	0.3	0.1	0.4
SMEs (excluding micro-enterprises)	247,215	138,607	41	25	6.0	2.0	6.7
ISEs	45,269	6,806	80	444	174	46	286

a) A legal unit is a legal entity identified by a SIREN number.
Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.
Scope: Firms as defined by the French Law on the Modernisation of the Economy (LME); all market-oriented activities, excluding sectors KZ (financial and insurance activities, excluding holding companies) and O (public administration).
Note: SMEs, small and medium-sized enterprises; ISEs, intermediate-sized enterprises.

TA2 Sectoral breakdown of micro-enterprises, other SMEs and ISEs in 2025

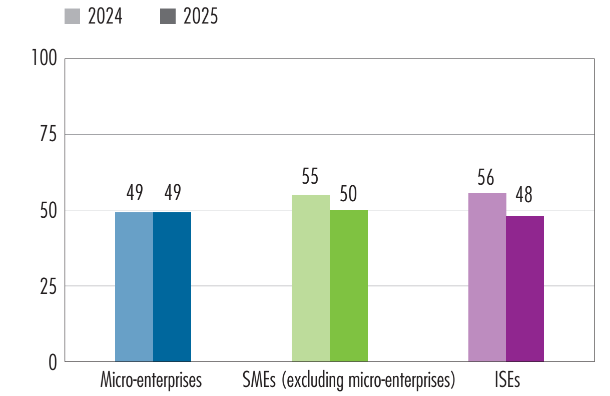
	Micro-enterprises		SMEs (excluding micro-enterprises)		ISEs	
	% of number of firms	% of value added	% of number of firms	% of value added	% of number of firms	% of value added
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2	2	2	2	0	0
Manufacturing industry	4	7	14	17	25	30
Energy, water, waste	1	1	1	1	2	2
Construction	11	15	15	13	5	5
Trade	16	20	29	24	33	25
Transportation and storage	3	3	4	5	5	5
Accommodation and food services	7	8	9	6	3	2
Information and communication	4	4	4	6	6	10
Real estate activities	27	12	2	2	2	2
Consulting and business services	17	18	14	17	15	14
Education and healthcare	3	6	4	4	3	3
Household services	5	3	2	2	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.
Scope: Firms as defined by the French Law on the Modernisation of the Economy (LME); all market-oriented activities, excluding sectors KZ (financial and insurance activities, excluding holding companies) and O (public administration).
Note: SMEs, small and medium-sized enterprises; ISEs, intermediate-sized enterprises.

Appendix 4
Additional statistics on the heterogeneity of individual positions

CA1 Proportion of firms showing a deterioration in their profit share

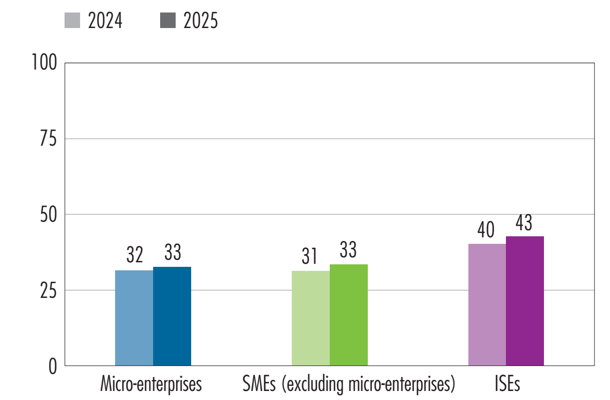
(%)



Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.
Notes: SMEs, small and medium-sized enterprises; ISEs, intermediate-sized enterprises.
Where VA^{Y} denotes the value added for the year and GOS^{Y} the gross operating surplus for year Y (2023, 2024 or 2025), we consider that there has been a “deterioration” in the profit share when:
(i) $VA^{Y-1} > 0$ and $VA^{Y} > 0$ and the rate decreases; or (ii) $VA^{Y-1} > 0$ and $VA^{Y} < 0$; or (iii) $VA^{Y-1} < 0$ and $VA^{Y} < 0$, with either $VA^{Y} < VA^{Y-1}$, or $GOS^{Y} < GOS^{Y-1}$.

CA2 Proportion of firms showing a deterioration in their debt ratio

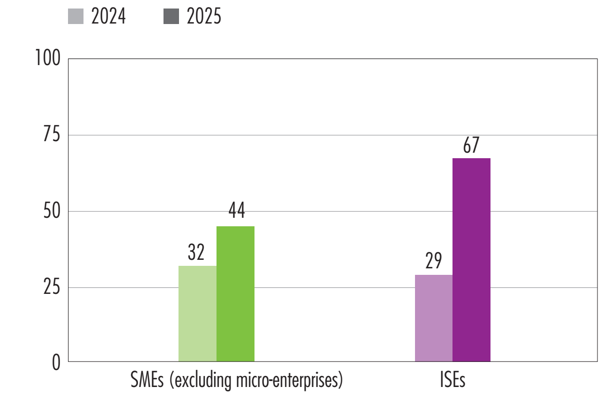
(%)



Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.
Note: Where CP^{Y} denotes equity for the year Y (2023, 2024 or 2025), we consider that there has been a “deterioration” in the gross leverage ratio when: (i) $CP^{Y-1} > 0$ and $CP^{Y} > 0$ and the ratio increases; or (ii) $CP^{Y-1} > 0$ and $CP^{Y} < 0$; or (iii) $CP^{Y-1} < 0$ and $CP^{Y} < 0$, with either $CP^{Y} < CP^{Y-1}$, or $debt^{Y} > debt^{Y-1}$.

CA3 Proportion of firms showing a decline in their apparent cost of debt

(%)



Source: Banque de France, FIBEN database, June 2026.
Note: Apparent cost of debt corresponds to interest payments in year *t*, relative to the average outstanding financial debt in years *t-1* and *t*.

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