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Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

PM for developing specialised lending products



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the authorities to work with commercial banks to develop specialised lending products for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), stressing that easier access to finance was essential for boosting exports, encouraging entrepreneurship and accelerating economic growth.

Chairing a review meeting on the performance and future roadmap of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), the prime minister directed the organisation to formulate a comprehensive strategy, in coordination with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and commercial banks, to improve SMEs' access to financing.

He also called for greater facilitation in extending credit to SMEs, saying that improved financing mechanisms would enable the sector to expand production, enhance competitiveness and contribute more effectively to the country's export earnings.

Highlighting the role of SMEs in employment generation and economic development, PM Shehbaz said urgent measures were needed to remove the obstacles impeding the sector's growth.

He directed the relevant authorities to strengthen institutional support for small businesses by improving awareness of available financing options and simplifying access to credit.

The prime minister placed particular emphasis on supporting farmers engaged in value addition through the processing of agricultural produce and fruits.

He instructed officials to enhance their capacity by facilitating access to finance and equipping them with the necessary knowledge to establish sustainable processing businesses capable of generating higher incomes and export revenues.

He further directed SMEDA to assist entrepreneurs in preparing feasibility studies and to provide technical support throughout the various stages of establishing, operating and expanding their businesses.

Calling for greater attention to youth and women's entrepreneurship, PM Shehbaz directed SMEDA to introduce measures aimed at helping young entrepreneurs, including women, establish and grow small and medium-sized enterprises, describing the sector as a key driver of inclusive economic growth.

During the meeting, officials briefed the prime minister on a range of initiatives being undertaken by SMEDA to facilitate SMEs and improve their competitiveness.

The meeting was informed that arrangements had been finalised for around 700 Pakistani SMEs to participate in 16 international exhibitions and trade events during the current year as part of efforts to expand their access to overseas markets and increase exports.

Participants were also told that SMEs operating in 35 cities had received training in financial regulations and business management to strengthen their operational capacity and improve compliance with regulatory requirements.

The briefing also covered other ongoing initiatives being implemented under SMEDA to promote entrepreneurship and support business development.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Minister for Climate Change Musadik Malik, special assistant to the prime minister on industries Haroon Akhtar and other senior officials. The chief secretaries of all four provinces and sector experts participated through video link.

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