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Research Article

Institutional Support for Small Enterprises: A Review of Small Industries Corporation Models

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Abstract

This paper is a systematic literature review on institutional support mechanisms for small enterprises through the lens of small industry corporation (SIC) models in developed and developing economies. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines are used to synthesise 38 peer-reviewed studies and 9 government or institutional reports (1,971 initial records) to assess the design, implementation effectiveness, and reform trajectories of state-sponsored institutional frameworks. The key bodies examined include the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), India's Small Industries Development Bank (SIDBI), Malaysia's Small and Medium Industries Development Corporation (SMIDEC), Japan's Small and Medium Enterprises and Regional Innovation (SMRJ) and the European Investment Fund (EIF). Government data shows that small enterprises account for more than 90% of all businesses worldwide, employ 45-50% of the private workforce, and have a financing gap of USD 5.7 trillion in emerging markets alone (World Bank, 2024). Despite considerable policy infrastructure, critical gaps exist in terms of reach, awareness, and coordination effectiveness. This review proposes an Integrated Institutional Support Framework (IISF) that maps institutional actors, support channels, firm level outcomes, and enabling environment conditions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Small businesses form the structural backbone of economies at all levels of development. As of 2024, the United States has 34.8 million small businesses, accounting for 45.9% of private sector employment alone (SBA, 2024). Globally, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute over 90% of all businesses and provide livelihoods for billions of people (World Bank B-READY, 2024). But this economic centrality does not mean that small firms are immune to the risks of market failures, financial constraints, skills shortages, and regulatory demands that large firms can easily absorb. This structural vulnerability has led governments around the world, in the past few decades, to establish dedicated institutional support bodies, popularly known as Small Industries Corporations (SICs), to fill these gaps.

Small Industries Corporation model means any government mandated or government supported institutional arrangement created for the promotion, financing, and development of small enterprises through a mix of financial instruments, technical assistance, regulatory advocacy, and capacity building interventions. Prominent examples include the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), India's Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), Malaysia's SME Corporation (SMIDEC), Japan's Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises and Regional Innovation (SMRJ), and the European Investment Fund (EIF). These bodies vary widely in terms of mandate, design, financing modality, and governance architecture but share a common purpose: to address market failures that constrain small enterprise formation, growth, and survival.

Even with substantial public investment in institutional support, important questions remain about effectiveness, reach, and equity. According to the World Bank (2024), the SME finance gap in 119 emerging market and developing economies is still USD 5.7 trillion. About 20 percent of small new businesses in the United States fail in their first year, and 50 percent close within five years (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). Multiple factors drive these outcomes, but inadequate access to institutional support is a consistent predictor of small enterprise fragility (Storey, 1994; Beck & Demirguc-Kunt, 2006).

This systematic literature review investigates the architecture, effectiveness, and reform directions of SIC models, guided by three main research questions:

1. What institutional models have been developed to support small enterprises, and how do they differ?
2. What barriers limit the effectiveness and reach of these models?
3. Which conceptual framework of relationships between institutional architecture, support mechanisms, and firm level outcomes is most appropriate?

2. BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1 The Rationale for Institutional Support

Economic theory offers several justifications for government intervention in small enterprise development. Market failure theory posits that structural constraints on optimal capital allocation include information asymmetries, externalities, and missing markets, especially for small and opaque firms that lack credit histories and collateral (Berger & Udell, 1998). Transaction costs in credit markets are relatively high for smaller firms, as the fixed costs of loan origination and monitoring are indivisible and cannot be spread across larger amounts of loans (Beck & Demirguc-Kunt, 2006). These frictions generate a chronic underinvestment in the small enterprise sectors compared to their social and economic potential.

According to Resource Dependency Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), the small enterprise faces the challenge of a critical scarcity of resources, such as financial capital, technical knowledge, market information, and human capital, which can be addressed through the role of institutional intermediaries as resource brokers. Institutional Theory (North, 1990; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) embeds SIC models in the wider institutional context, arguing that the effectiveness of any support body is shaped by the quality of the legal framework, contract enforcement, and protection of property rights in which it operates. Cross country studies (Ayyagari et al., 2007) show that countries with poor institutional quality tend to have lower returns on SME support programs.

2.2 Evolution of Small Industries Corporation Models

The design of the institutional model for supporting small enterprises has historically followed three broad generations. First generation models (1940s–1970s) focused on direct credit provision and loan guarantees, such as the U.S. SBA established in 1953. These models, primarily aimed at democratizing capital access for small manufacturers and retailers, emerged after postwar reconstruction. Their architecture was centrally planned and supply driven and it was largely disconnected from a demand side assessment of firm capabilities.

The second generation models (1980–2000) such as SIDBI (established in 1990) and SMIDEC (established in 1996) concentrated on refinancing through intermediary financial institutions and integrated nonfinancial business development services. This generation understood that financial support alone was insufficient; firms also required technical assistance, management training, and market linkages to convert capital into a sustainable competitive advantage (Storey, 1994; Bennett, 2008). In 2000, CGTMSE was launched as a path breaking instrument by SIDBI and the Ministry of MSME to provide collateral free credit guarantees to the micro and small enterprises, which were outside the formal banking system.

Third generation models (2010–present) are marked by digitization, ecosystem thinking, and mandates for green and inclusive finance. The British Business Bank (founded in 2014), BPI France expanded digital platforms, and SIDBI's Udyami Mitra and Udyam Assist platforms are all examples of

this change. These institutions are increasingly acting as orchestrators for multi stakeholder ecosystems, linking SMEs to fintech lenders, venture capital, export markets, and skill ecosystems rather than sole source financiers.

2.3 Theoretical Frameworks Applied

Several theoretical traditions inform the literature on the effectiveness of SIC. Along with the market failure and institutional economics, the Financial Intermediation Theory (Beck & Demirguc-Kunt, 2006) emphasizes the reduction of transaction costs and information asymmetries in credit markets by institutional intermediaries. Entrepreneurship and Growth Theory (Storey, 1994; Shane, 2003; Colombo & Grilli, 2005) explains the human capital, strategy, and environmental conditions that affect the transformation of institutional support into sustainable enterprise growth. Public choice perspectives (Lerner, 2009) critically assess the risks of government failure in SIC design noting that poorly designed programs can crowd out private lending, create dependency, and misallocate public resources to nonviable firms.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 PRISMA Guided Protocol

This review was conducted following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021) to ensure methodological transparency and reproducibility. Searches were conducted in five databases Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and EBSCO host and targeted grey literature searches on the OECD Library, World Bank Open Knowledge

Repository, SBA Research, SIDBI publications, and the European Investment Fund document library. Search terms combined: (institutional support OR small industries corporation OR SME development bank OR SBA OR SIDBI OR SMIDEC) AND (small enterprise OR small business OR MSE OR MSME) AND (effectiveness OR access to finance OR policy OR model OR framework).

The articles were selected based on the following inclusion criteria-

- Focus on institutional support mechanisms for small enterprises
- Empirical, comparative, or systematic design
- Publication between 2000 and 2025
- Availability in the English language

Exclusion criteria were purely normative theory papers, studies on individual large corporations' development banks, and non-peer reviewed conference proceedings without institutional affiliation.

3.2 Screening and Synthesis Process

Initially, 1,971 records were identified (1,619 from databases and 352 from grey literature). After de duplication, 1,744 records were screened by title and abstract, leading to 563 for full text review. A further 516 were excluded after full text assessment, leading to a final corpus of 47 studies for inclusion in qualitative synthesis, with 38 peer reviewed articles and 9 institutional/government reports constituting the core of this review. Full PRISMA flow is presented in Figure 1 in Section 4.

4. PRISMA Flow Diagram

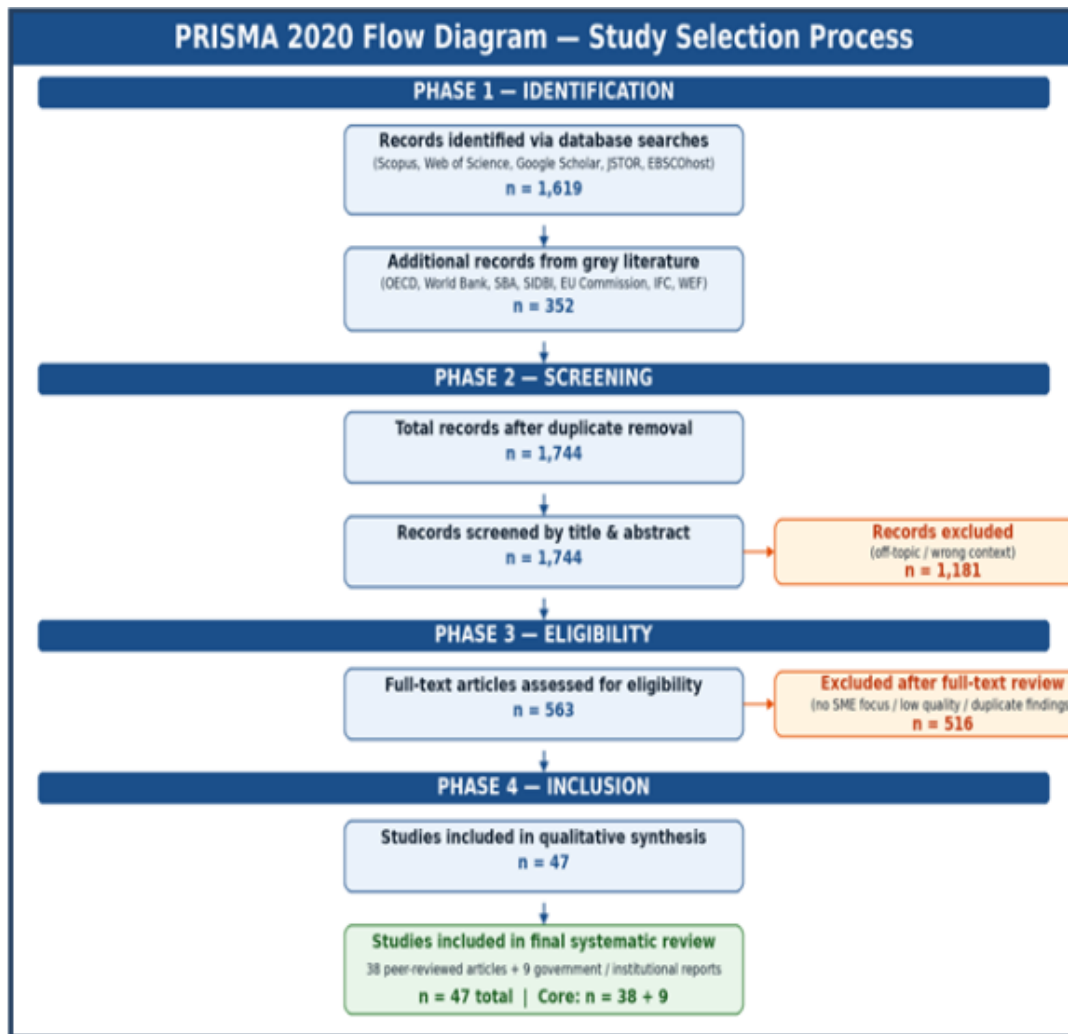


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram. Study selection process for systematic review of institutional support for small enterprises. Adapted from Page et al. (2021). BMJ, 372, n71. doi:10.1136/bmj. n71

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Scale and Scope of Small Enterprise Institutional Support

The evidence base shows that institutional support to small enterprises operates at a massive scale in the world but only for a small fraction of potential beneficiaries. In the most recent year of data, the United States had 34.8 million small businesses, which generated 2.6 million net new jobs (SBA,

2024). SIDBI’s Annual Report for 202425 states that India has more than 6.5 crore (65 million) registered MSMEs. Its refinance portfolio grew by 6.1% year on year to Rs. 38,532.7 crore and covered more than 29.83 lakh MSE customers across 715 districts. The World Bank (2024) estimates a global SME finance gap of USD 5.7 trillion across 119 emerging market and developing economies. This implies that even the most active institutional interventions only cover a small share of total demand.

Table 1: Key Government & Institutional Statistics on Small Enterprise Support

Indicator	Value / Finding	Geography	Source	Year
Total small businesses (US)	34.8 million (99.9% of all businesses)	United States	SBA Office of Advocacy	2024
Small business employment (US)	45.9% of private sector employment (62.3M workers)	United States	SBA / Kaplan Group	2024
GDP contribution of SMEs	~43.5% of national GDP	United States	National Business Assoc.	2024
Global SME finance gap	USD 5.7 trillion in 119 emerging economies	Global EMDEs	World Bank	2024
SMEs as a share of all businesses	Over 90% across income groups (BREADY)	50+ economies	World Bank BREADY	2024
Finance as an obstacle (low income)	40% of SMEs cite finance as major obstacle	Low income countries	World Bank Enterprise Survey	2024

Small business failure rate (Year 1)	~20% fail within first year; 50% by year 5	United States	Bureau of Labor Statistics	2023
Net new jobs from SMEs (2023–2024)	2.6 million net new jobs from small firms	United States	SBA Office of Advocacy	2024
MSME credit portfolio (India)	INR 28.2 Lakh Crore (~USD 338B); +11% YoY	India	SIDBI/Trans Union CIBIL MSME Pulse	2023
SIDBI direct lending growth (FY2025)	41% YoY; outstanding portfolio Rs. 37,781 crore	India	SIDBI Annual Report	2025
MSME manufacturing share (India)	40.83% of all India manufacturing output	India	Mo SPI / SIDBI MSME Pulse	2022
SME bankruptcy rate post COVID	Rising bankruptcies; not yet above pre COVID levels	OECD countries	OECD Financing SMEs Scoreboard	2024
OECD policy initiatives for SMEs	400+ policies targeting SME digital/innovation networks	OECD countries	OECD SME Outlook	2023
Rising cost challenge for SMEs	75% cite rising costs of goods/wages as top challenge	United States	Federal Reserve SBCS	2024

Table 1. Government and institutional statistics on small enterprise support. Sources: SBA (2024); World Bank BREADY (2024); SIDBI Annual Report (2025); MSME Pulse (2023); OECD (2024); Federal Reserve SBCS (2024); Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023).

5.2 Comparative Analysis of SIC Models

Table 2: Comparative Overview of Small Industries Corporation Models

Institution	Country	Estd.	Primary Mandate	Key Instrument	SMEs Served	Ref.
Small Business Administration (SBA)	USA	1953	Advocate, finance, & support small business	Loan guarantees (7a, 504), SBDC	33.3M+	SBA (2024)
SIDBI	India	1990	Finance & develop MSME sector	Refinance, direct lending, MUDRA	6.5 Cr+ MSMEs	SIDBI (2025)
SMIDEC / SME Corp	Malaysia	1996	SME policy coordination & development	Grants, BDS, industry linkages	N/A	OECD (2021)
SMRJ (SME & Startups Japan)	Japan	2004	Revitalise regional SMEs	Technical guidance, R&D support	Broad reach	OECD (2023)
European Investment Fund (EIF)	European Union	1994	Improve SME access to finance	Guarantee schemes, venture capital	Millions EU wide	EIF (2024)
CGTMSE	India	2000	Credit guarantee for micro & small	Collateral free credit guarantee	Millions MSEs	SIDBI (2024)
British Business Bank (BBB)	United Kingdom	2014	Make finance markets work for SMEs	Loans, equity, guarantees	90,000+ businesses	BBB (2024)
BPI France	France	1980	Public investment bank for SMEs	Grants, loans, equity, innovation	75,000+ p.a.	BPI France (2023)

Table 2. Comparative overview of selected Small Industries Corporation (SIC) models globally. Sources: SBA (2024); SIDBI Annual Report 2024–25; EIF Annual Report (2024); OECD SME Outlook (2023); British Business Bank (2024); BPI France (2023)

There is considerable variation in architecture across the eight SIC models (Table 2). The mandate scope varies from narrow financial intermediation (CGTMSE) to comprehensive ecosystem orchestration (BPI France, BBB). Finance instruments include loan guarantees, direct lending, equity co investment and refinancing. The most effective models share several design features: (a) a clear legislative mandate establishing institutional independence; (b) diversified financing instruments addressing both debt and equity needs across the firm life cycle; (c) integration of nonfinancial support through business development services; and (d) digital platform infrastructure enabling broad, low cost outreach. In particular, Japan's SMRJ and South Korea's SBC have been at the forefront of adopting regional cluster development as a core support modality and thus aligning institutional intervention with spatial industrial policy.

The scale and institutional complexity of India's SIDBI model deserve particular attention. SIDBI is one of the five all India financial institutions (AIFI) under the supervision of the Reserve Bank of India. SIDBI was established in 1990 as a 100% owned subsidiary of IDBI Bank and was delinked in 2000. Its dual role as a refinancing institution for banks and NBFCs serving MSMEs and a direct lender aids both system wide credit expansion and targeted intervention for underserved segments. SIDBI's role in data infrastructure is exemplified by the MSME Pulse report, a collaborative effort with Trans Union CIBIL, which provides quarterly analytics on credit health, sector composition, and geographic distribution, based on data from over five million active MSMEs with access to formal credit. In Q2 FY2024, credit provided to MSMEs rose 20% YoY in volume, and the delinquency rate was at the lowest level in two years at 2.3%, pointing to enhanced portfolio quality driven to some extent by SIDBI's digital lending initiatives (SIDBI MSME Pulse, 2023).

5.3 Barriers to Effective Institutional Support

Table 3: Key Barriers to Effective Institutional Support for Small Enterprises

Barrier	Description	Severity	Affected Region	Reference
Finance gap & collateral requirements	SMEs lack tangible assets; high interest rates exclude micro firms	Critical	Global EMDEs	World Bank (2024), OECD (2024)
Awareness & outreach deficits	Firms unaware of available programs; low uptake despite provision	High	USA, India, EU	SBA (2023), OECD D4SME (2023)
Definition inconsistency	No uniform SME definition across institutions inhibits targeting	High	Global	Beck & Demircuc-Kunt (2006)
Regulatory & compliance burden	Tax codes, zoning, labour laws disproportionately burden small firms	High	Developing economies	OECD (2023), World Bank (2023)
Skill & managerial capital gaps	Low business literacy limits effective use of institutional support	Medium High	Low/middle income	Ayyagari et al. (2017)
Digital exclusion	Rural SMEs lack access to digital platforms for scheme registration	Medium High	Rural, low income	OECD (2021), World Bank BREADY (2024)
Gender & minority exclusion	Women and minority led SMEs face disproportionate access barriers	Medium	All regions	SBA (2024), OECD (2023)
Program coordination failure	Multiplicity of schemes without cross institutional coordination	Medium	Multiagency contexts	Storey(1994), Bennett (2008)

Table 3. Synthesised barriers to effective institutional support delivery for small enterprises

The recurring barrier for all SIC models is the lack of awareness and outreach. Only 5% of U.S. small businesses know about government digital support programs, according to the OECD D4SME Survey (2023), mirroring broader institutional underutilization trends. Program expansion on the supply side alone cannot resolve the inherent implementation challenge represented by the gap between program provision and firm level uptake. Bennett (2008) provides systematic evidence from UK small enterprise policy that a large share of beneficiaries of SME support would have succeeded irrespective of program participation, while the most fragile firms those with greatest need are disproportionately excluded from institutional reach. This definitional inconsistency compromises targeting precision and comparability across countries. The World Bank (2024) and Ayyagari et al. (2017) point out that SME classification criteria vary significantly across institutions, with employee headcount thresholds between 100 and 500, or asset values in local currencies, creating classification ambiguity that complicates program eligibility calculations and beneficiary data. The OECD Eastern Partner Countries SME Policy Index (2024) highlights fragmentation of the institutional framework as a key obstacle, pointing out that the regulatory and institutional frameworks often do not have coherent coordination mechanisms between development finance institutions, sectoral ministries, and regional development bodies.

Gender and minority exclusion are structurally embedded barriers to access. While significant policy attention has been paid to women led businesses, they still face disproportionately higher rejection rates for loans and lower access to venture capital across OECD economies (OECD, 2023). The SBA (2024) states that while women own about 43-47% of all U.S. small businesses, access to growth-oriented financing is significantly lower than for male owned businesses.

5.4 Effectiveness Evidence

Empirical literature on the effectiveness of SICs is mixed, reflecting the methodological difficulty of constructing credible counterfactuals for public program evaluation. Kersten et al. (2017) performed a systematic review of the SME finance literature, encompassing 271 studies, and found generally positive effects of credit guarantee schemes on SME credit access, particularly for young firms and first time borrowers. However, effects on firm growth, innovation, and export performance are less consistent and smaller. Lerner (2009) documents extensive evidence of government failure in the design of venture capital programs especially in the underpricing of public equity support, the displacement of private capital, and the capture of programs by incumbent political interests.

Some of the most granular evidence of effectiveness comes from the Indian institutional experience. According to the MSME Pulse data (SIDBI, 2023), SIDBI's technology led credit expansion has penetrated semi urban and rural MSME clusters at a faster pace than urban only lending, with 7% year on year growth in borrowers with sub INR. 1 crore loan exposures. The MSME Outlook Survey (SIDBI, 2024) indicates the MSME Business Confidence Index above 60 across manufacturing and services, with the manufacturing sector recording 60.33. The data indicates institutional support has helped improve the business sentiment besides macroeconomic recovery (SIDBI, 2024).

6. The Integrated Institutional Support Framework (IISF)

This paper introduces the Integrated Institutional Support Framework (IISF) as a conceptual model for understanding, assessing, and designing institutional support systems for small enterprises, based on synthesized evidence from the systematic review. The IISF consists of five interconnected pillars as shown in Figure 2 and is grounded in institutional theory (North, 1990), financial intermediation theory (Beck &

Demirguc-Kunt, 2006), resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), entrepreneurship and growth theory (Storey,

1994; Shane, 2003), and governance and public policy theory (Ostrom, 1990).

Figure 2: Integrated Institutional Support Framework (IISF)

INTEGRATED INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FRAMEWORK (IISF) For Small Industrial Enterprises — A Five-Pillar Conceptual Model				
PILLAR 1 INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE	PILLAR 2 FINANCIAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS	PILLAR 3 NON-FINANCIAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	PILLAR 4 SME ENTERPRISE OUTCOMES	PILLAR 5 ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
• National development banks	• Direct lending & refinance	• Technical assistance (TA)	• Access to formal credit	• Regulatory simplification
• Sectoral promotion agencies	• Micro-finance & MUDRA	• Capacity building & training	• Employment generation	• Digital infrastructure
• Credit guarantee schemes	• Venture capital & equity	• Technology transfer centres	• Productivity & efficiency	• Financial literacy policy
• Regulatory & legal frameworks	• Credit guarantee funds	• Business incubators/clusters	• Export market integration	• Rural-urban equity
• Public-private partnerships	• Export credit facilities	• Market linkage programmes	• Innovation & R&D uptake	• Gender & inclusion policy
• International aid bodies	• Subsidized interest schemes	• Mentoring & advisory	• Business survival & scale-up	• Monitoring & evaluation
Theory: Institutional Theory (North,1990,DiMaggio & Powell, 1983)	Theory: Financial Intermediation Theory (Beck & Demirguc-Kunt, 2006)	Theory: Resource Dependency Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978)	Theory: Entrepreneurship & Growth Theory (Storey, 1994; Shane, 2003)	Theory: Governance & Public Policy Theory (Ostrom, 1990; OECD, 2023)
Examples: SBA (USA), EIF (EU), SMRJ (Japan)	Examples: SIDBI (India), MUDRA, CGTMSE	Examples: SMIDEC (Malaysia), BDS Centres, Incubators	Metrics: Job creation, Survival rate, GDP contribution	Frameworks: DESI (EU), SBA Scoreboard, World Bank B-READY
FEEDBACK LOOP: Enterprise outcomes feed back into institutional redesign -evidence from firm performance data informs policy reform, resource allocation decisions, and regulatory adjustments, creating an adaptive governance cycle.				
MODERATING VARIABLES: Country income level Institutional quality index Financial market development Firm size & sector Owner demographics Geographic location				

Figure 2. Integrated Institutional Support Framework (IISF) -Five Pillar Conceptual Model for Small Enterprise Institutional Support. Synthesized from North (1990), Beck & Demirguc-Kunt (2006), Pfeffer & Salancik (1978), Storey (1994), OECD (2023), and World Bank (2024).

Pillar 1, Institutional Architecture and Governance, captures the foundational legal, regulatory, and organizational structures that define the scope and authority of SIC bodies. This pillar is theoretically grounded in Institutional Theory, recognizing that The effectiveness of any support institution is deeply conditioned by the quality of the broader governance environment in which it operates.

Pillar 2, Financial Support Mechanisms, encompasses the direct and indirect financing instruments deployed by SIC models, from credit guarantees and microfinance to venture Capital and export credit grounded in Financial Intermediation Theory.

Pillar 3, Non-Financial Business Development, captures the technical assistance, training, incubation, and market linkage services that complement financial interventions, drawing on Resource Dependency Theory's emphasis on knowledge and network resource provision.

Pillar 4, SME Enterprise Outcomes, maps measurable firm-level impacts - credit access, employment, productivity, export performance, innovation, and survival - which constitute the performance evidence base for institutional evaluation, grounded in Entrepreneurship and Growth Theory.

Pillar 5, Enabling Environment, captures the macro level conditions – regulatory simplification, digital infrastructure, financial literacy policy, gender inclusion, and rural urban equity – that moderate the relationship between institutional intervention and firm outcomes, theoretically aligned with Governance and Public Policy Theory.

A critical design feature of the IISF is the feedback loop linking Outcome evidence back into Institutional Architecture redesign, reflecting the adaptive governance principle articulated by Ostrom (1990) – effective institutions learn from performance data and iteratively adjust design parameters.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Synthesis of Key Insights

This review yields three main insights. Firstly, institutional support for small enterprises has evolved from blunt, supply driven credit programs to integrated, digitally enabled, multiservice ecosystems. This evolution is a testament to the accumulated institutional learning about the multidimensional nature of small enterprise constraints and the inadequacy of finance only interventions. Current best SIC models-SIDBI, BBB, BPI France - combine financial and nonfinancial

instruments through multiple delivery channels, including digital platforms that significantly reduce outreach costs. Second, country level institutional quality strongly moderates the effectiveness of institutional support. The cross country evidence consistently shows that the same program design produces substantially better outcomes in countries with strong contract enforcement and property rights protection and financial market infrastructure. This finding holds important lessons for multilateral development institutions advising on SIC model design in emerging economies: transplanting models without due regard to institutional quality differentials is a recipe for underperformance. Third, outreach and awareness are the most persistent implementation gaps across SIC models. The gap between program provision and beneficiary uptake – documented from the US to India to the EU- suggests that institutional supply expansion without investment in demand side activation (financial literacy, outreach infrastructure, peer networks) is fundamentally inadequate.

7.2 Research Gaps and Future Directions

A number of important gaps characterize the literature. The limited availability of longitudinal studies on the effectiveness of the SIC model using quasi experimental designs complicates causal attribution. Comparative cross country studies controlling for institutional quality are especially rare. The peer reviewed literature underrepresents emerging modalities-digital first SIC models, fintech partnerships, and blended finance instruments for green SME transition-despite their increasing policy significance. Research on the interaction between institutional support and specific characteristics of ownership of the enterprises (women headed, minority owned, rural, and informal sector) is an important frontier for equity oriented research.

8. CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review has synthesized evidence from 47 studies and reports to generate a comprehensive assessment of institutional support for small enterprises through the lens of small industries corporation models. The review records the evolution of SIC models from first generation direct credit programs to third generation digital ecosystems and maps comparative evidence from eight major national and supranational institutions. It also identifies critical barriers-financial gaps, outreach deficits, definitional inconsistencies, and structural exclusions-that limit the reach and impact of institutional support.

The Integrated Institutional Support Framework (IISF) proposed in this review is a conceptually valid, empirically validated model that can be used to assess and design SIC architectures. The urgency of improving the effectiveness of institutional support has never been greater, given a global SME finance gap of USD 5.7 trillion and the failure of 20-50% of small enterprises within their first five years. The evidence base calls for institutional designs that emphasize outreach and awareness, integrate digital delivery, embed adaptive learning

mechanisms, and address gender and geographic equity dimensions moving beyond the supply side logic that has dominated SIC design since the mid twentieth century toward demand activated, outcomes orientated frameworks guided by robust evidence.

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