

HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMIC OF POLITICS

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**SUPPORTING SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED
ENTERPRISES IN HANOI IN THE NEW
CONTEXT**

SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale for the Research Topic

There is increasing evidence that, owing to private ownership, entrepreneurial spirit, flexibility, adaptability, and the potential to respond to challenges and changing environments, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in economic growth, job creation, export contribution, poverty alleviation, and equitable income distribution (Saeed Hashi, 2017) [146]; they are the nucleus of the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem, driving the achievement of sustainable development goals and climate change adaptation (Toran Lal Verma, 2020) [156]. However, weaknesses in capital, technology, management capacity, and risks associated with digitalisation and global data connectivity expose SMEs to the risk of lagging behind large enterprises and foreign-invested enterprises (FDIs), even bankruptcy if not supported by the State to undertake capital-intensive and technologically advanced transformations such as digital and green transitions. The new context presents numerous challenges, necessitating the supplementation and refinement of the theoretical foundation for supporting SMEs in connection with digitalisation and sustainable development.

In Vietnam, after nearly 40 years of Doi Moi (Renewal), the private economic sector has increasingly affirmed its significant role in the economy, with over 940,000 enterprises and more than 5 million business households in operation (approximately 98% of which are SMEs). The private sector contributes roughly 50% of GDP, over 30% of total state budget revenue, employs about 82% of the workforce [8], creates over 40 million jobs, and accounts for nearly 60% of total social investment capital [73]. Despite numerous policies from the Party and State to support SMEs in meeting the requirements of digital and green transformation and promoting innovation, a considerable gap persists between policy

and practice, and between demand and resource availability.

As the most dynamic development area in the country, Hanoi accounts for about 23% of the total number of enterprises nationwide. SMEs constitute 98.2% of registered enterprises, employ 55.1% of the workforce, and contribute over 40% of the city's GRDP [22]. In addition to implementing Party and State resolutions, Hanoi has promulgated policies tailored to the characteristics of local SMEs, such as Resolution 04/2018/NQ-HĐND dated 5 July 2018 on specific support measures, and Decision 5742/QĐ-UBND dated 29 December 2020 approving the SME support scheme for 2021–2025. Nevertheless, SME support programmes in Hanoi remain limited, reaching less than 1% of enterprises, with simple content and slow implementation, lagging behind the city's digital and green development orientation.

In the coming period, Hanoi aims to become a centre for innovation, digital economy, high-quality services, and a green, sustainable urban area, increasing the digital economy's contribution to over 30% of GDP, improving the investment environment, raising labour productivity, striving for 200,000 new enterprises, over 50% of innovative enterprises, and creating 167,000 jobs [8]. Supporting SMEs to meet digital and green transformation requirements is thus a strategic and urgent task, not only for the survival of SMEs but also as the only path for Hanoi to seize breakthrough opportunities.

For these reasons, the dissertation *“Supporting Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Hanoi in the New Context”* is of practical significance both theoretically and empirically.

2. Research Objectives and Tasks

2.1. Research objectives

Based on the systematisation of theory and practice regarding SME support, the dissertation aims to propose directions, solutions, and recommendations to enhance SME support in Hanoi in the new

context.

2.2. Research tasks

- Supplement the context and new approaches to the theoretical foundation of provincial government support for SMEs: (i) Concepts, objectives, methods, and content of provincial government support, including access to input resources and market expansion, participation in industry clusters and value chains; (ii) Analyse factors influencing provincial government support for SMEs; (iii) Develop a theoretical model to assess the impact of support on SME performance.

- Identify lessons for Hanoi through studying SME support in Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City.

- Highlight results, limitations, and causes in Hanoi's SME support from 2018–2024 through qualitative and quantitative analysis and sociological surveys.

- Propose perspectives, orientations, and solutions to strengthen SMEs support in Hanoi in the context of digital and green transformation, international integration, and the development of Hanoi as a creative, green, and smart city.

3. Research Subjects and Scope

3.1. Research subject

The subject of the dissertation is provincial government support for SMEs from the perspective of management functions.

3.2. Research scope

- Scope of supporting entities: The dissertation limits the supporting entity to the provincial People's Committee, using measures such as plans, programmes, and schemes to implement State policies within delegated authority.

- Scope of supporting contents:

+ Study SMEs operating in Hanoi with economic activities as of 31 December 2024, as defined by Article 4 of the Law on SME Support No. 04/2017/QH14 and Decree No. 19/2018/NĐ-CP on

classification criteria for SMEs which includes average annual social insurance participants and meeting the requirement of either total capital or revenue of the preceding year.

- + SMEs in Hanoi are studied across all types and sectors with economic activities in the service sector, industrial, agricultural sector as of 31 December 2024.

- + The dissertation focus on tools and programmes issued and implemented by Hanoi People's Committee: (i) Support for accessing input resources (credit, production premises, technology); (ii) Support for market expansion, participation in industry clusters, value chains.

- + The new context is defined as digital transformation, green transformation, international integration, and implementation of the “four-pillars” strategy...

- Spatial scope: Within Hanoi, with comparative references to other localities for supplementary experience.

- Temporal scope :

- + Analysis of SME support in Hanoi from 2018–2024, emphasising the period from 2021 (post-COVID-19, new-generation integration, digital and green transformation).

- + Proposed solutions extend to 2030, with a vision to 2045.

4. Theoretical Foundation and Research Methods

4.1. Theoretical foundation

The dissertation is based on the Resource-Based View (RBV), value chain theory, and small enterprise development theory to systematise the theoretical foundation and analyse the status of SME support in Hanoi in the new context.

4.2. Research methods

The dissertation employs a combination of qualitative, sociological survey, and quantitative methods to systematise theory, analyse the status, and propose solutions for enhancing SME support in Hanoi in the new context. Specifically:

- *Qualitative methods:*

Systematisation, synthesis, analysis, and comparison to review related research, systematise theory and practice, assess the status of SME support in Hanoi, and identify successes, limitations, and causes.

Analytical methods to forecast the impact of the new context (digital transformation, green transformation, deep integration into value chains) and suggest solutions.

- *Sociological survey*: Targeting SMEs in Hoan Kiem, Nam Tu Liem, and Dong Anh districts, with a sample size of 900 SMEs. Survey content includes timeliness, update, and effectiveness of support measures.

- *Quantitative methods*: Regression models to assess the impact of provincial government support on SME performance.

5. Novel Contributions of the Dissertation

5.1. Theoretical Contributions

- Introduces a dual-pillar approach to SME support: (i) access to input resources and (ii) market expansion. This approach overcomes the limitations of fragmented, unsystematic studies and clarifies chain linkages and long-term vision for SME support.

- Integrates digital and green transformation into the theoretical framework: (i) Adds digital resources (data infrastructure, digital technology, e-commerce platforms) and green resources (clean technology, green capital, environmental standards) to input resources; (ii) Clarifies the necessity of green standards, sustainability certificates, and global digital platforms for deeper participation in global value chains, expanding the theoretical framework to link local support with national and global policies.

- Clearly defines support objectives and develops evaluation criteria, as well as a quantitative model measuring the impact of support on SME performance through three indicators (capital growth, cost savings and market expansion).

5.2. Practical Contributions

- Identifies gaps in SME support in Hanoi, the mismatch between dual transformation and innovation requirements and current policies/tools, providing a practical basis for policy adjustment.

- Assesses support accessibility by enterprise type and the impact of support on SME performance in Hanoi from 2018–2024.

- Proposes breakthrough solutions to enhance SME support in Hanoi, such as digitalisation, greenification, value chain integration, with the provincial government acting as a “connecting intermediary” between SMEs and large/FDI enterprises, enabling active participation in global value chains and proposing flexible, adaptive support methods.

- Through survey results, evaluates the timeliness, continuity, and effectiveness of Hanoi People's Committee support activities for SMEs from 2018–2024, and identifies statistically significant relationships between support factors (credit, technology, market expansion, supply chain participation) and SME business performance via multivariate regression models.

6. Theoretical and Practical Significance

6.1. Theoretical significance

The dissertation helps to expand the research framework for SME support towards digitalisation, greening, and integration into global value chains.

6.2. Practical significance

The input-output support analysis approach enables Hanoi authorities to design and adjust support programmes and allocate resources more rationally and comprehensively. The findings help SMEs better identify opportunities and challenges in the new context to choose strategies for digital and green transformation and value chain participation, thereby enhancing competitiveness.

7. Structure of the Dissertation

In addition to the Introduction, Conclusion, and References, the

dissertation comprises four chapters and eleven sections.

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

1.1. GENERAL OVERVIEWS OF RELATED RESEARCH

1.1.1. Research on the Role and Challenges of SMEs

These studies affirm the significant role of SMEs in economic growth, development, job creation, and social welfare, while also highlighting challenges in accessing input resources (capital, land, technology) and market expansion, necessitating State intervention.

1.1.2. Research on the Role of the State with regards to SMEs

Most studies agree on the State's crucial role in promulgating and implementing policies and support measures for SMEs.

1.1.3. Research on State Support for SMEs

State support typically covers all activities in the SME business process, including financial access, land, technology transfer, and market expansion.

1.1.4. Research on Factors Affecting SME Support

Studies within and out of Vietnam confirm that factors affecting SME support is influenced by both objective and subjective factors such as technology adoption, policy completeness, technical infrastructure, and SME compliance.

1.2. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

1.2.1. Achievements and Inherited Content

- Research on provincial government support for SMEs converges in approach, content, and method, including multi-disciplinary perspectives, economic management approaches, and specific policy areas (credit, land, tax incentives, training, human resource development, trade promotion).

- Previous studies clarify the importance and weaknesses of SMEs, the necessity of support, and the positive impact of policies on

competitiveness, with some addressing international integration and chain linkages, and State management in the context of COVID-19, digital, and green transformation.

Methodology utilised usually includes qualitative synthesis, comparison, analysis, forecasting, surveys (questionnaires, in-depth interviews), and quantitative assessment of policy impacts.

1.2.2. Research Gaps

Theoretical:

- Lack of a comprehensive analytical framework; studies are fragmented, not systematically grouped by input resource access and market expansion/value chain participation.

- Insufficient focus on new contexts: digital transformation, green transformation, global value chain participation.

- Lack of systematic criteria for evaluating provincial government support for SMEs.

Practical:

- Lack of comparative analysis and forecasting; studies mainly describe current policies without deep evaluation or forecasting new policy needs for Hanoi post-COVID-19 and dual transformation.

- Insufficient analysis of Hanoi's role in creating a “support ecosystem” connecting SMEs with research institutes, universities, FDIs, and international markets.

- Lack of quantitative studies assessing the impact of provincial government support on SME performance (capital growth, cost reduction, market expansion).

These gaps necessitate further research and refinement of theory and practice in SME support in the new context.

1.3. NEW APPROACH OF THE DISSERTATION

- Adopts a systemic and contextual approach, viewing support activities as a system of interacting components (policies, tools, entities, subjects) in the context of international integration, digital transformation, green development, and post-pandemic recovery.

- Defines the new context (digital transformation, green

transformation, international integration, global supply chain participation, local mergers, institutional reform, “four-pillar” strategy) as influencing theory, status assessment, and solution design, shifting from “general support” to “focused support” around three axes: digital transformation, green transformation, and chain linkage.

Theoretical foundation: The new context changes the theoretical foundation with regards to SME support on the following angle:

- + Expands the concept of “input resources” (adding green capital, digital finance, digital data) and shifting from traditional markets to e-commerce, digital marketing).

- + Adjusts traditional support (credit, production premises, human resources, market expansion) towards innovation, digital transformation, green finance, green technology, digital management skills, e-commerce tailored to sector and group needs.

- + Shifts from direct administrative support to “ecosystem support”: State, large enterprises, support organisations participate, applying digital platforms, e-government, and demand-driven support models.

- + Changes the support approach: from viewing SMEs as weak entities needing support to seeing them as innovation drivers, shifting from equal support to focused support, encouraging innovative and green SMEs, promoting public-private cooperation, and innovating policy tools (innovation funds, policy sandboxes, green certificates on digital platforms).

Status assessment:

- + Evaluates SME support using new criteria: digital capacity, green capacity, value chain participation.

- + Analyses SME differentiation: digitised SMEs, active in supply chains, linked with FDIs, versus SMEs limited in capital, premises, technology, and linkage.

Solution proposals: Designs conditional policies and focused

support packages: basic digital transformation, green production (expanding credit access, credit guarantees, innovation funds, transformation support funds), increasing SME-FDI linkage.

- The dissertation focuses on Hanoi People's Committee as the supporting entity, along two axes: access to input resources and market expansion/industry cluster/value chain participation.

Chương 2

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF SMES

2.1. GENERAL OVERVIEWS OF SMES

2.1.1. Key Concepts

SMEs are enterprises with revenue, assets, or number of employee below a certain threshold, with each country setting different sectoral ceilings. Three main criteria: (a) number of employees; (b) average annual revenue; (c) asset value.

2.1.2. SME Classification

By average annual labour, total assets or revenue, economic sector, ownership form, and innovation level.

2.1.3. Advantages and Disadvantages of SMEs

Advantages: Flexibility, ease of sector selection, high creativity, production optimisation.

Disadvantages: Difficulty accessing input resources, market expansion, limited supply chain participation, and linkage with large domestic and FDI enterprises.

2.2. PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR SMES

2.2.1. Concept

Support in the new context encompasses policies, tools, and activities led or coordinated by local government to facilitate SME access to input resources (finance, premises, technology) and market expansion (industry clusters, value chains), thereby promoting

production/business scale, competitiveness, innovation, and global value chain participation, contributing to local economic growth.

2.2.2. Objectives, principles, and methods

2.2.2.1. Objectives

- Help SMEs overcome difficulties, improve access to input resources, enhance business capacity, and foster sustainable development.

- Increase SME operational efficiency and competitiveness, enabling their role in growth, development, job creation, and digital transformation.

- Promote green transformation and sustainable development.

- Enhance international integration, market access, and value chain participation.

- Improve the business environment and build a support ecosystem.

2.2.2.2. Principles

- Effectiveness and sustainability.

- Fairness and transparency.

- Partnership and creativity.

- Focused support.

- Resource diversification.

2.2.2.3. Methods

- Direct support

- Indirect support via institutional improvement

- Combined methods

2.2.3. Content of Support

2.2.3.1. Access to input resources

Market inefficiencies mean SMEs (inherently weaker than large enterprises) struggle to compete for financial, technological, and informational resources, necessitating State support (preferential credit, green credit, technology transfer, digital transformation, information infrastructure, institutional reform).

Supporting SMEs in accessing input resources are measures and methods that provincial authorities take to facilitate SMEs in accessing credit sources, production premises, human resources and technology at preferential interest rates to help businesses expand resources to conduct production and business activities.

Support includes:

- Credit access
- Production premises
- Technology access

2.2.3.2. Market expansion, Industry cluster, Value chain participation

Support involves trade promotion, product fairs, distribution chain establishment, training, capacity building, information, brand development, market connection, enabling SMEs to participate in markets and seek partners. In essence, output support comprises policies/tools to help SMEs access and expand markets and participate deeply in industry clusters and value chains.

2.2.4. Evaluation criteria on SME support

Enhancing competitiveness and operational efficiency.

Promoting digital transformation.

Promoting green transformation and sustainability.

Market expansion.

Value chain and industry linkage.

Improving the business environment and SME role in local economic growth.

Policy/institutional effectiveness via sociological surveys.

2.2.5. Influencing factors on SME support

Subjective factors: Management apparatus, IT adoption, resource mobilisation, development orientation

Objective factors: Policy completeness, SME characteristics, economic environment, local development level, market conditions

2.3. LESSONS ON SME SUPPORT FROM DA NANG CITY AND HO CHI MINH CITY FOR HANOI

- Rationale for selecting Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City
- SME support experience
- Lessons for Hanoi

Chapter 3

STATUS OF SME SUPPORT IN HA NOI

3.1. NATURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HANOI AND ITS SME (2018 – 2024)

3.1.1. Natural, Economic, and Social Characteristics of Hanoi (2018–2024)

As the capital of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Hanoi is the country's foremost urban centre, serving as the political, administrative, cultural, and educational hub. The city enjoys a favourable geographical position, acting as a growth pole and the nucleus of the Red River Delta, with a comprehensive network of transportation, logistics, industrial zones, high-tech parks, and financial services. In recent years (2018-2024), Hanoi has maintained a relatively high average economic growth rate of 6.8%, with the GRDP in 2024 estimated at approximately VND 1,426 trillion (about USD 58 billion) [11], ranking second nationwide after Ho Chi Minh City. With the objective of developing into a dynamic, green, and smart city, Hanoi is home to a large number of SMEs, predominantly in the service sector and supporting industries for industrial zones.

3.1.2. Features of SMEs and Support Requirements

3.1.2.1. Features of SMEs in Hanoi (2018–2024)

As of 31st December 2024, Hanoi had 402,547 active enterprises (cumulative from 1992 to 2024), with SMEs accounting for approximately 98.4% (about 396,106 enterprises),

mainly concentrated in sectors requiring minimal capital investment and rapid transformation. This is a distinctive feature of Hanoi's enterprises. However, most are small and micro enterprises, with limited capital, management, and capacity to participate in value chains. SMEs in Hanoi operate across various sectors, but are heavily concentrated in traditional industries, services, small-scale processing, handicrafts, construction, and logistics. Many sectors exhibit low productivity and have yet to form closed value chains. Management and technological capacity remain weak, and digital transformation is uneven. Capital constraints and difficulties in accessing finance for technological innovation persist. The ability to participate in global value chains is limited due to a lack of standards and certification.

3.1.2.2. Support Requirements from Hanoi People's Committee

Hanoi needs to design specialised financial packages for digital and green transformation, such as city-level green credit funds, credit guarantees for digital/green projects, interest subsidies, and vouchers for certification support; develop digital infrastructure, including platforms connecting enterprises (e.g., e-commerce platforms for SMEs); support standardisation, certification, and digital traceability. To participate in global value chains, SMEs must demonstrate quality and sustainability standards. Connecting major buyers/agents and developing green industry clusters is essential, as SMEs struggle to access global value chains without large intermediaries (corporations, FDIs) and cluster linkage mechanisms.

3.2. STATUS OF SMES SUPPORT IN HA NOI (2018 – 2024)

3.2.1. Context and characteristics of support activities by Hanoi People's Committee (2018–2024)

3.2.1.1. Context of SME support implementation (2018–2024)

During 2018–2024, Hanoi implemented SME support policies based on national legal frameworks and new development requirements.

From 2018–2020: Policies focused on traditional support—administrative reform, credit access, premises, human resource training, and trade promotion. During the COVID-19 pandemic, emergency support packages were introduced, mainly preferential credit, tax payment extensions, and fee reductions to help SMEs maintain production and employment.

From 2021–2024: Hanoi shifted strongly towards two major trends: digital transformation and green transformation.

3.2.1.2. Characteristics of SME support activities in Hanoi (2018–2024)

- Diverse supporting entities, with the People’s Committee as the lead, departments and agencies as implementers, and commercial banks, SME development funds, and business associations participating.

- Legal basis for support activities relies on State policies, with tailored plans for each period.

- SME support in Hanoi during 2018–2024 followed a “selective development” approach, focusing on innovative SMEs and high-tech applications to enhance competitiveness.

- Maximum mobilisation of resources to expand the scale, scope, and quality of support for SMEs.

3.2.2. Status of SME support in Hanoi (2018–2024)

3.2.2.1. Status of Support for SMEs in Accessing Input Resources (2018–2024)

Support from Hanoi People’s Committee during 2018–2024 was provided through various forms, including direct cash support, preferential interest rates, exemptions and reductions in land rent, non-agricultural land use tax, and income tax for innovative enterprises.

3.2.2.2. Status of support for SMEs in market expansion, industry cluster, and value chain participation (2018–2024)

From 2018–2024, Hanoi authorities implemented multiple measures to help SMEs expand markets and participate in industry clusters and value chains, creating a favourable environment and enhancing competitiveness. Support for industry cluster participation included establishing industrial zones to attract SMEs as suppliers for large domestic and FDI enterprises. Measures to promote value chain participation focused on SMEs in supporting industries.

3.3. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

3.3.1. Achievements in SME Support in Hanoi (2018–2024) via Surveys and Regression Models

Policies and measures from Hanoi People’s Committee for SMEs have been timely, continuous, and effective. This was assessed using sociological surveys with semi-structured questionnaires targeting SMEs in Hanoi. Sample size: 873/900 processed responses, including 286 from Hoan Kiem, 290 from Nam Tu Liem, and 297 from Dong Anh.

3.3.1.3. Discussion of Support Measures for SMEs in Hanoi

(1) Many support policies in Hanoi have proven effective in helping enterprises access key input resources and expand output markets, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(2) Quantitative models confirm statistically significant relationships between support factors and business performance. Credit support has the strongest impact, explaining 50% of variance in business results, followed by technology support, market expansion, and supply chain participation.

(3) In addition to survey results, reports on the implementation of the SME Support Law, Decree No. 80/2021/NĐ-CP, and the SME Support Plan for 2021–2025 show that after more than four years, there has been a shift towards flexible policy design and implementation based on practical needs.

3.3.2. Limitations and Causes in SME Support in Hanoi (2018–2024)

3.3.2.1. Limitations in SME Support in Hanoi (2018–2024)

- Support levels remain low compared to SME needs, both in accessing input resources and market expansion.
- Support quality is uneven across measures, lacking continuity and timeliness.
- Few enterprises access support policies, which have not fully addressed difficulties in resource access and industry cluster/value chain participation.
- Support for innovative start-ups is limited, with few investment channels for Hanoi's start-ups.
- The structure of support types in law and practice lacks flexibility for new contexts and does not focus on production capacity development.
- Most targets in the SME Support Plan for 2021–2025 were not met.

3.3.2.2. Causes of Limitations

Objective causes:

- State policies regulating enterprise activities and SME support remain overlapping.
- Market fluctuations, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact of Hurricane No. 3.
- Complicated procedures for SMEs to access support policies.
- Low capacity of SMEs.

Subjective causes:

- Management apparatus capacity does not fully meet requirements.
- Low technology adoption in management.
- Resource mobilisation for SME support falls short of needs.
- Lack of prioritisation for SME support in overall economic and social development strategies.
- Administrative procedures remain complex.

Chapter 4
DIRECTIONS AND SOLUTIONS TO ENHANCE SUPPORT
FOR SMES IN HA NOI IN THE NEW CONTEXT

4.1. NEW CONTEXT AND DIRECTIONS FOR
ENHANCING SME SUPPORT IN HANOI

4.1.1. Domestic and International Context

4.1.2. Directions and Perspectives for SME Support by Hanoi
Authorities in the New Context

- Directions

- Perspectives

4.2. SOLUTIONS TO ENHANCE SME SUPPORT IN HANOI IN
THE NEW CONTEXT

4.2.1. Solutions for Business Environment Reform

4.2.2. Solutions to Support SMEs in Accessing Input
Resources in Hanoi

4.2.3. Solutions to Enhance Support for SMEs in Market
Expansion

4.2.4. Strengthening Linkages between FDI's and Hanoi's
SMEs

4.2.5. Strengthening Linkages among Localities in the Red
River Delta

4.2.6. Enhancing Policy Communication and Policy
Effectiveness Evaluation

4.2.7. Solutions to Improve Enterprise Effectiveness

4.3. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.1. Recommendations to the National Assembly

4.3.2. Recommendations to the Government and Relevant
Ministries/Agencies

4.3.3. Recommendations to the State Bank of Vietnam

CONCLUSION

Through theoretical and practical research on SME support by Hanoi authorities (2018–2024), analysis of the new context, and proposed solutions, the dissertation draws several conclusions:

1. Theoretical Aspects

- The dissertation systematises and clarifies the concept, characteristics, and role of SMEs in large urban economies, emphasising flexibility, market-driven innovation, job creation, income growth, and vulnerability in supply chains.

- The dissertation clarifies the concept, objectives, principles, content, and influencing factors of provincial government support for SMEs.

- The dissertation adds the argument for risk-based support measures: support should be tiered according to technological readiness or chain linkage, rather than revenue scale or enterprise age.

2. Practical Aspects

- Experiences from Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City show that support is based on State mechanisms and some local regulations, with scope and methods varying by period. Alongside support policies, policy communication and awareness among SMEs should be strengthened.

- With favourable infrastructure and support services, Hanoi is home to many start-ups, mainly small and micro enterprises in supporting industries and services. However, Hanoi's SMEs still face limitations in management and finance, lack skilled labour (especially digital skills), struggle to access land and urban logistics, and exhibit uneven digitalisation and loose chain linkages.

- Secondary data (2018–2024) and primary survey data (900 SMEs in Nam Tu Liem, Hoan Kiem, and Dong Anh) show that Hanoi authorities have implemented various support measures (preferential credit, start-up support, basic digital transformation, market

connection), achieving successes in overcoming COVID-19 challenges and improving SME performance. Quantitative models confirm that credit access, technology support, digital transformation, and market expansion positively affect SME performance. However, only 1% of SMEs accessed support policies, with both objective and subjective causes for limitations.

3. Policy Recommendations for Enhancing SME Support in the New Context

- In the new context (digital transformation, green standards, cross-border e-commerce, traceability, “four-pillar” strategy), enterprises with technological, human resource, and capital readiness, and high value chain positions will outperform others.

- With institutional reforms making the private sector “a key driver” of the economy (Resolution 68), breakthroughs in science, technology, innovation, and digital transformation (Resolution 57), and international contexts, comprehensive solutions from Hanoi authorities and stakeholders are needed. The principle is tiered support, upgrading value chain positions to increase productivity, expand markets, enhance localisation, and strengthen SME resilience

LIST OF AUTHOR'S PUBLISHED WORKS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

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