RUSSIAN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES FORUM BUSINESS PROGRAMME

June 3, 2026, St. Petersburg

Programme accurate as at June 2, 2026

3 June, 2026

10:00–11:30

Congress Centre
zone D, VEB.RF
conference hall D2

Workforce

‘Expensive’ Professionals: How to Employ Highly Qualified Foreign Specialists Today

The workforce forecast for 2032 predicts structural change for the labour market, with the government creating a system that will connect workforce training to the needs of the economy and increase the number of state programmes involved in developing sought-after specialists. Companies are approaching the need to fill vacancies in new ways as they adapt to underlying personnel shortages and technological challenges. Major changes to the legislation governing immigration have presented companies with a number of new administrative and legal challenges. Stricter oversight and new requirements for the employment of foreign nationals, particularly highly qualified specialists, are forcing Russian and foreign businesses to update their HR policies fast. This session will introduce a discussion of some new approaches to training, motivating, and retaining specialists and how legislation and infrastructure might be adapted to better satisfy the needs of the modern economy. How is a persistent shortage of skilled labour changing the market? How will new migration laws change the makeup of the labour market and what it means to be a highly qualified specialist? What new approaches are businesses employing to attract talent? What are the latest trends when it comes to attracting highly qualified foreign specialists? How seriously are these changes affecting businesses and foreign companies in Russia? Do digital solutions hold the key to overcoming the talent shortage?

Moderator:

- **Sergey Nuzhdin**, Member of the Presidium of the Board, Chairman of the Committee for the Development of the National Labor Market and Monitoring of Migration Processes, OPORA RUSSIA

Speakers:

- **Erdem Acay**, Chairman, Russian-Turkish Businessmen's Association (RTİB)
- **Robert Agee**, President, Chief Executive Officer, American Chamber of Commerce in Russia
- **Kirill Kravchenko**, Member of the Board, Gazprom Neft
- **Tadzio Schilling**, Chief Executive Officer, Association of European Businesses (AEB)
- **Mikhail Shepel**, Director of the Institute of Distance Education, Vice-Rector for Development of Continuing Education, National Research Tomsk State University
- **Alexander Vaino**, Director of the Young Professionals Department, Agency for Strategic Initiatives to Promote New Projects
- **Anastasiya Zolotukhina**, Director of the Department for Social Sphere and Non-Profit Organizations Sector Development, Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation

10:00–11:30

pavilion E
conference hall E

Industries and Digitalization

Humans and AI as a New Player: How Artificial Intelligence Is Changing the Rules of the Russian Economy

Artificial intelligence is no longer merely a technological add-on. Today, AI is becoming an independent agent in economic decisionmaking – changing the logic of competition, redistributing roles between humans and algorithms, creating new markets, and dismantling old management models. In the Russian economy, this process is proceeding at a rapid pace, but not always transparently: where is there genuine growth in efficiency, and where is there merely inertia and marketing? Between 2024 and 2026, a sustained demand emerged in Russia for the practical implementation of AI in e-commerce, finance, manufacturing, and management. Companies are moving from pilot projects to scaling up, whilst the state is shifting towards systematic support measures and regulation. However, the key issue today lies not in the realm of technology, but in that of human responsibility, competencies, and the limits of trust in algorithms. The session will focus on real case studies from the business world without inflated expectations, including the process of creating a product using AI, from the initial idea to a finished market-ready solution. How is the integration of artificial intelligence changing the role of humans in management? Where does the border lie today between the real effectiveness of technologies and their overestimation? Which competencies come to the fore in the new logic of competition: engineering, managerial, or ethical? How can we measure the economic impact of AI implementation without mistaking it for the ‘novelty effect’?

Moderator:

- **Vladislav Kreinin**, Senior Vice President, Director of Marketing and Communications Department, Sberbank

Speakers:

- **Vasily Churanov**, Director of the Mechanical Engineering and Metalworking Division, Zyfra Group of companies
- **Anastasia Fedosova**, Founder, Ecomake Natural Cosmetics
- **Alexander Krainov**, Director for Development of Artificial Intelligence Technologies, Yandex
- **Georgy Ladozhsky**, Director of Business Development, Media Instinct Group
- **Matvey Pak**, General Director, Metamentor
- **Yury Shishkin**, Founder, 24TTL
- **Kristina Tarba**, Business Development Partner, ChekhovSad Plant
- **Adel Valiullin**, First Vice President, Gazprombank

10:00–11:30

pavilion G
conference hall G2

Industries and Digitalization

Digital Maturity of SMEs: Why Are Small and Medium-Sized Businesses Getting Left Behind?

Despite its potential to boost revenue and reduce costs, digitalization has not yet become a major growth driver for the majority of SMEs. The highest levels of digital maturity are seen among SMEs in the IT and telecommunications, administrative services, and education sectors. The systemic transformation of the SME sector requires concerted efforts from both the government and technology leaders. Greater digital literacy and enhanced innovative skills, as well as the introduction of digital technologies, are the primary catalysts for consistent improvements in the digitalization of SMEs. Big business needs to be more proactive in developing and bringing its products to the market, while also introducing special conditions and rates designed to attract SMEs. Fostering a culture of innovation within the business community is equally important. What measures do the government and tech leaders need to take to systematically transform the digital maturity of SMEs? How can the digital literacy and innovative skills of entrepreneurs be enhanced to accelerate the introduction of new technologies? What incentives and terms should big business offer to make its digital products more accessible and appealing to SMEs?

Moderator:

- **Alevtina Penkalskaya**, Financial Observer, RBC Investments; Presenter, RBC-TV

Speakers:

- **Timofey Abramenko**, Vice President for Product Development and SMEs, Rostelecom
- **Vladimir Krikushenko**, General Director, NexTouch, Nex-T Group; Member of the Expert Council, Agency for Strategic Initiatives for the Promotion of New Projects (ASI); Member of the Board, Russian High Growth Tech Companies Business Association
- **Sergey Kutsenko**, Director of Economics and Finance, Motorika Group
- **Dmitry Markelov**, Director of Government Relations and Corporate Governance, HeadHunter
- **Alexey Nikonov**, Co-founder, Cozy Environment
- **Aleksey Novikov**, Director of the Security Expertise Center, Positive Technologies
- **Maxim Protasov**, Head, Russian System of Quality
- **Mikhail Ryzhenkov**, Deputy Managing Director, Avito
- **Irina Sovik**, Chief Operating Officer of the Ecosystem and Integrated Services business group, VK
- **Юлия Ждан**, Deputy General Director, SME Corporation JSC

10:00–11:30

pavilion G
conference hall G3

SMEs and the State

The Gold Reserves of Business: People as the Economy’s Primary Resource

Today, human capital is the primary resource for achieving Russia’s national priorities. Sustainable national development is impossible without all segments of the population being involved in economic activity. The national development goals articulated by Russian President Vladimir Putin cannot be achieved without all citizens being systemically involved in the country’s economic activities. Demographics and longevity are no longer merely social categories; today, they are the foundation for sustainable economic growth and building a robust domestic market, as well as a stable tax base. In recent years, the government, major corporations, and development institutions have been working together to create a new ecosystem in which each and every individual – regardless of age, marital status, health, or personal circumstances – can realize their entrepreneurial potential. Cross-cutting programmes that integrate support for women with children, the older generation, as well as participants in the special military operation and their families play a key role in this endeavour. What are some of the best practices and new tools that help individuals from these priority groups confidently embark on an entrepreneurial path?

Moderator:

- **Olga Terno**, Deputy Director, Federal Resource Centre

Speakers:

- **Tatyana Evdina**, Director of the Department for Control and Coordination of Activities, Sberbank
- **Vlad Fedulov**, Managing Director, Avito
- **Alfia Kogogina**, First Deputy Chairman of the Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on Small and Medium Entrepreneurship
- **Natalia Medvedeva**, Director, Business Community “Top Manager”
- **Anetta Orlova**, Psychologist; Expert of the Silver Start Program
- **Pavel Pavlovsky**, Vice-Rector, State University of Management
- **Elena Shatunova**, Founder, Shatunov Estate Farm; Participant in the Federal Final of the Mom-Entrepreneur program
- **Maria Sittel**, Anchor; Chairperson, Union of Women of Russia; Member of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation
- **Elena Tyabutova**, General Director, ARNEST UNIRUS

Front row participants:

- **Vladislav Ganzhara**, Director, My Business Centre of the Republic of Crimea
- **Alena Kurochkina**, Head of Department, Department for Small and Medium-Sized Entrepreneurship Development and Tax Incentives, Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation
- **Anastasia Rusakova**, Director, Production Center "My Business - My Opportunities" of the "National Agency "My Business"

10:00–11:30

pavilion G
conference hall G4

Industries and Digitalization

Business at Digital Crossroads: New Opportunities or Additional Costs

Over the past three to five years, digitalization has become an integral part of numerous business processes, while platforms and super-apps have evolved into ecosystems that are forging new markets in areas where traditional industries intersect. On the one hand, digitalization offers businesses lower costs, increased productivity, and accelerated business processes; on the other, there are rising expenses associated with platforms (infrastructure access, pricing), artificial intelligence (autonomous decision-making), and comprehensive oversight (the digitalization of regulatory and supervisory activities). So where will digitalization ultimately lead the Russian entrepreneur? And does it offer more benefits or costs?

Moderator:

- **Elena Dybova**, Vice President, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation

Speakers:

- **Alexander Demyanov**, Member of the Board of Directors, Center for the Development of Advanced Technologies
- **Vladimir Gerasimov**, Deputy General Director, Interfax Information Services Group
- **Babken Ispiryan**, Farmer; Chairman, Association of Peasant (Farm) Households and Agricultural Cooperatives of the Kaluga Region
- **Larisa Kambolova**, Individual Entrepreneur
- **Natalia Korotchenkova**, Secretary of State – Deputy General Director, Member of the Board, Russian Small and Medium Business Corporation
- **Nikolay Kozak**, Member of the Board, DOM.RF; Deputy Chairman of the Board, Bank DOM.RF
- **Anatoly Popov**, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Board, Sberbank
- **Timur Shinaliev**, Deputy Head, Federal Tax Service of Russia

Front row participants:

- **Konstantin Agula**, Director of Government Relations, Avito Services
- **Dmitry Sytin**, General Director, Cooper
- **Dmitry Tafintsev**, Deputy Director General, RWB
- **Alexander Vasiliev**, Head of Government Relations, Ozon

10:00–11:30

pavilion H
conference hall H1

SMEs and the State

Interaction between Municipal Government and Business: The Role of SMEs

Interaction between local government bodies and business is one of the most critical prerequisites for the successful socioeconomic development of municipalities. In recent years, municipalities have been actively implementing their own economic programmes to support entrepreneurship, which serve as a supplement to regional and federal measures. These initiatives generate the greatest returns in municipalities where the administration and local business community have established a constructive dialogue, since this creates a favourable investment climate and promotes the sustainable development of the local economy. What are the main focuses of municipal business support programmes, and how do they differ from regional and federal measures? How does an open dialogue between the administration and entrepreneurs influence the effectiveness of a municipality's economic programmes? What economic effects are we seeing in municipalities that implement their own support programmes? What are the primary obstacles in the development of municipal entrepreneurship support programmes, and how can we overcome them? How should we evaluate the effectiveness of municipal business support programmes, and what metrics are used to analyse their impact on the local economy? What advantages does business gain from taking part in municipal-private partnerships?

Moderator:

- **Arkady Gershman**, First Vice President, OPORA RUSSIA

Speakers:

- **Alexander Demin**, Chairman of the Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on Small and Medium Enterprises
- **Natalia Egorova**, Founder, General Director, Educational Center
- **Evgeniy Grachev**, Deputy Head of the Office of the President of the Russian Federation for Domestic Policy
- **Evgeniya Khalamtseva**, Founder, General Director, Success KE
- **Ivan Litvinov**, President, "Association of the Self-Employed of Russia" All-Russian Public Organization
- **Pavel Pavlov**, Minister of Economic Development of the Rostov Region
- **Lyalya Sadykova**, General Director, Lucky Like; President, Association of Beauty Industry Enterprises and Professionals
- **Ekaterina Solovyova**, Minister of the Moscow Government; Head of the Department of City Property of the City of Moscow
- **Svyatoslav Sorokin**, Deputy Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation

10:00–11:30

passage in zone H
Passage conference hall

Foreign Economic Activities

Russia–China SME Dialogue: Adapting to New Conditions of Cooperation

Small and medium-sized enterprises are a significant driver of economic growth. In China, SMEs account for more than 60% of the country's GDP. There are over 13,000 Chinese companies currently operating in the Russian Federation, and this number continues to grow. In the current climate, there is an objective need to create a dialogue platform for small and medium-sized enterprises in the two countries. Practical issues of interaction are particularly important in the development of trade and economic cooperation between Russia and China, especially in the SME segment. Companies are faced with the need to quickly adapt to changes in tax and customs regulations, find new approaches to organizing logistics, and build sustainable mechanisms for international settlements. In this context, it is important not only to respond to the challenges, but also to take advantage of emerging opportunities to make interactions between Russian and Chinese companies more effective. In practice, this means that entrepreneurs are discussing and implementing strategies that allow them to respond flexibly to legislative changes, coordinating deliveries via alternative routes, and choosing reliable schemes for working with suppliers. Equally important is the issue of financial settlements: SMEs need accessible and secure channels and tools that allow them to make international payments without unnecessary risks. What is more, the experience of Chinese companies already operating in the Russian market is of great interest. An analysis of their successful practices and the challenges they frequently face will help other market participants avoid common pitfalls and build business processes more effectively. This kind of multipronged approach helps strengthen business ties and create sustainable models of cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises in Russia and China. What strategies for adapting to regulatory changes are most effective for SMEs in today's environment? How can we ensure the sustainability and transparency of international payments for SMEs given the constraints and risks? What experiences of Chinese companies in the Russian market can be considered the most successful?

Moderators:

- **Kirill Babaev**, Director, Institute of China and Modern Asia of the Russian Academy of Sciences
- **Zhou Liqun**, Chairman, Union of Chinese Entrepreneurs in Russia

Speakers:

- **Anton Dan-Chin-Yu**, Director for Infrastructure Projects, Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF)
- **Ilona Gorsheneva-Dolunts**, Director, Owner, InterBiz Trade and Logistics Company
- **Xu Huilong**, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Jiangsu Hengyuan Group
- **Taliya Minullina**, Head, Tatarstan Investment Development Agency
- **Sergey Sokolov**, General Director, Novosibirskkhleboprodukt
- **Dmitriy Starostin**, Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Nizhny Novgorod Region
- **Sun Tianshu**, Founder, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Qifa
- **You Xinyu**, President, Passion Group
- **Luo Zhanhui**, Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Saint Petersburg
- **Li Zheng**, General Director, China International Investment Corporation “Huaming”

Front row participants:

- **Ke Jin**, General Director, New New Shipping
- **Pavel Kuznetsov**, Vice President, National Coordination Center for International Business Cooperation
- **Tatyana Sizova**, Commissioner for Entrepreneurs' Rights Protection in Moscow
- **Anton Tsetsinovskiy**, Director on International Cooperation and Development, Russian Export Center

10:00–11:30

pavilion G
conference hall G1

Accelerating SMEs

New Opportunities for SMEs: The Innovation Chain and Growth through the Exchange

For three years now, this session held during the SME Forum has brought together leaders who are building an innovative economy: from early-stage grants to stock exchange listings. In 2024, we discussed the resurgent wave of IPOs and how startups could rightfully dream of becoming unicorns. In 2025, we spoke about how the synergy between private capital and development institutions was transforming this dream into a concrete roadmap. In 2026, the conversation will be more specific: the route has been plotted, but the journey has become more challenging. The high cost of capital has fundamentally altered the rules of the game. The IPO window has opened slightly, but now the market only welcomes the strongest players – companies with a clear business model, measurable ROI, and a genuine technological edge. Mergers and acquisitions have overtaken IPOs as the primary channel for liquidity. Artificial intelligence has dramatically lowered the barriers to launching a startup while simultaneously raising the bar for investor expectations. Meanwhile, Russian-Chinese cooperation in the digital sphere is opening up new opportunities for tech companies that are seeking capital and markets beyond the Western sphere of influence. What does an ‘exchange-ready’ tech startup look like amidst the realities of high key interest rates and a selective IPO market in 2026? M&A vs. IPO: how has the logic behind investor exits shifted, and what does this mean for a startup’s growth strategy? AI as infrastructure for the next wave of tech champions: what is changing for venture funds, development institutions, and the government? Where is the line between smart state support and excessive paternalism for rapidly growing companies? How is Russian-Chinese cooperation in the digital economy creating new investment opportunities for domestic tech companies? How can we build a ‘science → startup → venture capital → public market’ pipeline without incurring losses at each transition stage? How will the parameters and implementation of issuer support programmes be updated in 2026?

Moderator:

- **Dmitry Polyakov**, Deputy Head, Softline Venture Partners

Speakers:

- **Mehri Aliev**, Director, Russian-Chinese Research Center for Digital Economy
- **Daniil Grizenkov**, Investment Director, Signal Direct Investment Fund
- **Tatyana Ilyushnikova**, Deputy Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation
- **Aleksandr Likhanov**, General Director, Russian High Growth Tech Companies Business Association
- **Mikhail Mamuta**, Head of Service for Protection of Consumer Rights and Ensuring the Availability of Financial Services, Member of the Board of Directors, The Central Bank of the Russian Federation (Bank of Russia)
- **Oleg Neretin**, Director, Federal Institute of Industrial Property
- **Ekaterina Petrova**, Director of Innovation and Technological Development, Russian Venture Company; Director of the corporate accelerator GenerationS
- **Julia Povolotskaya**, General Director, Moscow Venture Fund
- **Dmitry Taskin**, Director for Primary Bond Market Development, Moscow Exchange
- **Andrey Zhizhin**, Director General, Foundation for Assistance to Small Innovative Enterprises in Science and Technology (Innovation Promotion Foundation)

10:00–11:30

pavilion G
conference hall G5 – St. Petersburg

SMEs and the State

The Future of Statistics: How New Data and Classifiers are Reshaping Business and the State

High-quality information is the foundation for adopting effective and well-grounded management decisions in all aspects of life and particularly in public administration. The government possesses a vast amount of diverse data whose primary custodian is the Russian Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat). The Strategy for the Development of State Statistics and Rosstat until 2030 envisions the thorough modernization of all stages of statistical production: from data collection to dissemination. Along with the development of the state statistical system, reforms are also being conducted to improve the procedures used to assign codes within the Russian National Classifier of Economic Activities (OKVED). This initiative aims to create a tool for the rapid and clear identification of various business groups and help provide targeted support measures to specific economic sectors. How can official statistical data contribute to the development of business? What are some of the advantages and challenges of transitioning to the new versions of the national classifiers – OKVED-3 and Russian Classification of Products by Economic Activities-3 (OKPD)? How can the automation of data collection reduce the administrative burden on businesses? What is the primary objective of the reform to generate information about companies' OKVED codes, and how will it impact corporate operations?

Moderator:

- **Pavel Smelov**, General Director, Center for Strategic Research Foundation

Speakers:

- **Andrey Chernenko**, Director of Business Applications for Financial and Operational Tasks, VK Digital Technologies
- **Anton Danilov-Danilyan**, Vice-Chairman, Delovaya Rossiya (Business Russia)
- **Denis Dybov**, Director of the Department of Entrepreneurship Development, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation
- **Evgeny Kutsenko**, Director, Russian Cluster Observatory Center
- **Sergey Lazarev**, Head of the Accounting and Reporting Methodology Department, X5 Corporate Center
- **Anton Moskalenkov**, Director for Government Relations, Yandex
- **Sergey Okladnikov**, Deputy Head of Federal State Statistics Service
- **Andrey Shubin**, Executive Director, All-Russian Non-Governmental Organization of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses OPORA RUSSIA
- **Denis Tyupyshev**, Deputy Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation

12:00–13:30

pavilion E
conference hall E

Industries and Digitalization

AI for All: How to Bring Technology to Small Businesses and Accelerate Economic Development

In partnership with Ozon

Artificial intelligence is changing its status: from a hard-to-access and expensive innovation, it is becoming a digital infrastructure that is beginning to influence the growth rates of the entire economy. Today, only the largest technology companies and industrial giants in Russia are truly harnessing its potential. Small and medium-sized enterprises are far behind: they are only just beginning to apply AI in their work, as they sometimes lack the expertise and resources even to actively implement accessible technologies. Is it realistic to 'deliver' AI to small businesses and regions, and how will this affect the economy? Can the popularization of AI tools accelerate the development of manufacturing? Who should build the digital infrastructure – business or the state, and on what terms? Is there a risk of becoming dependent on big tech? What exactly does a small business need: access to data, training, ready-made services, or state support?

Moderator:

- **Dmitry Beskromny**, Founder, bQ Group; Co-founder, AI Influence

Speakers:

- **Vladimir Goncharevich**, Director of Interaction with Regional and Foreign Government Authorities, Ozon
- **Andrey Gostev**, Social Media Operations Director, VK
- **Tatyana Ilyushnikova**, Deputy Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation
- **Georgy Ladozhsky**, Director of Business Development, Media Instinct Group
- **Anna Loevskaya**, Director of the Digital Corporate Bank Division, Sberbank
- **Dmitry Ognerubov**, General Director, Newman Technologies
- **Alexander Shoitov**, Deputy Minister of Digital Development, Communications and Mass

Media of the Russian Federation

Front row participants:

- **Alexey Nikonov**, Co-founder, Cozy Environment
- **Yuri Pavlov**, Founder, Architectural Bureau "Pavlov.Studio"

12:00–13:30

pavilion G
conference hall G1

Accelerating SMEs

Business Never Sleeps: 360° Analysis

This event will take the form of an interactive show, bringing together representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises for open business reviews with the participation of an experienced mentor. The session will examine the real concerns regarding company development faced by entrepreneurs at the different stages of running a business. Participants will be able to analyse key challenges and identify new areas of growth for their projects. The expert speaker will be a successful Russian media entrepreneur who is ready to share practical experience and tools for business development. Rather than a lecture, the audience can expect a detailed analysis of business situations and an introduction to practice-oriented methods of business management and scaling.

Moderator:

- **Mikhail Grebenuk**, Founder, ES-CLINIC

12:00–13:30

pavilion G
conference hall G3

Industries and Digitalization

The Technologies Transforming the Creative Industries

In partnership with SberMarketing

The creative industries, where talented professionals have been working for decades to benefit their country’s image abroad, fuel the economy, and benefit businesses as both partners and drivers of development, are increasingly showing themselves to be cornerstones of the Russian economy. Creativity in business finds its primary outlet in marketing, and AI is quickly transforming it and lending it new scale. This session’s speakers conducted a comprehensive study, examining the most important practices employed by marketers and customer experience specialists and analyzing the data to identify possible scenarios for the industry’s development over a 25-year period and the changes most likely over the next 3–5 years. How are marketing and customer experience changing in retail, development, delivery, education, smart home appliances, and consumer electronics? What new technologies are driving marketing and creative solutions and improving the customer experience? How will the advertising market change over the coming years and decades? What skills will be needed to give Russia a leading position on the global stage in a technologically advanced, creative future? What new standards should the industry prepare for? How will artificial intelligence change the way we use marketing tools to create and promote businesses?

Moderator:

- **Vladislav Kreinin**, Senior Vice President, Director of Marketing and Communications Department, Sberbank

Speakers:

- **Alexey Bakhterov**, President, Media Instinct Group
- **Ekaterina Cherkes-zade**, Advisor to the General Director, Agency for Strategic Initiatives to Promote New Projects
- **Vladimir Kosteev**, Referent, Office of the President of the Russian Federation for Public Projects
- **Artem Kumpel**, Senior Managing Director, Avito
- **Marina Mongush**, President, Creative Economy
- **Dmitry Pashutin**, Director for Strategy, National Media Group
- **Nikita Pipko**, President, Igronik Group of Companies
- **Lydia Roy**, Director of the Center for Creative Economy, SKOLKOVO Moscow School Management
- **Sergey Stamboltsyan**, General Director, GPM Projects
- **Maria Zaikina**, Vice President, Industry Relations and Special Projects, Ozon

12:00–13:30

pavilion G
conference hall G4

Foreign Economic Activities

Russia–UAE Relations: New Pathways for Technological Cooperation

Russia and the UAE are seeing sustainable growth in their partnership, as evidenced by an increase in bilateral trade turnover to USD 10 billion in 2025. The UAE is a key business partner for Russia in the Arab world and is actively expanding technological cooperation. The UAE’s strategy, which aims to turn the country into a global technology hub, entails substantial investment in high-tech industries and the development of international partnerships, including with Russia. Leading universities and the Mubadala Investment Company have expressed interest in collaborating with Russian tech companies and startups in such promising sectors as artificial intelligence, robotics, energy, fintech, space, and the bioeconomy. The UAE has identified 24 priority focuses for scientific and technological collaboration that could open up broad opportunities for expanding bilateral cooperation. The key challenges are to overcome barriers to technology transfer, strengthening Russia's technological sovereignty, and creating synergy with leading international players. Which high-tech investment projects are most promising for Russia-UAE collaboration? Which strategies are most effective for commercializing Russian technologies on the UAE market? What support measures do Russia and the UAE currently have to incentivize technological exchanges? What new instruments could be developed? How can we spur on joint research and development projects between Russian and UAE universities and companies? What legal barriers are hindering technology transfer between Russia and the UAE, and how can they be overcome?

Moderator:

- **Maksim Zagornov**, President of the Russian Federation of Small Power Generation (RAME); Business Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, All-Russian Public Organization "Business Russia"

Speakers:

- **Khalid Al Marzooqi**, Vice President, Khalifa Economic Zones Abu Dhabi (KEZAD Group)
- **Andrey Antonov**, General Director, Kredo
- **Alexey Kamynin**, Director, Chelyabinsk Plant of Electrical Equipment
- **Timur Kornilov**, Managing Director for Strategic Partnership Development, Knowledge and Technology Transfer, Skolkovo Foundation
- **Anton Kuchin**, Co-founder, Digital Lab
- **Dmitry Livanov**, Rector, Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (National Research University)
- **Samuel Mao**, Senior Director, Masdar Institute of Science and Technology; Professor of Practice in Mechanical Engineering, Khalifa University
- **Ekaterina Petrova**, Director of Innovation and Technological Development, Russian Venture Company; Director of the corporate accelerator GenerationS

Front row participant:

- **Natalya Popova**, First Deputy General Director, Innopraktika

12:00–13:30

pavilion G
conference hall G5 – St. Petersburg

Industries and Digitalization

Place Branding: From Meaning and Values to Economic Impact

A place brand is the organic formation of a distinctive image of a location (and sometimes simply of an object), based on the genuine characteristics of the place rather than on artificially created concepts. It is a process of evolution in which a place becomes known for its unique nature, culture, people, or activities. One example is the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (Spain), where a single museum became a powerful catalyst for the development of the city (and subsequently the entire province of Biscay); or the Veliky Ustyug – Home of Father Christmas project, which has made the Vologda Region one of the most popular destinations in Russia for families. A place brand directly influences the development of a region, significantly enhancing its competitiveness. This influence, in turn, helps attract investment, tourists, and skilled workers. A strong territorial brand acts as an effective tool of economic strategy, transforming the region's unique characteristics into economic advantages. This approach directly stimulates economic growth and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. For small and medium-sized businesses, the place brand can serve as an 'umbrella' for product promotion, boosting consumer confidence and facilitating entry into new markets. How can a place brand be used to create a cohesive regional brand, transforming fragmented impressions and images into an ecosystem of meanings and development scenarios? What indicators and tools can be used to measure the strength of a place brand and demonstrate its economic and social impact?

Moderator:

- **Maria Kiseleva**, Managing Partner, Trends Travel Consulting

Speakers:

- **Anton Artemov**, Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Chelyabinsk Region
- **Nelly Badalyan**, Deputy Director General for Communications, ANO Creative Economy
- **Yulia Boyarkina**, Minister of Entrepreneurship and Tourism of the Vladimir Region
- **Marina Kashina**, Deputy Chairperson of the Government of the Yaroslavl Region
- **Sergey Meshalkin**, Chief Architect, State Vladimir-Suzdal Museum-Reserve
- **Dmitry Orchenko**, General Director, SberMarketing
- **Ilya Umansky**, President, Russian Union of Travel Industry; General Director, National tour operator "Alean"
- **Maria Zolotukhina**, Deputy General Director, Mantera Group

12:00–13:30

courtyard between
pavilions G and H
Krasnodar Region Hall

Workforce

SME Labour Productivity: From Rhetoric to Operational Efficiency

Labour productivity in Russia is projected to increase by at least 20% by 2030, with some sectors seeing growth of 30% or more. Given the reality of the growing labour shortage, productivity has become a key factor in ensuring Russia's competitiveness in a world defined by digital platforms, autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, and robotic manufacturing. The Russian economy has tremendous untapped potential for productivity gains in each of these areas. But how can the tools for boosting efficiency be effectively applied at the level of SMEs – a sector that accounts for 22% of GDP and 35% of total employment? Does Russia currently have any ready-made strategies for increasing productivity within the SME sector?

Moderator:

- **Elena Dybova**, Vice President, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation

Speakers:

- **Svetlana Gorchakova**, General Director, Federal Center of Competence in Labor Productivity
- **Maxim Kostarev**, President, Tomsk Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- **Inna Loseva**, Commercial Director, Timeless
- **Sergey Melamed**, Director of the Small and Micro Business Division, Sberbank
- **Yulia Mihaleva**, Deputy Director, Russian Quality System (Roskachestvo)
- **Olga Muravyova**, General Director, Pobeda Confectionery Factory
- **Yuriy Shilov**, General Director, Ivanovo Textile Company
- **Pavel Tikhonov**, Director of Government Relations, Avito Podratka
- **Denis Tyupyshev**, Deputy Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation

12:00–13:30

pavilion H
conference hall H1

Foreign Economic Activities

Asian Horizons for Small Business

Russia is currently expanding its foreign economic activity based on robust partnerships with friendly nations. Such long-term cooperation, which is resilient to external challenges, enables countries to join forces in specific sectors and achieve shared, mutually beneficial objectives. For nations of the global majority, key priorities include establishing justice, achieving prosperity, and ensuring equality. The alignment of these strategic goals lays the foundation for the emergence of a multipolar world. Within this framework, economic cooperation shifts from a model of dominance to one of equal partnership that takes into account the interests of all participants. Asia is one of the most dynamically developing regions in this regard, having created a favourable ecosystem for small and medium-sized enterprises. What are the most promising areas of interaction for Russia and Asian nations? What role does diplomatic support play in the successful international expansion of Russian companies, and what are the most effective mechanisms for bolstering this support? What barriers and opportunities do SMEs encounter when entering Asian markets, and how can state support and raising investment help to overcome these challenges? What are the main advantages that Asian markets offer for Russian SMEs? Which factor has a greater influence on success: a well-crafted business proposal or the existence of long-standing ties?

Moderator:

- **Alexey Maslov**, Director, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University

Speakers:

- **Nikolai Dunayev**, Chairman of the Board, Siberian Export-Import Company (SEIC); Vice President, All-Russian Public Organization of Small and Medium-Sized Entrepreneurship OPORA RUSSIA
- **Ilona Gorsheneva-Dolunts**, Director, Owner, InterBiz Trade and Logistics Company
- **Manish Kumar**, President of Soltex Group; Deputy Chairman of the Board, FBA EAC
- **Sergey Sokolov**, General Director, Novosibirskkhleboprodukt
- **Anna Solovyova**, Managing Director of the Department of International Bilateral Cooperation, Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP)
- **Vitaly Stepanov**, General Director, Moscow Export Center
- **Sun Tianshu**, Founder, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Qifa

12:00–13:30

Accelerating SMEs

pavilion H
conference hall H2

Research findings

4,123 Support Measures: When There Are Too Many, Yet Not Enough, What Needs to Change?

Despite the broad range of state support instruments (which currently number more than 4,000), the contribution of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to the economy remains virtually unchanged. The main problem is not only the sheer number of these measures, but how they are communicated: many of these initiatives either fail to reach entrepreneurs or do not align with their actual needs. Given the growing role of SMEs, establishing an effective system of interaction among the government, corporations, and the business community has become a particularly critical issue. In preparation for the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, a comprehensive study of the SME sector was conducted to analyse some of the world's best practices in entrepreneurship support, as well as the following key areas: behavioural insight into entrepreneurs (from surveys and in-depth interviews), regional and international expertise (identifying real-world barriers and successful local practices), and an overview of the current state of the SME market. The study provided a detailed clustering of different types of business, identified key challenges and conclusions regarding support for the SME market, and assessed the economic efficiency of existing support measures. How can we enhance the targeted nature and relevance of support measures drawing upon both Russian and international experience? Which communication channels are most effective for different business segments? What role do banks and corporate ecosystems play in conveying opportunities to entrepreneurs? Finally, how can support measures be transformed into a true driver of SME growth?

Moderator:

- **Alexander Sirovatskiy**, Managing Partner, Media Instinct Prime

Speakers:

- **Alexey Bobrovsky**, Economic Observer; Director, Institute for the Study of World Markets
- **Angela Gdlyan**, Deputy Head, State Secretary, Department of City Property of the City of Moscow
- **Denis Osin**, Director of Small and Micro Business, Member of the Management Board, Alfa-Bank
- **Julia Poletaeva**, Director of the Department for the Implementation of Entrepreneurship Support Projects, Head of the Growth Platform Project, RWB
- **Andrey Shubin**, Executive Director, All-Russian Non-Governmental Organization of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses OPORA RUSSIA
- **Ekaterina Trofimova**, Partner, Business Solutions and Technologies
- **Alexander Vaino**, Director of the Young Professionals Department, Agency for Strategic Initiatives to Promote New Projects

Front row participant:

- **Alexey Parabuchev**, Chief Executive Officer, Moscow Innovation Cluster Foundation

12:00–13:30

pavilion H
conference hall H3

Foreign Economic Activities

Competitive Environment and Sustainability in E-Commerce for SMEs

Marketplaces have emerged as one of the most popular channels for business development, as they provide access to vast audiences and cutting-edge promotional tools. These e-commerce platforms provide entrepreneurs with access to a broad customer base, robust infrastructure, and modern marketing instruments. However, working on these platforms entails systemic risks. The fundamental issue is the actual structure of the relationship, since the platform's dominant position allows it to dictate the rules of the game by setting rates and algorithms, while the seller remains in a position of dependency. This structural imbalance is compounded by an unfavourable economic climate: market saturation leads to greater competition and rising commission fees, while profit margins either stagnate or decline. Moreover, competitive conditions are unequal for domestic and foreign sellers, which creates an additional burden for domestic manufacturers. There is also further pressure from rising logistics costs, new tax regulations, and constant expenses on product returns and penalties, all of which which jeopardizes business profitability. What key state support measures and legislative initiatives are needed to create a more balanced and transparent environment in the relationship between sellers and marketplaces? How can a seller come up with a comprehensive anti-crisis strategy that does not simply cut costs, but systematically boosts profit margins? How do changes in platform fees impact a business's capital turnover? What state support measures are available to domestic manufacturers? How can sellers survive in 2026 and maintain their profits amidst the new marketplace reality? How can sellers protect their brands against counterfeits and unscrupulous vendors in marketplaces?

Moderator:

- **Marina Bludyan**, First Vice President, All-Russian Non-Governmental Organization of Small and Medium Business OPORA RUSSIA

Speakers:

- **Roman Chekushov**, State Secretary – Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation
- **Yana Gomzhina**, "OPORA-START" Federal Course Curator on Marketplaces

- **Levon Hayrapetyan**, GR Director, Avito Travel
- **Mukhamed Khamukov**, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Ozon
- **Denis Kravchenko**, Deputy Chairman of the Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on Economic Policy
- **Maxim Protasov**, Head, Russian System of Quality
- **Kirill Purtov**, Head of the Moscow City Department of Competition Policy
- **Dmitry Tafintsev**, Deputy Director General, RWB
- **Anastasia Tyugay**, President, Association of Platform Economy Entrepreneurs
- **Dmitry Volvach**, Head, Federal Accreditation Service (Rosaccreditation)

12:00–13:30

passage in zone H
Passage conference hall

Foreign Economic Activities

The Middle East Without Illusions

The Middle East has been one of the world's premier hubs for capital in 2026. Russian businesses are actively seeking out new markets to scale up their operations and exploring fresh opportunities. The region of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is simultaneously generating immense interest as well as a multitude of myths. It is crucial to dispel these myths, evaluate the region's potential, discuss the main mistakes that have been made, and search for new opportunities available to Russian companies. The GCC and its Vision 2030: where is the Middle Eastern economy headed, and is there a place for Russian business within it? What new niches and opportunities are emerging? Has Russian business missed the boat? What are the primary mistakes and risks Russian companies face in relations with GCC markets? Is it realistic to expect the Middle East to become a new 'economic Europe' for Russia and a source of investment for Russian projects? Can the GCC effectively replace Western markets, and how truly resilient is the region?

Moderators:

- **Alrched Abduljawad**, Editor-in-Chief, Alarabiya TV Channel Bureau in Russia
- **Ksenia Sobchak**, TV Anchor, Journalist, Public Figure

Speakers:

- **Sami Al Helali**, Chief Executive Officer, Petro Oil & Gas Traders
- **Budour Al Mousa**, Journalist, TV presenter, Forbes Middle East
- **Jihad Bakkura**, Founder, Owner, Bakkoura
- **Polina Bereza**, Marketing Director, Vasilchuki Restaurant Group
- **Alexander Biba**, President, Cosmos Hotel Group
- **Galina Podzolko**, Designer, founder, Galina Podzolko Fashion House
- **Samvel Sarukhanyan**, General Director, MRIA
- **Oleg Torbosov**, Owner, Whitewill; Founder, HRScanner

13:50–15:00

Congress Centre
zone D, VEB.RF
conference hall D2

Accelerating SMEs

A Minute of Tech Glory

Creating a new entrepreneurial initiative in a rapidly changing environment is not only a way to make money, but also an opportunity to shape a future where innovative technologies solve complex problems and improve quality of life and education. Every new idea has the potential to become a catalyst for significant change. Business ideas that can be used in education can be of great help here. During the session, entrepreneurs will have three minutes to pitch their tech developments and business ideas. Investors can evaluate the potential of these projects and discuss opportunities to become involved in their development. What technologies are of top priority today? How can entrepreneurs be created? What is the role of investors and development organizations?

Moderator:

- **Mikhail Khomich**, Chief Strategist, VEB.RF

Speakers:

- **Darina Abu-Nabut**, Student, Entrepreneur
- **Artem Chkalin**, Student, Founder, General Director, Astramis
- **Konstantin Egoshin**, Founder, Professor's Sneakers (OOO "Meridian")
- **Vladimir Mlynchik**, Founder, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Volts Energy Group
- **Alexander Panov**, Chief Executive Officer, Neiry
- **Vadim Vishnevsky**, General Director, Casper AI
- **Sergey Zaytsev**, Innovation and International Relations Specialist, 01Math

Jury:

- **Olga Gamza**, Deputy General Director for Digital Products, Prosveshcheniye

- **Anna Gruzdo**, Marketing Director, PSB Bank
- **Stanislav Kolesnichenko**, Managing Director, SK Capital
- **Ivan Kuzmin**, Vice President, Director of the B2C Data and Recommendation Systems Department, Sberbank
- **Vitaly Polekhin**, Investor; President, The National Business Angels Association; Director, SKOLKOVO Investors' Club
- **Pavel Salugin**, Acting Vice President, Gazprombank
- **Alexandra Shadyuk**, Deputy General Director, Kiberdom
- **Andrey Shubin**, Executive Director, All-Russian Non-Governmental Organization of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses OPORA RUSSIA
- **Sergey Stamboltsyan**, General Director, GPM Projects
- **Alexander Vaino**, Director of the Young Professionals Department, Agency for Strategic Initiatives to Promote New Projects

14:00–15:15

Congress Centre
zone B, 2nd floor,
conference hall B2

Foreign Economic Activities

Has the Economy Switched on the Light at the End of the Tunnel?

The current decade is marked by turbulence and unpredictability affecting a wide range of areas of life and the economy. Nevertheless, business in Russia and globally has so far coped with these challenges, demonstrating a high level of resilience and an ability to adapt to changing conditions and problems, while generally maintaining profitability and growth. How do entrepreneurs from different countries view the current stage of development? In particular, what kind of opportunities and prospects for economic cooperation are there for Russia? How bright is the light at the end of the tunnel?

Moderator:

- **Alessandro Cassieri**, Journalist

Speakers:

- **Erdem Acay**, Chairman, Russian-Turkish Businessmen's Association (RTİB)
- **Robert Agee**, President, Chief Executive Officer, American Chamber of Commerce in Russia
- **Stefan Duerr**, Founder, EkoNiva Group; General Director, EkoNiva-APK Holding
- **Antonio Fallico**, President, Conoscere Eurasia Association
- **Fernando Rojo**, General Manager, Corinthia St. Petersburg Hotel
- **Vittorio Torrembini**, President, Association of Italian Entrepreneurs in Russia (GIM Unimpresa)
- **Vincenzo Trani**, President, Italian-Russian Chamber of Commerce
- **Stefan Van Doorslaer**, Representative of the Shareholder, Astros Logistic Center
- **Stefano Vlahovic**, President, Member of the Board of Directors, Food Products Group; Honorary Consul of the Republic of Croatia in the Kaliningrad Regiona

14:00–15:15

pavilion E
conference hall E

Foreign Economic Activities

White Imports for SMEs: New Opportunities under Enhanced Regulatory Control

With the intensification of state control and the digitalization of foreign economic activities, SMEs face a fundamental choice: continue working under outdated schemes with the inevitable risk of losing business, or invest in the full legalization of operations to gain access to proper development tools. Establishing an effective support system for SMEs that aims to legalize import operations requires a comprehensive approach that includes developing clear mechanisms for state support, building accessible infrastructure to support business processes, and creating transparent conditions for legitimate entrepreneurship to thrive. What key changes are we seeing as business processes are transformed by the digitalization of imports? What primary challenges do SMEs face with imports, and how can they be overcome? What tools do SMEs need today to legalize imports? Which existing state support mechanisms for imports have proven most effective for SMEs? Which digital platforms and services make it easier for SMEs to gain access to financial instruments to support imports? What are some of the specific nuances of interacting with online marketplaces when conducting import operations? What financial products are available to support legal imports? What mechanisms are being used to insure and protect the economic interests of SMEs within the import sector?

Moderator:

- **Leonid Nesterenko**, General Director, Autonomous Non-Commercial Organization for Business Support "Center for Regulatory Solutions"

Speakers:

- **Evgenia Chernitskaya**, Chairman, Council of the Association of Participants of the Electronic Commerce Market (AUREC)

- **Olga Grekova**, General Director, Association of Manufacturers of Light-Emitting Diodes and Systems Based on Them (APSS)
- **Konstantin Kim**, Director, Information and Analytical Center for Foreign Trade
- **Alexey Nikonov**, Co-chairman for Government Relations, Association of Electronic Commerce Market Participants (AUREC)
- **Andrey Seregin**, Sales Director, TRANSIT Transport Group
- **Natalia Shamanskaya**, Deputy Director of the Department for SME Development and Tax Incentives, Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation
- **Dmitry Svetlov**, Managing Partner, PravoVED Center for Legal Support of Foreign Economic Activity

14:00–15:15

pavilion G
conference hall G1

Accelerating SMEs

Financial Dialogue
Finance for Business

Lending to small businesses is declining due to high interest rates, stricter bank risk policies, and regulatory pressure, all of which are causing an overall cooling of the financing market. At the same time, state support programmes are undergoing significant changes: while access to preferential funding might improve for some companies, it could, conversely, diminish for others. Which alternative sources of financing and mechanisms for securing long-term capital will prove most effective for small businesses? How will the evolution of transactional banking services and cross-border settlements impact the stability and competitiveness of SMEs?

Moderator:
- **Pavel Samiyev**, Editor-in-Chief, Financial Sphere Section of Bankovskoye Obozreniye Magazine

Bank Financing Block:
- **Georgiy Gorshkov**, Chairman of the Board, WB Bank; Head of Fintech, RWB
- **Ilya Guryanov**, Director of the Moscow Region Development Department, Sovcombank
- **Irina Zhimerina**, Senior Vice President, Head of Small Business Unit, Promsvyazbank

Alternative Financing Block. Investments and Long-term Money Block:
- **Evgeny Gurevich**, General Director, Kapital Life Insurance
- **Evgeny Shcheklanov**, General Director, Everia Life Insurance Company
- **Alexander Zaitsev**, General Director, Atomic Capital

Infrastructure and Development Block:
- **Vsevolod Antonovsky**, Deputy Chairman of the Management Board, MSP Bank
- **Anton Kuprinov**, Executive Director, Moscow Small Business Credit Assistance Fund
- **Roman Markov**, Head of Financial Inclusion Department, Service for Consumer Protection and Financial Inclusion of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation (Bank of Russia)
- **Dmitry Taskin**, Director for Primary Bond Market Development, Moscow Exchange

Front row participants:
- **Alexey Boreysho**, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Laser Systems
- **Roman Frolov**, Member of the Board of Directors, VSK
- **Konstantin Gorbunov**, Member of the Board, Bondholders Association
- **Oksana Ivanova**, General Director, "Socium" Non-State Pension Fund
- **Andrey Khoroshilov**, Project Founder, General Director, Forest Save
- **Andrey Kisilev**, General Director, RKO Group
- **Alexey Lazutin**, General Director, Mosgorlombard
- **Dmitry Malkin**, General Director, Media Group
- **Evgeny Samoilov**, General Director, Rusaudit
- **Aleksey Savatyugin**, Chairman of the Board, "Commonwealth" Self-Regulatory Organization of Auditors Association
- **Oleg Senkov**, General Director, ARENZA
- **Ruslan Yalovenko**, General Director, RusMilk

14:00–15:15

pavilion G
conference hall G2

Industries and Digitalization

How Industrial SMEs are Evolving in the Regions: Cooperation, Exports, and Investment Projects

Russia has prioritized the development of small and medium-sized industrial enterprises as a key factor in fostering sustainable regional economic growth and achieving its national objectives. As the external economic landscape continues to evolve and Russia pursues its strategy of technological sovereignty, the manufacturing segment of the SME sector in particular is establishing new cooperative supply chains, localizing production, and contributing to increased investment in the real economy. Building an effective industrial ecosystem in the regions requires the coordinated efforts of the government, business, as well as financial and development institutions. Interregional cooperation, access to financing, investment projects, and support for exports are turning into critical prerequisites for scaling up industrial SMEs and enhancing their contribution to regional economies. In this regard, a particularly vital role is played by the practical experience of entrepreneurs who are implementing manufacturing projects on the ground, as well as by the support tools offered by the banking sector and development institutions, including the SME Corporation. Which models of cooperation enable industrial SMEs to effectively integrate into production chains and enter new markets? Are existing financial and non-financial instruments sufficient for the implementation of investment projects in the regions? What barriers are hindering the development of industrial SMEs and require systemic solutions? How can the regional authorities build an effective industrial ecosystem and stimulate growth in SMEs? What role should the regional authorities and development institutions play in creating a favourable environment to ensure growth in the manufacturing business? Which practices are already demonstrating the greatest effectiveness today and could be scaled up at the federal level?

Moderator:

- **Anton Kovalev**, Chairman of the Board, Young Industrialists Club

Speakers:

- **Nikita Bantsekin**, Deputy General Director, Member of the Board, SME Corporation
- **Dmitry Baryshnikov**, Deputy Chairman of the Board, PJSC Sovcombank
- **Roman Chekushov**, State Secretary – Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation
- **Vasily Chernetsov**, General Director, Kvazar Corporation
- **Denis Gurkov**, Minister of Industry and Trade of the Samara Region
- **Alexey Kamynin**, Director, Chelyabinsk Plant of Electrical Equipment
- **Polina Sharova**, Founder, Hermes-Ural
- **Anton Uvarov**, Managing Director, Avito Work
- **Yekaterina Zinovyeva**, Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Moscow Region - Minister of Investments, Industry and Science of the Moscow Region

14:00–15:15

pavilion G
conference hall G3

Accelerating SMEs

Business in 2026: Challenges, Opportunities and Development Strategies

The economy is undergoing a profound structural transformation in 2026. These changes are having a tangible impact on both small and medium-sized enterprises as well as big business. This practical session brings together entrepreneurs from diverse economic sectors to explore how businesses are navigating the current challenges and turning them into new opportunities for corporate growth. What are some of the key tools that specific industries are using today: from boosting labour productivity, optimizing costs, and introducing AI technologies to overhauling communication strategies? In which areas do businesses currently need the most support?

Moderator:

- **Victoria Roshchina**, Head of the Press Center, OPORA RUSSIA

Speakers:

- **Irina Amosova**, General Director, Estilab Rus
- **Anton Balyklov**, Co-founder, Lapochka Brand
- **Tatyana Fomicheva**, Founder, Art Director, STUDIO 29
- **Mikhail Grebenuk**, Founder, ES-CLINIC
- **Vladimir Larionov**, General Manager, Fairytale Baths Banya holding
- **Sergey Mironov**, Founder, Restaurant Chain "Meat & Fish"
- **Natalya Shik**, Founder, SHIK Cosmetics Group of Brands; Owner, Colorcos

14:00–15:15

courtyard between
pavilions G and H
Krasnodar Region Hall

Workforce

Entrepreneurial Human Capital for the Russian Economy

To ensure its economic development, Russia needs professionals who can boost added value by progressively increasing labour productivity. This will naturally result in an increase in tax revenues flowing into both regional and national budgets. A definitive number of skilled professionals is needed to address this challenge. When discussing the workforce, people often focus on the categories that have the highest shortages, such as engineers, educators, as well as welders and drivers among skilled trades. However, the shortage of managerial and entrepreneurial talent is almost never mentioned.

Studies show that the country needs to increase its number of entrepreneurs by two to three times to ensure sustainable competitiveness and growth. In surveys, many entrepreneurs cite workforce shortages as one of the primary reasons for sluggish growth. They primarily point to a lack of marketers and sales professionals, yet, during in-depth interviews, they cite insufficient knowledge about business operations and a lack of effective managerial staff with whom they can grow their enterprises as the true underlying causes of this low level of development. How can we increase the number of entrepreneurs? How can entrepreneurial effectiveness be enhanced? Where can entrepreneurs find competent managers? What role do business associations play in fostering the country's entrepreneurial development? What role do higher and vocational education systems play in training entrepreneurs and the personnel needed to support them?

Moderator:

- **Eduard Omarov**, Director of the International School of Entrepreneurship, Tyumen State University (TSU)

Speakers:

- **Yulia Alferova**, Director General, National Agency for Entrepreneurship Development
- **Vladislav Grib**, Deputy Secretary, Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation
- **Victor Ivlev**, Founder, "OUR FARMER" Federal Network of Farmer's Product Fairs
- **Denis Kravchenko**, Deputy Chairman of the Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on Economic Policy
- **Sergey Morozov**, First Deputy Chairman of the Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on Regional Policy and Local Self-Government; Federal Coordinator, Project "Choose Your Own"
- **Igor Petrov**, General Director, Brick Trading and Production Company
- **Olga Petrova**, Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation
- **Yury Rubin**, Chairman, Scientific Council for the Development of Entrepreneurial Education at the Russian Academy of Education (RAO)

Front row participant:

- **Alina Chistyakova**, General Director, Four Seasons

14:00–15:15

pavilion H
conference hall H1

SMEs and the State

Bringing Together Large and Small Businesses to Promote Regional Development

Russia's regions are making greater efforts to identify and introduce practices that effectively integrate the corporate social responsibility and sustainability programmes of large enterprises with the initiatives of small and medium-sized businesses. It is particularly important to analyse the experience gained from collaboration between local economic mainstays and local small businesses, as well as both the financial and non-financial support mechanisms that enable entrepreneurs to grow and contribute to the local economy. The integration of corporate and municipal programmes with micro- and small-business projects plays a crucial role, particularly within the service sector, as it directly helps to enhance the quality of life for local residents. These efforts are coordinated by external project offices, municipal development agencies, and business associations that all work to align the interests of large, small, and micro-enterprises, as well as to implement joint initiatives that aim to preserve human capital, develop social infrastructure, and boost the gross regional product. How can the initiatives of small and medium-sized businesses be effectively integrated into the development of urban spaces? What support measures are needed from large corporations and municipalities to help small businesses enhance their competitiveness and drive regional economic growth?

Moderators:

- **Dmitry Bogdanov**, Expert in Organizing Federal and Corporate Business Development Programs, Supporting Entrepreneurship, and GR interactions
- **Yuliya Simbireva**, General Director, RSPP Business School

Speakers:

- **Zakhar Azarov**, Advisor to the Chief Executive Officer for Sustainable Development, Severstal
- **Anna Fedorova**, Director, Monchegorsk Development Agency
- **Olga Gorskaya**, Individual entrepreneur
- **Alfia Kogogina**, First Deputy Chairman of the Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on Small and Medium Entrepreneurship
- **Kirill Kuznetsov**, Director of the Corporate Relations Department, ITMS Group of Companies; Chairman of the Excise Goods Committee, All-Russian Public Organization of Small and Medium-Sized Entrepreneurship "OPORA RUSSIA"
- **Alexey Lupka**, General Director, Glavstroy
- **Yuriy Shilov**, General Director, Ivanovo Textile Company
- **Tatyana Sizova**, Commissioner for Entrepreneurs' Rights Protection in Moscow

- **Mikhail Sterkin**, Deputy General Director for Sales and Marketing, PhosAgro
- **Irina Zhuykova**, Director, Social Policy Department, MMC Norilsk Nickel

14:00–15:15

pavilion H
conference hall H2

Workforce

Master Class

Productivity at Its Peak: The Formula for Efficiency

In the modern world, company management is a system in which success depends on numerous interconnected factors. It is crucial to understand how the management system impacts a company's overall productivity, as well as its market capitalization. An examination of real-world case studies involving successful companies shows how modern management approaches function in practice and specifically how leaders identify solutions in complex situations, assemble effective teams, and achieve impressive results. How do modern companies establish effective management structures as well as delegation and task-setting systems to boost productivity, and how are these approaches implemented in practice? How should we properly set objectives and identify key challenges?

Moderator:

- **Dmitry Pishalnikov**, General Director, Member of the Management Board, Krasnokamsk Metal Mesh Plant

Speakers:

- **Konstantin Akhidov**, Director of the Department of Economic Expertise, Competence Center for Import Substitution in the Sphere of ICT
- **Nadezhda Burtseva**, Head of Business Process Development Department, SPLAT GLOBAL
- **Denis Filippov**, General Director, "Myasnitsky Ryad" Meat processing plant
- **Elena Krupskaya**, Director of Food Safety, X5 Corporate Center
- **Yulia Mihaleva**, Deputy Director, Russian Quality System (Roskachestvo)
- **Valery Shinkarenko**, Chairman of the Committee on Migration and Labor Productivity, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Leningrad Region

14:00–15:15

pavilion H
conference hall H3

Foreign Economic Activities

Gamification as a Global Trend in Communication, State Governance, and Business Development

Amidst the current trends of globalization, governments and businesses are looking for ways to synchronize regulatory, corporate, and educational cultures, as well as to accelerate the implementation of changes across a wide range of markets. Gamification has emerged as a proven tool for communicating with users, ensuring effective engagement and retention, increasing sales of concepts, goods, and services, as well as training and professional development. However, there are currently no universal international standards and approaches for how to implement gamification, distinct regulatory, cultural, and religious nuances do exist. Discussions will help to come up with the relevant approaches and requirements, enable the exchange of case studies, and create a roadmap for international cooperation at the G2G, G2B, and B2B levels. Which international gamification practices are most effective for various government and business functions? What are some of the pathways for interaction among the government, private sector, and academic community to scale up projects? What cultural differences influence the perception and effectiveness of game mechanics across different regions, and how can solutions be adapted without compromising brand consistency? How can gamification be integrated into global digital ecosystems (ERP/CRM/HCM), and which technologies are most compatible? What risks and ethical considerations arise when introducing game elements at the international level, and how can they be minimized? What partnership models and ecosystems are needed to scale gamified solutions worldwide? Which innovative technologies are most appropriate for use in global gamification projects?

Moderator:

- **Anton Kuchin**, Co-founder, Digital Lab

Speakers:

- **Ekaterina Cherkes-zade**, Advisor to the General Director, Agency for Strategic Initiatives to Promote New Projects
- **Evgeny Etin**, Director of Innovation and Ecosystem Development, RWB
- **Vlad Fedulov**, Managing Director, Avito
- **Nikita Kondratyev**, Director of the Department of Multilateral Economic Cooperation in Special Projects, Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation
- **Evgeniy Melentyev**, General Director, CentroKino; Head of the Expert Center for Creative Industries, All-Russian Public Organization "Business Russia"
- **Vasiliy Ovchinnikov**, General Director, Organization for the Development of the Video Game Industry (RVI)

- **Vitaly Stepanov**, General Director, Moscow Export Center

Front row participant:

- **Ivan Nikolsky**, Founder, General Director, EXPONIC

14:00–15:15

passage in zone H
Passage conference hall

SMEs and the State

The Philosophy of Russian Entrepreneurship: Principles, Values, and Strategic Directions

The discussion will focus on the search for core values to guide modern Russian business, an appeal to the country's historical roots, and a re-imagining of the entrepreneur not merely as an economic agent, but as a creator and custodian of the nation's cultural code. The phenomenon of pre-revolutionary entrepreneurs deserves particular attention, since their professional reputations and life journeys have come to serve as a benchmark for service to society. The research project 'Holy Entrepreneurs' has identified 33 historical figures who have become a source of spiritual guidance for many of today's business leaders and owners, and interest in such individuals continues to grow. Is it possible in the current conditions to build a business guided by spiritual and moral principles? How does a philosophy of entrepreneurship 'with a human face' influence relationships with employees, clients, and society at large? What is the best way to strike a balance between ethics and economic efficiency? Does such an approach enhance business sustainability in the long term or does it introduce risks instead? How is modern business impacted by the exchange of practical experience and the emergence of a new business agenda in which corporate success is measured not solely by financial metrics, but also by a company's contribution to preserving the country's national identity and developing its human capital?

Moderator:

- **Nataliya Loseva**, TV and radio presenter; Director of the Media and Communications Department of the company, Interros Holding Company

Speakers:

- **Mikhail Fedorenko**, General Director, Research Institute of Education Development Strategies
- **Alexey Govyrin**, Deputy, Member of the State Duma Committee of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on Small and Medium Enterprises
- **Andrey Gusarov**, Chairman of the Committee on Value-Oriented Entrepreneurship, All-Russian Non-Governmental Organization of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses OPORA RUSSIA; Chairman of the Board of Directors, Satori
- **Andrey Iliopulo**, President, Novard Group of Companies
- **Sergey Ivanov**, Executive Director, Member of the Board of Directors, EFKO Management Company
- **Amvrosy, Metropolitan of Tverskaya and Kashinsky**, Diocesan Bishop, Tver and Kashin Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
- **Nadezhda Smirnova**, Director, Museum of Entrepreneurs, Patrons and Philanthropists
- **Olga Terno**, Deputy Director, Federal Resource Centre
- **Pavel Ulyanov**, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Radio VERA
- **Vladislav Zhukovich**, Vice President, OPORA Association; Chairman, Union of Orthodox Entrepreneurs

Front row participants:

- **Elena Bortnik**, President, "Sobranie" Union for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Heritage
- **Maria Glivinskaya**, Project Manager of the Non-Profit Partnership "Museum of Joint-Stock Business and Financial History"

14:00–15:15

pavilion H
zone H, 2nd floor,
conference hall H23

Foreign Economic Activities

Pitch session

UAE–Russia Business Opportunities and SME Partnerships

In recent years, the United Arab Emirates has become a major global innovation hub with a rapidly developing SME ecosystem and strong entrepreneurial activity. A flexible government policy framework and favourable business regulatory environment have transformed the UAE into a successful launchpad for startups. Its strategic location and wide network of trade agreements position the UAE as a gateway to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and beyond for companies looking to expand internationally. What opportunities does the UAE SME ecosystem offer to ambitious entrepreneurs? How can Russian SMEs use these opportunities to grow their innovation and strengthen their international presence?

Moderator:

- **David Tabet**, Advisor to the Office of the Minister of Economy and Tourism of the United

Arab Emirates

Speakers:

- **Jana Elkova**, SME Project Development Expert, Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Tourism of the United Arab Emirates
- **Yulia Suvorova**, Deputy Chair, Russian-Arab Business Council

15:30–17:00

Congress Centre zone D, VEB.RF conference hall D2

Plenary session

The Small Business Transformation: A New Recipe for SME Growth

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are a core pillar of economic development, contributing to innovation, job creation, and overall economic resilience. Since 2026, a new stage of tax reform has been introduced, affecting all sectors of SME activity. Ongoing measures aim to increase economic transparency and ensure fair business conditions. This requires businesses to adapt their operational models and review financial strategies in a timely manner. SME development potential is closely associated with cost reduction, lean manufacturing approaches, and the digitalization and automation and digital transformation of business processes. The creative sector is also emerging as an important growth factor for small and medium-sized enterprises. Artificial intelligence and robotics are among the key technologies enabling the practical transformation of the SME sector. How is the SME sector adapting to changing market conditions? What are the main goals and expected macroeconomic impacts of the 2026 tax reform for SMEs? What are the key priorities for SMEs and the state? How can sustainable business development be ensured under current conditions? What support measures are currently available for businesses? Which technologies and innovations can strengthen resilience and growth? What tools enable the integration of creativity, efficient production, and omnichannel sales?

Welcome address:

- **Tatyana Ilyushnikova**, Deputy Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation

Moderator:

- **Alexey Bobrovsky**, Economic Observer; Director, Institute for the Study of World Markets

Speakers:

- **Marina Demina**, Founder, "Mega-Pak" Polymer Plant
- **Elena Dybova**, Vice President, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation
- **Denis Filippov**, General Director, "Myasnitsky Ryad" Meat processing plant
- **Maria Glukhova**, Executive Vice President, Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP)
- **Alexander Kalinin**, President, All-Russian Non-Governmental Organization of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses OPORA RUSSIA
- **Veniamin Kizeev**, Member of the Board, Project Management Association "SOVNET"; Managing Partner, WINbd Management Academy
- **Mikhail Mamuta**, Head of Service for Protection of Consumer Rights and Ensuring the Availability of Financial Services, Member of the Board of Directors, The Central Bank of the Russian Federation (Bank of Russia)
- **Alexey Matushansky**, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation
- **Anatoly Popov**, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Board, Sberbank