



Lamia Kamal-Chaoui - Director of the [OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities](#).

Follow Lamia on:

[X](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#)

Download a [photo](#) of Lamia.

Follow the Centre for Entrepreneurship Regions and Cities on:

[X](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#)

Read the Centre's [brochure](#) for more details on activities, programmes and initiatives.

Read the Centre's [COGITO](#) blog platform for latest ideas and analysis on entrepreneurship, SMEs, tourism, regions and cities.

"I firmly believe that for the OECD's mission of 'better policies for better lives' to flourish, our entrepreneurs, SMEs, regions, and cities need to be recognised as the architects of our lives and the guardians of our prosperity. They embody an unyielding force for innovation, rejuvenation, and social progress. As the global economy is reshaped by geopolitical tensions, digitalisation and the green transition, these entities serve as catalysts for growth, resilience, and positive change. At CFE, I, together with a diverse team of passionate talents, aspire to craft policies that empower these vital entities. Collaborating with policymakers, we unlock the untapped potential of the OECD's 40 million SMEs and 35 million undiscovered entrepreneurs. Operating at both national and local levels, we provide practical guidance to maximize the impact of the USD 10 trillion annually spent on enhancing outcomes for the diverse cities and regions within the OECD. Additionally, we champion policies fostering the thriving of the tourism, cultural, and creative sectors, as well as the social economy. This experience stands out as one of the most exciting chapters of my professional life!"

As a key member of the OECD Executive Leadership team, Ms. Kamal-Chaoui supports the Secretary-General in achieving the OECD's mission to advance economic growth and social progress as well as contributing to other global agendas such as the G20 and G7, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Since 2016, she has been at the helm of the Centre, overseeing its efforts in various areas, including in the fields of: [SME and entrepreneurship policy](#); [Regional, urban and rural development](#); [Local employment and economic development \(LEED programme\)](#); [Subnational statistics](#); [social economy](#); [Multi-level governance, local finance and decentralisation](#); [Tourism](#) and [Culture](#). Under her leadership, the Centre has experienced remarkable growth, with its size and budgets more than tripling. It has successfully positioned itself as the global hub for expertise on people, places, and firms.

Guided by a dedicated team of over 220 staff, Ms. Kamal-Chaoui provides intellectual leadership and strategic vision. She oversees analysis, advice, and support for policy reform across various domains, including entrepreneurship, small and medium-sized enterprises, regions, cities, rural communities, local employment, social enterprises, tourism, culture, multi-level governance and local public finance. With financial oversight of a 32 million EUR annual budget, 85% sourced from fundraising contributions, she ensures responsible fiscal management. Under her stewardship, the Centre produces over 130 policy reports, papers and case studies annually, along with customized action plans and implementation roadmaps, guiding significant institutional reforms at both national and subnational levels. Additionally, she orchestrates hundreds of international meetings each year, including at the ministerial level, reinforcing the Centre's pivotal role in shaping global discourse and

policy implementation as well as setting international standards.

As a key member of the OECD's executive leadership team, Ms. Kamal-Chaoui represents the Organization in high-profile meetings and conferences worldwide, including at the UN, G20, G7, COP, Davos, and more. Delivering over 70 speeches annually, she also embarks on approximately 15-25 missions each year, engaging with Ministers, Mayors, and CEOs from both OECD and non-OECD countries. In her role, she conducts around 100 briefings annually with Ambassadors, Ministers, and Mayors, and actively participates in media engagements with outlets such as the Financial Times, NY Times, Les Echos, the Globe and Mail, Politico, Chosun Ibo, Business News, among others. Moreover, Ms. Kamal-Chaoui has initiated several "Ambassadors' Group of Friends" networks (focused on small business, tourism, culture, and inclusive growth) to facilitate connections between the OECD Council (Board of Ambassadors) and the Centre's impactful initiatives.

Before assuming the role of Director at the Centre, Ms. Kamal-Chaoui held various senior positions within the OECD. From 2012 to 2016, she served as Senior Advisor to former OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría, actively contributing to his strategic and political agenda. During this time, she also spearheaded corporate initiatives, including the [OECD Inclusive Growth Initiative](#), the [Knowledge-Sharing Alliance programme](#), the [Global Deal](#) and the implementation of the [OECD Strategy on Development](#)

In the period from 2003 to 2012, Ms. Kamal-Chaoui played a pivotal role in establishing the OECD Urban Programme. Notably, she launched the [OECD Roundtable of Mayors and Ministers](#), a unique policy forum involving both local and national decision-makers. She also established the OECD series of [Metropolitan Reviews](#) and [National Urban Policy Reviews](#), and developed the National Urban Policy Framework which was endorsed by the UN for implementation in developing countries. Earlier in her career, she worked in the Trade Directorate on competition and regulatory policies, in the Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs on foreign direct investment, and in the Public Affairs and Communication Directorate as an economic editor. Before joining the OECD, Ms. Kamal-Chaoui worked for a university-based research institute and contributed to several media outlets.

During her extensive career at the OECD, she has authored, co-authored, and overseen hundreds of policy reports and articles. Notably, Ms. Kamal-Chaoui has been at the forefront of several groundbreaking, multi-stakeholder OECD initiatives. She established the [Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Coalition](#)—a coalition of 70 mayors from cities across the world dedicated to combatting inequalities. Her strategic partnerships with large corporations resulted in the inception of the [Business for Inclusive Growth](#) (B4IG). Furthermore, Ms. Kamal-Chaoui has significantly expanded the OECD's efforts in the realm of Social and Solidary Economy (SSE), leading to the adoption of various international guides for legal frameworks and the organization of the bi-annual SSE Global Summit.

Under her leadership, the Centre has also elevated the role of tourism in economic development – a sector which is bigger than agriculture in many countries and is among the largest service-export sectors. Her initiatives have included work to maximise tourism's socio-economic impacts, harness AI and other technologies, and accelerate climate action, alongside efforts to strengthen governance, improve destinations, engage start-ups and SMEs in the sector and modernise tourism statistics through Tourism Satellite Account implementation. As a result of these efforts the OECD flagship publication, ***Tourism Trends and Policies***, is among the most downloaded publications in the OECD.

Amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, she collaborated with [Business at OECD](#) to establish the [Digital for SMEs Global Initiative](#) (D4SMEs). This initiative unites prominent IT companies, including Meta, Amazon, Kakao, Microsoft, Vodafone, Intuit, PayPal, Sage, Wolt and Raktuen with government representatives, including at Ministerial levels, and small businesses. The primary objective is to facilitate the adoption of digital technologies, fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Additionally, during COVID, she spearheaded the [StandbyYouth Initiative](#), aiming to support young individuals through the crisis and beyond. This effort involved building a robust coalition of like-minded businesses in partnership with 12 global organizations, encompassing

international business associations, academic institutions, and youth associations. This collaborative effort evolved into the OECD/EU Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy ([YEPA](#)).

Demonstrating a steadfast commitment to advancing the climate agenda, she assumed a prominent role in establishing the [Centre on Green Finance and Investment](#). Furthermore, she facilitated the OECD's participation in the Advisory Group of the G20 Task Force of the Financial Stability Board and engaged in a collaborative effort with Bloomberg Philanthropies focused on [Green Investment Banks](#). In addition, she initiated the **No Net Zero Without SMEs Campaign**, recognizing the vital role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the transition to climate neutrality. This campaign aims to accelerate the involvement of the often-overlooked 99% of firms in this crucial transition. As part of this initiative, she championed the creation of the [OECD Platform on Financing SMEs for Sustainability](#), convening large public development banks providing critical support for sustainable financial practices among small and medium-sized enterprises.

Convinced that *"we cannot manage it without measuring it"*, she has significantly intensified the Centre's commitment to advancing its smart data strategy. This strategic focus has transformed the Centre into a singular global repository for subnational data, encompassing a comprehensive set of hundreds of indicators for 2 700 OECD regions and 1 200 OECD metropolitan areas. Through the [OECD Local Data Portal](#), launched in 2024, the Centre has delivered access to internationally comparable data at an unprecedented level of granularity, with hundreds of indicators covering 225 000 municipalities across 41 countries. Under her leadership, the Centre has also developed dedicated databases such as the [World Observatory of Subnational Government Finance and Investment](#) and the [OECD Scoreboard on Financing SMEs and Entrepreneurs](#). She inaugurated the [Spatial Productivity Lab at the OECD Trento Centre](#), a distinctive initiative which draws strength from extensive partnerships with academia. Subsequently, she established the [OECD Geospatial Lab](#) to connect people from different organisations, including academia, government agencies, the private sector, and Statistical Offices to develop and disseminate policy-relevant analyses grounded in geospatial information.

Ms. Kamal-Chaoui has cultivated a diverse network of formal collaborations, establishing partnerships with major philanthropic organisations such as the Ford Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Rockefeller Foundation, Kauffman Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, and Open Society Foundations. Additionally, she has engaged with other prominent organizations, including the Vatican Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, Club of Madrid, global civic organizations like the Youth Forum and Ashoka Global, and various multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, IADB, ADB, EBRD, European Commission, UN Habitat, APEC, United Cities and Local Governments, ICLEI, and the European Committee of Regions.

Throughout the years, Ms. Kamal-Chaoui has played a key role in elevating the OECD's presence in G20/G7 agendas, particularly in areas such as SME finance, infrastructure, tourism, and culture. Her efforts have resulted in some cases in the adoption of OECD tools and reports by leaders, exemplified by initiatives like the [OECD/G20 Financing Cities of Tomorrow](#), [OECD/G20 High-Level Principles on SMEs Finance](#), and the [G7 Rome Guidelines for the Future of Tourism](#). She has also deepened OECD engagement with ASEAN and APEC.

Ms. Kamal-Chaoui has actively participated as a member in numerous International Committees and Advisory Boards, including the SDSN Global Commission for SDG Urban Finance, Bpifrance Lab Steering Committee, Lancet Green Recovery Task Force on COVID-19 recovery, C40 Women for Climate, UNWTO COVID-19 Crisis Group, World Economic Forum Deputy Board of Trustees, World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on Advanced Manufacturing and Value Chains Vatican Expert Group on Inclusive Globalization, Club of Madrid's Shared Societies, Shanghai World Expo, Michael Bloomberg's Mayors Challenge Committee, and Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo's Strategic Committee.

She has additionally served as a Lecturer at Sciences Po Paris for the "Governing Large Metropolis" Master's Programme and is a member of the Strategic Council of the Science Po Urban school. Additionally, she is a recipient of the Wharton University's Emerging Leaders Programme Certificate and was recently selected to

participate in the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, a high-level invitation-only programme for 40 mayors from around the world.

In recognition of her contributions, she was honoured with the Officer of the Order of the Star of Italy by the President of the Italian Republic and with the "Women of the Decade in Enterprise and Leadership" Award at the Women Economic Forum (WEF) in 2019.

Ms. Kamal-Chaoui holds dual citizenship as a French and Moroccan national. Her academic qualifications include a Master's Degree in Macroeconomics from the University of Paris Dauphine, a BA in International Economics from the University of Paris-la-Sorbonne, and a Master's Degree in Foreign Languages and History from the University of Paris Diderot.

ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SMES, REGIONS AND CITIES (CFE)

The Centre provides comparative statistics, analysis, policy advice and capacity building. It helps local and national policy makers in OECD countries and many developing countries work together to unleash the potential of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), promotes inclusive and sustainable regions and cities, boosts local job creation and implements sound tourism policies. It includes the Secretariats serving the Regional Policy Development Committee (RDPC) and its three Working Parties on Urban Policy, Rural Policy and Territorial Indicators, the Committee on SMEs and Entrepreneurship (CSMEE), the Tourism Committee and the Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Directing Committee.

The Centre also manages several initiatives and networks that bring together national governments, mayors and other local leaders, economic development practitioners, business leaders and entrepreneurs, and social innovators. They include: the [Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative, Coalition](#), the Roundtable of Mayors and Ministers, [The OECD Water Governance Initiative](#), the [World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment - SNG-WOFI](#), the [OECD Local Development Forum](#), the [Spatial Productivity Lab](#), and the [OECD Trento Centre](#) (which provides capacity building to local and national stakeholders).