

# How the world's largest economies are protecting small businesses

For SMEs, late payments can have a significant impact on cash flow and business growth. In response, governments worldwide have implemented legislation to cap payment terms. **Here's what CFOs need to know about that legislation to improve working capital and protect their businesses.**



## Trends in payment terms regulation

**OECD countries** have largely adopted payment term regulations, with exceptions like Mexico, Switzerland, and New Zealand—though reform is underway in these nations.

**At least seven countries** (including Kenya, Uzbekistan, Peru, and Australia) are currently in the process of proposing, drafting or implementing new payment terms law.

**The EU Late Payment Directive (2011)** set a 60-day maximum term for commercial contracts, though some EU nations have adopted stricter 30-day limits for SMEs.

**SMEs constitute 99%** of all businesses in the EU, contributing significantly to GDP. But they often struggle with cash flow due to long payment terms.

## Key regional and sector policies



## Five country-specific policies

**1 The United States'** Prompt Payment Act mandates 30-day payment for federal contracts, with shorter terms for specific sectors, including agriculture and construction.

**2 The EU's** Unfair Trading Practices (UTP) Directive further restricts terms in the agriculture and food supply chains, enforcing a 30-day limit on perishable goods.

**3 Chile, Colombia, and Peru** have imposed 30 to 45-day payment limits.

**4 The United Kingdom** has a 30-day cap for public contracts and 60-day cap for commercial deals, with reporting requirements on payment practices.

**5 India** has a maximum term of 45 days for all contracts with SMEs.

## The need for alternative finance

SMEs are benefiting as governments tighten payment term regulations. But in reality, many still face cash flow challenges and struggle to access traditional sources of funding. That's why alternative finance represents an attractive option. For instance, solutions like Supply Chain Finance and Dynamic Discounting can help improve cash availability through the supply chain, and they're some of the most sustainable forms of alternative finance available.

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Coming to terms with late payment: How the world's largest economies are protecting small businesses

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