

Press Release

Less freelance and business start-ups in the Corona pandemic year Corona

IfM Bonn: Transformation to a service economy continues steadily

10.05.2021. In the pandemic year 2020, the number of start-ups in the liberal professions (-5.6 %) and the commercial sector (-11.7 %) decreased compared to 2019. In contrast, the number of start-ups in agriculture and forestry increased (+8.4 %). Overall, the negative trend in the total number of start-ups in Germany has continued.

In the liberal professions, however, the decline in the number of start-ups was less severe than in the commercial sector. As a result, the structure of the economic activities shift towards non-commercial activities: The share of freelance start-ups increased from 23.5 % 5 years ago to 26.7 % of all start-ups today.

Also changes regarding the branches can be observed within the commercial sector: In 2020, the share of start-ups in the health and social services sector and agriculture, forestry and fishing increased when compared with the previous year. In turn, particularly fewer start-ups were recorded in the construction industry.

Overall, the structural change towards the (knowledge-based) service economy continued despite the pandemic-induced market restrictions in many service sectors. Comparably many start-ups were recorded in the relatively small sector of agriculture, forestry and fishing in the Corona pandemic year 2020.

Share of women increases in business start-ups in the liberal professions and commerce

Women accounted for more than half of the approximately 88,400 freelance business start-ups in the pandemic year: Their share increased slightly from 52.6% (2019) to 52.8% (2020). Among sole proprietorships, the share of women increased from 29.4 % to 30.7 %.

Institut für
Mittelstandsforschung

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Gefördert durch:



Bundesministerium
für Wirtschaft
und Energie

aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages

Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Innovation,
Digitalisierung und Energie
des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen



All data on business start-ups in the commercial and non-commercial sectors – including the liberal professions – are available in the statistics section on the Institute for SME Research (www.ifm-bonn.org).