

As of June 1st of 2020, SOWALFIN became the newest member of The Montreal Group (TMG), a global forum for public banks focused on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME).

Following its mission “to bring Development Banks together as thought leaders to foster the evolution of their respective practices to the benefit of MSMEs from around the world”, The Montreal Group is pleased to welcome a very dynamic and innovative Bank like SOWALFIN.

With the arrival of SOWALFIN, The Montreal Group reinforces its European presence and the diversity of its members. SOWALFIN has a unique model offering hybrid direct and indirect products to the MSMEs of Wallonia in Belgium. Although relatively small in size, SOWALFIN will have a lot to offer with other members around their advanced offering based on partnerships with the larger ecosystem in Europe and worldwide. As an example, they have been the lead in Europe designing a connectivity platform for MSMEs looking to transfer their company or buy another one. We look forward to exchanging with them on several fronts. ***Welcome et Bienvenue!***

In the words of Jean Pierre Di Bartolomeo, President of SOWALFIN, “The membership with the Montreal Group is a give and take, and that’s the way it should work. SOWALFIN believes in the added value of peer exchanges and international partnerships that make banks stronger”. Mr. Di Bartolomeo stated that SOWALFIN joined TMG wanting to get inspired by good practices, innovative tools and services from other regions of the world to be able to improve their model and provide the best services to the Walloon entrepreneurs. At the same time they want to inspire other development banks, by sharing their current model which is built in principles of continual improvement and high trust.

With the addition of SOWALFIN ,The Montreal Group portfolio is now sustained by 9 institutions, who are members. To see all the TMG members, please visit: <http://www.themontrealgroup.org/en/members.html>

### **About The Montreal Group**

The Montreal Group is an international forum founded in 2012, in the city of Montreal, Canada, with the objective of fostering peer group exchanges, identifying best practices and innovative solutions on key topic issues, and developing thought leadership material in order to contribute to the global MSME ecosystem. Members are National Development Banks focusing on supporting the needs and growth of domestic MSMEs.

### **About SOWALFIN**

SOWALFIN is the one-stop shop for Walloon SMEs, providing information, guidance and financing solutions to entrepreneurs, at each step of the company lifecycle: start-up, growth, internationalization, innovation, green transition and transfer of ownership. Initially, SOWALFIN was set up in 2002 by the Walloon Government to support the access to finance to MSMEs and self-employed entrepreneurs. Since then, it has also appointed SOWALFIN as the one-stop shop for information and guidance for Walloon entrepreneurs.