Brazil SME Thermometer

SPCG reading on the SME moment in early 2026 — public indicators, cycle inflection and strategic implications

BRAZIL SME — SPCG ANALYSIS

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

About this publication

This report is an SPCG analysis consolidating public indicators available at the dates indicated. It does not constitute primary field research conducted by SPCG.

Sources used are cited throughout the text and fully listed in the bibliography. Interpretations and recommendations are labeled as SPCG reading.

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SUMÁRIO

Neste relatório

SUMÁRIO EXECUTIVO

Principais conclusões

This Thermometer consolidates SPCG's reading of the SME moment in early 2026, with focus on monetary cycle inflection. Main sources: IBGE, FGV IBRE, Central Bank of Brazil, SEBRAE, and Ipea.

01 Brazilian GDP grew 2.3% in 2025, with rising performance throughout the year — Q1 +2.9% YoY, Q2 +2.2% YoY, H1 +2.5% YoY (IBGE).

02 Agriculture was the growth driver in 2025: +10.1% H1, +11.7% year. Services +2.0% H1 and +1.8% year; Industry +1.7% H1 and +1.4% year (IBGE).

03 Ipea projects 2% growth for 2026, with slowdown vs. 2025 — scenario requiring cautious strategic reading for SMEs.

04 Selic had critical trajectory in 2025: began at 14.25% in May/25, rose to 15% in June/25 (highest in nearly 20 years), COPOM started cutting cycle February/2026. April/2026 reduced to 14.5% (Central Bank, 2026).

05 Business confidence showed stabilization signals in May/25: FGV IBRE ICE closed at 90.9 points, stability after two months of decline. Industry and Services rose; Trade retreated (FGV IBRE, 2025).

06 Inflation accelerated in early 2026: April IPCA-15 rose 0.89%; in 12 months, index accelerated from 3.9% (March) to 4.37% (April), pressuring monetary agenda.

07 Strategic priority for SMEs in 2026: navigation of transitioning cycle — Selic starting to fall but still elevated; inflation under pressure; Agriculture slowing. Financial caution combined with preparation for recovery.

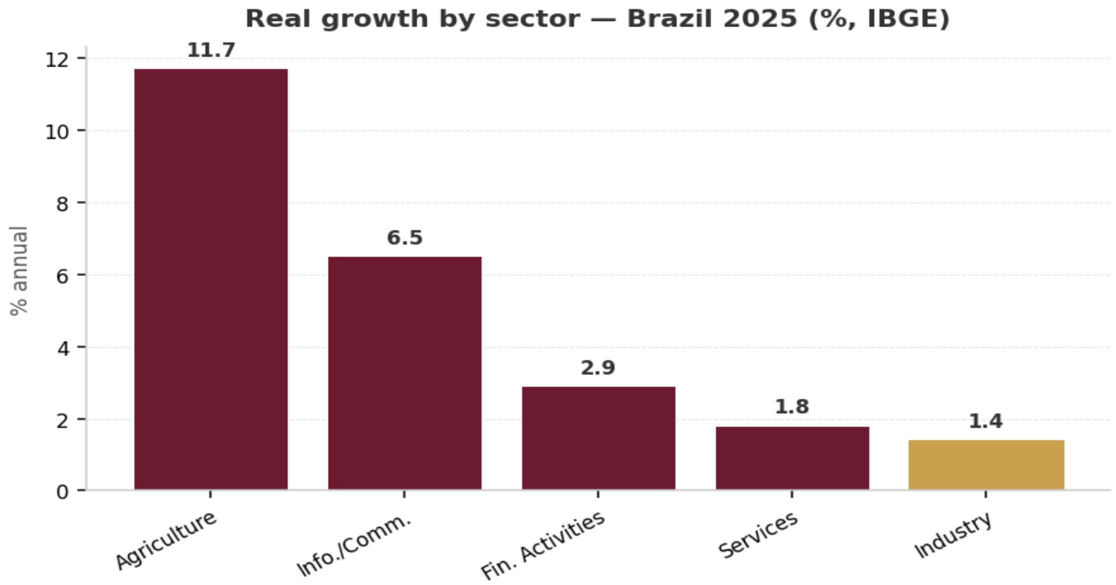
SECTION 01

Macro overview — early 2026

2025 closed with positive performance, but at decelerated pace vs. 2024. This chapter consolidates official IBGE data and Ipea projections on the macro picture relevant for SMEs.

2025 close — official data

Brazilian GDP grew 2.3% in 2025 vs. 2024, reaching R$ 12.7 trillion in current values (IBGE, Contas Nacionais, March 2026).



Quarterly trajectory in 2025

- Q1 2025: +1.4% vs. Q4/24 (seasonal adjustment); +2.9% vs. Q1/24 (YoY). Agriculture was highlight at +12.2% (IBGE, June 2025).
- Q2 2025: +0.4% vs. Q1/25; +2.2% vs. Q2/24. Services (+0.6%) and Industry (+0.5%) drove growth (IBGE).
- H1 2025: +2.5% vs. same period 2024, with positive performance in Agriculture (+10.1%), Industry (+1.7%), and Services (+2.0%) (Ministry of Finance, September 2025).

Projections for 2026

Ipea maintains projection of 2.4% growth for 2025 and projects 2% for 2026 (Ipea, 2025-2026). It is relative slowdown requiring careful strategic reading for SMEs.

SPCG reading: combination of projected slowdown + inflation under pressure + still-elevated Selic configures environment where SMEs need to prioritize (a) analytical pricing instead of uniform readjustments, (b) building cash reserves before any expansion, and (c) reviewing client/product portfolio to eliminate marginal contributions.

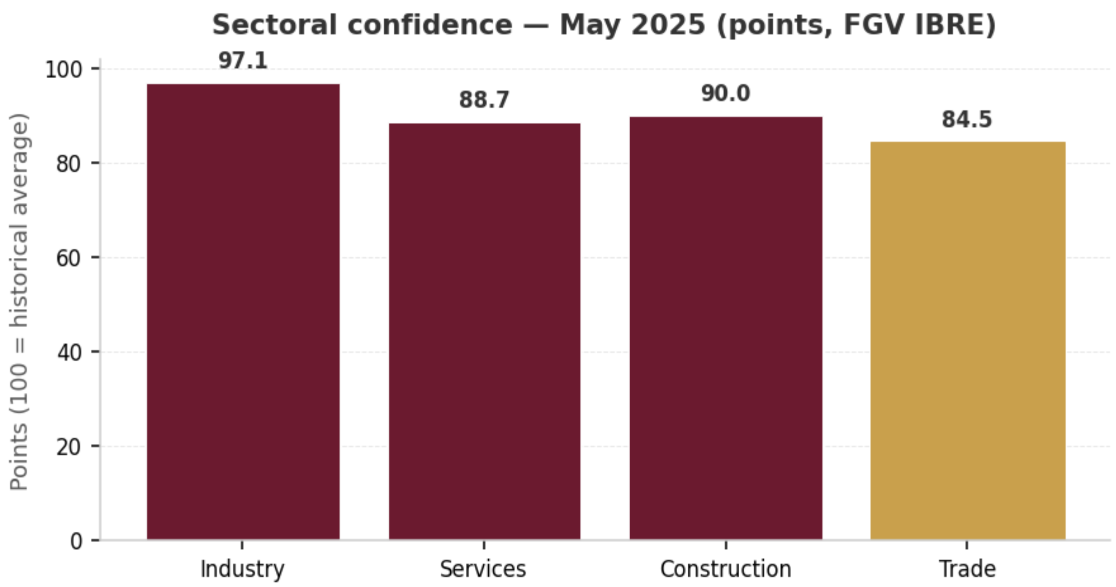
SECTION 02

Business confidence — stabilization signals

The moment captured by FGV IBRE sondagens in May 2025 marked beginning of inflection in business confidence indices.

FGV IBRE ICE in May 2025

The Business Confidence Index (ICE) closed May 2025 at 90.9 points, indicating stability after two consecutive months of decline (FGV IBRE via InfoMoney and BPMoney, June 2025). Reading by sector:



Confidence advanced in two of the four mapped sectors: Industry rose 1.1 points to 97.1 points; Services rose 0.9 points to 88.7 points. Trade retreated; Construction stable. In specific segments, 63% of industrial segments improved, indicating positive dispersion.

SEBRAE-FGV MSE Sondagem

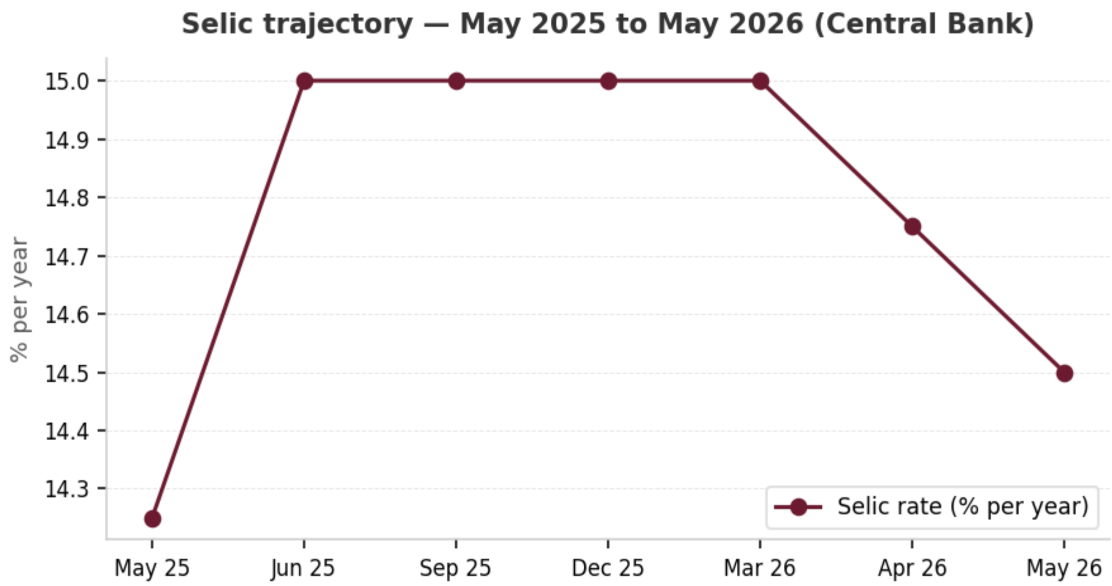
SEBRAE-FGV research captures relevant additional indicators: in 2025, 52% of small businesses operated without financial reserves; of these, 12% reported difficulty paying bills (SEBRAE, 2025).

> *"Stability in activity level combined with structural financial fragility defines the moment — it is not crisis, but it is not slack either."*

SECTION 03

Monetary policy and credit cost for SMEs

Selic trajectory — from peak to start of cutting cycle



- May 2025: Selic at 14.25% per year.
- June 2025: COPOM raised Selic to 15% — highest in nearly 20 years (Agência Brasil, 2026).
- June 2025 to March 2026: Selic maintained at 15%.
- February-March 2026: first cut, Selic to 14.75%.
- April 2026: second consecutive cut, to 14.5% per year — unanimous COPOM decision (Poder360, April 2026).

What inflation is doing

April 2026 IPCA-15 rose 0.89%, pressured by fuel and food. In 12 months, index accelerated from 3.9% (March) to 4.37% (April) (Agência Brasil, 2026).

Implication for SMEs

SPCG reading: cutting cycle is positive but gradual. SMEs should expect: (a) bank credit cost takes 6-12 months to reflect Selic cuts fully; (b) fintechs and credit cooperatives typically reflect cuts faster than traditional banks; (c) with 52% of SMEs without reserves, priority number one is shielding cash.

SECTION 04

Labor market and qualified labor bottleneck

Positive balance in 2025 — MSEs as driver

According to New CAGED (Ministry of Labor, January 2026), Brazil recorded positive balance of 1.27 million formal jobs in 2025. SMEs' role was decisive: micro and small enterprises hired more than 1.3 million workers, equivalent to 7 out of 10 formal jobs generated (SEBRAE via ASN, 2025).

Qualified labor bottleneck

- 23.3% of industrial companies reported labor shortage as significant obstacle in Q2/25 — series record.
- 28.4% of small-sized establishments face the same problem.
- In medium and small industries, percentage reaches 70% of establishments.
- Brazil needs to qualify 14 million professionals between 2025 and 2027: 2.2 million new + 11.8 million requalification (CNI, February 2026).

SECTION 05

SPCG readings and strategic recommendations

1. Prioritize cash shielding before expanding

With 52% of SMEs without reserves and Selic still at 14.5%, strategic priority is cash strengthening before any expansion. Practical target: 3-6 months of fixed cost reserve before considering new capex.

2. Renegotiate credit lines following cutting cycle

COPOM started cutting cycle. SMEs should monitor bank spreads and consider renegotiation with fintechs and credit cooperatives, which typically reflect Selic cuts faster than traditional banks.

3. Invest in internal talent pipeline

Given structural qualified labor bottleneck (record 23.3% industrial shortage, 28.4% in small size), alternative for SMEs is building internal formation.

4. Reprice analytically instead of uniform readjustments

With inflation accelerating and cost pressure affecting 7 in 10 SMEs (SEBRAE Pulso), uniform readjustment is no longer viable option.

How SPCG can help: our services of Financial Diagnostics, Portfolio & Pricing Diagnostics, and Strategic Planning address the most relevant areas. For a free 45-minute exploratory conversation, write to contato@spcg.com.br.

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Se este material foi útil e você quer discutir aplicação ao contexto da sua empresa, ficaremos felizes em conversar.

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