

Assistance scheme to facilitate SMEs to obtain standards/certifications required internationally

GUIDELINES FOR COMPANIES

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1. The Scheme

The Sri Lanka Export Development Board (EDB) proposes to implement a Financial Assistance Scheme to support SME exporters and export-oriented SME companies registered under the EDB New Exporter Development Programme in obtaining standards/certifications required to access international markets.

Under the assistance scheme, the EDB will reimburse eligible beneficiaries for the cost of certification and consultancy fees incurred in obtaining standards/certifications, up to a maximum of Rs. 0.3 million per company on reimbursement basis. Reimbursement will be made upon submission of the relevant supporting documents, including a copy of the certificate.

2. Objectives

- To assist viable SME companies to penetrate into International Market.
- To generate direct and indirect export income by three years.
- Enhance the competitiveness of export oriented SMEs.
- Facilitate export oriented SME companies to negotiate and cater to the international market.

3. Qualifying Activities

- The Assistance Scheme shall remain in operation for a period of one (1) year, with effect from the final date for the receipt of applications. Eligible companies may obtain assistance for standards/certifications within this one-year period. The certifications shall be obtained from an internationally recognized accreditation service provider (local or international). The consultancy firm engaged by the beneficiary under the Scheme shall be a reputed and duly recognized firm operating in Sri Lanka.
- The EDB shall not reimburse any costs incurred in implementing activities or corrective measures recommended by the compliance auditor. Reimbursement under this Scheme shall be limited to expenses incurred in obtaining initial certifications, including consultancy fees and initial product quality and/or system certification fees. This shall include certifications such as RoHS, REACH, PAH, ISO 9001, ISO 50001, ISO 14001, ISO 22000/HACCP, GAP, GMP, Organic, Halal, BRC, Kosher, and other product-specific certifications required to meet international standards (e.g., FDA, CE Mark), as applicable.
- Reimbursement under this Scheme shall also be applicable for certifications within the ICT/BPM sector, including consultancy fees and initial certification fees. Eligible certifications shall include, but not be limited to, ISO 9001 – Quality Management Systems (QMS), ISO/IEC 27001 – Information Security Management Systems (ISMS), SOC 2 (System and Organization Controls 2), GDPR Compliance, ISO 20000 – IT Service Management, and PCI-DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard).
- In addition, certifications not specified above may be considered, subject to demonstrated requirements of international buyers. Applications seeking financial assistance to obtain certifications other than those listed above shall be supported by a strong justification, clearly outlining the rationale for obtaining such certification together with the anticipated benefits and expected outcomes in return.

- The cost of renewal of existing certifications shall not be eligible for reimbursement under this Scheme.

4. Eligible Product Sectors

Product sectors eligible for the assistance are Processed Food and Beverages, Spices and Concentrates, Fisheries, Electrical and Electronic Components, Ayurveda Sector (Indigenous Medicinal Products), Personal Protective Equipment, Life Style Products, Chemical Based Products, ICT/BPM Sector, etc.

5. Eligibility Criteria

SME Exporters/Export oriented SME companies registered under the EDB New Exporter Development Programme.

6. Form of Assistance

Under the assistance scheme, the EDB will reimburse eligible beneficiaries for the cost of certification and consultancy fees incurred in obtaining standards/certifications, up to a maximum of Rs. 0.3 million per company on reimbursement basis.

The approved assistance shall be reimbursed upon completion of the approved project and submission of original invoices, receipts, bank statements evidencing payments made to the relevant service provider, a copy of the certificate obtained, and any other supporting documents as may be required by the EDB.

7. Documents Required

- 7.1. Duly completed application
- 7.2. A copy of the Business Registration Certificate in respect of a Sole Proprietorship/ Partnership or Certificate of Incorporation and the list of Directors as certified by the secretary of the Company, in respect of a company.
- 7.3. Business Plan for next 3 years including – project proposal, Implementation Plan, Expected Outcome, Detailed Cost Estimation, Sales Turnover with breakup and Forecasted Financial Performance
- 7.4. Financial statements for last 3 Years (Audited/Management Certified) 2023, 2024 and 2025
- 7.5. Sales Turnover with breakup for last 3 Years (2023, 2024 and 2025)
- 7.6. Current Production Capacity (monthly)
- 7.7. Documentary evidence for present employment (EPF,ETF Records)
- 7.8. Relevant quotations to obtain standards/certifications
 - a. Quotations should be submitted for all the activities that request financial assistance
 - b. All the quotations should certified by the service provider with cooperate seal

8. Selection

Shortlisted applications shall be evaluated by a panel appointed by the EDB, and recommendations for assistance shall be made following an interview. The recommended assistance shall be approved by the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the Sri Lanka Export Development Board. Where necessary, the EDB may conduct inspection visits to the applicant's factories or sites.

Applicants shall bear full responsibility for providing all information and supporting documents required for the evaluation of their project proposals. Incomplete applications shall be rejected.

Selected applicants granted assistance shall be required to enter into a legally binding agreement with the Sri Lanka Export Development Board.

9. Application Procedure

- 9.1. Eligible companies are requested to complete the application as per the given format and submit to the Export Development Board with all relevant documents. Details given in this Scheme Guidelines to be read carefully before filling the application.
- 9.2. The companies are eligible to obtain assistance either in obtaining standards/certifications within one year period.
- 9.3. The assistance scheme will be in operation for a period of one year with effect from the deadline for receiving the applications.
- 9.4. Incomplete applications, applications submitted without required documents or not adhered to the above guidelines will be rejected.
- 9.5. Applications not adhered to the given time limit (submitted after the deadline) will not be considered for processing.
- 9.6. The standards/certifications should be obtained from an internationally accepted accreditation service provider (local or international).
- 9.7. The consultancy firm engaged by the beneficiary under the scheme must be a reputed and recognized firm in Sri Lanka.
- 9.8. Certified information related to Compliance audits provided by the selected service provider should be submitted by the time of the interview.
- 9.9. No assistance will be granted under this Scheme to those who have obtained financial assistance under any Scheme of the EDB for the same activity in the given year.
- 9.10. Enterprises who have defaulted EDB loans are not eligible to apply unless all outstanding dues to EDB are settled before sending the application.
- 9.11 Under the assistance scheme, the EDB will reimburse eligible beneficiaries for the cost of certification and consultancy fees incurred in obtaining standards/certifications, up to a maximum of Rs. 0.3 million per company on reimbursement basis. Reimbursement will be made upon submission of the relevant supporting documents, including a copy of the certificate.
- 9.12. No assistance will be granted under this scheme for the activities conducted prior to the closing date of the application.
- 9.13. The applicants could commence the proposed project after submission of the application. However, the final decision for granting assistance will be at the discretion of the Sri Lanka Export Development Board.
- 9.14. Applicants should submit any additional information or documents if requested by the EDB/Evaluation Committee.
- 9.15. All the payments to the selected service providers pertaining to qualified activities/items should be remitted in favour of the respective service provider through a bank by cheques or cash deposits. Bank statement should be submitted with original invoices for reimbursement. Direct cash payments to the service provider will not be eligible for reimbursement under this scheme.
- 9.16. EDB officer or nominated representative of EDB will visit the applicant's factory /production facility prior to disbursement of funds and reserve the right to visit during the project period.