



**Western Cape
Government**

**Export Competitiveness Enhancement
Programme (ECEP) Fund 2023**

Call for proposals

August 2023

1. Purpose and scope

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT) requests individual companies and intermediaries/organisations currently assisting businesses that are exporting or need to be export-ready but are facing technical challenges to access international markets to apply for financial assistance and support via the Export Competitiveness Enhancement Programme (ECEP).

The programme aims to support businesses that are exporting, export-ready or working towards export readiness and need assistance to meet international market requirements. The focus of the programme will be on developing and investing in the capacity of businesses to unlock market access opportunities. It will also position the business to expand into current export markets as well as potential new export market opportunities.

The Export Competitiveness Enhancement Programme (ECEP) Fund 2023 will provide support to businesses and intermediaries/organisations that implement programmes and projects that provide holistic support to their export initiatives. The Export Competitiveness Enhancement Programme (ECEP) is a support programme to develop and equip businesses to allow them to export effectively. Interventions will be targeted at specific businesses and provide support mechanisms aimed at improving the capability, competitiveness, productivity, and export growth of these businesses. The Fund will provide support the following activities:

- Product reformulation and refinement.
- International packaging, labelling, and printing requirements.
- International product certification and standards for international market access.
- Product registration with relevant international bodies in export markets
- International nutritional analysis
- Specialised shipping requirements

2. Categories

- 2.1 Priority will be given to companies operating in the following sub-sectors with high export potential identified in the Western Cape economy, but not limited to:
1. Processed Food.
 2. Beverages.
 3. Cosmetics.
 4. Jewellery.
 5. Transport equipment.
 6. Computer, electronic and optical products.
 7. Rubber and plastic products.
 8. Machinery and equipment.
 9. Wearing apparel.
- 2.2 The financial support provided will be capped at R200 000.00 per company and per intervention. The planned intervention intends to develop successful exporters meeting client needs in a professional manner.
- 2.3 The period of application to the Fund is open until 31 March 2024 and is subject to budget availability, whichever comes first. It is in the best interest of the applicant to submit funding applications as soon as possible.
- 2.4 Applications received will be evaluated on a monthly basis against the evaluation criteria. All applicants to the Fund will be informed of the outcome of their application.
- 2.5 The allocation of funds will be at the discretion of the Department and will be based on an evaluation process and the availability of budgetary resources.

3. Qualifying Criteria

Qualifying businesses and intermediaries/organisation must meet the **minimum requirements** listed below and **supporting documents must be submitted** as part of the application process.

Minimum required documents:

- 3.1 The organisation must be tax compliant at the time of application. A tax compliant status (TCS) letter with a **valid (not expired)** tax pin must be submitted. The tax pin must be valid for the duration of the application evaluation process up to a period of 60 days from the date of submitting your application.
- 3.2 The organisation applying for support must be formally registered or incorporated. Company registration documents or documents of incorporation (NPO/NPC registration certificate, partnership agreements, sole proprietor tax certificate etc.) clearly identifying the director(s) of the company or organisation must be submitted.
- 3.3 The business / intermediary must be SA registered and directorship should entail more than 50% SA citizenship. Include the ID's of directors that are SA citizens.
- 3.4 The company must have obtained an unqualified audit opinion during the latest financial year period and audited financial statement for the last financial year must be submitted (the guidelines in the Companies Act will be strictly applied). Alternatively, independently reviewed or independently compiled financial statements for businesses not required to prepare audited financial statements in terms of the Companies Act. The financial statements will be assessed against the going concern principle and the opinion of the independent auditor or reviewer.
- 3.5 The business or intermediary/organisation must demonstrate that it provides co-funding for the requested amount or more for the specific intervention. A signed letter by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/ Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or similar executive authority confirming the value of own funding committed for the implementation of the proposed intervention must be submitted.
- 3.6 The intermediary/organization can be based anywhere in South Africa; however, the beneficiary businesses must be based in the Western Cape.
- 3.7 The applying business must be based within the geographic boundary of the Western Cape even if the main office is based in another province.

Recommended supporting documents:

- 3.8 The business to be supported should have an export permit.
- 3.9 A valid B-BBEE certificate or B-BBEE Exempt Micro Enterprise sworn affidavit should be submitted.

4. Exclusions

The following costs will not be considered for support from the Export Competitiveness Enhancement Programme (ECEP):

- i) Operational and Working Capital.
- ii) Contributing to production costs or purchase of stock.
- iii) Building any kind of infrastructure.

5. Obligations of The Beneficiary

- 5.1 The Department will exercise a strict and robust approach to monitor the funds transferred to successful companies or intermediaries/organisations. The following will be required from the beneficiaries:
- 5.2 The beneficiary must create a separate bank account for Departmental Funds (only Departmental funds will be reflected in this bank account) or create a separate cost centre within their Financial Accounting System or provide a formal (on a letterhead) expenditure report/ management account signed by the Financial Accountant/ Bookkeeper.
- 5.3 Provide the Department with a signed expenditure report (signed by Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Chief Financial Officer (CFO) together with the bank statement and source documents for all transactions as per the timelines agreed to in the signed agreement.
- 5.4 Regular project activity reports will be required based on key milestone achievements.
- 5.5 Grant the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT) access to conduct physical site inspections.

5.6 The Department will enter into an agreement with the beneficiary to outline the terms and conditions.

6. Application process

Please follow the guidance and information provided below:

6.1 The application process is two-fold and entails (i) the completion of the required online information and (ii) the uploading of the required supporting documents.

6.2 Only applications submitted via the online process, will be considered. No emailed or hand-delivered applications will be considered.

6.3 Completion of the online form is mandatory.

6.4 All documents requested in section 3 of this Call for Proposals must be submitted to complete your application. Please ensure that all documents submitted are legible. The application cannot be considered when documents are illegible, damaged, or corrupted.

6.5 The Department is unable to notify applicants of the correctness and completeness of the requisite information and documents submitted, nor can it request additional information. The onus is on the applicant to ensure that all the required information and the correct documents are timeously submitted.

6.6 The fund is contingent upon budget availability, which will be made accessible through an open fund which will be valid until 31 March 2024. The allocation of funds will be at the discretion of the Department, based on evaluation criteria and the availability of budgetary resources.

6.7 Requests for proposals by individual companies and intermediaries will be evaluated on a monthly basis against the evaluation criteria. Applicants that meet the set criteria will be informed accordingly.

Enquiries can be directed to Mr. Goodwell Dingaana at Goodwell.Dingaana@western-cape.gov.za/021-483-9315.

Annexure A: Template for the preparation of project proposals

Please use the below structure when preparing your submission. Where annexures are attached (e.g., timelines, budgets, cash flows) please clearly indicate this and number these. Failure to comply with the proposal template may result in your application not being considered.

Please note that the project proposal and all supporting documents must be uploaded to a folder when making the online submission. Document uploads must be completed by the time of the submission deadline as specified in this document.

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT (no more than two pages)

Describe the project and highlight the key elements thereof:

- The company profile must contain the following information: Date of establishment, Core activities/mandate of the organisation, Number of employees, Experience implementing similar projects **(Applies only to intermediaries/organisations)**.
- Describe the appropriate area of support for which funding is being applied for.
- What does the initiative seek to achieve?
- Who are the partners involved and what role will they play in the project?
- Describe the level of planning conducted to date e.g., market research, feasibility studies, business plans, impact assessments, etc. (Please attach any documents in support of your application).
- Describe any market trends that the initiative responds to.
- What are the project timelines?
- How will the funding be used?
- Describe the nature of the co-funding in place.
- What key activities will be undertaken to ensure the success of the project?
- Does the project require any statutory approvals before implementation can commence? Please describe these.

2. PROJECT IMPACT (no more than two pages)

- Has any market research been conducted? Please describe the findings.
- In the case of product development support initiatives, what markets or market trends does the initiative respond to?
- Who are the beneficiaries of this project?

- How many jobs have been created since the inception of the initiative? Or how many will be created if a new project?
- How many beneficiaries will be supported through the intervention?
- Indicate how these jobs will be created/sustained.

3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

- How will the project be monitored (meetings, site visits, financials etc)?
- What measurement metrics will be used? How will you determine that the project is on track? Key milestones should be noted.

4. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN WITH TIMELINES ([Annexure](#))

- Provide a project implementation plan detailing all project activities.

5. CASH FLOW ([Annexure](#))

- Provide an activity-based cash flow detailing all activities (items) that will be funded by the Department through the fund.

6. DETAILED BUDGET BREAKDOWN ([Annexure](#))

- Provide a project budget which clearly shows own funding, Export Competitiveness Enhancement Fund request, funding from other organisations as well as any other contributions.