



**Western Cape  
Government**

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**Export Competitiveness Enhancement  
Programme (ECEP)  
Fund 2025**

**Call for proposals**

**September 2025**

## 1. Purpose and scope

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT) is inviting applications from potential and existing companies as well as intermediaries / organisations that currently assist businesses with exports to apply for financial assistance and support through the Export Competitiveness Enhancement Programme (ECEP). The Export Competitiveness Programme (ECEP) aims to develop and equip business enterprises and related intermediary organisations who support businesses facing technical challenges to diversify and access international markets.

The Export Competitiveness Enhancement Programme (ECEP) Fund 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 technical support programme to develop and equip businesses to allow them to export effectively. Interventions will focus on selected companies and intermediaries supporting exporters, aiming to enhance their capability, competitiveness, productivity, market diversification and export growth. The programme will provide technical market access support through the following, support categories but not limited to:

- Product reformulation and refinement.
- International packaging, labelling, and printing requirements.
- International product testing, certification, and standards for international market access.
- Product registration with relevant international bodies in export markets
- International nutritional analysis
- Special handling services and/ or permits required to export products safely and efficiently.
- E-commerce platform listing
- Global market expansion support (**only** intermediaries and/or business support organisations), which includes support relating to, but not limited to:
  - i) Productivity improvement and efficiencies to scale capacity for exports
  - ii) International market development and diversification support
  - iii) Technology improvements to improve export competitiveness and production capacity.

## 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:

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|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1. Food.                                                | 7. Computer, electronic and optical products. |
| 2. Beverages.                                           | 8. Rubber and plastic products.               |
| 3. Cosmetics (make-up products).                        | 9. Machinery and equipment.                   |
| 4. Personal care products (oral-, skin, and body care). | 10. Wearing apparel.                          |
| 5. Jewellery.                                           | 11. Craft and furniture.                      |
| 6. Boatbuilding.                                        |                                               |

- 2.2 For individual companies, the financial support provided will be capped at R200 000.00 per company and per intervention. However, for intermediaries/organisations, financial support will be determined by the number of businesses they assist.

- 2.3 The intermediary/organisation can be based in South Africa; however, the beneficiary businesses must be based in the Western Cape.

- 2.4 The approval of applications is subject to budget availability. The Department will allocate funding at its discretion, based on a process of evaluation and the availability of budgetary resources. It is in the best interest of the applicants to submit funding applications as soon as possible.

- 2.5 Applications received will be evaluated regularly against the evaluation criteria. All applicants to the Fund will be informed of the outcome of their application.

### 3. Qualifying Criteria

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

- 3.1 The business/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 business / 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 / organisation must be registered in South Africa, and the applying business must be based within the Western Cape's geographic boundaries, even if the main office is in another province.
- 3.4 The intermediary/organisation can be based in South Africa; however, the beneficiary businesses must be based in the Western Cape.
- 3.5 Signed annual financial statements (AFS) for the most recent two financial years must be submitted as part of the application process (the guidelines in the Companies Act will be applied). The financial statements will be assessed against the going concern principle and the opinion of the independent auditor or reviewer. Where AFS are audited or independently reviewed, the AFS must be unqualified.
- 3.6 The business or intermediary/organisation must demonstrate that it is able to provide its own or third-party funding. A signed letter from the CEO/CFO or similar executive authority confirming the value of own or third-party funding committed for the planned intervention's implementation is required.

## **4. Minimum required documents**

The following documents must be provided to be part of a valid submission:

- 4.1 The business/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.
- 4.2 The business/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.

Signed annual financial statements (AFS) for the two most recent financial years must be submitted as part of the application process (the guidelines in the Companies Act will be applied). The financial statements will be assessed against the going concern principle and the opinion of the independent auditor or reviewer. Where AFS are audited or independently reviewed, the AFS must be unqualified.

- 4.3 A signed letter by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/ Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or similar executive authority confirming the value of own or third-party funding committed for the implementation of the proposed intervention. The business or intermediary/organisation must demonstrate that it provides its own funding or third-party funding.

## **5. 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 the purchase of stock.
- iii) Building any kind of infrastructure.
- iv) Enterprises not based in the Western Cape.

## **6. Obligations of The Beneficiary**

- 6.1 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:
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 Regular project activity reports will be required based on key milestone achievements.
- 6.5 Grant the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT) access to conduct physical site inspections.
- 6.6 The Department will agree with the beneficiary to outline the terms and conditions.

## **7. Application process**

Please follow the guidance and information provided below:

- 7.1 The application process has three parts as follows (i) the application form section A (ii) the project proposal section B and (iii) the uploading of the required supporting documents.
- 7.2 Only applications submitted via the online process will be considered. No emailed or hand-delivered applications will be considered. The onus is on the applicant to ensure that all the required information and the correct documents

are timeously submitted.

- 7.3 At completion of the application form, project proposal, and loading of required supporting documents are mandatory.
- 7.4 All documents requested in section 4 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.
- 7.5 The fund is contingent upon budget availability, which will be made accessible through an open fund. The allocation of funds will be at the discretion of the Department, based on evaluation criteria and the availability of budgetary resources.
- 7.6 Requests for proposals by individual companies and intermediaries/organisations will be evaluated regularly against the evaluation criteria. Applicants who meet the set criteria will be informed accordingly.

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