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# Participation in International Fairs SME Refund Scheme

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## Implementation of Refund Scheme

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### Guidelines

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*March 2014*

## Objective

As announced in the budget 2012, Government will provide a grant to finance the participation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in international fairs. The objective is to assist SMEs to expand their businesses through participation in export promotion activities.

## Eligibility

- 1) The Participation in International Fairs SME Refund Scheme provides grant to SMEs for their participation in trade fairs/ exhibitions.
- 2) SMEs engaged in the Services sector should apply for refund through the Board of Investment while SMEs carrying out activities in the Manufacturing or Tourism sectors should contact Enterprise Mauritius or the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority respectively.
- 3) Activities falling under the services category include but are not limited to the following:
  - ICT/BPO
  - Freeport and Logistics\*
  - Knowledge services
  - Healthcare services
  - Life sciences
  - Creative industries

*\* Freeport operators should make value addition of 30% to 35% before export.*

*Activities falling under retailing categories are excluded.*

*Financial and Real estate sectors are not eligible for refund*

- 4) Companies which are incorporated in Mauritius with the Registrar of Companies and which fall under the SME category are eligible to apply for the refund.

***Definition of an SME: Any business generating an annual turnover not exceeding Rs50 million.***

- 5) Associations and Federations participating in an international fair are not entitled to refund under this scheme.
- 6) Any local SME, which is a subsidiary of larger company/group of companies and where the latter generates an annual turnover exceeding Rs50 million, the SME will not be eligible for the refund.
- 7) Sister companies are eligible for refund provided that the turnover of the group does not exceed Rs 50 million and that the sister company has been in operation for at least 1 year.

## Refund amount

- 1) As of December 2012, the government has double the annual refund ceiling per SME from Rs 100,000 to Rs 200,000. An SME can thus benefit from a maximum of Rs 200,000 per year and grant for freight expenses of up to Rs 20,000.
- 2) SMEs may claim refund on multiple occasions, provided that the refund ceiling of Rs 200,000 per SME is not exceeded.
- 3) The remaining balance of the present year is not carried forward to next year.

## Scope

- 1) The Scheme provides grants to SMEs for participating as **exhibitors** in international fairs **outside** Mauritius.
- 2) However, SMEs attending or visit specialized fairs are eligible for refund provided that their participation to the event are institution-driven (Enterprise Mauritius, Board of Investment, Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority and Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority).
- 3) SMEs participating in fairs, under a Mauritian pavilion, led by the Board of Investment, Enterprise Mauritius or the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority are also eligible for refund.
- 4) Such export promotion activities must be organized by bona fide organisations/companies and **directly related to the business of the applicants** (SMEs).
- 5) SMEs participating in an international fair on their own are eligible for refund as well.
- 6) SMEs must be directly represented by a Director and/or employees in the international fairs from Mauritius to the host country. Participation through a third party will not be eligible for refund.
- 7) SMEs carrying out regulated activities should be duly registered with the relevant institutions and hold a valid certificate/permit/licence to benefit from the grant.

For example,

- a. **Logistics operators** should have a valid Freeport Certificate issued by Board of Investment.
  - b. **Tertiary education institutions** should be properly accredited by Tertiary Education Commission or Mauritius Qualifications Authority.
  - c. **Healthcare and life sciences**
    - i Private clinics & Laboratories should be duly registered with the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life;
    - ii Pharmaceutical distributors should be registered by Pharmacy Board
- 8) SMEs engaged in non-regulated activities should ensure that they are duly registered with the required authorities.

- 9) The following expenses incurred by SMEs in relation to their participation will be considered for refund:
- a. Participation fee charged by the organisers including:
    - i. Rental charges for stand/booth
    - ii. Registration fee
  - b. Travelling expenses are limited to an economy air ticket between Mauritius and the host country/city for **one representative only**. Least cost, most direct rule applies.
  - c. Accommodation expenses **for one representative only** incurred during the duration of the fair.
  - d. Freight expenses on extra luggage on exhibit items only (communication/ marketing materials) related to the participation in the international fair.
- 10) Items not listed in section (9) above, such marketing materials or design of booth, are not refunded under the Participation in International Fairs SME Refund Scheme.
- 11) Applications will not be considered for SMEs that have been subsidized by any other institution, local and international, in respect of the participation in the said International fair. BOI will verify whether there is any double benefit.
- 12) The Project Evaluation and Monitoring Committee reserves at all times the absolute right to determine whether the applicant's eligibility, the nature of the export promotion activity, the relevancy of the international fair are acceptable under Participation in International Fairs Refund Scheme.
- 13) The Project Evaluation and Monitoring Committee also reserves the right to determine whether the expenditures incurred will be regarded as fundable items. Expenses borne by any third parties will not be refundable. The committee will request for invoice and proof of payments at all time.
- 14) Only expenses qualified under section (6) will be eligible for refund subject to necessary proof of payments being submitted. Refund will be made on expenses incurred by the local SME only. Any payments made on behalf of the SME by another local or international party will not be refunded.

### **Procedures to obtain refund**

There are 3 distinct processes to obtain the refund:

1. Submission of application for the refund;
2. Evaluation of the application by a Project Evaluation and Monitoring Committee;
3. Submission of claim.

## Application for refund

- 1.1. The SME (applicant) should submit the application for refund **at least 2 weeks before** participating in international fair. Applications submitted at a later date will not be considered.
- 1.2. An application is considered complete if all the fields in the application form have been duly filled in and that the support documents required as per checklist has been attached. In case of any missing information/documents, the application is deemed incomplete and will not be considered. Only complete applications will be processed.
- 1.3. The Application form can be downloaded from the following link. It should be filled electronically and submitted either in hard copy or by email.
- 1.4. The name and designation of the representative of the SME participating in the fair should be clearly indicated in the Application form.
- 1.5. Companies which have already benefited from the Participation in International Fairs SME Refund Scheme should indicate in the application form the outcome of previous participation.
- 1.6. Supporting documents, as applicable, to be submitted to the Board of Investment together with the Application form are as follows :

### **General Documents**

- a. Certificate of Incorporation of Company and Business Registration Card
- b. Certified copy of either “Form 1: Application for Incorporation of a Company” or “Form 9: Consent of Shareholder” for all shareholders at the time of incorporation of company and transfer of shares, where applicable.
- c. Audited financial statements indicating the turnover and profitability of the company for past 3 years or signed by Director(s).
- d. Copy of receipt of Trade fee;
- e. VAT registration certificate.
- f. Copy of ID card or passport of the applicant

### **Sector specific documents**

- *Freeport operators*- Freeport Certificate issued by BOI
- *Knowledge related operators* - Approval of TEC/MQA
- *Private clinics & laboratories* - registration with the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life;
- *Pharmaceutical distributors* – registration with Pharmacy Board

## 2. Evaluation of application

- 2.1. Following submission of **the complete application set (application form and supporting documents)**, a Project Evaluation and Monitoring Committee will assess and approve applications as per the criteria defined above.
- 2.2. The Project Evaluation and Monitoring Committee, through the Board of Investment, reserves the right to request applicant to submit additional documentary proof or any clarifications to substantiate applications.
- 2.3. Once the application is processed and evaluated by the Project Evaluation and Monitoring Committee, the Board of Investment will inform the applicant about the decision of the committee.

## 3. Submission of claim

- 3.1. Only applicants having received a notice confirming approval of application from the Board of Investment on behalf of Project Evaluation and Monitoring Committee should submit their claim for refund.
- 3.2. Within **10 days after** participating in the international fair, the SME (applicant) should submit the Claim Form together with the following support documents, as applicable:
  - (a) Copy of contract with organisers;
  - (b) Invoice of air fare between Mauritius and host country/city
  - (c) Receipt of payment of airfare
  - (d) Travel itinerary and Boarding Pass(es);
  - (e) Detailed receipt of accommodation with room rates per night
- 3.3. The name of the representative mentioned in application form should be similar to the name in travel itinerary and accommodation receipt.
- 3.4. Once the complete set of proof of expenses has been provided, the Board of Investment will process the claim and notify the Project Evaluation and Monitoring Committee.
- 3.5. The refund will be disbursed to the applicant through a cheque in the name of the company.

### N.B.

- 1) Applicants should note that it is their responsibility to ensure that application forms and support documents are received within the prescribed deadline. Documents should be submitted according to the checklist annexed to the Application form and Claim form. Failure to comply with the deadline might lead to late refunds.
- 2) If there is any change in the information provided in the Application form or Claim Form after its submission, the applicant should promptly inform the Board of Investment.

- 3) The Project Evaluation and Monitoring Committee reserves at all times the absolute right to review all applications and adjust the entitlement of grants if necessary. In the event that there is overpayment due to error in calculation or assessment, applicants are required to refund the amount overpaid.

## Contact

- 1) Application forms and Claim form (together with support documents) can be submitted either by hard copy or soft copy to the Board of Investment.

**Soft copies** can be sent by email to [sme@investmauritius.com](mailto:sme@investmauritius.com). Kindly ensure that all documents are in pdf format and the pages area well readable.

**Hard copies** should be submitted to the attention of the Managing Director. Kindly specify “Participation in International Fairs SME Refund Scheme” on the envelopes.

Board of Investment  
10<sup>th</sup> Floor, One Cathedral Square Building  
16, Jules Koenig Street  
Port Louis

## Contact person

For any information, please contact:

**The Advisory Unit**

Board of Investment  
10th Floor, One Cathedral Square Building,  
16, Jules Koenig Street,  
Port Louis  
Tel: 203 3800  
Website: [www.investmauritius.com](http://www.investmauritius.com)