



Republic of Mauritius

# **CUSTOMER CHARTER**

**Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives  
(Business and Enterprise Division)**

**“Make your own waves”**

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## 1.0 About the Ministry and Business and Enterprise Division

The Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives comprises two main Divisions, namely the Business and Enterprise Division (BED) and Cooperatives Division. The main activities of the Ministry revolve around formulation of policies pertaining to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperatives.

BED acts as a facilitator and catalyst in the promotion, development and growth of a competitive and innovative SME sector by creating the appropriate framework through mentoring, coaching and provision of adequate business development support and incentives. A new SME Act 2017 was proclaimed on 18 January 2018 to provide for, inter-alia, the phasing out of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) and creation of a post of Registrar for SMEs for an improved service delivery and staunch support for our SMEs.

According to SME Act 2017, SMEs are categorised based on their annual turnover as follows:

Enterprise	Annual Turnover
Micro	Not more than Rs 2 million
Small	More than Rs 2 million but not more than Rs 10 million
Medium	More than Rs 10 million but not more than Rs 50 million

SMEs represent 99% of all businesses in Mauritius. With a contribution of about 40% to the country's GDP and representing 55% of total employment, SMEs have the potential to become a major pillar of the economy. In line with Government's vision 2030, SMEs are called to assume a more impactful role in the economy not only as an enabler but as a key driver of inclusive and balanced growth.

## 1.1 Our Vision

To develop a strong, diversified, competitive, resilient and innovative business and enterprise sector operating in a sustainable environment.

## 1.2 Our Mission

- Provide the appropriate technical, professional and managerial support to businesses to enhance economic growth and sustainable development; and
- Act as facilitator and catalyst in the promotion, development and growth of a competitive and innovative SME sector by creating the appropriate framework through mentoring, coaching and provision of adequate business development support and incentives

## 1.3 Strategic Direction

- Enhance the technology base of SMEs leading to innovative processes, enterprise productivity and competitiveness both locally and internationally.
- Facilitate SME development by fostering the right eco-system, appropriate institutional support framework and an enabling business environment.
- Inculcate entrepreneurial skills for improved technical and innovative capabilities to increase productivity, efficiency and profitability.
- Harmonize and streamline administrative processes for better compliance and reporting by SMEs.

## 1.4 Strategic Objectives

- Providing an environment conducive to creating new enterprises and enhancing growth and competitiveness of existing ones.
- Facilitating market access to enterprises.
- Increasing economic growth and job creation through enhancement of enterprise competitiveness.
- Facilitating the development of professionalism in the operation of local entrepreneurs to enable them to adopt sustainable business practice and meeting global challenges.



## **1.5 Our Core Values**

- Trust – Building confidence and commitment among staff and other stakeholders
- Teamwork – Achieving synergy through sharing of information and teambuilding
- Transparency – Performing with professional ethics, good governance principles and integrity
- Timeliness – Meeting set targets with pride
- Transformation – Innovativeness and achieving excellence

## **1.6 Our Quality Statement**

- Committed to provide quality service to our customers by continuously improving our systems and procedures and by creating the necessary climate for sustainable development.
- Ensuring smooth and seamless service delivery to our customers based on total quality management.

## **2.0 Strategic Units of the Business and Enterprise Division**

### **2.1 Administration**

Providing necessary administrative support in meeting the goals and objectives of BED by facilitating, designing and formulating appropriate strategic policies and ensuring timely and effective implementation of programmes and projects as well as its monitoring and evaluation.

### **2.2 Technical**

Providing support for the development, implementation and management of corporate policies and strategic functions for the sustainable development of the business sector including SMEs.

### **2.3 SME Registration Unit**

Providing registration facilities to SMEs as well as support and information with a view to facilitating the obtention of any other registration, permit, licence, authorisation or clearance which an enterprise may require.

### **2.4 Human Resource**

Managing policies and issues pertaining to human resources and employment relations including human resource planning and development, recruitment, promotion, benefits, allowances, retirement, training, performance appraisal and Human Resource Management Information System.

### **2.5 Finance**

Managing the finance and accounts of BED, including the preparation of the annual budget as well as ensuring judicious use of funds and processing of bills/claims within one week.

### **2.6 Procurement and Supply**

Planning and procurement of goods and services in accordance with the Public Procurement Act and Regulations, management of warehouse for store items and ensuring that tenders and quotations are prepared, examined and awarded within time schedule.



### **3.0 Policies and Programmes of BED**

In furtherance of its mandate and objective, BED designs, devises and develops appropriate policies, programmes and schemes in line with Government Vision and promotes, amongst others, the following:

#### **3.1 SME Financing Scheme**

BED in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and other financial institutions has introduced attractive incentive schemes and facilities for SMEs to have access to finance, credit and other facilities. An SME Development Scheme has been introduced and is managed by SME Mauritius.

#### **3.2 Promoting Local Products of SMEs**

BED promotes local products of SMEs and artisans through the following:-

- Regular Salon des Entreprises;
- Monthly SME Regional Fairs;
- Operation of SME Mauritius Craft shop at the airport;
- Interactive and online product catalogues; and
- Encouraging SME to participate in public procurement exercise and avail themselves of the margin of preference.

#### **3.3 Building Export Capacity for SMEs**

BED also promotes and facilitates export capacity for SMEs through the following:

- Access to international fairs by encouraging SMEs to participate in overseas forums/fairs/B2B, etc;
- Familiarisation with procedures and processes for export of their products to Africa and in the region;
- Adoption of international norms and standards for export potential;
- Provision of appropriate training and capacity building; and
- Sensitisation and awareness campaign regarding various trade agreements and protocols with different friendly countries and trading blocks.



### **3.4. SME Innovation Award (SIA) 2017**

BED launched an SME Innovation Award (SIA) 2017 on 14 April 2017 with a view to recognising SMEs which have, during the last three years of their operation, brought significant innovation in terms of product and process development.

#### **Objectives of SIA 2017 were to:**

- a) Enhance the competitiveness and productivity of the SME sector;
- b) Promote and reward innovative SMEs; and
- c) Encourage local SMEs to be creative and adopt innovative practices leading to business transformation.

The SME Innovation Award 2017 was of two types, namely Best Product Innovation and Best Process Innovation.

Best Product Innovation - recognising the introduction of new products and/or improvement of existing products through new product designs, dimensions, material quality and packaging to suit customer requirements; and

Best Process Innovation - recognising new process development or improvement in methods of production as well as development related to operational processes, such as process reengineering and innovative production with a view to achieving efficiency and productivity.

76 entries were received by the closing date which was on 31 July 2017. Evaluation of applications was carried out by a Technical Assessment Committee and 11 SMEs were awarded during a special ceremony held on 24 November 2017.

### **3.5. International Cooperation in the field of SME**

Provision of technical assistance and skillful guidance to SMEs through areas of cooperation and collaboration with different countries and international bodies through the transfer of appropriate technology, skills, capacity building and other entrepreneurship development programme. Proposed areas of collaboration have been sought from some 37 countries and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in February 2018 with the People's Republic of China on cooperation in the field of SMEs and Cooperatives Development with view to exploring avenues of cooperation between Mauritius and China.

Moreover, in December 2013, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Mauritius and India, following which two Joint Committee Meetings (JCM) on SMEs were held in India in January 2016 and in Mauritius in May 2017.

#### **4.0 Services Provided by the Ministry through SME Registration Unit**

The SME Registration Unit came into existence following the promulgation of the SME Act on 18 January 2018. The main services of the Unit, comprise, inter-alia, the following:

- registration and issue/renewal of registration certificate to SMEs;
- provide support and information to facilitate obtention of any registration, permit, license, authorisation or clearance which an enterprise may require;
- monitor the performance & growth of registered SMEs;
- regular updating and analysis of statistics on registered SMEs; and
- effect site visits to SMEs.

#### **5.0 Services Provided by BED through SME Mauritius Ltd**

SME Mauritius Ltd, a private company, wholly owned by Government was incorporated on 14 July 2017 to replace SMEDA. It operates under the aegis of BED, having as main objectives the promotion and development of entrepreneurship and providing the necessary support and assistance to SMEs.

##### **5.1 SME Development Scheme Certificate**

The SME Development Scheme was introduced since January 2016 as a comprehensive programme including fiscal and financial incentives/facilities for the benefit of small and medium enterprises which is in line with Government objective to making SMEs the backbone of the economy.

Eligible SMEs are granted SME Development Certificates and are eligible to incentives and facilities, such as Income Tax holiday for the first 8 years and other tax concessions.

To be eligible under this Scheme, an entrepreneur should meet the following criteria:

- (a)
  - (i) incorporated as a small company under the Companies Act, or
  - (ii) formed as a Cooperative Society, or
  - (iii) an individual issued a Business Registration Card on or after 2 June 2015 and registered under the SME Act 2017;
- (b) the project value should not exceed Rs 20 Million;
- (c) the projected annual turnover should not exceed Rs 50 Million;
- (d) none of the shareholders of the Company/ members of the Cooperative Society should hold interest/share in any other entity having an annual turnover at individual or group level exceeding Rs 50 Million; and
- (e) the Company/ Cooperative society/Individual should be involved in any of the 7 priority sectors below:
- (f) The Company or Cooperative should be involved in any one of the following priority sectors:
  - Manufacturing
  - Handicraft
  - ICT and other Export Services
  - Aquaculture and value Ocean Economy related activities
  - Bio Farming and value-added Agri-Business activities
  - Renewable and Green Energy
  - Any other productive sectors that will create employment

## 5.2 Promotion of Handicraft

With a view to bringing innovation to the Mauritian craft products in terms of design, packaging and branding to allow SMEs to remain sustainable and competitive and also to preserve the uniqueness of Mauritian cultural craft. Cabinet proposed a series of measures to revamp the Handicraft sector. Consequently, BED in collaboration with SME Mauritius Ltd had been liaising with various institutions such as MITD, MGI and RTI for providing various training courses on drawing techniques, painting, quilling, embroidery, engraving and jewellery making, and packaging techniques to the local craftsmen with the objective of allowing and enabling them to come up with innovate, creative and value added products.

In addition, a one-of-its kind hologram was introduced as a branding tool for recognizing genuine, local and high quality products of our SMEs in Mauritius. This project is in line with the objective of facilitating and promoting a competitive, vibrant and conducive environment for SME development as well as improving the visibility and marketability of locally manufactured products.

Furthermore, to allow our SMEs showcase their products and services virtually, Creative Mauritius is being used as an online platform providing visibility to local talent and know-how, with an access to the tourist market. This confers a new dimension to the promotion of Mauritian handicraft on the international scene.

To further assist SMEs improve the marketing of their manufacturing products, Government is contributing Rs 5,000 towards the cost of membership in the 'Made in Moris' Label.

### **5.3 Training and Capacity Building Programmes**

SMEs and artisans have to continuously confront competitive pressures and other challenges taking place in their immediate environment and training represents a useful approach to cope with such dynamics. SME Mauritius Ltd supports SMEs and artisans in enhancing both their managerial and technical capabilities through organisation of regular training programmes for both potential and existing entrepreneurs. Key programmes include:

- Small Business Management (Managing your Business level I and II, Start Your Business & Financial Planning for SMEs); and
- Craft and Skill development (Fashion Jewelry, Garment Design, Woodcraft, fibrecraft, food preservation and chips making).

### **6.0 Implementation of the 10 Year Master Plan for the SME Sector**

BED came up with one-of-its kind Master Plan for the SME Sector in March 2017 with 86 key recommendations having as objective to meet realistic targets by 2026 as follows:

- raising SMEs' contribution to GDP from 40% to 52%;
- raising SMEs' share of total national employment from 55% to 64%; and
- increasing current exports from less than 3% to about 18%.

In line with the 10 Year Master Plan, five (5) schemes have been launched since February 2018. These are described below:

### 6.1 Technology and Skills Transfer – Inclusive Business



Scheme encourages established enterprises to enable smaller businesses to integrate into their efficient value chains in a productive way, thereby increasing income as well as being more competitive. The concept behind the Inclusive Business approach is to allow the established enterprise to focus on its core activities and sub-contract its noncore or value-adding activities within the supply and value chain to smaller enterprises.

A refund of 15% of the transaction value per annum (with a ceiling of Rs 100,000) is payable per eligible enterprise.

### 6.2 Access to Market – Barcode Registration



Barcodes are unique product identifiers on retail products that include a sequence of lines, characters and numbers. It helps in tracking sales of products and facilitate automated inventory control. It also provides customer identification, device part number and date code of the product.

Scheme aims at providing financial assistance to SMEs to upgrade their products and facilitate access to new markets. SMEs are encouraged to adopt the Barcode Certification and use barcodes for their products.

The grant allows for 100% reimbursement on registration and training fees (Rs 6,750 inclusive of VAT) paid by SMEs for the registration and use of barcodes. The scheme covers only GS1 Barcode which is unique, globally recognised and registered in the GS1 Global Registry. The barcode is being supplied by GS1 (Mauritius) Ltd in collaboration with the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI).

### 6.3 Mentoring and Hand-Holding Programme

Scheme is a developmental partnership through which mentors/industry-experts share their lifelong acquired experience, knowledge, skills and abilities, long term perspective to foster sustainable growth for SMEs. Assistance to each SME begins with a growth diagnostic, which evaluate all key elements of the business, contributing towards increased sales and business growth. The intention is to identify, in order of priority, the weaknesses or gaps that, when remedied, will lead to the highest possible impact in terms of increased sales growth.

Areas of intervention include among others:

- Financing and Accounting;
- Marketing;
- Operational Management; and
- Information Technology: IT tools and online presence and visibility.



### 6.4 Green Energy Promotion – Solar Photovoltaic Rebate Scheme



Scheme aims at offering SMEs the opportunity to produce electricity using solar photovoltaic (PV) technology and shall contribute to fulfilling Government's Long Term Energy Strategy - increase the share of renewable energy to 35% in the national energy mix by 2025 and maintain it until horizon 2030. Scheme operates on the net metering principle which allows eligible SMEs to produce electricity solely for their own consumption.

A one-off grant of 80% of total cost not exceeding Rs 100,000 for the installation of a solar PV installation is provided to eligible SMEs.

## 6.5 Communication and Visibility – Online Presence

A strategically developed website and online presence solution provides tremendous benefits such as credibility, marketability and visibility for SMEs. Being visible worldwide means SMEs would be very likely to gain additional customers and eventually be a global player. It is also a fact that potential foreign buyers prefer to deal with enterprises having credible websites.



Scheme aims to assist SMEs in developing and implementing various tools and means for online presence and marketing. Areas of intervention include: Domain name, Website Design and Development, Social Media Presence and Digital Marketing Training.

A grant for acquiring the technical assistance of service providers for the above mentioned areas of intervention represents 80% of cost of the project up to a maximum amount of Rs 40,000.

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