

18 October 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

Export Readiness Fund – Funding Windows 2 and 3 are now open!

Funded by the World Bank Group and implemented by the Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Export Readiness Fund (ERF) is a component of the Export Competitiveness for Jobs (EC4J) Project. The ERF is a US\$10 million matching-grant programme which provides financial support to eligible Bangladeshi firms to identify gaps, catalyse investment and improve Environmental, Social and Quality (ESQ) standards, and, thus, improve competitiveness on the export markets.

Grant support is provided for advisory services, training, and equipment that enables eligible firms to identify and address ESQ compliance gaps and upgrade their factories, improve production processes and enhance product quality, as required by international buyers/brands and the regulatory standards of the major export markets. The target export industries for the ERF, which are Government priorities for diversifying Bangladesh's export basket, are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in the leather and leather goods, footwear (leather and non-leather), plastics, and light engineering (covering electronics and electrical goods, automobiles (including motorbikes) and parts, bicycles, accumulators and batteries) sectors, respectively.

The ERF was formally launched in January 2020 and has been providing support to Bangladeshi firms with ESQ compliance assessments under its funding Window 1.

Following a public announcement made by Dr Jafar Uddin, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, on 30 September 2020, we are pleased to inform you that ERF has now launched the following additional funding windows:

- ✓ **Window 2:** The Small Grant Window, covering business and technical services of up to US\$40,000; and,
- ✓ **Window 3:** The Large Grant Window, covering projects in both services and fixed asset expenditures up to US\$200,000.

Eligible firms are encouraged to submit concept notes as the first step in the application process to obtain a Window 2 or 3 grant. Details and documentation to apply for a grant can be downloaded from the ERF website (www.erf-bd.com).

Please note that grant applications are considered on a demand driven first-come, first-served basis. Therefore, such that eligible firms and their proposed projects do not miss out on this funding opportunity, it is highly recommended that concept notes are prepared and submitted to the ERF Management Unit (MU) within a month from the date of this letter. This will enable us to consider your proposed project for this call for funding under Windows 2 and 3 as soon as possible.



**EXPORT
READINESS
FUND**

Export Readiness Fund

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Should you have any questions about the ERF and its grant application process, please do not hesitate to contact the ERF MU on the telephone numbers given above and/or via e-mail (info@erf-bd.com). We will be pleased to discuss the ERF and its grant application process with you in more detail.

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Yours sincerely

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