



SME Baseline Assessment

Zenzele ESD Programme

The purpose of this assessment is to understand the current situation of an SME. It serves as a reference point to measure progress and impact later on, allowing for comparisons and adjustments as needed.

This section and the costs section are to be completed by Siyabonga Africa Personnel. Please answer sections 1 to 3 only

Section 1: Funding Ready		
Compliance & Operational Requirements		
Sections	Categories	Completed Yes/No - Comments
Subsection 1.1	Business Plan	
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Subsection 1.5	Human Resources	
Subsection 1.6	Facility Health & Safety	
Subsection 1.7	Branding & Marketing	
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Subsection 1.9	Credit Worthiness	
Subsection 1.10	Mentorship & Support	
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Subsection 2.3	Market Risks	
Subsection 2.4	Compliance Risks	
Subsection 2.5	Technology Risks	
Subsection 2.6	HR Risks	
Subsection 2.7	Strategic Risks	
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Subsection 3.6	Supplier Network	
Subsection 3.7	Compliance & Safety	
Subsection 3.8	Technology & Systems	
Subsection 3.9	Insurance & Risk Management	
Subsection 3.10	Growth & Scalability Plan	

CATEGORIES	STATUS	ESTIMATED AVERAGE	ACTUAL
Business Plan			
Basic entry level plans		R1,000.00	
Legal & Regulatory Compliance			
Company registration		R125.00	
Company registration with name reservation		R175.00	
Name reservation (online)		R50.00	
Name reservation (manual)		R75.00	
Tax practitioners fee for annual tax returns		R7,030.00	
VAT registration for business with taxable supplies > R1million in any consecutive 12-month period. (Direct SARS registration)		R0.00	
Health & Safety compliance certificate (compliance assessment)		R5,000.00	
Health & Safety compliance certificate (audit < 50 employees)		R5,150.00	
Health & Safety compliance certificate (courses/certifications per employee)		R800.00	
Health & Safety compliance certificate (safety file - inhouse)		R0.00	
B-BBEE compliance certificate (affidavit signed by Commissioner of Oaths)		R0.00	
CIPC provides free B-BBEE certificate for exempted micro enterprises of turnover > 10million		R0.00	
Annual Employment Equity compliance certificate (without consultant services). *Not all businesses are required to submit EE reports. Only those with >50employees, exceed specific annual turnover thresholds depending on sector, municipal and organs of state*		R0.00	
Compensation for Occupational Injuries & Diseases registration (direct registration with the compensation fund)		R0.00	
COIDA letter of good standing		R0.00	
Certificate of acceptability (by local municipality)		R0.00	
Application for certifications or accreditations for product quality (e.g., SABS approval)		R5,700.00	
Finance			
Tax compliance (basic tax & accounting services)		R12,185.00	
Financial record keeping system (monthly)		R100.00	
Cloud based invoicing systems (monthly)		R150.00	
Online accounting systems (e.g. sage accounting) monthly		R190.00	
Online accounting software (e.g. xero accounting)		R45.00	
Free online accounting software e.g. zoho (free for business turnover < 1million p/a)		R0.00	
Business Insurance (monthly fee. Depending on vendor and package/cover)		R1,800.00	
Funding Purpose			
Operational business consultant (per hour)		R250.00	
Strategy consultant (per month)		R1,400.00	
Inhouse		R0.00	
Human Resources			
UIF/PAYE registration costs		R0.00	
Ongoing monthly contributions (1% of employee's gross salary)			
HR Consultant services (depending on services offered) monthly		R1,000.00	
Direct registration with Department of Labor		R0.00	

Facility Health & Safety

OHS Consultants (monthly) depending on scope of services & Consultant experience		R900.00	
Trained and appointed OHS Reps (one-day courses). Depends on the course/training		R1,300.00	
Emergency evacuation plans (per plan). Depends on plan details		R825.00	
First aid kit (more comprehensive and specialised kits costs more)		R800.00	
Fire extinguishers		R469.00	
Service of fire extinguishers (depends on the vendor)		R150.00	

Branding and Marketing

Brand identity (depends on the scope of work and the designer/agency chosen)		R3,000.00	
Social media		R0.00	
Market research (Utilizing services of consultants will incur costs)		R0.00	
Competitor analysis (Utilizing services of consultants will incur costs)		R0.00	

Communication and IT

Customer relationship management systems		R0.00	
Reliable and efficient hardware/software (monthly fee for a tech package. Depending on the service provider chosen and details of the tech package)		R290.00	
Cyber security measures (costs vary depending on the vendor and the number of devices covered)		R10,900.00	
Evaluation of cybersecurity practices of your third parties (no costs for self-assessments)		R0.00	
Inventory management system (monthly fee) Using online tools and Microsoft packages will not incur a cost, but increased manual work		R2,000.00	
Systems for e-commerce / digital supplier portals (monthly fee for basic platform management) Larger and more complex incur more costs		R3,750.00	

ESTIMATED ACTUAL

Remember, there are no "wrong" or "right" answers, only honest answers.



Section 1: Funding Ready

It is crucial for a business to present a compelling case for funding. If the business cannot meet certain requirements for funding, it might fail on the opportunity to get the funds it needs.

Status	Subsections	Questions	Importance	Resources
Subsection 1.1: Business Plan				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.1.1	Do you have a clear and well-documented business plan?	Serves as a roadmap for growth, provides a framework for making informed decisions and helps business attract funding.	Hire a consultant or utilize the free business plan templates online.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.1.2	Does your business plan have an executive summary, defining your business, its target markets and	Gives investors a total overview of your business. Investors use the executive summary to decide if they want to continue go through your entire business plan or not.	

		financial projections?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.1.3	Is your business model clearly defined?	Gives investors an overview of how your business operates.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.1.4	Are your target markets and customer segments?	Gives insights into the industry your business operates in and the opportunities you have identified.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.1.5	Are the gaps in the market identified and how your business will fill those gaps?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.1.6	Is your marketing and sales strategy outlined?	Helps guide on how you will create a name for your business in the industry and increase your customer base.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.1.7	Is your operational strategy outlined?	Outlines the day to day running of your business.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.1.8	Does your business plan detail your management and organisational team?	Gives investors a picture of your team, their experience, skills and capabilities to run the business.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.1.9	Are your financial projections outlined?	Financial projections are important as it is the only section investors pay close attention to.	

Subsection 1.2: Legal and Regulatory Compliance

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.2.1	Is your business registration completed (e.g. CIPC registration)?	Business registration is important to legally operate as a company, which will allow your business to benefit from tax, and financial advantages and ensure legitimate business operations.	https://www.cipc.co.za/
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.2.2	Does your business have a tax compliance certificate?	Helps in assessing funding, avoid penalties and loss of revenue. If your business has a turnover of less than R1 million p/a, you should register for turnover tax with SARS. The first R335000 of your annual turnover will be tax exempt & thereafter you can expect to pay 3% of your annual turnover in tax.	https://www.sars.gov.za/businesses-and-employers/small-businesses-taxpayers/
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.2.3	Does your business have necessary licenses and permits obtained, as per your business type and location?	You need to obtain a general business license and potentially, industry specific permits or licenses depending on your business type and location in order to operate a business in a specific area.	Obtain necessary permits and licenses from your local municipality for business, and trade licenses and go through the Business Act 71 of 1991 to determine which trade license your business needs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.2.4	Is your business compliant with labor laws and other relevant regulations?	Required to ensure ethical business practices, avoid potential legal issues, and penalties which can harm the reputation and the growth of the business.	https://www.gov.za/documents/labour-relations-act
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.2.5	Does your business have a BBBEE certificate or	Required to demonstrate compliance with Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment regulations, which can	Obtain a valid B-BBEE certificate from an accredited – with either IRBA or SANAS – BEE Verification Agency to help your

		affidavit?	open doors to opportunities like government tenders and preferential procurement.	business correctly implement BEE, get a good score and grow your business's bottom line. Alternatively, you can download a BBEE affidavit template from the CIPC website or the dtic website, complete it with your business details and have it signed by a Commissioner of Oaths .
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Subsection 1.3: Finance

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.3.1	Does your business have a financial record keeping system to indicate the financial performance of the business?	Required for compliance with tax regulations, demonstrating financial integrity to regulatory authorities and making informed business decisions.	Maintain detailed, and organized records of income, expenses and payroll. Including receipts, bank statements, invoices, and contracts, for at least five years, as required by South African law. Alternatively, you can hire an Accountant or audit firm.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.3.2	Does your business have a bank account set up and maintained?	Required to separate business and personal finances. Facilitate payments, track income and expenses. Build a credit history for accessing funding and financial services.	Open a business bank account at any financial institution of your choice.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.3.3	Does your business have an invoicing system?	Essential for tracking payments and cash flow.	Hire a bookkeeper, use accounting software's such as xero at a monthly reasonable fee or use free online accounting systems such as sage accounting .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.3.4	Does your business have a good credit record?	Vital for accessing credit, negotiate favorable borrowing terms and business funding.	Ensure you pay your suppliers, creditors and service providers on time to avoid negatively affecting your credit score. You can also leverage an accounting software to automate payments and stay on track.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.3.5	Does your business have assets to pledge as collateral for loans from commercial lenders?	To increase chances of receiving funding from commercial lenders.	If required, you can use assets such as your property, equipment, invoices, etc. as collateral. Alternatively, you can hire a Consultant/Accountant to assist on ways to increase your business chances of receiving credit.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.3.6	Does your business have a detailed budget and forecast for future performance?	Enables efficient allocation of resources, management of risks, performance measurement, make informed decisions and establish more accurate financial report analytics.	Hire an Accountant, audit firm or use online accounting systems that enables the business to gather historical financial data, analyze market conditions, and make reasonable and realistic assumptions about future revenues and expenses.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.3.7	Does your business have a debt-to-income ratio check?	Lenders use the debt-to-income ratio to assess your ability to manage monthly payments and repay borrowed money. It is a big factor in determining your business credit worthiness	Some financial institutions have free tools online to help you calculate your debt-to-income ratio. You can also use free online material, hire an Accountant or audit firm.

Subsection 1.4: Funding Purpose

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.4.1	Do you have clear, specific description of your funding requirements?	Helps investors to decide whether to fund your business or not.	Aim to demonstrate through research, data and testing that there's a market for your business, detailing breakdown of how the funds will be used (e.g., working capital, equipment purchase) or hire a business Analyst to assist.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.4.2	Do you have a clearly defined return on	Enables you to effectively manage your debts, and cash flow efficiently, structure a realistic repayment plan	Utilize online materials or platforms such as VALIDUS for guidance on how to create your repayment plan or return on

		investment (ROI) or structured repayment plan (if debt funding)?	based on your business cash flow.	investment. Alternatively, hire accounting services businesses such as xeinadin or an Accountant.
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Subsection 1.5: Human Resources

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.5.1	Do you have an experienced and skilled management team?	Experienced and skilled management team is significant for the business as a whole, to grow and develop.	Utilize online platforms such as inforentrepreneurs.org for guidance on how to build your management team or hire a business Analyst to assist.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.5.2	Do you have a PAYE/UIF registration, if you have employees?	It is a necessary tax implication for all businesses with employees. Ensures compliance.	https://www.sars.gov.za/
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.5.3	Do you know the basic conditions of employment?	To ensure that you operate in a manner fully compliant with labor laws, ensuring smooth, fair workplace functioning.	https://www.gov.za/documents/basic-conditions-employment-act
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.5.4	Do you have the summaries or wall charts of basic conditions of employment Act (BCEA) and the employment equity act (EEA) printed and visible on display?	The Labor Laws in South Africa state that every business must communicate the basic conditions of employment act to their employees in the form of a poster at all times. Businesses are legally required to print and display certain employment-related acts for their employees to see.	https://www.pencil.co.za/labour-law-posters-basic-condition-of-employment-posters
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.5.5	Do you have employment contracts or agreements for your staff and or volunteers?	Crucial for defining the working relationship, outlining responsibilities, and mitigating potential legal disputes. Provides clarity on duties, compensation (if applicable), benefits, and expectations.	https://labourguide.co.za/employment-condition/the-importance-of-the-employment-contract

Subsection 1.6: Facility Health and Safety

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.6.1	Is your facility compliant to the SA OHS Act?	Provides a legal framework for creating a safe, and healthy working environment and minimizes potential costs associated with accidents and injuries.	Conduct thorough risk assessments, implement safety measures, and regularly review and update policies. This includes identifying hazards, providing safety training, ensuring proper equipment, and staying updated on regulations, including the OHS regulations. Alternatively, hire an OHS Consultant to help ensure your business is compliant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.6.2	Have you read / are you familiar with the SA OHS Act?	Mandated by the SA OHS Act for employers to provide a safe and healthy workplace.	https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.6.3	Do you have the OHS Act visible on display in your business premises?	The OHS Act mandates that employers with five or more employees have a copy of the Act and relevant regulations readily available at the workplace. Displaying the Act ensures compliance with this legal obligation.	Can be purchased from OHS institutions, labor guide etc. you can also download from the internet, print and frame.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.6.4	Do you have trained and appointed OHS Reps (if you have	The OHS Act mandates the appointment of representatives for businesses with more than 20 employees. Having the OHS Reps	https://www.gov.za/documents/occupational-health-and-safety-act

		more than 20 employees)?	strengthens the business ability to create a safer work environment, comply with legal requirements, and improve overall workplace well-being.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.6.5	Do you have a designated emergency assembly point?	Complies with legal obligations. Facilitates swift and orderly evacuation during emergencies, ensuring everyone's safety. It enables a roll call to confirm everyone has evacuated and helps emergency responders.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.6.6	Are there emergency evacuation plans printed and visible on display in your business premises?	It is required for businesses to have and display emergency evacuation plans as part of workplace safety regulations.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.6.7	Does your business have a fully stocked first aid kit?	The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act) mandates that workplaces have adequate first aid provisions, including a first aid kit. Allows for quick and effective handling of injuries, potentially preventing complications or even saving lives before professional medical help arrives.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.6.8	Does your business have serviced & easily accessible fire extinguishers?	South African law requires employers to prioritize employee safety and provide a safe working environment, which includes fire safety measures like having fire extinguishers.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.6.9	Do you have clean, hygienic and working toilet facilities with wash basin?	Businesses are required to meet certain standards for sanitation facilities, particularly in workplaces. Ensuring compliance with these regulations can help avoid penalties and legal issues.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.6.10	Are all your tools, stock, equipment and cleaning materials stored correctly?	South African workplace safety regulations (like those outlined by the Labor Guide South Africa) emphasize the importance of safe storage practices.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.6.11	Does your business have a designated "smoking" and "no smoking" zones?	The Tobacco Products Control Act requires employers to protect non-smokers from second hand smoke, allowing for designated smoking areas while prohibiting indoor smoking.	https://www.gov.za/documents/tobacco-products-control-act

Subsection 1.7: Branding and Marketing

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.7.1	Do you have a clearly defined brand identity?	Enables a business to stand out in a competitive market, build trust with customers and attract investment. A strong brand can differentiate your business from competitors, fostering customer loyalty and generating long-term success.	Define your brand's purpose, values, and target audience. Then, create a consistent visual identity (logo, colors, fonts) and develop compelling messaging that resonates with your audience. Government initiatives like the National Small Business Act and Khula Enterprise Finance offer support and resources. Organizations like SME South Africa and The Banking Association South Africa can also provide guidance and access to experts.
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.7.2	Have you developed a unique visual identity for your business?	Plays a major role in brand recognition.	Hire professional branding and design agencies, as well as leveraging government support and industry networks.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.7.3	Does your business have social media accounts & maintain consistency across all platforms?	Provide an avenue to connect with potential customers, showcase products, and build a strong brand presence.	Hire dedicated social media management agencies, freelance social media managers, and even organizations offering training and resources for small businesses.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.7.4	Does your business have a brand voice with a tone and style of your communication?	Crucial for building a strong brand identity, fostering trust, and differentiating your business in a competitive market.	Hire a marketing agency, a branding consultant, or a social media influencer with a relevant following.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.7.5	Have you done market research?	Provides vital insights into customer needs, competitor landscape, and market trends, enabling informed decisions and strategic planning.	The Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) are key government agencies that offer various support services, including market research assistance. Additionally, private market research firms can provide specialized expertise.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.7.6	Have you done an analysis on your competitors?	By understanding your rivals, you can tailor your strategies, identify market gaps, and make informed decisions that improve your overall business development.	Various government agencies and private organizations can assist with competitor analysis. The Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda) offers business assessments, mentoring, and technical support, which can include analyzing market conditions and competitors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.7.7	Do you have marketing strategies?	Help businesses reach their target audience, build brand awareness, and drive sales, ultimately contributing to growth and sustainability	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.7.8	Does your business partake in community engagements?	Fosters trust, builds networks, and enhances resilience, leading to increased customer loyalty, positive reputation, and improved financial performance.	

Subsection 1.8: Communication and IT

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.8.1	Have you fostered an environment for your employees to feel comfortable sharing ideas, concerns, & feedback?	Allows businesses to identify where they need to improve in terms of work culture, policies, and processes. This helps HR create a more engaging work environment that supports employee satisfaction and growth.	Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) offer resources and guidance to SMEs. Additionally, organizations like Edge Growth and the Banking Association South Africa (BASA) can assist with developing communication strategies and a number of other systems and processes. Consulting firms can also provide specialized support.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.8.2	Do you have customer relationship management systems to manage customer interactions, track sales, and provide personalized service?	Enhance customer relationships, improve operational efficiency, and drive business growth.	

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.8.3	Does your business have a reliable & efficient hardware, including computers, servers, and network equipment?	Crucial to operate effectively and compete in the market. Enable businesses to access the latest software, store and manage data efficiently, collaborate effectively, and connect with customers and suppliers.	Hire managed IT services that offer outsourced IT departments, expert advice, and round-the-clock support. Government initiatives and funding can also help with accessing technology.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.8.4	Do you have appropriate software for your business needs, such as accounting software, customer relationship management systems, or project management tools?	Streamline operations, improve efficiency, and ensure compliance with regulations. Help with financial management, project tracking, and communication, ultimately boosting productivity and profitability.	Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) offer resources and guidance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.8.5	Do you have robust cyber security measures to protect sensitive data & prevent cyber-attacks?	Protect sensitive data and prevent cyberattacks, safeguarding the business and customer information. Help mitigate financial losses, reputational damage, and operational disruption.	Leverage a variety of resources to bolster your cybersecurity, including IT support services and resources from organizations like SME South Africa . Additionally, consulting with security specialists, legal professionals, and relevant government agencies can provide comprehensive support in implementing robust cyber security measures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.8.6	Do you have employees with the necessary IT skills or hired an IT services business to manage your business technology infrastructure?	Crucial for competitiveness and growth. Having skilled employees can allow for greater control and customization. Outsourcing offers cost-effectiveness, specialized expertise, and access to advanced technologies.	Access assistance with IT skills development and infrastructure management through a combination of government agencies, private sector initiatives, and IT service providers. Key resources include the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.8.7	Do you or your management team keep yourself updated with the latest technology trends and best practices?	Crucial for achieving growth, efficiency, and competitiveness in a rapidly changing market. By embracing new technologies, you can improve your business operations, access wider markets, and enhance customer service.	Several entities can assist in staying updated with technology trends and best practices, including government initiatives, industry experts, and technology companies. Specifically, the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) has programs to support digital transformation. Alternatively, you can use online resources and consulting services for valuable insights and support.
Subsection 1.9: Credit Worthiness				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.9.1	Does your business have good credit record?	Will enable your business to be recognized for its track record of timely payments and increase trust for your business.	The Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) is a key resource for SMEs seeking to improve credit standing. Additional help can be found from organizations like the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and various financial institutions, including the Banking Association South Africa .

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.9.2	Do you have debt to income ratio checks done on your business?	Crucial for lenders when evaluating loan applications because they provide a measure of a business's ability to manage debt repayments. A higher DTI indicates a greater risk to the lender, as it suggests a larger portion of the SMME's income is already committed to debt repayment.	Various entities can assist with debt-to-income ratio checks, primarily those involved in financial services and business support. These include banks, and financial institutions like Khula Enterprise Finance , and government agencies such as the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) and the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.9.3	Do you maintain accurate and organized financial records demonstrating transparency and enabling lenders to assess your business's financial health?	Crucial for tax compliance, understanding your business's financial performance, and making informed financial decisions. Also essential for securing funding, demonstrating financial readiness to lenders, and building a strong business reputation.	Hire a book keeper/ Accountant or professional financial advisor. Alternatively, seek assistance from Government agencies like the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) that also offer support and resources for SMEs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.9.4	Do you ensure sufficient working capital and retained earnings to cover short-term obligations and reinvest in your business?	Ensures business has money to cover its routine expenses, debts, unexpected costs and basic materials.	The Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) is a key source of funding and support for SMEs, offering various loans and post-investment assistance. Additionally, government-backed institutions like the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and the NEF provide funding for SMEs across various sectors, including startups, expansion, and equity acquisition.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 1.9.5	Do you maintain a healthy cash flow to ensure your business can meet its financial obligations?	Enables the business to meet its day-to-day expenses, pay suppliers on time, and capitalize on growth opportunities. Acts as a buffer against economic volatility and unexpected events, allowing the business to handle emergencies and maintain stability.	Secure funding from the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) , explore private funding options, and implement effective cash flow management practices. The government also provides support through agencies like the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) .

Section 2: Risks

Assessing potential risks ensures proactive measures are taken to mitigate threats and seize opportunities. Identifying and managing risks, is a proactive approach that will help your business make informed decisions, allocate resources effectively, and access capital more easily, ultimately leading to strategic growth and a competitive advantage.

Status	Subsections	Questions	Importance	Resources
Subsection 2.1 Financial Risks				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.1.1	Have you secured any external funding or investment?	Required because your own resources are often limited, making it difficult to finance expansion, innovation, and business growth.	Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) , the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) , the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) , and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.1.2	Do you have any plans, and systems in place and cash reserves to protect your business from unexpected financial storms?	Enables your business to weather unexpected financial storms or unforeseen expenses.	Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) , government funding programs, and various financial institutions.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.1.3	Do you have a detailed financial plan and budget for the next year?	A comprehensive financial plan will help your business assess feasibility, profitability, and growth strategies, while a budget provides a framework for managing cash flow, monitoring performance, and making informed decisions.	Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) is a primary resource, offering financial products, services, and support. Additionally, the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) provides business development services and support. The Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) and the South African government also offer resources and support, including financial planning assistance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.1.4	Do you have a process in place to regularly review your business financial performance?	Helps the business understand its current state and make the best decisions to improve financial health moving forward.	https://www.gov.za/about-government/small-business-development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.1.5	Do you regularly, closely track your business cash flow?	Helps identify potential problems early on. Ensure operational stability, build financial resilience, and capitalize on growth opportunities.	Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) and the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) are key institutions that offer financial support and guidance to SMEs, including tools for managing cash flow. Financial institutions also offer specialised products to help track and manage cash flow.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.1.6	Do you have business insurance?	Helps ensure financial stability and business continuity, in case of unexpected financial storms.	Insurance brokers and online platforms can help find the right insurance solutions for your business specific needs.
Subsection 2.2: Operational Risks				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.2.1	Do you have a documented operational plan outlining your key processes?	Ensure your business comply with regulations, manage it effectively, and access funding opportunities.	Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) , as well as the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) . Additionally, private sector consultants can offer specialised expertise in developing strategic and effective business plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.2.2	Do you have contingency plans in place for critical operational failures?	Minimizes the impact of unexpected disruptions and ensure business continuity.	Banking Association of South Africa and the Department of Trade and Industry (dti) .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.2.3	Do you have systems in place to identify potential operational threats and mitigation strategies developed?	Having these systems and strategies in place enables you to create a risk management plan for your business to be ready to protect itself from operational threats.	Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda) , the Banking Association South Africa , and the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) can help identify operational threats and develop mitigation strategies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.2.4	Are all your employees trained on the standard operating procedures?	Ensures employees understand and follow established procedures for their tasks, reducing errors, accidents, and training costs, while also promoting consistent results and a more efficient workflow.	Can be done internally or hire various sources such as consulting firms and private training providers.
Subsection 2.3: Market Risks				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.3.1	Have you conducted a market analysis to understand your target market & overall market	Understanding market trends that will reshape the world and businesses helps you make informed decisions about the future.	Institutions such as SME SA or sba.gov have tools for guidance to conduct the analysis inhouse.

		trends?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.3.2	Do you have strategies in place to mitigate market entry barriers?	Essential for SMMEs to thrive, contribute to the economy, and achieve the business's full potential.	Develop internal processes to create robust business planning, financial management, strategic market entry, and continuous learning. Institutions such as trade.gov have free tools to utilize.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.3.3	Are you regularly monitoring market trends and competitors?	Enables the business to thrive and adapt to changing market conditions. It allows the business to make informed decisions, optimize its strategies, and maintain a competitive edge.	SA government agencies like the Department of Small Business Development and The Competition Commission play a role in supporting SMME growth and providing insights into market dynamics.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.3.4	Do you have a plan to pivot if the market conditions change drastically?	Allows the business to quickly adapt and pivot your business strategies when needed, ensuring long-term sustainability and growth.	Develop a proactive approach that includes diversifying your offerings, building strong customer relationships, investing in digital capabilities, and continuously monitoring the market for emerging trends and opportunities. Make use of guidelines from institutions such as SA SME Finance Association (sasfa) , Small Business Institute (SBI) etc.

Subsection 2.4: Compliance Risks

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.4.1	Are you aware of all the regulatory requirements for your industry and is your business compliant?	Crucial for legal compliance, reputation, operational efficiency, access to funding and business opportunities. Neglecting these requirements can lead to penalties, reputational damage, and even business closure.	Seek guidance from government agencies, industry associations, and legal advisors, and staying updated through resources like government websites and compliance software. Visit government websites like SARS , DOL , and CIPC for information and resources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.4.2	Do you have all the necessary licenses and permits for your business?	Ensure compliance with laws and regulations, demonstrate a commitment to ethical business practices. Enhance your business credibility and can be a factor in securing funding or partnerships.	Engage external Auditors to provide an independent review of your business compliance practices. Ensure to take prompt action to address any compliance issues identified during audits.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.4.3	Do you have a process to regularly update your compliance practices and stay informed about relevant laws?	Crucial for avoiding penalties, maintaining a good reputation, and ensuring operational efficiency. Failure to comply can lead to fines, lawsuits, and damage to the business's image, while proactive compliance can open up new opportunities and improve investor confidence.	Monitor legislative changes, regularly check for updates to laws and regulations relevant to your industry and business operations. Follow reputable business news sources, and industry publications for compliance updates. Visit government websites like SARS , DOL , and CIPC for information and resources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.4.4	Have you fostered a compliance culture amongst your staff and do you lead by example on compliance?	Crucial for navigating the complex regulatory landscape and ensuring long-term sustainability.	Clearly communicate compliance expectations to all employees and lead by example by demonstrating a commitment to compliance at all levels of the organization. This involves embedding compliance into the company's values and daily operations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.4.5	Do you offer training to employees on relevant compliance requirements?	Compliance training ensures employees understand their responsibilities, which can prevent errors and legal issues, ultimately protecting the business.	Develop a structured compliance program, leveraging technology, and consulting with experts. This includes ensuring employees understand relevant regulations and providing online training.

Subsection 2.5: Technology Risks

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.5.1	Do you have robust cybersecurity measures to protect your data?	Safeguard sensitive data, prevent financial losses, and minimize reputational damage from cyberattacks.	Prioritize basic measures like antivirus software, firewalls, strong authentication, and regular software updates. Educate employees about phishing and other threats and develop an incident response plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.5.2	Is your business data regularly backed up?	Protect against data loss due to various threats, including cyberattacks, hardware failures, and natural disasters. They ensure business continuity by allowing quick restoration of critical data, minimizing downtime and financial losses.	Use a combination of cloud storage platforms and local backups. Cloud platforms like Google Drive and Dropbox offer convenient, secure, and scalable storage solutions, while local backups, such as offsite hard drives, provide an additional layer of security.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.5.3	Do you have a recovery plan in case of a technology failure?	Mitigate the significant impact of technology failures, which can lead to business disruptions, data loss, and financial losses.	Prioritize business continuity planning, data backup and storage, and cybersecurity measures. This involves identifying critical systems, establishing redundant systems or backups, and regularly testing recovery procedures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.5.4	Do you use up-to-date software and hardware for your operations?	Crucial for increased efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness in the global market, as well as improved data security and resilience to market turbulence.	Leverage cloud computing, explore financing options for technology investments, and prioritize cybersecurity. Cloud-based solutions offer affordability, scalability, and ease of maintenance, while various funding options can help bridge the gap for technology upgrades.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.5.5	Are your employees regularly educated on cyber threats and best practices?	Crucial for minimizing risk, protecting sensitive data, and maintaining business continuity. This education reduces the likelihood of human error, which is a significant factor in data breaches. By understanding potential threats and appropriate responses, employees can better safeguard the business from cyberattacks.	Provide employees with regular cybersecurity training to educate them about common threats, such as phishing emails and malware. Encourage employees to use secure practices, such as not clicking on suspicious links or opening attachments from unknown senders.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.5.6	Do you evaluate the cybersecurity practices of your third parties?	Help mitigate risks associated with third-party access.	Conduct a thorough risk assessment, focusing on your third party's security policies, procedures, and incident response capabilities. This should include reviewing their policies regarding data handling, access controls, and security awareness training.
Subsection 2.6 HR Risks				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.6.1	Are you compliant with employment laws and regulations?	Ensures a stable, ethical, and sustainable business environment. Non-compliance can lead to financial penalties, reputational damage, and legal repercussions, hindering growth and development.	Focus on understanding key legislation, maintaining accurate records, and staying informed about changes. This includes familiarizing yourselves with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) , the Labor Relations Act (LRA) , and the National Minimum Wage Act .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.6.2	Do you have a structured fair recruitment process, & written job descriptions & roles for all employees?	Helps the business attract & select the best candidates & ensure new hires are properly integrated into the company & understand their roles & responsibilities.	Establish a structured, fair, robust recruitment & onboarding process.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.6.3	Do you have measures in place to handle employee disputes or grievances?	These measures help ensure fair treatment, consistent application of policies, and a process for resolving issues before they escalate.	Establish a clear, documented grievance procedure. Outline the steps for lodging a grievance. The procedure should ensure fair and impartial treatment, with opportunities for employees to express their concerns and have their views heard.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.6.4	Do you have an employee training and development program?	By investing in workforce, you can improve employee skills, knowledge, and abilities, leading to greater productivity, innovation, and profitability.	Leverage the Skills Development Levy (SDL) and its associated grants. This involves registering with the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and their respective Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) . You can then access mandatory and discretionary grants, which are funded by the SDL , by submitting a Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) and an Annual Training Report (ATR) .
Subsection 2.7: Strategic Risks				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.7.1	Are your business goals and strategies reviewed and updated regularly?	Allows business to adapt to evolving market conditions, regulatory changes, and consumer preferences, enhancing chances of long-term sustainability and growth.	Regularly assess your operations & identify potential sources of reputational harm, such as poor customer service, unethical behavior, regulatory non-compliance, or negative media coverage.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.7.2	Do you have a risk management strategy integrated into your business plan?	Enable the business to identify potential risks.	Develop a structured process, conduct thorough risk assessments, and implement mitigation strategies. This includes identifying potential risks, analyzing their impact and likelihood, and creating plans to address or reduce them.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.7.3	Are you aware of the key risks that could impact your strategic goals?	Allows you to anticipate potential challenges and take proactive measures to mitigate them.	Analyze external factors like economic trends, political instability, and technological changes that could affect your business. Implement a structured risk management process that includes identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks, as well as fostering a risk-aware culture.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.7.4	Do you have a crisis management plan, and regularly review and update policies?	Outlines how your business will react if a crisis occurs. Minimizes damage and restore business operations as quickly as possible.	Identify potential threats and assess their impact, then establish a crisis leadership team, and develop a communication strategy. The plan should also include business continuity measures and recovery strategies.
Subsection 2.8: Reputational Risks				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.8.1	Do you have a crisis communication plan?	Ensures effective communication with internal and external stakeholders, mitigates reputational risks, and maintain business continuity.	Develop a crisis communication plan by first identifying potential crisis, creating a crisis team, and developing clear communication protocols. Regularly reviewing and updating the plan is also crucial.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.8.2	Do you monitor customer feedback and reviews regularly?	By actively seeking and analyzing feedback, your business can gain valuable insights into customer preferences, needs, and areas for improvement, ultimately leading to increased customer loyalty and business growth.	Utilize various online tools, social media, and customer service platforms. Utilize SME South Africa and Zendesk https://smesouthafrica.co.za/9-tips-on-how-to-retain-customers/ for guidance.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.8.3	Do you have a plan in place to address negative publicity or reviews?	Crucial for protecting your reputation, maintaining customer trust, and ensuring business survival.	Respond to negative feedback promptly, manage social media, and engage in positive PR efforts. Alternatively, you can hire a PR consultant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 2.8.4	Are you proactive in managing your business's online reputation?	A positive online reputation can lead to increased brand awareness, customer loyalty, and ultimately, higher sales. Conversely, a negative online reputation can deter potential customers and damage the business's image.	Focus on building a strong online presence, actively monitoring mentions, responding to reviews promptly, and addressing negative feedback constructively.



Section 3: Supplier Ready

Being supplier ready will help your business unlock opportunities for growth, increase its revenue, and create a greater stability. It can open doors to larger, more established companies, potentially leading to significantly increased revenue and sales opportunities for your business.

Status	Subsections	Questions	Importance	Resources
Subsection 3.1: Operational Capacity				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.1.1	Have you established production processes or supplier relationships for raw materials?	Enhances efficiency and reduces costs, builds stronger supply chains, and improves overall business resilience.	Focus on identifying reliable suppliers, building strong relationships, and implementing effective supply chain management strategies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.1.2	Do you have the ability to produce or source products at required scale and quality?	This capability will allow your business to meet customer demands, participate in larger markets, and contribute effectively to the broader economy.	Focus on strengthening Supply Chain Management: This involves identifying reliable and cost-effective suppliers, negotiating favorable terms, and implementing effective inventory management systems.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.1.3	Does your business have the capacity to handle large orders or increased demand?	Crucial for growth, job creation, and economic diversification. Will allow your business to capitalize on opportunities, improve efficiency, and contribute more significantly to the economy.	Improve your capacity through a combination of strategic measures, including securing additional funding, optimizing operations, and leveraging partnerships.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.1.4	Do you have inventory management system in place to track stock levels and order fulfillment?	Crucial for efficient operations and improved profitability. By tracking stock levels and managing order fulfillment, your business can optimize inventory, reduce costs, and enhance customer satisfaction.	Leverage cloud-based solutions like MRPeasy or Zoho Inventory . These platforms offer real-time tracking, alerts, and reporting, enabling businesses to manage stock levels efficiently.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.1.5	Do you have systems in place to evaluate your business existing capabilities?	Will enable your business to analyze the existing machinery, workforce, and production processes to identify areas for improvement.	Define clear company goals, analyses current processes, and identify potential areas for improvement. Additionally, understanding the support available through government programs and industry networks can help your business identify and address specific challenges related to access to finance, skills development, and infrastructure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.1.6	Do you have an investment and upgrades?	Investments and upgrades such as investing in new equipment, expanding facilities, or improving	Can secure investment and upgrades by exploring diverse funding avenues, including government grants, loans,

			production processes enable your business to increase efficiency and output.	and incentives, as well as venture capital, crowdfunding, and equity partnerships. Networking and engaging with public-private sector collaborations can also be beneficial. The Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) , the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) , the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) and Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) provides financial and business support to SMEs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.1.7	Do you offer training and skill development for your team?	Helps ensure your team has the necessary skills and knowledge required for the success of your business.	Register with the relevant Sectoral Education and Training Authority (SETA) . Identify your business training needs and source quotations from potential training providers. Compile a workplace skills plan and utilize the Skills Development Levy (SDL) to fund training initiatives. Explore opportunities for grants and rebates to offset training costs, and consider partnering with local providers or accessing online learning platforms like Get Smarter or Skill share .
Subsection 3.2: Product and Quality Control				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.2.1	Do you have documented quality assurance processes?	Quality assurance processes ensures that quality is controlled throughout the production process, from raw materials to finished goods.	Adopt a formal Quality Management System (QMS) framework, like ISO 9001 , and implement it across your various business functions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.2.2	Do you have consistent product quality, meeting customer or industry standards?	Crucial for building trust and confidence, attracting investment and gaining access to larger markets. It also leads to increased profitability, improved operational efficiency, and reduced risk of product-related issues.	Implement a robust quality management system (QMS), like ISO 9001 , which includes processes for planning, risk management, leadership commitment, and continuous improvement.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.2.3	Do you have any necessary certifications or accreditations for product quality (e.g., SABS approval)?	These certifications demonstrate adherence to standards, ensuring products are safe and fit for purpose, which is essential for gaining trust with customers and potential partners.	Understand the relevant South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) specifications and the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) . Then focus on ISO standards, particularly ISO 9001 for quality management systems.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.2.4	"Do you provide training to your team on quality standards?	Ensures employees know and understand quality control procedures and the importance of meeting specified standards.	Leverage a combination of internal expertise, external resources, and government-supported initiatives.
Subsection 3.3: Financial Stability				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.3.1	Do you have sound cash flow management?	Effective cash flow management ensures the business has enough cash on hand to cover operational costs and make timely payments.	Have proactive strategies like prompt invoicing, negotiation of payment terms with suppliers, and careful expense management.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.3.2	Do you have adequate working capital?	Help the business to cover operating expenses and larger orders.	Manage your cash flow effectively, explore various funding options, and potentially leverage government programs and private investment.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.3.3	Do you have financial buffer?	Helps with unexpected costs or supply chain disruptions.	Focus on proactive financial management, including cash flow optimization, risk mitigation, and alternative financing options.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.3.4	Does your business demonstrate consistent revenue growth, manageable debt levels, and a healthy cash flow?	Ensures financial stability that makes your business attractive to suppliers as suppliers are likely to be more comfortable with a business that can consistently meet its short-term obligations, generate profits, and manage its debts effectively.	Maintaining strong liquidity, profitability, and solvency.
Subsection 3.4: Reputation and Reliability				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.4.1	Do you actively cultivate a positive reputation?	Builds trust and makes your business more appealing to potential suppliers.	Focus on consistent performance, ethical practices, and strong communication. This includes seeking recommendations, reading reviews, and assessing your reputation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.4.2	Does your business have a track record of reliability in delivering orders on time?		Prioritize delivering on commitments, ensuring timely and accurate work.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.4.3	Does your business have positive references from previous suppliers or customers?		Focus on establishing strong relationships with suppliers and customers through open communication, transparency, and fair practices. Actively solicit feedback and use it to improve operations, creating a reputation for reliability and quality.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.4.4	Does your business have demonstrated ability to manage supply chain challenges?	Crucial for survival and growth in the dynamic and competitive market. It allows business to optimize operations, reduce costs, improve efficiency, and ultimately become more resilient and sustainable.	Implement strong supplier relationships, leveraging technology for data analysis and forecasting, and developing robust contingency plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.4.5	Is your business transparent, have clear, and open communication and responsive to your suppliers?	Fosters a positive working relationship and builds trust.	Build strong relationships with suppliers through open communication, fair negotiations, and a long-term perspective.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.4.6	Are you adhering to ethical labor practices and environmental standards?	For suppliers, doing business with an SMME that adheres to ethical labor practices and environmental standards offers several benefits, including enhanced reputation, risk mitigation, and potential for long-term sustainable relationships.	Focus on understanding and complying with relevant labor laws, implementing environmentally sound practices, and fostering a culture of ethical behavior within the organization.
Subsection 3.5: Supplier Networks				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.5.1	Do you have a diversified supply chain?	Helps your business to not be dependent on a single supplier. Is essential for accessing resources, improving competitiveness and facilitating growth.	Build strong supplier relationships, explore co-opetition with larger companies, and leverage technology for supply chain optimization.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.5.2	Have you established relationships with multiple suppliers?	Helps your business to mitigate supply risks.	Focus on clear communication, transparency, and trust. This includes establishing a process for managing

				relationships, evaluating risks, and addressing supplier concerns.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.5.3	Do you have formal agreements or long-term contracts with key suppliers?	These agreements provide clarity, reduce risks, and foster collaboration, ultimately benefiting both the supplier and the purchasing organization. Can protect you from future disputes and offer your business protection against non-payment and product/service liability.	Establish a clear understanding of the legal requirements for contracts and ensure they are compliant with relevant regulations. Develop comprehensive terms and conditions that protect your business interests and clearly outline your expectations and the suppliers.
Subsection 3.6: Compliance and Safety				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.6.1	Is your business compliant with industry-specific health and safety standards?	Suppliers have a significant interest in ensuring their SMME clients comply with industry-specific health and safety standards. This compliance minimizes risk and liability for the supplier, protects their reputation, and ensures a stable and efficient supply chain.	Demonstrate strong health and safety compliance, adhering to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and industry-specific regulations. Accredited safety inspectors or consultants can help with certification and staying updated on regulations. providing adequate training to employees.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.6.2	Does your business have the necessary licenses or certifications related to operations or products?	For suppliers, supplying an SME that holds relevant licenses and certifications is crucial for ensuring compliance, mitigating risk, and enhancing the SME's credibility. It also allows the supplier to potentially leverage the SME's certification for their own benefits, like preferential procurement or government contracts.	Understand the specific regulatory requirements for your sector, such as business registration, trade licenses, and any industry-specific permits. Additionally, certifications like ISO 9001 for quality management or other relevant standards can demonstrate a commitment to quality and compliance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.6.3	Does your business have environmental and social responsibility (if applicable to the industry)?	Suppliers benefit from supplying an SME that prioritizes environmental and social responsibility by enhancing their own reputation, gaining competitive advantage, and potentially increasing their long-term business opportunities. An SME with strong CSR credentials can attract customers who value ethical practices, and this can lead to increased demand and loyalty, benefiting the entire supply chain.	Implement sustainable practices like reducing waste, promoting circular economy, and engaging in ethical sourcing. This can involve partnering with responsible suppliers, using renewable energy, and supporting local communities.
Subsection 3.7: Technology and Systems				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.7.1	Does your business have the capability to engage in e-commerce or participate in digital supplier portals?	Helps increase integration with suppliers and improve performance.	Build a digital presence, learn about e-commerce platforms, and understand the legal landscape.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.7.2	Does your business have inventory management system in place (e.g., software for tracking orders)?	Helps business to effectively and efficiently manage inventory, reduce costs, and improve supplier management.	Utilize online or cloud-based software, which are cost-effective and reliable. You can also consider using free or freemium plans, or choose from various platforms like Sage, Zoho Inventory, or Xero.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.7.3	Does our business have systems integration, digital tools for order processing, invoicing, and supplier communication?	Helps your business to streamline operations, improve communication and enhance supplier management.	Implement technologies like Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems , cloud-based platforms, and e-procurement tools.
Subsection 3.8: Insurance and Risk Management				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.8.1	Does your business have relevant insurance coverage for business operations (e.g., product liability, inventory insurance)?	Insured SMEs are more resilient to unforeseen events, reducing the risk of supply chain disruption and allowing them to continue operations.	Obtain relevant insurance coverage for business operations. Having adequate insurance demonstrates financial stability and trustworthiness, making your business a more desirable partner for suppliers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.8.2	Does your business have risk management plans for supply chain disruptions, theft, or product damage?	Understanding and complying with risk management plans are crucial for ensuring a stable supply chain, minimizing disruptions, and protecting business continuity.	Create a risk management plan, diversify suppliers, and consider insurance. This plan should include risk identification, assessment, and mitigation strategies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.8.3	Do you have systems and processes to ensure that supplier's operations are adequately insured?	Crucial for protecting your business from claims arising from the supplier's activities.	Implement a system of supplier due diligence, including verifying insurance coverage, assessing risk profiles, and establishing clear communication channels.
Subsection 3.9: Growth and Scalability Plans				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.9.1	Have you identified opportunities for scaling operations?	Scaling operations will make your business attractive to suppliers as, for supplier to supply a business with scaling opportunities offers significant benefits, including potential for increased volume and long-term business relationships, as well as opportunities for innovation and growth.	Focus on internal readiness, market analysis, and regional expansion. This involves assessing internal capacity, identifying potential market segments, and considering regional growth strategies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.9.2	Does your business have a growth plan to meet increased supplier demands (e.g., expanding production capacity)?	A growth plan is crucial to manage increased supplier demands and attract new suppliers by demonstrating the ability to handle growth and provide a more secure and reliable business relationship.	Develop a multi-pronged growth plan focusing on market access, technology adoption, and support from organizations like Edge Growth . This plan should also include prioritizing inclusivity and diversity to enhance resilience.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.9.3	Does your business have contingency plans for managing growth without compromising quality?	Having contingency plans will make your business attractive to suppliers as, for suppliers, supplying an SME with contingency plans for managing growth is important because it demonstrates a proactive approach to risk management and ensures a more reliable and sustainable business relationship. It signals the SME's commitment to quality and resilience, potentially leading to stronger supplier relationships and improved long-term performance.	Create a clear growth vision, leverage technology for automation, and evaluate your company's current operations to identify areas for improvement.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.9.4	Does your business have a scalable business model, improving operational efficiency, enhancing supply chain management, and strengthening financial planning?	Having a scalable business model will make your business more attractive to suppliers and increase your power in the buyer and supplier relationship as supplying a scalable business offers suppliers advantages such as potential for growth, improved efficiency, and enhanced supply chain management. By partnering with a scalable SME, suppliers can benefit from increased order volumes, opportunities for new business development, and stronger, more efficient relationships. This also strengthens financial planning for the supplier as they can anticipate a more reliable and predictable income stream.	Create a clear growth vision, leverage technology for automation, and evaluate our company's current operations to identify areas for improvement.
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Section 3.10: Legal and Contractual Readiness

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.10.1	Do you or your team have an understanding of legal obligations in supplier agreements?	Helps manage risks, ensure compliance, and protect the business interests. A lack of understanding can lead to disputes, financial losses, and reputational damage.	Focus on clear contract drafting, seeking legal advice, and understanding key legal concepts. This includes knowing your rights and obligations, potential liabilities, and how to enforce the contract.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.10.2	Do you have formal contracts with suppliers and customers in place?	Protect your business interests, ensure clarity in business relationships, and navigate legal requirements. These agreements minimize disputes and foster trust between your business, suppliers, and customers.	Ensure all agreements are in writing, clearly defining the terms, roles, and responsibilities of each party. You can hire a legal personnel / business consultant to assist with drafting your contracts or utilize free online tools.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsection 3.10.3	Does your contracts with suppliers and customers have clear terms and conditions of supply (e.g., service-level agreements)?	Crucial for protecting your business interests, ensuring smooth operations, and maintaining healthy relationships. These contracts help define responsibilities, prevent misunderstandings, and reduce the risk of disputes.	You can hire a legal personnel / business consultant to assist with drafting your contracts or create written agreements outlining all aspects of the transaction, including product/service descriptions, pricing, payment terms, responsibilities, and confidentiality clauses. There are also free online tools and templates to assist with these.