Frequently Asked Questions on the Early Childhood Industry Digital Plan (EC IDP) and Early Childhood Digitalisation Grant (ECDG)

This FAQ is divided into 4 sections:

(i) General Questions on the Early Childhood Industry Digital Plan (EC IDP)
(ii) General Questions on the Early Childhood Digitalisation Grant (ECDG)
(iii) Questions on the Application Process
(iv) Questions on the Claims Process
(v) Broad overview of process and timeline for ECDG Application and Claim

(i) General Questions on the Early Childhood Industry Digital Plan (EC IDP)

Q1: What is the EC IDP?

The Early Childhood Industry Digital Plan (EC IDP) provides preschools and operators a structured framework to guide them on the digital development as well as a roadmap on training to equip the sector's workforce with the new capabilities and the necessary mindset to support digital transformation.

The IDP comprises three stages.

• **Stage 1: Getting Ready for the Digital Economy** – Adopt and Adapt. This stage calls for operators to adopt digital solutions such as e-enrolment and adapt centre processes for more efficient processes and digital-enabled work.

• **Stage 2: Growing in the Digital Economy** – Analyse and Automate. This stage calls for preschools to adopt digital solutions such as data analytics that can help them analyse and automate operations and educator training for more data-driven operations and digital-enabled training.

• **Stage 3: Leaping Ahead** – Advance Capabilities. This stage identifies solutions such as smart resource management and virtual training for teachers, so that operators can advance capabilities for smart centres and innovative learning.

More details on the components of the IDP is available in the IDP e-book.

Q2: What is the objective of the EC IDP?

The EC IDP aims to help address the trends that are impacting the EC sector:
a. Enhance productivity and cost management for **preschool operators**
b. Improve the quality and range of services delivered for **parents**
c. Improve job attractiveness and support professional development for **EC professionals**

Q3: How is the IDP different from past efforts to promote the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) (e.g. SMART Solutions)?

With ICT solutions becoming increasingly complex, ECDA and IMDA recognise the need for clearer and more accessible guidance, especially for smaller businesses to go digital. In the past, preschool operators can implement some preschool management solutions under the previous SMART Solutions programme. Building on these efforts, the IDP (developed in consultation with the industry) will support the EC sector in its digitalisation journey.

The EC IDP provides a structured framework to guide preschool operators on the digital solutions that they can adopt across three stages of growth and introduce a roadmap on relevant training to equip the sector's workforce. ECDA will work with IMDA to **pre-approve more digital solutions under the IDP in addition to the existing Preschool Management Solutions for the sector, as well as to chart the development of new solutions together with the industry, as guided by the IDP**.

Q4: What is included in the EC IDP?

Central to the EC IDP is a **Digital Roadmap** that guides operators in the EC sector to better understand the digital readiness of their businesses, the solutions available across different stages of digitalisation and the training required to raise their employees' digital skills.

The IDP will be reviewed and updated over time to take into account the latest digitalisation advancements in the sector as new technologies are gradually introduced.

A **Self-Assessment Checklist** is provided for operators to assess how digitally ready they are. Operators can then plan their digitalisation journey according to their stage of digitalisation, business operations and growth plans.

Operators requiring funding support can apply for funding under the Productivity Solutions Grant [Early Childhood Digitalisation Grant (ECDG)] to help them get started in their adoption of relevant pre-approved solutions listed in the IDP.

In addition, eligible operators can also use consultancy services from the SME Digital Tech Hub for business diagnosis and advisory on digital solutions relevant to their operations.

(ii) General Questions on the Early Childhood Digitalisation Grant (ECDG)

Q1: What is the ECDG?

The ECDG is part of the Productivity Solutions Grant (PSG) which supports businesses in the adoption of pre-scoped solutions that improve productivity.

The ECDG supports EC licensed preschool operators in their digital transformation journey by co-funding the implementation of pre-approved solutions, aligned to the Early Childhood Industry Digital Plan (EC IDP).

Eligible EC Operators will receive up to 70% funding support, subject to grant caps.

Q2: What are the pre-approved solutions available at the moment?

Pre-approved solutions under the following categories are now available:
- (a) Preschool Management System
- (b) E-Enrolment/E-forms
- (c) Data Analytics for Centre Operations.

Details on these solutions and a list of appointed vendors can be found on the GoBusiness website.

Q3: Can preschool operators that have already adopted digital solutions apply for funding for the ECDG?

The ECDG will support new applications for solutions listed in the IDP, including the Preschool Management System that was part of the SMART Solutions Programme. Preschool operators who have already implemented some digital solutions can consider other solutions in different categories that will help them further.

Preschools that have already adopted SMART solutions in stage 1 may apply for stage 2 pre-approved solutions.

Q4: What are the eligibility criteria?

Operators must meet the following eligibility criteria at the point of submission through the Business Grants Portal (BGP):

- Be registered and operating in Singapore
- Purchase/lease/subscription of the solution must be used in Singapore
- Must not have:

- made any payment to a supplier, vendor or third party in relation to the purchase/lease/subscription of the solution
- signed or confirmed any contract with a supplier, vendor or third party in relation to the purchase/lease/subscription of the solution
- Purchase/lease/subscription of the solution must be used in Singapore

In addition, operators must also meet the following sector specific requirements:
  (a) Operators and centres licensed under ECDA
  (b) The solutions must be for new or enhanced functions that have not been implemented by the operators/centres yet.
  (c) Solutions must be within the scope of the Early Childhood IDP categories and the solution/s adopted has/have been pre-approved jointly by ECDA and IMDA

Q5: Can childcare centres or kindergartens under the Social Service Agencies (SSAs/VWOs) apply for the ECDG?

Yes, SSAs/VWOs are eligible for the grant, as long as they are licensed under ECDA and fulfil the eligibility criteria mentioned in Q4 above.

If the SSAs/VWOs are eligible, they may proceed to apply for the grant via the Business Grant Portal using their CorpPass. For more information on CorpPass, please refer to Q3. of the next section – (iii) Questions on the Application Process.

Q6. Is there a minimum requirement for the number of children enrolled in the preschool and/or staff headcount to be eligible for the ECDG?

No, there is no such requirement. However, the preschool/operator must fulfil the list of criteria set out on Q4 above.

Q7: Am I eligible for the grant if my centre has already adopted one of the pre-approved solution, but the solution we are looking at is an enhanced version?

Yes, the grant provides funding for operators to adopt pre-approved solutions which are either (i) entirely new for centres **or** (ii) include enhanced functions such as additional modules.

Operators who wish to adopt enhanced versions of existing solutions used in the centres will have to submit the current contract with the vendor in the application for ECDA's review and consideration.

Operators who submit grant applications for contract renewal of existing solutions already implemented at the centre(s) will not be eligible for funding support.

Q8: Are new preschools eligible for the ECDG?

Yes, new preschools who are licensed under ECDA can apply for the grant. They must also meet the other eligibility criteria set out in Q4.

Q9: Do I have to wait for the approval by ECDA before commencing work?

Operators should only commence their project to adopt the pre-approved solution and make payment to the vendor after submitting their funding application on the BGP. If project had commenced prior to submitting the funding application on BGP, then this would not qualify for funding.

However, the submission of the application does not automatically entitle the applicant to funding. Applications will also subsequently be subject to evaluation. The entire evaluation process may take 6 - 8 weeks if the documents and details submitted within the application are complete and accurate. Operators may wish to refer to the Letter of Offer that will state whether the project is supported and the maximum support available.

In the event that the application is subsequently unsuccessful, operators will not be able to claim for any expenses incurred.

Q10: How long will the ECDG fund each pre-approved solution?

The grant will subsidised up to 70% of the implementation cost of the pre-approved solutions for the first year of adoption. It does not cover fees incurred for subsequent years.

Q11. Does the ECDG cover the hardware cost such as laptops and cameras?

Generally, the ECDG does not cover the cost of hardware unless it's part of the pre-approved packages.

Q12: I will need to send my staff for digital trainings to be able to keep up with the implementations of solutions. Is this covered by the ECDG?

No, the cost of digital training or consultancy not part of the pre-approved solution package will not be covered under the ECDG. However, eligible employers can use the SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit (SFEC) for a one-off $10,000 credit per firm to cover up to 90% of out-of-pocket expenses on qualifying costs for schemes or training courses that demonstrate support for enterprise or workforce transformation.
   a. Enterprise Transformation (up to $7,000 only) – which includes Productivity Solutions Grant (PSG); and/or

b. <u>Workforce Transformation (up to the full $10,000)</u> – Training courses aligned to the various Industry Skills Frameworks by SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG), Job redesign initiatives, and Professional Conversion Programmes etc. by Workforce Singapore (WSG)

The list of SFEC-supportable programmes will be updated from time to time and is available on **Enterprise Singapore's website**, https://www.enterprisesg.gov.sg/financial-assistance/grants/for-local-companies/skillsfuture-enterprise-credit and the **SkillsFuture Singapore's SFEC microsite**, https://sfec-microsite.enterprisejobskills.gov.sg/courses

Employers can also access the updated list of approved training courses on **SkillsFuture Singapore's SFEC microsite**, https://sfec-microsite.enterprisejobskills.gov.sg/courses to verify that the course is eligible for SFEC before enrolling your employees.

(iii)   Questions on the Application Process

Q1: How can my centre apply for the ECDG?

Operators can apply for the ECDG via the Business Grant Portal (BGP) at
www.businessgrants.gov.sg, using Corp Pass.

Please refer to the user guide.

Q2: What is the application process?

Operators will have to:

1. Visit GoBusiness to access the list of supportable solutions and identify relevant solutions that best suit your needs.
2. Get a quotation (unsigned*) from the pre-approved vendor
3. Submit an application on the Business Grants Portal (BGP). You will need to have a CorpPass account to transact on the BGP.

If you have yet to register for a CorpPass Administrator account, please visit
www.corppass.gov.sg. After successful registration, users will need to be assigned the e-Service access to the BGP in order to submit their grant application.

Please refer to ***User Guide - Annex A*** for step-by-step instructions.

*As part of the Productivity Solutions Grant (PSG) guidelines, applicant must not have signed the quotation and must not have made payment and/or any form of depositions to confirm the contractual agreement prior to the PSG application.

Q3: I have queries on CorpPass and BGP. Who can I contact?

For BGP and CorpPass, you can contact the following:

☎   BGP helpdesk: +65 6708 7288
Monday to Friday: 8.30 am to 5.30 pm

✉   Email: bgp_helpdesk@enterprisesg.gov.sg

☎   CorpPass helpdesk: +65 6643 0577
Monday to Friday: 8.00 am to 8.00 pm
Saturday: 8.00 am to 2.00 pm
Sundays: Closed

✉   Email: support@corppass.gov.sg

Q4: Who can I contact if my centre has queries on the ECDG?

You may contact the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA):

☎ 6735 9213

✉ Ecda_SO@ecda.gov.sg

Q5: I have more than 1 centre under the same Unique Entity Number (UEN). Does that mean that only 1 centre can apply for ECDG or should I submit multiple applications?

If multiple centres under the same UEN would like to apply for funding for the **same solution**, there is no need to submit separate applications.

Operators can just indicate the centres' addresses (up to 10) under "deployment locations" during the application on BGP. If there are more than 10 centres under the same UEN keen to apply for funding for the same solution, please contact ECDA_SO@ecda.gov.sg for assistance.

Q6: If I have multiple centres under the same UEN but would like to roll out the solutions in some centres first. Will I be able to do so?

If multiple centres under 1 UEN wishes to roll out the **same solution** in some centres first, multiple applications should be made. However, **only a single claim is allowed for an application.**

Example: *UEN XXX has 4 centres (A, B, C, D) and wishes to implement the Preschool Management System for all centres. However, Operator wants centre A and B to implement the solution in Nov 2021 and centre C and D in Jan 2022.*

Application: *Operator should put in separate applications for (A & B) and (C & D).*

Q7: I have multiple centres with multiple UEN. Can I put in a single application for the same solution for all of them?

No, each application is tied to ONE UEN. Please submit separate applications for each unique UEN as they are considered separate entities.

Q8: What do operators need to submit as part of the application process?

Operators will need to submit the following documents:
  (a) Quotation (unsigned) from the pre-approved vendor with
      details on the solutions being considered

(b) Company's Financial Statements
(c) [Business Impact Measurements](#)

Q9: I would like to apply for 2 or more solutions for my centres. How should I do so?

Operators will need to submit an application for each solution.
For each solution application, operators will need to indicate the number of centres (i.e. units) that they would want that particular solution to be implemented.

Q10: My application has been rejected because I do not qualify for the solution of my choice. Can I put in an application for another solution under a different category?

Yes, operators may choose to wait for ECDA to onboard more vendors for other pre-approved solution categories, before putting in another application.

Q11: Is there a funding cap?

Yes, there are funding caps. Operators can refer to the Letter of Offer for the approved grant amount.

(iv)   Questions on the Claim Process

Q1: What are the steps to take to submit claims in BGP?

Refer to *User Guide – Annex C* for step-by-step instructions

Q2: What do operators need to submit for the claim?

Documents you will need to submit for your claim:
- (a) Invoice
- (b) Bank Statement showing payment
- (c) Receipt or cheque
- (d) Proof of solution implementation. This includes Usage Reports and Pictures.
- (e) Purchase Order or Signed acceptance of quotation/contract
- (f) Delivery order
- (g) Other documents (if applicable)

Q3: If I have stated for a solution to be implemented in more than 1 centre (under the same UEN), can I only make a single claim or will I be able to make multiple claims each time a centre fully implements the solution?

(Cross reference to Section II Q5.)

Only a single claim can be made per application.

Each claim must **not exceed the approved grant amount**, which is stated in the letter of offer which is given to operators in every application. Additionally, each claim must be done before the claims due date stated in the letter of offer generated after each application is approved.

Example: UEN XXX has 4 centres (A, B, C, D) and wishes to implement the Preschool Management System for all centres. However, Operator wants centre A and B to implement the solution in Nov 2021 and centre C and D in Jan 2022.

Application: Operator can put in separate applications for (A & B) and (C & D).

Claim: Subsequently, Operator can only put up a claim for application (A & B) only when the two centres have fully implemented the solution. Likewise, for the application for (C & D).

Q4: When is the submission deadline of claims?

Your claim must be submitted on BGP **by the claim due date indicated in the Letter of Offer.**

If you miss the claim due date, your claims will lapse. Note that reminder emails will be sent to the main contact person before the claim due date.

Q5: Can I make an amendment for my claims on BGP? If so, how can I do it?

Once claims are approved, changes **cannot** be made. You may contact the ECDA *Sector Outreach* team for assistance:

☎ 6735 9213

✉ Ecda_SO@ecda.gov.sg

As such, operators are strongly advised to check through the claims applications before submitting it to ECDA.

Q6: How will I be reimbursed after the submission of claims?

Once the claim is approved, the approved claim amount will be credited directly to the company's bank account through Vendors@Gov. Hence, companies will need to set up a Vendors@Gov account before or at the time of submission of the claim

For more information on Vendors@Gov, please refer to the Vendors@Gov website.

(vi)   Broad overview of process and timeline for ECDG Application and Claim

Visit GoBusiness to access the list of pre-approved solutions and vendors

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Operators to approach pre-approved vendors to obtain quotation. Once done, apply for grant on BGP

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Application on BGP

- Documents to submit:
- Official quote from the pre-approved vendor with details on the solutions being considered
- Company's Financial statements
- Business Impact measurements
- Select Pre-approved solutions

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Approval/Rejection from ECDA - Estimated 6-8 weeks if all documents are provided and accurate

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If approved, companies to accept Letter of Offer (LOF) - Within 2 weeks (Refer to Annex B)

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Commencement of solutions

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Submission of claims by due date stated in LOF

- Documents to submit:
- Invoices
- Payment proof/Cheques/Receipts
- Usage report
- Purchase order
- Signed LOF
- Proof of implementation of solution

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Reimbursement of amount via Vendors@Gov - Estimated 4 weeks if all documents are provided and accurate

Operators may choose to proceed with implementation of solution prior to approval

Note: Operators can still commence the implementation of solutions after they have submitted a funding application **before** receiving approval/rejection from ECDA.

However, in the event that the application is subsequently unsuccessful, operators will not be able to claim for any expenses incurred. Otherwise, operators may wish to wait for the Letter of Offer before proceeding.

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