

Trade Regulations, Accreditation & Compliance Enablement.

TRACE / EPM – Niryat Disha

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Manual

DISCLAIMER: Please read the official TRACE Guidelines carefully before relying on the information provided in this FAQ. This FAQ is intended for reference and general guidance only and does not supersede or replace the provisions of the TRACE Guidelines or applicable Trade Notices. The FAQ will be periodically updated based on clarifications and queries received from stakeholders. Queries received will be reviewed and addressed through subsequent updates, as applicable.

Section A – About the TRACE Scheme

Q1. What is TRACE?

A: Trade Regulations, Accreditation and Compliance Enablement (TRACE) is an intervention of the Niryat Disha Sub-Scheme under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM) – Niryat Disha launched vide Trade Notice No. 26/2025-26 dated 20.02.2026 and amended vide Trade Notice No. 09/2026-27 dated 01.07.2026. TRACE provides partial reimbursement of costs incurred by exporters towards testing, inspection, certification, audits, traceability systems and other regulatory compliance requirements necessary for exporting to overseas markets.

Q2. Who is eligible to apply under TRACE?

A: Support under TRACE is available to:

- MSME Exporters holding an active Importer-Exporter Code (IEC)
- MSMEs having a valid MSME Udyam Registration Number
- MSMEs not listed in the Denied Entity List under the Foreign Trade Policy
- In case of Merchant Exporters, the eligibility is only for products falling under the HSN codes listed in Annexure-IV of Trade Notice No. 26/2025-26

Q3. How much financial assistance is available, and is there a cap?

A: Reimbursement is based on the classification of the MSME:

- Micro & Small Enterprises: up to 95% of the actual eligible cost (excluding taxes, duties and cess), subject to the prescribed ceiling.
- Medium Enterprises: up to 80% of the actual eligible cost (excluding taxes, duties and cess), subject to the prescribed ceiling.

Maximum cumulative assistance is capped at Rs. 50 lakh per IEC per financial year.

Q4. How is the reimbursement amount released – in one go or in instalments?

A: Approved assistance is released in two equal instalments, not as a single payment:

- 50% is released at Stage I (RC-1), on submission of the certificate/test report, invoice, proof of payment, the details of the related product and the Country to which the same is exported.
- The remaining 50% is released at Stage II (RC-2), on submission of documentary evidence of exports made using that certification and proof of export realization.

Funds are credited directly to the bank account linked with the applicant's IEC.

Q5. What certifications/expenses are covered under TRACE?

A: The Annexure-I of Trade Notice No. 09/2026-27 provides the list of eligible certificates against which claims can be made. (462 certificate entries are listed as on 25.08.2026 across various sectors).

Q6. What is excluded from TRACE support?

A: Support is not admissible for deemed exports (as defined under Chapter 7 of the Foreign Trade Policy) or for exports made to Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

Section B – Application Process (Intent & Reimbursement)

Q7. What is the overall application process?

A: Benefits under TRACE are disbursed in two stages – 50% is released at Stage I (RC-1) and the remaining 50% at Stage II (RC-2):

- Submission of an Application for intent with the details of certificate and the indicative amount of expenditure for certification.
- Stage I – RC-1: 50% is released on submission of the certificate, invoice and proof of payment.
- Stage II – RC-2: filed *after* the expenditure is incurred and, subsequently, after export using that certification is completed; the remaining 50% is released on proof of export.

Applications are filed online through the DGFT Trade Connect Portal: <https://www.trade.gov.in/pages/export-promotion-mission> → Trade Regulations, Accreditation and Compliance Enablement

Check Annexure-I of Trade Notice No. 09/2026-27

Q8. What is required at the RC-1 and RC-2 stages?

A: Stage I (RC-1) requires:

- Successfully submitted Intent Application before filing RC-1
- Duly filled application form for RC-1 along with the following details/documents
 - Submission of the certificate / test report / inspection report

- Invoice and proof of payment

Stage II (RC-2) requires:

- Duly filled application form for RC-2 along with the following details/documents
 - Shipping Bill
 - E-BRC

Q9. Is there a time limit for filing the Reimbursement Claim after Intent approval?

A: Yes. TRACE prescribes two separate two-year timelines, each governing a different stage of the claim:

1. Stage-1: The reimbursement application (RC-1) must be filed within 2 years from the date of filing the Intent-to-Claim. If missed, the claim automatically lapses, and the applicant becomes ineligible to file claims for the following financial year.
2. Stage-2: Once the first instalment (RC-1) has been disbursed, evidence of exports made using that certification must be submitted within 2 years from the date of disbursement. If missed, the second instalment lapses, and the first instalment already released may become liable for recovery.

Section C – Migrating from MAI / Council Portals to TRACE

Q10. We already applied under the MAI Scheme through our EPC portal. Do we need to file a fresh application on Trade Connect/TRACE?

A: Yes. Direct submission of Market Access (Statutory Compliances) claims through individual Export Promotion Council portals (e.g., the Pharmexcil MAI Portal) has been discontinued. Such claims are now to be filed through the DGFT Trade Connect Portal under the EPM–Niryat Disha (TRACE) framework, following the Intent-to-Claim → RC-1 → RC-2 process described in Section B.

Q11. Will our earlier MAI applications be migrated automatically, or do we start fresh?

A: No. Applications filed under the erstwhile MAI scheme will **not** be migrated to TRACE, as the two are distinct interventions. For any clarification on applications submitted under the erstwhile MAI scheme, may be requested from the concerned EPC or the E&MDA Division, DoC.

Q12. How do we track a previously submitted MAI application, or an application filed on Trade Connect?

A: Application status can be checked under the applicant's login on the Trade Connect Portal for TRACE applications and for applications submitted under erstwhile MAI scheme the concerned EPC or the E&MDA division may be contacted.

Q13. Do the new TRACE rules and procedures also apply to applications originally submitted under the old MAI/council process?

A: Applications submitted under TRACE on or after 20th February 2026 will be governed by TRACE rules and procedures. Applications filed under the erstwhile MAI scheme remain a separate intervention and are not covered under TRACE (see Q11).

Section D – Eligibility of Specific Certificates, Labs & Products

Q14. Our certification body / testing lab is not listed in Annexure-V (list of eligible Certification Authorities). Is our certificate still eligible?

- **A:** Eligibility is limited to specific certification/test name appearing in Annexure-I of Trade Notice No. 09/2026-27 dated 01.07.2026 as on the date of application provided the export country and the exported product matches with that the details specified against that entry.

Q15. What if a certification/test required by an applicant is not currently listed in Annexure-I?

A: A representation for inclusion of the certification/test may be submitted through this Google Form [here](#). Such representations will be placed before the Sub-Committee for consideration and a decision for inclusion into Annexure-I

Q16. Are consignment-specific certificates (eg., Health Certificate, Fumigation Certificate, Phytosanitary Certificate, Weight & Quality Certificate, Certificate of Analysis, Aflatoxin Test Report, Heavy Metal Testing, etc.) eligible under TRACE, and can they be claimed separately for each consignment?

A: Eligibility for reimbursement under TRACE requires the certificate type to be listed in Annexure-I of Trade Notice No. 09/2026-27.

For consignment-specific, recurring certifications, repeat claims are eligible under TRACE – a separate claim may be filed for each consignment, subject to the overall ceiling of ₹50 lakh per IEC per financial year. However, the same certificate cannot be used to support more than one consignment; each claim must be backed by a distinct certificate issued for that specific consignment.

Q17. Can Merchant Exporters avail EPM/TRACE benefits, or is it restricted to Manufacturer Exporters?

A: Yes, Merchant Exporters can avail TRACE benefits – but only for products falling under the HSN codes listed in Annexure-IV of Trade Notice No. 26/2025-26. Before filing an Intent Claim, check that the HSN code of your export product appears in Annexure-IV; if it does not, the Merchant Exporter route is not available for that product under TRACE. (See Q2.)

Section E – Common Portal / Technical Issues

Q18. We get an error while trying to apply for "Intent of Claim" on the Trade Connect Portal – what should we do?

A: This is a recurring, commonly reported technical issue. Before escalating:

- Try in incognito/private browsing mode and clear cookies/cache
- Try a different browser and a stable network connection
- Re-confirm that IEC, MSME Udyam Registration, and all mandatory fields are correctly entered

If the error persists, raise a Service Request on the Trade Connect Portal describing the exact error (attach screenshots), and separately email trace.epm-dgft@gov.in, tradeconnect-dgft@gov.in, and epm-dgft@gov.in for platform-specific technical assistance. Mark the matter urgent if a fee payment or application deadline is at risk.

Q19. The IEC number field does not auto-populate and is marked mandatory, so the form cannot be submitted. What should we do?

A: Report it via a Service Request on the Trade Connect Portal (with a screenshot) and email to trace.epm-dgft@gov.in, tradeconnect-dgft@gov.in, and epm-dgft@gov.in, referencing

your draft number and IEC and the exact screen/step where the field fails to populate. Request an expected resolution timeline in writing, especially if a submission deadline is approaching.

Q20. Our Intent was auto-approved, but at the Reimbursement (RC) stage the Certifications and Reimbursement Claim columns are blank, and we cannot proceed to enter bank details. What should we do?

A: Raise a Service Request quoting both the **Intent Request No. and the Reimbursement/Draft Request No. (e.g., DRAFTREFUND... reference)** with IEC number; attach screenshots of the blank fields. In addition to the Service Request, also send the same query by email to trace.epm-dgft@gov.in for faster tracking.

Q21. The portal (including the login page) is not opening at all, and our deadline is approaching. What alternative do we have?

A: If the portal is inaccessible close to a deadline, raise a Service Request the moment access is restored, and separately email tradeconnect-dgft@gov.in and trace.epm-dgft@gov.in with timestamped screenshots of the outage, explicitly requesting deadline relaxation/condonation given the system unavailability.

Section F – Tracking Applications & Grievance Escalation

Q22. Who do we contact for TRACE-related queries?

A: Applicants are advised to first check this FAQ for a resolution. If the query remains unanswered, it should be escalated to the concerned EPC. If the issue is still not resolved, it may then be raised with trace.epm-dgft@gov.in, along with supporting proofs/screenshots.

For Trade Connect ePlatform technical issues specifically, applicants may additionally write to tradeconnect-dgft@gov.in, but trace.epm-dgft@gov.in should always be included/mentioned on the query.

Always quote the IEC, Service/Application Request number, draft number, and attach relevant screenshots for faster resolution.

Reference Notices Cited in This Manual

- Trade Notice No. 26/2025-26 dated 20 February 2026 – original TRACE guidelines

- Trade Notice No. 09/2026-27 dated 01 July 2026 – revised/amended TRACE Operational Guidelines and Annexure-I (462 entries)
- Portal: <https://www.trade.gov.in/pages/export-promotion-mission>