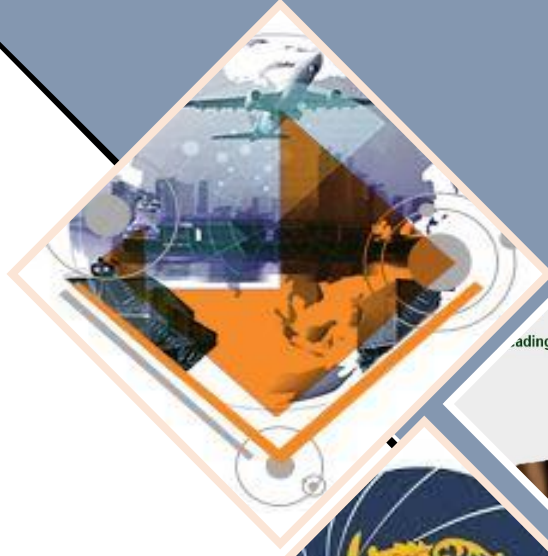


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கைத்தொழில் மற்றும் தொழில் முயற்சியாண்மை அபிவிருத்தி அமைச்சு

MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Sri Lanka Export Development Board

Performance Analysis Report

Export Development Board of Sri Lanka (EDB)

1. Introduction

The Export Development Board (EDB), the apex body for export promotion in Sri Lanka, operates under the mandate of the Export Development Act No. 40 of 1979. Its mission is to develop and promote the country's exports of goods and services by implementing strategic programmes, facilitating market access, and enhancing competitiveness.

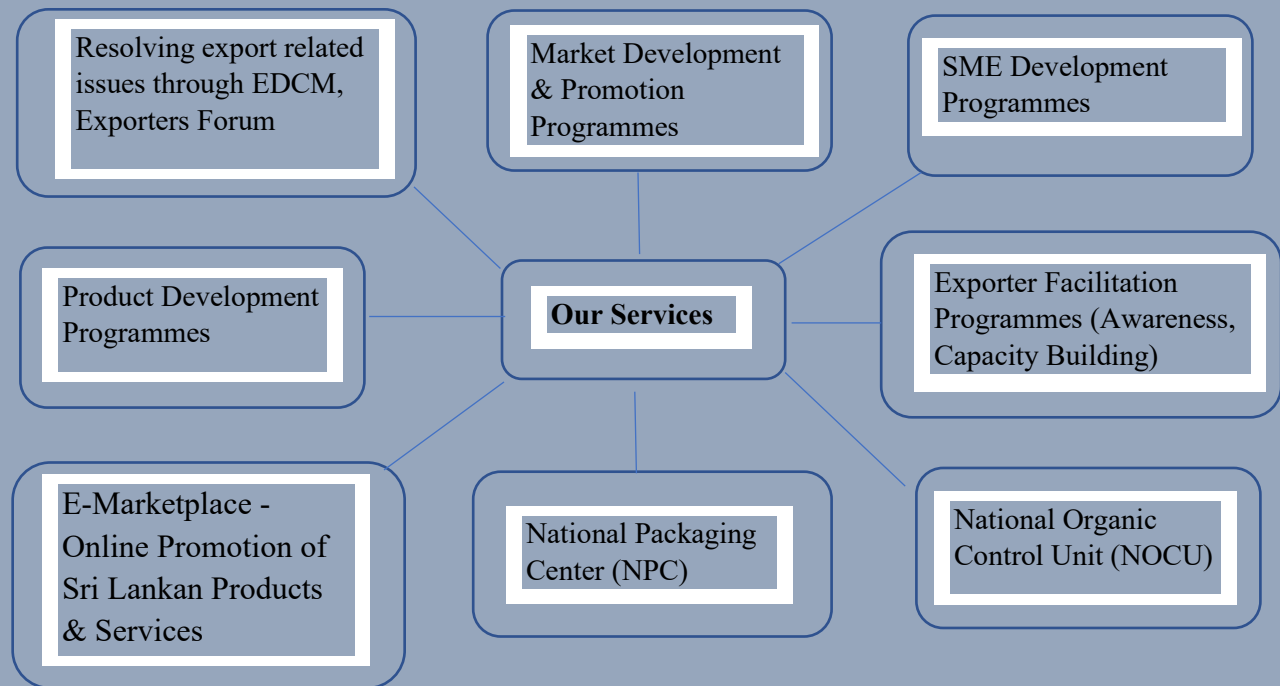
The review period (2020–2024) was shaped by several critical factors:

- Global Disruption – The COVID-19 pandemic caused severe trade and production disruptions.
- Economic Challenges – Rising freight costs, currency depreciation, and inflationary pressures impacted exporters.
- Recovery & Transformation – Post-pandemic years saw a shift toward digital trade promotion, sustainable production, and market diversification.
- The EDB's response was multi-pronged: immediate crisis mitigation, medium-term recovery measures, and long-term strategic initiatives.

Key results achieved during 2020–2024 include:

- Growth in total exports from US\$ 12,334.64 Mn in 2020 to US\$ 16,344.90 Mn in 2024, supported by both merchandise and services recovery.
- Notable increase in services exports, particularly in ICT/BPM and logistics, which increased from US\$ 1,889.03 Mn in 2022 to US\$ 3,572.96 Mn in 2024.
- Expanded presence in new markets, including Denmark, Latvia, Canada, South Korea, and the Middle East.
- Strengthened SME capacity via the New Exporters Development Programme, One Village One Product (OVOP), and the Export Production Village (EPV) initiatives.
- Introduction of the National Export Brand – “Your Vital Island” to improve the global image of Sri Lankan products.
- Development of sector-specific branding and certification, notably GI certification for Ceylon Cinnamon.
- Establishment of the National Packaging Centre (NPC) in 2023 to address packaging standards and innovation.

Our Services



2. Export Performance Analysis

2.1 Export Performance 2020–2024

Following table depicts the performance of merchandise and services exports during the period 2020-2024.

Table No. 2.1: Export Performance 2020–2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Merchandise Exports (US\$ Mn)	10,047.4	12,498.6	13,106.4	11,910.8	12,771.9
Services Exports* (US\$ Mn)	2,287.2	1,929.2	1,889.0	3,195.4	3,573.0
Total Exports (US\$ Mn)	12,334.6	14,427.8	14,995.7	15,106.1	16,344.9

Sources: CBSL, SL Customs

* EDB consider ICT/BPM, Construction, Financial services, and Transport & Logistics services as Services Exports.

Key Observations:

- 2020 witnessed a contraction in exports due to COVID-19, but recovery began in 2021 with merchandise exports rising to US\$ 12,498.6 Mn.
- Services exports dipped during travel restrictions but rebounded strongly by 2024.
- Growth in ICT/BPM, logistics, and value-added agricultural products contributed significantly to recovery.

2.2 Sectoral Performance

- Agriculture – Strong performance in tea, spices, coconut products, and fisheries, with new value-added products launched in niche markets.
- Industrial – Apparel remained the largest contributor; rubber-based products and EEC showed steady demand.
- Services – ICT/BPM sector expanded market share, benefitting from remote working trends.

Following table 3.2 shows the sector-wise export performance and the average growth during the period under review. Between 2020 and 2024, Sri Lanka's total goods and services exports increased at an average annual rate of 5.97%, reaching US\$ 16.24 Bn in 2024. Merchandise exports increased by 4.32% on average, driven by Apparel & Textiles (US\$ 5.05 Bn, increased by 1.66%), tea (increased by 2.81%), and coconut-based products (increased by 3.43%), while high-growth sectors included petroleum products (increased by 35.62%), boat building (increased by 64.20%), and gems & jewellery (increased by 24.22%).

Services exports expanded more rapidly, averaging 13.40% growth, led by transport & logistics (increased by 17.26%) and ICT/BPM (increased by 7.66%).

Table No. 2.2: Sector wise Export Performance, 2020-2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average Growth % (2020-2024)
Apparel & Textiles	4,405.83	5,415.91	5,933.52	4,864.53	5,050.99	1.66
Tea	1,240.94	1,324.38	1,258.81	1,309.90	1,435.87	2.81
Rubber-based	816.18	1,092.60	1,018.40	930.24	1,001.54	2.48
Coconut-based	664.58	836.09	817.09	708.70	856.79	3.43
Diamond, Gems & Jewelry	148.35	294.05	399.77	500.00	381.90	24.22
Electrical & Electronics	328.58	422.17	483.65	486.66	421.98	6.43

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average Growth % (2020-2024)
Spices and Essential Oils	335.50	456.78	370.30	397.78	461.85	5.01
Food & Beverages	351.36	443.99	426.39	427.97	478.05	5.79
Seafood	189.80	274.07	269.02	262.24	232.99	3.66
Ornamental Fish	13.03	20.97	21.74	26.38	24.46	14.89
Vegetables	25.74	27.44	27.80	29.19	29.79	3.54
Fruits & Nuts	35.66	39.46	38.79	43.27	41.72	4.06
Other Export Crops	67.60	68.58	92.41	91.30	65.02	2.08
Flowers & Foliage	12.62	16.19	14.66	15.01	13.67	0.84
Boat Building	2.39	37.81	17.40	78.50	41.10	64.20
Petroleum Products	271.80	234.36	283.22	539.40	1,063.50	35.62
Others	1,137.44	1,493.73	1,633.47	1,199.73	1,170.72	-1.62
Total Merchandise Exports	10,047.40	12,498.58	13,106.44	11,910.80	12,771.94	4.32
ICT/ BPM	1,010.24	1,216.50	1,112.38	1,228.00	1,474.80	7.66
Construction	7.00	9.65	9.05	354.90	203.10	103.40
Financial Services	95.60	94.80	91.74	64.00	50.80	-16.57
Transport & Logistics	1,173.90	608.25	675.85	1,550.38	1,742.83	17.26
Total Services Exports	2,287.24	1,929.20	1,889.03	3,197.28	3,471.53	13.40
Total Goods & Services Exports	12,334.64	14,427.78	14,995.43	15,108.08	16,243.47	5.97

Sources: CBSL, SL Customs, EDB

Market Diversification

- Expanded into Northern and Eastern Europe, East Asia, and Middle Eastern markets.
- Key new buyers established in Denmark, Latvia, Canada, and South Korea.
- Joint ventures and investment partnerships formed in multiple sectors.

3. Strategic Initiatives & Programme Outcomes

3.1 Market Development

- **Participation in major global trade fairs:** During the period under review, Sri Lanka actively participated in a wide range of international trade fairs across sectors such as food and beverages, gems and jewellery, apparel, pharmaceuticals, ICT, and boat manufacturing. Key events included Gulfood, BioFach, Anuga, SIAL, Seafood Expo Global, Organic & Natural Expo Dubai, and sector-specific exhibitions like Bangkok Gem & Jewellery Fair, Dusseldorf Boat Show, and Japan IT Week.
- These events collectively attracted the participation of more than 450 companies, including over 120 SMEs, providing a platform to showcase Sri Lankan products and services to global buyers. Across the period, the events generated confirmed export orders exceeding US\$ 75 Mn, reflecting the significant contribution of these trade promotion initiatives to expanding market access and export earnings.
These participations generated significant export opportunities, with millions of dollars in confirmed and executed orders, hundreds of inquiries, many SMEs were introduced to international markets, with several companies launching innovative products like PGI-certified cinnamon-based items, vegan patties, and cloud-based ICT solutions.

Following table 3.1 shows the participation of Sri Lankan Exporters at International Trade Exhibitions during the period under review.

Table No. 3.1: participation of Sri Lankan Exporters at International Trade Exhibitions during 2020 - 2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
No of trade exhibitions	4	7	14	18	13
No of participants including SMEs	50	64	91	213	189
Value of orders (US\$ Mn)	21.0	7.73	36.16	22.21	4.72

Source : EDB

- In addition, the EDB sustained and expanded global market linkages despite challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, utilizing more than 150 virtual and physical B2B meetings, trade delegations, webinars, and sectoral promotions across diverse industries during the period
- “Sourced Sri Lanka” Roadshow in London (2024) showcased “Your Vital Island” brand and promoted SMEs and women entrepreneurs.

3.2 Product Development

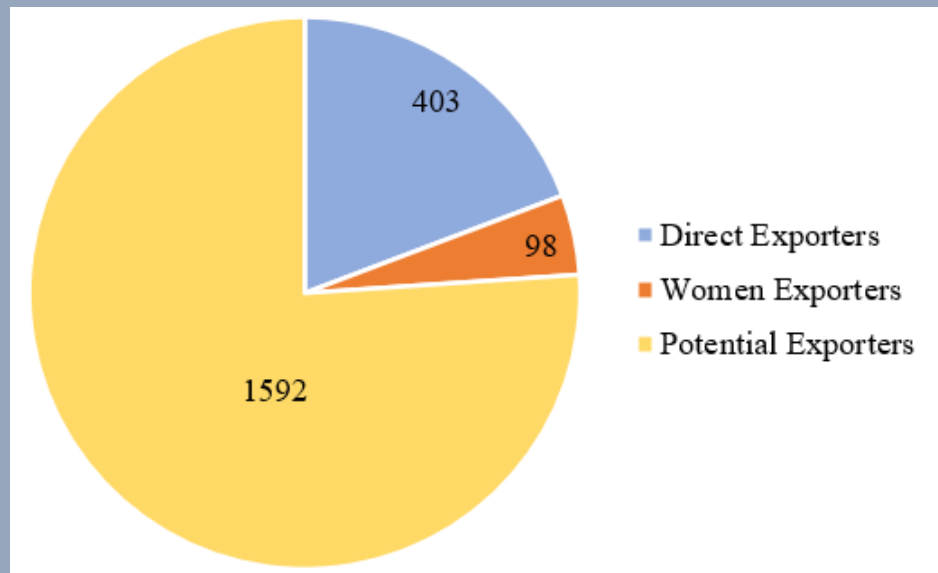
- GI Certification for Ceylon Cinnamon – Expanded promotional campaigns in the EU.
- Development of branding for Ayurveda, gems & jewellery, processed foods, and pharmaceuticals.
- Establishment of National Packaging Centre to assist SMEs with packaging innovations.

3.3 SME Development

- New Exporters Development Programme (NEDP)

The programme mainly focused on identifying, nurturing, and supporting potential entrepreneurs to become successful exporters. Following chart depicts the assisted companies under the NEDP programme during the period of 2020 - 2024.

Chart No: 3.3 Supported companies under the NEDP 2020-2024



Source : EDB

- Export Production Villages (EPV) – Coffee, mango, vanilla, and paper-based product clusters established.
- One Village One Product (OVOP) - The programme aims to develop specialized production villages, enhance productivity, and boost the competitiveness of Sri Lankan products in global markets. Launched in 2017 to address supply constraints particularly in agriculture, the programme focuses on strengthening regional SME farmer and producer networks, which are vital to the export supply chain.

It tackles key challenges such as inadequate raw materials, high production costs, lack of buyer linkages, and limited access to finance. By improving supplier capacity, providing market linkages, and facilitating buy-back arrangements with exporters, OVOP seeks to drive regional development, create jobs, improve rural living standards, and increase national export income.

Following table shows the established OVOP along with the no of farmers and project outcomes during the period under review.

Table No. 3.3: established OVOP along with the no of farmers and project outcomes during 2020 - 2024

Year	OVOP	No of Farmers	Outcome	
			Rs. Mn	Kg
2018-2023	Paper Basket	350	100	
2019-2023	Thawashi Brushes	10	10	
2023	Curry Leaves	32	0.261	1,044kg (Rs.250per kg)
2023	Organic Gotukola	108		
2023-2024	Soursop leaves	26		1,000kg per every 2 months
2024	Scotch Bonut (Chilli pepper)	7		90 Kg
2024	Soursop	83		
2019-2020	Smart Agro Vanilla Project	1036	29.97	8425.725
2020-2021	Coffee Project	880	18.45	67813
2023-2024	Dehydrated Nilkatatorolu flowers	120	8.566	1730
2019-2024	Ginger	120	Supplying to linked exporter and local market.	
2019-2024	Ornamental Fish	45		
2019-2024	Cinnamon	73		

Source : EDB

3.4 Women Entrepreneur Development

- Launched ITC She Trades Hub in 2024.
- Conducted branding workshops, pitching competitions, and exposure visits for women-led SMEs.

Exporter Facilitation & Capacity Building

- Eleven (11) Certificate courses on Import-Export procedures and five (05) courses on Operational Aspects of International Trade between 2020–2024.
- Market intelligence: 59 market alerts in 2020; 48 country studies in 2020-2024.
- Publications: Business Lanka Magazine, Expo News, Export Performance Indicators.
- **Help Desk:** Amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Help Desk operated by the EDB was formalized in 2020 and expanded to include 14 Sectoral Help Desks, providing 24/7 support services. This enhancement enabled more effective and timely assistance to exporters during this critical period.

Policy & Institutional Support

- Exporters' Forums – Three Forums addressed operational and policy barriers.
- Advisory Committees – 24 committees established in 2021 for sector-specific strategies for a five-year term.
- Trade Facilitation Task Force – Launched in 2024 to coordinate with 35 agencies.

Special Initiatives

- Facilitation of Development of Sustainable Organic Agriculture System in Sri Lanka - The National Organic Control Unit (NOCU) under the EDB, actively facilitated the development of a sustainable organic agriculture system in Sri Lanka. During this period, 43 farmers, processors, and input producers were supported to obtain the National Organic Standard, with virtual training provided on Organic Management Plans. Additionally, 500 farmers were selected to adopt International Organic Standards.

To promote awareness, a press conference introduced the National Organic Certification Mark, supported by 15 newsletters, and an automated stakeholder registration system was launched with assistance from GIZ and ITC, issuing eight certification certificates.

The initiative included the launch of the official website www.nocu.lk, funded by the EU and BMZ and implemented by GIZ Sri Lanka, to further support organic agriculture SMEs. NOCU registered 50 organic stakeholders nationwide and conducted awareness programs in Colombo, Kegalle, and Matara, alongside webinars on updated EU organic regulations in partnership with COLEAD Brussels.

These efforts enhanced knowledge on organic farming techniques, certification processes, standards, and market opportunities, contributing to a credible and sustainable organic agriculture value chain in Sri Lanka.

- Digital Promotion – Expansion of www.srilankabusiness.com as a global B2B/B2C gateway.
- Presidential Export Awards

Between 2020 and 2024, the EDB successfully organized the prestigious Presidential Export Awards, the highest honor recognizing outstanding exporters contributing to Sri Lanka's economic development. The 24th Awards ceremony in November 2021 combined two years (2019/20 and 2020/21) due to COVID-19 disruptions, honoring 63 companies with 12 Overall and 46 Sectoral Awards. New award categories were introduced to align with national policy goals, including product and market diversification, value addition, emerging markets, and innovation. The 25th Awards, held in November 2023, celebrated exporters from 2021/22 and 2022/23 with 13 Overall and 51 Sectoral Awards annually, plus merit awards. Judging was conducted by an eminent panel led by a retired Supreme Court judge. The Awards emphasized contributions in export diversification, indigenous branding, sustainability, and regional value chain development, supporting the government's strategic export expansion initiatives.

Institutional Challenges

- Lack of human capital of the institute often has to bear a large workload existing employee. This leads to overburdened officers managing multiple projects at once, slower execution of programmes, reduced efficiency, and a higher risk of burnout, ultimately affecting the quality and timeliness of services provided to exporters.
- Challenges in terms of providing quality and prompt services to clients. Eg: difficulties to bear the cost of services, time consuming, lack of updated and modern technology / technical knowledge, difficulties to get the support of other institutions due to conventional /outdated laws and regulations, non-availability of updated industrial Data and information.