

DATA PROTECTION TRUSTMARK (DPTM) - FAQs

DPTM CERTIFICATION SCHEME

1) What requirements do organisations have to fulfil to apply for the DPTM certification?

IMDA welcomes organisations which strongly believe in active accountability, beyond mere compliance, in personal data protection to apply for the DPTM. To apply for DPTM, organisations should have put in place policies and practices to comply with the PDPA, and who are (a) formed or recognised under the laws of Singapore; or (b) resident or having an office or a place of business in Singapore.

Organisations can refer to PDPC's resources online, including the use of the PDPA Assessment Tool for Organisation (PATO) [<https://www.pdpc.gov.sg/Resources/PDPA-Assessment-Tool-for-Organisations>] to check if they are ready for DPTM certification.

Organisations can refer to the DPTM certification checklist to gauge if they are ready for DPTM Certification - <http://www.go.gov.sg/imda-dptm-checklist>

2) Could you please share more about the funding support?

Interested organisations may apply for the **Enterprise Development Grant (EDG)** with Enterprise Singapore if you meet the criteria (1) Have local 30% shareholding (2) Registered & operating in Singapore (3) be in a financially viable position to start and complete the certification.

The funding support will help defray costs for DPTM certification and consulting services.

To help companies during this COVID-19 situation, the maximum support level has been raised from 70% to 80% till 30 September 2021.

Before applying for the EDG, organisations should

1. **Apply for the DPTM certification** at www.imda.gov.sg/dptm as IMDA's approval email is required for submission as part of EDG application
2. **Secure quotations** from
 - a. your preferred **Assessment Bodies** (list of appointed Assessment Bodies can be found at www.imda.gov.sg/dptm)
 - b. your preferred **consultant**. You may refer to IMDA's [list of Data Protection Service Providers](#), but do ensure your selected provider is an approved CQI consultant to be eligible for EDG funding. *[List of certified management consultants can be found at [Consultant Quality Initiative \(CQI\)](#)]*

3) How long does certification take?

The process depends on the complexity and readiness of an organisation – which is not necessarily reliant on size. Organisations that have sound and transparent data policies implemented may take a shorter time to complete certification. Generally, from application to certification, it would minimally take an organisation an estimated 6 months. The estimated time of assessment of organisations could range between 2 to 4 months.

*Please refer to **Annex A** for the Certification Process.*

4) Does the DPTM certify an organisation’s product/services?

No, DPTM does not certify an organisation’s product/services. The DPTM certifies an organisation’s data protection policies and practices, and may include those relating to its key products/services.

5) What happens if an organisation undergoes the assessment by the Assessment Body but fails to make the cut?

The certification assessment process provides for remediation where necessary. Organisations will be given an opportunity to take corrective actions to meet the certification requirements within a timeframe. Should an organisation not be able to carry out the necessary remediation, it will not be certified and will need to re-apply for the certification when ready.

6) Will the PDPC consider DPTM Certification as a mitigating factor in the event of a data breach?

Obtaining a DPTM certification means an organisation has demonstrated good data protection policies and practices including drawer plans to deal with data incidents, and it may serve as a mitigating factor in the event of a data breach.

Under the PDPC’s Active Enforcement Framework, the PDPC and/or an organisation that is able to demonstrate accountable data protection practices, for example having a DPTM certification, may initiate an undertaking* process. The organisation must be ready to implement remediation of the data breaches and take steps to prevent recurrence. The undertaking process is to provide such organisations more efficient resolution and improve their processes.

More information on the undertaking process can be found in the Guide on Active Enforcement.

**The undertaking is a written promise by the organisation that it is ready to execute a fully developed and prepared contingency plan to resolve a data breach when it has occurred; or*

where the PDPC assesses that an undertaking would achieve a similar or better enforcement outcome as opposed to a full investigation.

7) Why should small companies like SMEs apply for the DPTM?

In this digital, data-driven economy, it is important for organisations, including the SMEs, to **demonstrate trust in the way they manage personal data**. According to 2020 PDPC Consumer Survey, 4 in 5 Consumers believe companies that handle PD should apply for DPTM while 3 in 4 Consumers prefer to purchase from & more willing to share PD with DPTM-certified companies. Trust takes effort to build up, but easily destroyed. One data breach could potentially close a small business down, and it is imperative that they pay attention to this.

Beyond this, having the DPTM would help **build up and establish the branding of small organisations, giving them the edge in the market** that is becoming more aware of data protection. We have stories of how our certified-SMEs gained an advantage over their larger competitors to clinch business deals.

Lastly, the DPTM will help small organisations **validate their data protection policies and practices and give them a peace of mind** that they adhere to a high standard of personal data protection.

8) I am a B2B business and do not collect personal data, should I apply for the DPTM?

Yes, as the DPTM is an enterprise-wide assessment, it also looks at how you manage your employees' data, which is equally important.

Also, in our perception survey conducted in 2020, 7 in 10 companies prefer to do business with DPTM-certified companies. Having the DPTM would give confidence to other businesses in the supply chain that data entrusted to you would be treated responsibly, and would allow you to prepare for development of future business opportunities that may involve the collection of personal data.

9) Is the DPTM certification recognised overseas?

The DPTM is a local certification scheme. Depending on regional developments, IMDA may explore mutual recognition of similar certifications with other countries.

Annex A – Certification Process

Step 1 – Application

Apply online at www.imda.gov.sg/dptm and make payment for the Application Fee.

Step 2 – Selection of Assessment Body

IMDA will inform you when your application has been accepted/rejectedd. If accepted, you will receive the Self-Assessment Form from IMDA.

You may refer to the IMDA website for the contact details of the DPTM panel of Assessment Bodies. Select one of the Assessment Bodies to conduct an assessment of your organisation's data protection policies and practices.

Step 3 – Assessment

The assessment stages are as follows:

- Documentation review
- On-site assessment
- Remediation (if required)
- Completion of assessment
- Assessment report to be submitted to IMDA by the Assessment Body

Step 4 - Certification

Eligible organisations will be awarded the DPTM certification by IMDA. The certification is valid for 3 years. Organisations should apply for the re-certification at least 6 months from the date of expiry of the certification.