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SBP launches SMEConnect to simplify financing

BUSINESS RECORDER

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has launched "SMEConnect," a centralised digital portal to facilitate Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in accessing financing from banks and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), as part of its efforts to develop an SME-friendly financial ecosystem.

The portal aims to strengthen linkages between SMEs and financial institutions by providing a single digital platform for businesses seeking financing. SMEConnect will also simplify access to financing for SMEs across Pakistan and streamline the application process, improve accessibility, efficiency and transparency in SME financing.

The SMEConnect will not only simplify the loan application process but will also enable the SME Applicants to track the status of their applications on real time basis, and in case of rejection, will be able to see the reasons of rejection.

Similarly, its live Dashboard will enable the SBP to have complete visibility of the SME financing applications and status thereof. The Dashboard will provide real time data on the applications received, processed, approved, disbursed and rejected both at the individual bank/DFI level and on an industry-wide basis.

All SME finance applications are required to submit on the SMEConnect w.e.f. 1st November 2026 and will be forwarded to the applicant's bank/DFI after necessary verifications.

The applicants visiting their respective bank's/DFI's branch for submitting the financing application will be guided and facilitated by the branch staff for digitally submitting the application on the portal.

Similarly, the applicants visiting their bank's portal to apply for financing shall be directed to SMEConnect. The R-6 of Prudential Regulations for Small & Medium Enterprise Financing requiring banks/DFIs to allow applicants to digitally apply for financing will stand withdrawn w.e.f. 1st November 2026.

SBP has advised the Banks and DFIs to prominently display the SMEConnect link on their respective website and App for facilitating the SME applicants for applying for financing. Furthermore, banks/DFIs shall also use all available marketing channels for creating awareness about the SMEConnect.

Banks/DFIs shall take all necessary measures to ensure implementation of the above instructions with effect from 1st November 2026.

SBP said that the launch of SMEConnect underscores SBP's commitment to promoting financial inclusion, supporting entrepreneurship, and strengthening the SME financing ecosystem for achieving inclusive economic growth.

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