

Empowering MSMEs with more time to meet mandatory quality benchmarks.

In a significant move to support the growth and smooth transition of the domestic footwear industry, the Government of India has extended the compliance timeline for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) operating in the non-leather footwear sector under the mandatory Quality Control Order (QCO). The revised deadline, now extended up to 31 July 2027, provides smaller manufacturers with additional time to align their production processes and obtain certification from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

The decision is aimed at facilitating ease of compliance while strengthening the overall quality ecosystem within the sector. Recognizing the operational challenges faced by smaller enterprises, the extension is expected to enable them to upgrade systems, enhance manufacturing standards, and prepare for seamless adherence to quality norms.

Additionally, the Government has introduced a special provision permitting footwear manufacturers to import up to 4,500 pairs of footwear annually for purposes such as research, design and product development, testing, and other non-commercial activities, without the requirement of QCO compliance.

As per the notification issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), such imported footwear must not be sold commercially and should be clearly marked and embossed with the words “NOT FOR SALE” before being disposed of as scrap after use.

It is pertinent to note that the leather footwear sector continues to remain under a separate regulatory framework governed by the Footwear Made from Leather and Other Materials (Quality Control) Order, 2024, which mandates BIS certification across 12 categories of footwear.

This progressive approach reflects the Government’s commitment to promoting quality, encouraging innovation, and supporting the competitiveness of India’s footwear manufacturing ecosystem.

01 More Year for Small Rubber Footwear Units to Align with Quality Standards

The Indian Footwear Industry: Navigating the BIS Quality Shift & Global Trade Trends



India's Footwear Component Industry: The Quiet Revolution Behind Global Competitiveness

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When discussing India's emergence as a major global footwear manufacturing nation, attention is often focused on footwear production and exports. Yet behind this success lies another story, one that has received far less recognition but, has been equally important. It is the story of India's footwear component industry and its transformation from a sector dependent on imported inputs into an increasingly sophisticated manufacturing ecosystem.

Four decades ago, the industry operated under very different circumstances. Domestic manufacturers had limited access to advanced materials, mould technologies and specialized chemicals. Components such as EVA sheets, polyurethane systems, synthetic uppers, moulds, toe puffs, counters and specialty adhesives were largely imported. This dependence increased production costs, lengthened lead times and constrained the ability of footwear manufacturers to respond quickly to changing market demands.

As India's footwear sector expanded and became increasingly integrated with international markets, the need for a reliable domestic component base became evident. Export-oriented manufacturers required higher quality standards, consistent supply, faster product development cycles and greater innovation. These demands encouraged component manufacturers to invest in technology, modern production systems, testing facilities and workforce development.

The results have been significant. Today, India possesses manufacturing capabilities across a broad spectrum of footwear components. PVC soles, EVA sheets, polyurethane soles, synthetic leather, footwear adhesives, insoles, footbeds, counters, toe puffs and numerous other inputs are produced domestically by a growing number of specialized manufacturers. Indian companies have also developed expertise in mould manufacturing, reducing dependence on overseas suppliers and improving responsiveness to market requirements.

The development of a stronger component sector has enhanced the competitiveness of the entire footwear value chain. Manufacturers benefit from shorter sourcing cycles, lower logistics costs and closer collaboration with suppliers during product development. This integration has become increasingly important as global brands seek greater speed, flexibility and resilience within their supply chains.

An equally important trend has been the rise of specialization. Many Indian companies now focus on advanced sole technologies, technical textiles, synthetic materials, footwear chemicals and performance-oriented solutions. Such specialization has improved product quality while helping the industry move beyond basic manufacturing into higher-value activities.



The industry's progress has also coincided with the growth of major footwear clusters across the country. These ecosystems have encouraged collaboration between manufacturers, suppliers, machinery providers, designers and technical institutions, creating an environment that supports innovation and continuous improvement.

Despite this progress, opportunities remain. Certain high-value segments continue to rely on imports, including advanced TPU compounds, specialized athletic footwear materials, high-performance technical textiles, select specialty chemicals and sophisticated machinery. Addressing these gaps will be critical if India is to strengthen its position within global footwear supply chains and capture a greater share of value-added manufacturing.

Sustainability is emerging as another defining priority. International brands and consumers increasingly expect environmentally responsible materials and manufacturing practices. Indian component manufacturers are responding through investments in cleaner technologies, recycled materials, resource efficiency and more sustainable production systems.