



REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

OSTİM TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

**REDUCING EXPORT DOCUMENTATION
BARRIERS: A PROTOTYPE-BASED
SOLUTION WITH CERTIFIGO**

GRADUATION PROJECT

KÜBRA BAYRAM

190101012

**FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND ADMINISTRATIVE
SCIENCES**

ADVISOR

ASST. PROF. DR. HASİBE AYSAN

MAY, 2025

ANKARA

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PREFACE

This graduation project was prepared within the scope of my studies at Ostim Technical University, Department of International Trade and Finance. The subject of this project was chosen because of the problems I encountered during my internships and my work in the field of export. I noticed that many companies had difficulty finding the documents and certificates they needed for different countries. This gave me the idea of creating a simple tool that could help exporters find this information more easily.

I would like to thank my advisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hasibe Aysan for the support, guidance and useful advice she gave me during this project. Her comments helped me improve my work step by step.

I would also like to thank Mr. Selman Selim Taşdemir, the founder of Alyattes, where I did my last internship. He taught me how important professionalism and business ethics are in business life, and I learned a lot from him.

I would like to thank all my professors and the institutions where I completed my internships, especially the Ministry of Trade and the DAC Consulting Group. These experiences helped me better understand international trade and the problems exporters face.

I owe a special thanks to my husband Oğuzhan Bayram, who has supported me at every stage of this journey for the last six years. He also technically helped me to create the prototype of this project. His encouragement made this process easier for me. Also, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my daughter, my family, and my cousin, Dr. Figen Gündüz, a chemical engineer, whose guidance and encouragement have meant a great deal to me during my years of study. This journey would not have been possible without their unwavering support.

I hope this project will be useful to others and help small businesses on their export journey.

Kübra Bayram

Ankara, May 2025

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the challenges exporters face when accessing certification requirements for different product groups and international markets. While certification is a key component of trade compliance, the lack of centralized, accessible, and up-to-date information often creates barriers, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The research involved structured interviews with 120 firms across 10 countries, a review of institutional responses from the Turkish Ministry of Trade's "Ask the Trade Attaché" platform, and manual analysis of official websites related to six HS codes. A structured comparative analysis method was used to systematically identify documentation patterns and inconsistencies.

Findings revealed that SMEs frequently struggle to locate the correct certificates, interpret foreign regulatory sources, and manage documentation timelines. Institutional tools were found to be insufficiently detailed, and manual research proved time-consuming and fragmented. To address these issues, a prototype tool named CertifiGO was developed using Google Sheets and Glide. The tool enables users to select a country and HS code and instantly view the required and optional certificates with explanatory notes.

Although the system was built manually, the findings underline the strong potential of integrating artificial intelligence in future versions to automate data extraction, translation, and classification. CertifiGO demonstrates how digital tools can simplify certification access, reduce export delays, and support SMEs in navigating international trade requirements more efficiently.

Keywords: Certification Requirements, Export Barriers, SMEs, International Standards Certification, Digital Trade Tools, Artificial Intelligence

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	<i>i</i>
ABSTRACT.....	<i>ii</i>
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	<i>iii</i>
TABLE OF FIGURE AND TABLE.....	<i>iv</i>
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. LITERATURE	5
2.1. Certification Systems as Non-Tariff Barriers	5
2.2. Challenges Faced by SMEs in Certification Processes.....	5
2.3. Timing and Operational Constraints in Certification	6
2.4. The Need for Centralized and Accessible Platforms	7
3. METHODOLOGY.....	10
3.1. Problem Definition and Data Collection Approach	10
3.2. Research Design	11
3.3. Data Sources	11
3.4. Structured Comparative Analysis	14
3.5. Limitations of the Study	14
3.6. Structure of the Prototype	15
3.7. Summary of Methodology	19
4. FINDINGS	21
4.1. Findings from Exporter Interviews.....	21
4.2. Challenges with Institutional Platforms	22
4.3. Why Manual Research Is Not Enough	22
4.4. Insights from the CertifiGO Prototype	23
4.5. Summary of Findings	24
5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	25
6. REFERENCES	28
7. APPENDIX.....	31
7.1. APPENDIX A: Inquiry and Response from the “Ask the Trade Attaché” Platform.....	31
7.2. APPENDIX B: Screenshots from the CertifiGO Prototype.....	33