

12 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE BUYING A CYPRUS SHELF COMPANY

A practical buyer's checklist | 2026 Edition

Buying an existing Cyprus company can save time, particularly where an already incorporated company or an earlier incorporation date is required. But before acquiring any existing company, it is important to understand exactly what you are buying.

A genuine shelf company should have been incorporated and maintained for future acquisition without carrying on business in the meantime. If you are buying an existing company from another source, its history should be checked carefully.

Use this checklist as a starting point before proceeding with an acquisition.

YOUR 12 ESSENTIAL CHECKS

❑ 1. Is the company active and properly maintained? Confirm its status with the Cyprus Registrar of Companies, its incorporation date and whether its statutory filings are up to date.	❑ 7. Has it held a bank or payment account? Ask whether it has used a bank, EMI or other payment account and whether any accounts remain open.
❑ 2. Has the company ever traded? Ask whether it has issued invoices, provided services, sold goods, held assets or conducted any other business activity.	❑ 8. Has it ever employed anyone? Check for previous employees and any outstanding payroll, social insurance or employment obligations.
❑ 3. Has it entered into any contracts? Check whether it has signed agreements, guarantees, indemnities or other continuing commitments.	❑ 9. Are there any charges over the company or its assets? Search for registered charges, mortgages or other forms of security.
❑ 4. Does it have any liabilities? Confirm whether it owes money to banks, suppliers, professional advisers or any other creditors.	❑ 10. Has it been involved in a dispute or legal claim? Ask about current, previous or threatened litigation and circumstances that could lead to a future claim.
❑ 5. Are its tax affairs in order? Check its tax registration, filing history and whether any taxes, assessments or enquiries remain outstanding.	❑ 11. Who has owned and controlled the company? Review its shareholder, beneficial owner, director and secretary history.
❑ 6. Has it ever been registered for VAT? Confirm its present and previous VAT status and whether all required VAT returns have been submitted.	❑ 12. Are its corporate records complete? Confirm that its statutory registers, certificates, resolutions and share records are accurate and up to date.

WHY THESE QUESTIONS MATTER

Due diligence should provide confidence, not create complexity. It helps distinguish a properly maintained shelf company from an existing company with a commercial history that requires further investigation. When a company has been incorporated and maintained specifically for future acquisition, its history should be straightforward to explain and document.

1.	Corporate status	An active company with up-to-date filings is easier to acquire and use. Outstanding statutory matters may need to be resolved before or immediately after the transfer.
2.	Trading history	A genuine shelf company should have been maintained for future acquisition without carrying on business. Previous trading activity may have created obligations that are not immediately visible from its corporate certificates.
3.	Contracts	When you acquire a company by purchasing its shares, its existing contractual rights and obligations generally remain with it. Any continuing agreements or guarantees should therefore be identified.
4.	Liabilities	Changing the company's shareholder does not normally eliminate its existing debts. Loans, unpaid expenses and guarantees should be investigated before the acquisition.
5.	Tax	Historic tax obligations remain with the company after its ownership changes. Its registration, return-filing history and any outstanding correspondence with the tax authorities should be reviewed.
6.	VAT	Present or previous VAT registration can provide important information about the company's activities. It should also be confirmed that any required VAT returns and payments have been completed.
7.	Banking	Previous banking or payment-account activity may indicate how the company has been used. Open accounts, borrowing facilities and guarantees should be identified before the transfer.
8.	Employees	Outstanding salaries, payroll taxes, social insurance contributions and potential employment claims remain obligations of the company after its shares are transferred.
9.	Charges and security	A registered charge may give a lender or another creditor rights over the company's assets. Historic charges should also be checked to ensure that any satisfied security has been properly recorded.
10.	Litigation and claims	Not every dispute or potential claim will necessarily appear in a standard company search. Information should therefore be requested directly from the seller or provider.
11.	Ownership history	Knowing who has previously owned, managed and controlled the company helps establish how it may have been used and whether any changes require further explanation.
12.	Corporate records	Complete and accurate records are essential for proving the company's ownership, share capital and corporate history. Missing documents can cause difficulties long after the acquisition.

DOCUMENTS YOUR PROVIDER SHOULD MAKE AVAILABLE

Depending on the company's age and history, the documents and information you request should include:

☐	Certificate of Incorporation	☐	Relevant corporate resolutions
☐	Memorandum and Articles of Association	☐	Cyprus Registrar of Companies search
☐	Certificate or evidence of the registered office	☐	Information regarding registered charges
☐	Director and secretary information	☐	Financial statements, where applicable
☐	Shareholder information	☐	Tax information
☐	Statutory registers	☐	VAT information, where applicable
☐	Share certificates	☐	Details of material contracts, where applicable
☐	Previous share transfer documentation, where applicable	☐	Details of bank and payment accounts, where applicable

ONE IMPORTANT QUESTION: IS IT REALLY A SHELF COMPANY?

The term “shelf company” is sometimes used quite loosely. An older company being offered for sale is not necessarily a genuine shelf company.

Before proceeding, ask a simple question: **What has this company actually done since the day it was incorporated?**

If the answer is that it has previously traded, held assets, entered into contracts, employed people or operated bank accounts, you are not simply acquiring an unused corporate vehicle. Its previous activities need to be understood and, where appropriate, investigated. A genuine shelf company should have been incorporated and maintained specifically for future acquisition without carrying on business in the meantime.

BUYING A CYPRUS SHELF COMPANY THROUGH MERIDIAN TRUST

Meridian Trust maintains Cyprus shelf companies specifically for future acquisition.

Before you proceed, we can provide details of the companies currently available, including their incorporation dates, corporate history, status and price.

Once you select a company, we handle the transfer and any corporate changes required to put the company into the structure you need.

Our support also continues after the acquisition. Our legal, accounting and corporate teams can assist with the company's ongoing requirements, including tax and VAT registration, accounting, payroll, banking, legal agreements and corporate administration.

READY TO ACQUIRE A CYPRUS SHELF COMPANY?

Contact Meridian Trust Limited today to request current availability and discuss the most appropriate option for your requirements. Visit our **Cyprus Shelf Company** page to see current availability or contact Meridian Trust to discuss your requirements.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: This checklist provides general information and is not a substitute for legal, tax or other professional advice. The appropriate due diligence will depend on the history and circumstances of the particular company. Last reviewed 13 September 2026.