

IMPORTATION OF GOODS INTO BOTSWANA

OVERVIEW

Goods imported into Botswana for commercial purposes should be electronically declared to customs and placed under an appropriate customs procedure for which the goods were imported. Goods placed under a customs procedure should be covered by a customs declaration appropriate for that particular procedure.

As a general rule, goods exported from one country to another are liable to customs duties and local taxes in the importing countries. There may however be situations where such imports may be exempted in accordance with any Trade Agreement, which may exist between the exporting country and the importing country. To that end, Botswana has entered into some Trade Agreements with other countries and economic communities through which certain goods of Botswana origin are granted duty free and or quota free access in the markets of those countries or economic communities. Conversely, imports into Botswana under such Trade Agreements enjoy customs duty concessions and/or quota free access status.

Customs may carry out all the customs control they deem necessary on goods including means of transport, and persons that enter or leave Botswana, regardless of whether the goods or means of transport are liable to duties and taxes. This control consists of audit based controls, verification of declaration data, examination and inspection of goods and means of transport, samples testing and carrying out official enquiries and other similar acts.

The following are required when declaring imported commercial goods;

1. Cargo manifest
2. Customs bill of entry
3. Suppliers invoice
4. Transport documents
5. Certificate of origin where preference is claimed
6. Permits and licenses for goods requiring such.

CLEARANCE OF GOODS FROM CUSTOMS CONTROL

The clearance of goods involves the lodgment of a goods declaration with supporting documents (e.g. import/export permit, certificates of origin, etc.) and the payment of applicable duties and taxes.

Customs Duty is levied on imported goods in terms of the Customs and Excise Duty Act [Chapter 50:01] whilst Excise Duty is levied on certain locally manufactured and imported goods as specified under part 2 of schedule No. 1 of the Customs and Excise Tariff, which is published in the form of a statutory instrument. The applicable rates of duty depend on the category of goods

Importation by Government Ministries and Departments is exempted from payment of customs and excise duties subject to prior approval of an exemption certificate, [CE 112](#), by BURS. Since Government is only entitled to exemption from payment of customs and excise duties, VAT should be paid separately at time of importation.

A completed [CE 112](#) exemption certificate submitted for processing by BURS should be accompanied by:

- i. Government Purchase order
- ii. Letter of credit or Bank telegraphic transfer note
- iii. Tender/contract document and
- iv. Project Memorandum as a proof of purchase by Government

Applicants should note that:

- i. A [CE 112](#) exemption certificate should be obtained for each qualifying importation consignment
- ii. Where state stores have been procured through government tenders, supply contracts should clearly indicate that prices quoted for the goods are Customs duty inclusive or exclusive, as the case may be
- iii. The certificate should be submitted by the relevant Government Ministry or Department
- iv. Only Authorized Signatories whose names and specimen signatures have been submitted to BURS on an annual basis may sign the Certificates. Authorized Signatories may only be officers of D4 Scale and above

RELEASE OF GOODS

Goods may be released to an importer where there are no **prohibitions** or **restrictions** on importation of the goods imported, as long as payment has been made to BURS and all Customs procedures have been completed.

PAYMENT OF DUTIES AND TAXES

Payment may be deferred by a month for traders registered with BURS for that purpose otherwise payment becomes due and payable at the time of importation. Assessed customs duty and taxes including VAT are payable in Botswana Pula. Payments may be made online or over the counter at the bank or any BURS office

Value Added Tax (VAT) is another tax levied on imported goods in terms of the Value Added Tax Act. Goods imported into Botswana from outside the SACU market are liable to 12% VAT and tariff rates set out in the Customs and Excise Tariff Schedule.

Goods imported from any SACU Member States (Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa or Swaziland) attracts only 12% VAT.

The amount payable on goods imported into Botswana is assessed as follows:

Customs Duty (goods from SACU) = 0

VAT (goods from SACU) = (transaction value + insurance + freight) x 12%

Customs Duty (goods from outside SACU) = transaction value x tariff rate

VAT (goods from outside SACU) = (transaction value + customs duty + insurance + freight) x 12%

Duties and taxes may be reduced or waived where it has been established that the goods there has been a collection or recovery of an amount of customs duties and/or taxes more than that legally payable. BURS usually accept correction of the errors and refunds the amount underpaid. The same applies for overpayment.

A refund application form, **CE 66**, must be submitted within 6 months and 3 months for customs duties and VAT respectively from the date of payment. The application form should be submitted at the Customs Office where the transaction that resulted in the need for a refund was processed. The following are the necessary supporting documents for processing a refund:

- i. A copy of the Customs bill of entry relating to the importation/exportation of such goods.

- ii. All supporting documents used at time of import/export, including invoices, transport documents and exemption certificates.
- iii. A copy of BURS receipt issued at time of payment
- iv. Comprehensive worksheet indicating how the duty amount claimed was calculated
- v. Examination report/certificate by customs Officer
- vi. A Voucher of Correction, [SAD 503](#)
- vii. Original destruction certificate, where goods have destroyed under Customs supervision, where necessary
- viii. Any other document as BURS may request.