

# COMESA Simplified Trade Regime

COMESA has come up with a simplified Customs Clearance procedure for its Member States that would be used by small scale cross border traders to facilitate easy import and export of their goods.

The simplified clearance procedure under COMESA is called the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime (STR).

## **Why is it necessary to implement the STR?**

The COMESA Simplified Trade Regime has been introduced to solve the problems faced by small scale cross border traders such as:

- Lack of knowledge and information on the benefits of trading with other COMESA countries
- Complex documents and complicated processes of filling the current forms
- Increased clearance costs
- Delays in the clearing of goods and processing of tax refunds

The STR intends to overcome the above challenges by simplifying the whole process of clearing goods for small scale cross border traders by way of introducing:

- A simplified certificate of origin which should be signed and stamped by a ZIMRA official at the border post for all goods that appear on the Common List.
- A simplified customs document – traders are supposed to declare goods that appear on the Common List and duty is not payable on the declared goods.
- A common list of qualifying goods - The Common List will be gazetted by each member state and notified to the general public. Once gazetted, the Common List will also be displayed at all border posts within COMESA.

## **Who can use the STR?**

It is used by small scale cross border traders importing or exporting goods from one COMESA Member State to the other. Travellers who do not have goods for sale should not use the Simplified Trade Regime.

## **When can it be used?**

Where a small scale cross border trader is exporting goods valued at US\$2,000.00 or less per consignment he or she can use the STR. The goods should be listed on the COMESA STR Common List and should be for re-sale or use in the business.

## **How is it used?**

In addition to the necessary travel documents the small scale cross border trader should possess the following documents:-

- a. COMESA Simplified Certificate of Origin
- b. Invoices of the goods
- c. Import or export permits for certain agricultural goods and animal products

For goods that have been grown or wholly produced in the COMESA Region and appear on the Common List, the trader will complete a Customs Document (declaration form) and a simplified COMESA Certificate of Origin. These documents are filled in at the border post by the trader and are stamped and certified by a customs official.

If the trader is carrying chemicals, agricultural foods, plant and animal products such as pesticides, oranges, bananas, milk, eggs, fish, meat or chicken, report to the offices of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture or the Environmental Management Agency to stamp any imports and export permits and certify that the goods imported or exported comply with food safety, plant and animal health regulations including environmental protection. This is important to guard against the spread of pests and diseases and to protect human lives as well as the environment.

The trader should ensure that the exported goods are separated into the following categories:-

- a. Goods produced in the COMESA Region that are prescribed on the Common List on which no duty is payable.
- b. Goods produced in the COMESA Region that do not appear on the Common List on which duty may be payable.
- c. Goods produced in non-COMESA member states on which duty must be paid

Some of the goods appearing on the Common list that qualify for preferential treatment are shown in the tables below;

## Examples of eligible products Zimbabwe and Zambia

<b>Product</b>	<b>HS Code</b>
Potatoes	0701
Tomatoes	0702
Dried Beans	0713
Oranges	0805
Soya bean Oil	1507
Margarine	1517
Peanut butter	2008
Yeast	2102
Cement	2523
Freezit making machines	833880
Candle making machines	841989
Ploughs and plough parts	843210 and 843290
Peanut butter making machines	843780

## Examples of eligible products Zimbabwe - Malawi

<b>Product</b>	<b>HS Code</b>
Live animals	Chapter 1 inclusive
Birds' eggs, in shell, fresh, preserved or cooked (or for hatching)	0407
Potatoes, fresh or chilled	0701
Tomatoes, fresh or chilled	0702
Onions, shallots, garlic, leeks	0703
Cabbages, cauliflowers, etc.	0704
Lettuce	0705
Carrots, turnips, salad beetroot, and other edible roots	0706

Cucumbers and gherkins	0707
Peas, beans and other legumes, fresh or chilled	0708
Other vegetables (asparagus, eggplant, celery, mushrooms, other)	0709
Dried vegetables (incl. mushrooms, wood ears, jelly fungi)	0712
Dried beans, chickpeas, lentils, including seeds for sowing(EXCLUDING SEEDS FOR SOWING)	0713
Seeds	0713
Bananas	0803

### **What are the advantages?**

1. COMESA rates of customs duty are applied on clearance of the goods.
2. Fast clearance at the border posts.
3. Reduced clearance costs.
4. No need to smuggle your goods risking your life and goods.

### **Border Posts where STR is being implemented**

1. Victoria Falls
2. Kariba
3. Chirundu
4. Nyamapanda