

Botswana

ARTICLE 7: RELEASE AND CLEARANCE OF GOODS

The pre-clearance concept was first introduced when Botswana Unified Revenue Service (BURS) implemented the current customs processing system in 2017 and has since been improved with various other reforms to effective and efficient release and clearance of goods. The concept allows traders to submit electronic Customs declaration alongside other requirements such as invoices, permits or certificates, other supporting documents as attached copies; before the actual goods could arrive at the border for clearance purposes. This is integrated and implemented in conjunction with other reforms such as online payment and Centralized Processing Centre. The Centralized Processing Centre is the processing hub where all declarations are routed for clearance processing for all ports of entries around the country. The Centre consists of various officers with specialized function such as classification, rules of origin, valuation, risk management, who performs specific functions on the declaration processing process. The Customs Management System supports the clearance process as the system is web based and enable access and online payment at the convenient place of the trader. The process flow for the clearance process entails:

- Submission of electronic declaration with invoices attached or permits issued through Customs clearance system prior to arrival of goods by the Customs brokers at the comfort of their offices.
- The submitted declaration goes through the clearance formalities including declaration assessment, duties calculation, online payment, verification, e.t.c.and once completed the trader (importer or exporter) is issued with release order to proceed to the border where other formalities mainly Customs border controls will be performed based on risk criteria which could be verification and physical examination. Nevertheless, the trader is not notified on selectivity criteria as that could compromise Customs controls effectiveness.
- Once the consignment arrives at the border and the Release order has been verified, the trader is issued with release cargo which authorize the cargo to leave the Customs controls.
- In this regard compliant cargo can easily flows across the border and only risk cargo is subjected to physical examination which is also performed much quicker with the use of scanners and considering the declaration process has been processed prior to arrival.

The pre-arrival processing is implemented across all commercial borders. The Centralized Processing Hub has moved away declaration processing from border posts and transactions are performed on blind interaction between Customs and the traders reducing non regulatory barriers such as bribery and corruption which could impede trade facilitation.