

SAS CLEARING SERVICES / KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

Import Clearance Process in Tanzania

A practical pre-arrival, declaration and release guide for commercial imports into Mainland Tanzania.

RESOURCE	REVIEWED	USE
SAS-KC-IMP-01	JULY 2026	OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

IMPORTANT

This resource is general operational guidance, not a customs ruling or legal advice. Requirements and rates can change, and additional approvals may apply by commodity, origin, destination, customs regime and port. Confirm the current position with TRA, the relevant regulator and your licensed clearing and forwarding agent before shipment.

How to use this guide

Use this guide to organize a standard commercial import into Mainland Tanzania. Start before shipment: classification, permits and document consistency are easier to correct before cargo leaves the origin.

THE CORE CONTROL

The commercial invoice, packing list and transport document should describe the same goods, quantities, parties, marks, weights and shipment references. Incomplete declarations or insufficient descriptions may be queried or rejected in TANCIS.

The clearance path

STAGE	WHAT GOOD PREPARATION LOOKS LIKE
01 DEFINE	Confirm the goods, intended use, condition, composition, origin, value and shipment mode. These facts support classification, valuation and permit screening.
02 CLASSIFY	Determine the EAC tariff code and check the current duty treatment, sensitive-item treatment, restrictions and regulator requirements.
03 AUTHORIZE	Appoint a TRA-licensed clearing and forwarding agent and issue an authorization letter. Share the complete pre-arrival file.
04 PREPARE	Obtain applicable permits or conformity documents and reconcile the final invoice, packing list and bill of lading, airway bill or road consignment note.
05 DECLARE	The agent lodges the declaration and supporting documents through TANCIS. TRA advises lodging at least seven days before vessel arrival where possible.
06 ASSESS	Review the customs assessment and settle approved duties and taxes through the prescribed channels. Resolve valuation or classification queries with evidence.
07 CONTROL	Cargo may be routed for documentary review, scanning, verification or physical inspection. Coordinate access and respond accurately to queries.
08 RELEASE	After customs and relevant-agency release, complete port or terminal formalities, collect the cargo and retain the final declaration and supporting audit file.

Core document matrix

DOCUMENT	WHEN	QUALITY CHECK
Final commercial invoice	Core	Seller and buyer; invoice number/date; precise goods description; quantity; unit and total value; currency; Incoterm; origin; payment terms.
Packing list	Core	Package-by-package marks, contents, quantities, net/gross weights and dimensions; totals reconcile to transport document.
Transport document	Core	Bill of lading, airway bill or road consignment note; consignee and cargo particulars match the commercial file.
Agent authorization letter	Core	Correct importer details, TIN where applicable, agent identity, scope and authorized signature.
Import permits / approvals	Conditional	Confirm by HS code and product. Agencies may include TBS, TMDA, TASAC and other sector regulators.
Certificate of Conformity	Conditional	For products regulated under TBS PVoC. Obtain before shipment and complete TBS authentication requirements.
Certificate of origin	Conditional	Use where origin affects preferential treatment, trade measures or a regulator requirement.
Insurance / freight evidence	As requested	Supports CIF customs valuation where charges are not fully shown on the invoice.
Exemption / remission approval	Conditional	Approval must be valid for the importer, goods, quantity, value and period claimed.
Technical literature	As requested	Specifications, composition, model, use and photographs support classification and regulator review.

Permit screening before shipment

Search the Tanzania Trade Portal using the product name and HS code. Then confirm the result with the responsible agency. A generic customs file does not replace product approvals.

- **TBS:** Check whether the product falls under PVoC or destination inspection. Regulated PVoC consignments generally require a Certificate of Conformity before shipment.
- **TMDA and health-sector regulators:** Medicines, medical devices and related regulated goods can require product registration, premises licensing and consignment permits.
- **TASAC and transport regulators:** Vessel, shipping and maritime requirements may apply depending on the operation.
- **Agriculture, animals, plants, chemicals and controlled goods:** Obtain the relevant sector permit and certificates before dispatch.

Duties, taxes and landed-cost controls

TRA states that import duty may be ad valorem or specific and is generally linked to CIF customs value. Excise may apply to specified goods. Standard VAT on taxable imports is currently 18 percent, but exemptions, special rates and tax-base rules must be checked against the current law and assessment.

DO NOT QUOTE DUTY FROM THE PRODUCT NAME ALONE

The EAC tariff code, customs value, origin, preferential eligibility, sensitive-item treatment, excise schedule, exemptions and current Gazette measures can all change the final assessment.

Pre-arrival readiness checklist

- ☐ Licensed agent appointed and authorization issued.
- ☐ Eight-digit EAC tariff code supported by product evidence.
- ☐ Product-specific permits confirmed and obtained.
- ☐ Invoice, packing list and transport document reconciled.
- ☐ Freight and insurance evidence available for valuation.
- ☐ Declaration data reviewed before submission.
- ☐ Funds and approval path ready for taxes and port charges.
- ☐ Inspection contact, cargo access and transport plan confirmed.
- ☐ Final release and audit documents assigned to a records owner.

Official sources and verification links

- **TRA Import Procedures:** <https://www.tra.go.tz/page/import-procedures>
Official overview of TANCIS processing, licensed agent appointment, pre-arrival lodging and core import documents.
- **TRA Trading Across Borders:** <https://www.tra.go.tz/page/trading-across-borders>
Official overview of import duty, excise duty, VAT and CIF-based assessment.
- **TRA VAT:** <https://www.tra.go.tz/page/value-added-tax-vat>
Official VAT rates and treatment of taxable imports.
- **Tanzania Trade Portal:** <https://trade.tanzania.go.tz/>
Official commodity-specific procedures, permits, agencies and required documents.
- **TBS Imports and Export Control:** <https://www.tbs.go.tz/pages/inspection>
Official PVoC, Certificate of Conformity and destination-inspection guidance.
- **EAC Common External Tariff:** <https://repository.eac.int/handle/11671/24409>
Official EAC tariff nomenclature and duty structure.

Source pages were reviewed in July 2026. Always open the live source to check for later notices, amendments, fees or commodity-specific procedures.