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South African Revenue Service

Lehae la SARS
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Dear Valued Stakeholder

AUTOMATION OF CUSTOMS & EXCISE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AFCFTA) AGREEMENT

The South African Revenue Service (SARS) continues to modernise and streamline its systems to improve its digital platforms to help traders and taxpayers meet their tax and customs obligations.

As part of these modernisation efforts, SARS is automating the AfCFTA agreement for SARS Customs & Excise clients. SARS published the necessary legal instruments on 26 January 2024, and trade began on 31 January 2024 for the approved published tariff offers to and from countries such as Algeria, Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, and Tunisia. Trading with SADC countries takes place under the SADC Trade Protocol. Traders must be registered with SARS as exporters or producers before being allowed to trade under AfCFTA, and this registration process previously required manual submission.

From 1 November 2025, traders can submit applications for the following client types under the AfCFTA agreement through the RLA system.

- Exporter in terms of AfCFTA
- Approved Exporter in terms of AfCFTA
- Producer in terms of AfCFTA

These are the steps to migrate these client types to the RLA system:

1. Log in to SARS eFiling or visit a customs and excise office. The SARS website should classify the branch as one which provides "branch front-end" electronic capturing. The client should send a representative to share RLA information at the branch. SARS recommends using eFiling so that clients can avoid queues.

2. SARS Customs & Excise employees that perform customs registration or licensing–related activities must obtain the appropriate eFiling user rights and RLA profiles from clients' eFiling Administrators. This will enable the necessary access to the new RLA system on eFiling.
3. Refer to the RLA webpage — https://www.sars.gov.za/customs-and-excise/registration-licensing-and-accreditation/rla/ — for more information on RLA on eFiling. All guides and presentations are available through this link.
4. eFilers with an individual profile must change their profiles to "Organisation".
5. Navigate to RLA on eFiling.
6. Your existing customs code must be available for selection.

   a) If you do not see your customs code for selection, follow the "Merge process". More information about merging is available here: https://www.sars.gov.za/about/sas-tax-and-customs-system/efiling-system/merging-tax-profiles/.
   b) Some existing customs clients may have more than one customs code displayed on the customs-code selection screen. Clients should select the code that is preferred and register all client types on RLA using this code.
   c) If any customs codes are displayed that are not in use anymore, such codes must be cancelled by submitting a manual cancellation application at any customs and excise office indicated on the SARS website.

7. On the RLA Dashboard, click the drop-down arrow, and select "New Application" (being the process for updating information).
8. Navigate the client-type wizard to **Registration → select "Exporter" → Exporter → (Exporter in terms of AfCFTA or Approved Exporter AfCFTA)**.

   Note: the trader must register as an Exporter before it can select the next level ("Exporter i.t.o. AfCFTA").

9. Complete the required information and upload any required supporting documents.
10. Upon successful submission, you will receive a reference/case number.
11. Once the application is processed by SARS, an e-mail or SMS notification will be sent to you.
12. You can access the letter by checking the RLA inbox on eFiling or by visiting our website — www.sars.gov.za — to access the SARS Query Online System (SOQS) to download RLA correspondence.

Please address any questions to RLARegistrations@sars.gov.za.

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