

The Trade Portal



- | AN ONLINE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO TRADE-RELATED PROCEDURES
- | A TRADE FACILITATION TOOL FOR TRANSPARENCY AND SIMPLIFICATION
- | PROCEDURES, FORMS, REQUIREMENTS, CONTACTS AVAILABLE ONLINE

IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 1 OF THE WTO BALI AGREEMENT ON TRADE FACILITATION THE TRADE PORTAL SHOWS ALL IMPORT, EXPORT AND TRANSIT PROCEDURES

MAIN BENEFITS

- Total **transparency** in rules and procedures, though detailed, practical and up-to-date descriptions of steps to go through, from the user's point of view.
- Facilitates the **simplification** of procedures. Field investigations undertaken to collect the information are an opportunity for government agencies to review and streamline procedures. Once they are clearly documented online, it becomes easy to identify unnecessary steps and requirements.
- Promotes **public awareness** of rules and procedures and stimulates public-private dialogue thereon.

EASY AND QUICK IMPLEMENTATION

Foreign trade procedures, including forms, requirements and contact data can be accessible online within a few months. Implementation steps are the following:

- Installation on a national server
- Training of national officers in collecting and registering information
- Set up of a permanent update mechanism associating all concerned government agencies
- Transfer of complete administration and technical documentation

Further assistance can be provided to simplify procedures and to create an electronic single window.

The screenshot displays the 'Customs clearance (R)' procedure page. It includes a 'List of steps' (Total number of steps: 20), a 'SUMMARY OF THE PROCEDURE' section with 'Where to go?' (listing agencies like MADENWA, Rwanda Bureau of Standards, Rwanda Revenue Authority, and Good Freight Ltd), 'What you will get' (listing documents like Goods exit note and Goods delivery note), 'Required documents' (listing Goods invoice, Packing list, Bill of lading, Goods arrival notice, and Importation permit), and 'How much?' (Estimated cost of the procedure: TZS 531,320, with a 'Cost detail' of TZS 300,000).

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TRADEMARK EAST AFRICA HAS PARTNERED WITH UNCTAD TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRADE PORTALS IN EAST AFRICA. THE TRADE PORTAL IS BUILT ON THE BASIS OF THE EREGULATIONS SYSTEM, AN ELECTRONIC TOOL DEVELOPED BY THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD) TO HELP GOVERNMENTS MAKE RULES AND PROCEDURES FULLY TRANSPARENT AND FACILITATE BUSINESS, TRADE AND INVESTMENT. IT HAS BEEN INSTALLED IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES AND CITIES WORLDWIDE, SINCE 2005 (WWW.EREGULATIONS.ORG).

PROCEDURES FROM THE USER'S POINT OF VIEW

Procedures are presented **step-by-step**, from the user's point of view. Every necessary interaction with a civil servant is considered a step. The system shows all required information to complete each step:

- Name of the step
- Result of the step
- Entity/office/officer in charge, with contact data
- Requirements (forms and documents)
- Cost
- Duration (minimum and maximum)
- Entity/office/officer in charge of attending complaints, with contact data
- Legal justification
- Authority certifying that the step is correctly described

For each procedure, the system presents a list of required steps and a summary showing the entities involved, expected results, requirements, minimum and maximum processing time and all legal bases.

The screenshot displays the 'Submit goods arrival notice for verification' step in the Trade Portal. The interface includes a 'List of steps' sidebar on the left, a main content area with 'Contact details' for NAL BUSINESS COMPANY LIMITED and LADISLAUS MWANGOMBE, an 'Expected results' section with document thumbnails, and a 'Requirements' list at the bottom. The requirements include: 1. customs value form C. 41 (original), 2. Importer authorization letter (original), 3. Goods invoice (original), 4. Packing list (original), 5. Tax Identification Number (TIN) Certificate (Simple copy), and 6. Bill of lading (original).

A TOTALLY CONFIGURABLE SYSTEM

Trade Portal is a **Content Management System (CMS)**. All texts, colors, pictures and logos of the public interface can be modified, procedures and all the corresponding data can be registered and updated, menus can be organized and administration rights can easily be configured from a password protected administrative interface. System administration requires no computer expertise and can be mastered after few hours of training.

Information is displayed through a user-friendly, public website. Users can interact with the site and its administrators through email and online chat, for any inquiry, suggestion or complaint.

The system is installed on a local server or in the cloud, as decided by the recipient country. UNCTAD provides complete technical documentation. The source code is available upon request.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

User countries are granted an unlimited right to use the system and to configure it according to their needs. They decide freely which procedures they want to register and maintain full ownership of all information in the database.

GUIDANCE AND TRAINING IN INFORMATION COLLECTION

Detailed information on procedures is often not readily available. The challenge is to adequately reflect procedures as they are practiced (and not how they are thought to be). Building a comprehensive and orderly list of steps and collecting, for every step, the required data (contacts, forms, requirements, duration, legal basis, etc.) usually requires repeated field visits to all offices involved.

UNCTAD can assist countries in developing adapted methodologies and in building the capacity to collect and maintain the information on procedures.

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