

- Special treatment by partner government agencies
- Priority treatment by other customs administrations with whom customs has established Mutual Recognition Agreements
- Access to own declarations on customs systems through application programming interface (API) on the ZRA website
- Opportunity to recommend additional benefits

Additional information

Currently, criteria developments to accommodate other economic players on the AEO programme beyond importers and exporters are underway.

Notwithstanding the above, note that Customs Services has since 2008, been running the Customs Accredited Clients Programme (CACP) which is a compliance variant of the AEO programme. The CACP is strictly for importers and exporters who are accorded a portion of most of the benefits which AEO members enjoy except a few such as mutual recognition arrangements with other customs administrations, special treatment from partner government agencies, opportunity to recommend other benefits etc.

For further information refer to;

ZRA website www.zra.org.zm
Call toll free call centre line 4111
Email advice@zra.org.zm



**AUTHORISED
ECONOMIC
OPERATOR**

The Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme is a trade facilitation tool premised under the World Customs Organisation (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards (SAFE FoS) whose main objective is safety and to secure and as well as facilitate global trade. The SAFE FoS defines an AEO as: “a party involved in the international movement of goods in whatever function that has been approved by or on behalf of a national Customs Administration as complying with WCO or equivalent supply chain security standards. AEOs include inter alia manufacturers, importers, exporters, brokers, carriers, consolidators, intermediaries, ports, airports, terminal operators, integrated operators, warehouses, distributors”. Thus, the AEO programme is intended to include all economic operators to enhance security along all points of the supply chain. The AEO programme in Zambia was officially launched on October 25, 2023.

To be eligible an economic operator must:

- Have been operating at least three years prior to application
- have an excellent compliance record with tax and customs requirements and other regulatory requirements in general; and
- have robust business systems, effective security management systems and adequate internal controls.

Requirements for joining the AEO Programme

Economic operators should complete the

application form for the AEO programme and the self- assessment questionnaire (SAQ) and send to the office of the Assistant Commissioner — Audit and Business Risk (ABR) or the nearest customs office or client service centre for onward transmission to ABR.

This process involves the following:

- Clearance from ZRA and partner government agencies;
- Validation of applicant’s internal controls and system using the SAQ and a due diligence audit;
- A recommendation will be made to the Customs Risk Management Committee (CRMC) for approval for qualifying applicants;
- For unsuccessful applicants, improvement plans may be considered to assist the applicants in improving their compliance to regulatory requirements through the improvement of systems and internal controls;
- For successful applicants a full accreditation to the programme is made effected by an agreement in the form of a Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and an improvement plan where necessary.

Benefits of AEO members

The programme is aimed at reducing customs clearance time and thereby reducing the cost of doing business. Accredited members in the

importer and exporter categories have the following benefits:

- Clearance of most goods without customs intervention
- Acceptance of most self-certified copies of certificates of origin
- Release of consignments before payment
- Deferred payment for three days after release of goods
- Expedited clearance at the border even in time of downtime
- Preferential treatment in times of disputes with Customs
- Allocation of case manager or Relationship Manager
- Minimum intervention by the inland enforcement units
- Choice of location for control of goods
- Special identity logo on Customs systems
- Facilitated client education and coaching with a bias on compliance management
- Eligibility for self-audit or self assessment leading to no penalties for own corrective disclosures
- Self-release order printing on ASYCUDA World