

LESOTHO AUTHORISED ECONOMIC OPERATOR PROGRAMME (AEO)

**"Experience a hassle- free trade
as *Authorised Economic Operator.*"**

WHAT IS AN AUTHORISED ECONOMIC OPERATOR?

Authorized Economic Operators (AEOs) are businesses that have been certified by Customs Administrations as meeting certain security and compliance standards. AEOs enjoy a number of benefits in international trade, such as faster clearance times, reduced inspections, and increased predictability in the movement of goods.

Within the context of global and intra-Africa trade, AEOs can play a significant role in promoting trade and economic growth. By meeting the stringent security and compliance requirements of Customs Administrations, AEOs can help to;

- a) reduce the time and cost of customs clearance, which can facilitate the movement of goods across borders;
- b) promote trust and confidence among trading partners, which can encourage greater participation in intra-Africa trade and therefore regional and global value chains. This is particularly important given the challenges associated with trade in Africa, including complex customs procedures, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to finance;
- c) provide a framework for improving supply chain security and compliance, AEO programmes can help to reduce the risks and costs associated with trade in Africa. This can help to promote greater investment and economic development, which can contribute to the overall growth and stability of the continent.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME:

The Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programme is a global initiative that aims to enhance international trade security and facilitate trade flows. The programme offers benefits to revenue administrations, private sector entities, and government agencies, as follows:

Revenue Administrations:

For revenue administrations, the AEO programme enables them to better manage their resources and allocate them efficiently, focusing on higher-risk trade transactions, which results in a reduced number of physical and documentary inspections.

Private Sector:

For private sector entities, the AEO programme provides a competitive advantage by streamlining trade processes, reducing costs, and improving supply chain security. It also allows them to have a better understanding of customs requirements and regulations, which can help them to avoid costly delays and penalties.

Government Agencies:

For government agencies, the AEO programme enables them to better regulate trade flows, identify high-risk shipments, and combat illicit trade. It also facilitates the harmonization of customs procedures, which helps to reduce administrative burdens and improve efficiency.

The AEO programme overall offers numerous benefits to revenue administrations, private sector entities, and government agencies by improving trade security, reducing costs, streamlining processes, and enhancing cooperation and coordination among stakeholders.

MAIN BENEFITS OF THE LESOTHO AEO ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME

- ✓ Expedited clearance at the ports of entry and exit in SACU
- ✓ Reduced level of verification at the border based on risk selectivity
- ✓ Choice of place for physical verification of goods by clients
- ✓ Automatic qualification for expedited refund systems for importers and exporters
- ✓ Contact person at each border post to facilitate all accredited transactions, includes frontline privileges in the border Queue Management System
- ✓ Mutual recognition of status in all SACU member states

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE STATUS?

Any manufacturers, importers, exporters, brokers, carriers, consolidators, intermediaries, ports, airports, terminal operators, integrated operators, warehouse, distributors and freight forwarders etc...registered by Revenue Services Lesotho and other partner Revenue Administration in SACU, within the auspices of the SACU AEO Frameworks; SACU Member States' legislation and section 66 of the Customs and Excise Amendment Act, 2021 and other supporting policy documents.



ELIGIBILITY / QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

1. Must have a physical address in the Lesotho
2. Must have a good financial standing /proven financial solvency
3. Must maintain adequate books, records and control systems to support full compliance auditing by the RSL
4. Must have had a good compliance record for the previous three years at least, prior to application with customs & tax obligations
5. Must be bonded if a carrier and/or freight Forwarder
6. Must be duly licensed by the RSL to operate if a clearing agent
7. Must maintain adequate Safety and Security standards

To ensure a successful application for the AEO status in Lesotho, clients must be compliant with the Customs and Excise Act 1982 as amended and related Laws, VAT Act 2001, and Income Tax Act 1993.

CONTACT US

For submission of Applications Forms

Registration & Licensing Office (AEO Key Contact Office)

Finance House, 2nd floor, Office no. 2045

Email: AEO@rsl.org.ls

Call: +266-5221-5143 / +266-5221-5336 / +266-5221-5621

Mobile: +266-6211-2349

Enquiries, Complaints and Appeals:

Physical Address: Ground Floor, Finance House Building, Government Office Complex

Tel: +266-2231-3796 / +266-522-15111

Mobile: +266-5221-5000 or +266-5221-5002

Fax: +266-2231-2091

Email: info@rsl.org.ls

Website: www.rsl.org.ls - see **FAQs** - under Complaints and Enquiries; **Appeals and Complaints**; **"Need help?"** Online Chat for inquiries.

Visit us at our: **RSL Digital Contact Centers:** Maseru, Leribe and Mphahle's Hoek Advice

RSL mobile offices: ThabaTseka, Makhhotlong, Qacha's Nek

Border Posts:

Caledonspoort Border Post (Butha-Buthe):

Tel: +266-2246-0621 or +266-2246-1790

(Opening Hours: 06:00am - 22:00pm)

Maputsoe Bridge Border Post (Leribe):

Tel: +266-2243-0257; Manager: +266-2243-1175

(Opening Hours-24 Hours)

Maseru Bridge Border Post (Maseru):

Tel: +266 22312204 *(Opening Hours-24 Hours)*

Qacha's Nek Border Post (Qacha's Nek):

Tel: +266-2295-0290 *(Opening Hours-08:00 - 22:00)*

Van Rooyen's Gate (Mafeteng):

Tel: +266 22224700 *(Opening Hours-08:00 - 22:00)*