

Experts Study the Root Cause of the Recurrent Challenges in Recording Personal Import Data Between South Africa and Swaziland



Members of the Task Team on Trade Data Reconciliation, from left: Mr. Muzi Dube, Statistics Unit Manager at the Swaziland Revenue Authority, Mr. Sienievasen Arnachellan, Trade Specialist at the South African Revenue Services, Mr. Abel Sindano, Trade Data Analyst at the SACU Secretariat and Mr. Bongani Mabuza, Manager at the Ngwenya Border Post pictured during the field visit at Ngwenya border post.

In efforts to establish the root cause and find an amicable solution to the recurrent challenges detected in the actual trade data reconciliation process between South Africa and Swaziland, field visits were undertaken to clearly specify how personal imports should be recorded in trade statistics.

The field visits were undertaken by representatives of Swaziland Revenue Authority, Ministry of Finance and Planning (Swaziland), Ministry of Trade (Swaziland), South African Revenue Services, National Treasury of South Africa and the SACU Secretariat on 23 February 2016. The team visited the Ngwenya/Oshoek border post, which is the biggest commercial border accounting for about 60 per cent of imports into Swaziland.

The border records about 90 000 travellers passing through the border on a monthly basis. Another border post visited was Salitje/Onverwacht, a non-commercial designated border post allocated 250 kilometres from Ngwenya/Oshoek border post.

One of the recurrent challenges that was identified between the two countries is the variance in data for Chapter 99 that entails personal effects and private shoppers. This constitute a significant weight relative to the overall Swaziland imports, hence the need to thoroughly study the main cause of the problem in data generating process.

A report on the findings from the field visits was presented at the meeting of the Task Team on Trade Data Reconciliation held on 16-17 March 2016 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

As provided for in the 2002 SACU Agreement, Member States are required to submit actual data of intra-SACU trade for the recent financial year to the Secretariat at least six months prior to the beginning of any financial year.

However, before this data could be used for revenue sharing purposes it is a requirement that the datasets must be reconciled among the Member States to uphold the integrity and quality of the data. The data reconciliation process starts in May and ends in September every year.