



## SARS takes a further step towards improving the integrity of trade and traveller facilitation as part of implementing smart borders

There is unconscious biasness that individuals travelling abroad or to RSA need not declare personal effects, that is a big mistake or error of judgement: take note of the following. Travellers are required by law to make certain declarations of goods and cash on entering or leaving South Africa.

The declaration process is in line with practices around the world and in compliance with the provision of the Customs and Excise Act No. 91 of 1964 which makes it mandatory for any person entering and leaving the Republic to declare any goods in their possession.

Failure to make a proper declaration as required under the Customs and Excise Act, 1964, is an offence that may result in the detention and forfeiture of the goods not declared and accompanying goods, imposition of an administrative penalty and/or criminal prosecution depending on the seriousness of the offence.

In November 2022, SARS launched a pilot implementation of an electronic on-line portal for travellers to make declarations on a voluntary basis, well ahead of their arrival or departure to/from South Africa.

This pilot got implemented at the King Shaka International Airport. It allowed travelers to pre-declare goods purchased, received, or otherwise acquired. For travellers who choose not to use the on-line portal on their mobile devices, SARS has made available a paper form as well self-service counters at terminals. Customs Officers have hand-held devices to assist travelers, to facilitate passage. Travellers are still permitted to continue to use the travelers card if they so choose.

SARS believes that the process of pre-declaration enable travelers to have a swift and seamless movement when they arrive, and those departing, for a smooth boarding process. The South African Traveler Management System is part of the broader Customs Modernisation Programme that seeks to provide “pre-clearance” as far as possible to travellers and facilitate passage through their ports. SARS aims to create “SMART borders” by leveraging data and technology to create a seamless experience for legitimate traders and travelers through their ports of entry while enhancing its detection capabilities to respond to any risks.



**Siphon Mhaga**  
Senior Manager Customs & Excise