External Manual

SADC Electronic Certificate of Origin (SADC e-CoO) Application Process

Section 1: Introduction

1. Purpose and scope

Use this manual to apply for a Southern African Development Community electronic Certificate of Origin (SADC e-CoO) through Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL). It covers account setup, lodging the related export declaration, submitting and tracking an application, downloading the issued certificate and checking its verification details.

This guide is for exporters in Lesotho, their authorized clearing agents and staff who manage trader accounts as well as the Customs Administrations of the importing countries. It also explains how recipients can check an issued certificate.

2. When to apply

Apply when the importer intends to claim SADC preferential tariff treatment and the goods meet the applicable SADC rules of origin. Check the rule for each product using its Harmonized System (HS) classification. Depending on the rule, you may need to show that goods are wholly obtained or that production meets a specified processing, tariff classification or value requirement.

The e-CoO provides proof of origin. The importing country's customs authority uses it to help determine whether the goods qualify for a reduced or zero customs duty rate under the SADC trade agreement. A completed export declaration and applicable clearance in ASYCUDAWorld and Customs System on the importing country attests the transaction and the e-CoO is one of the mandatory supporting documents.

3. Legal and procedural framework

a) **SADC preferential origin -** Article 12 of the SADC Protocol on Trade and Annex I to the Protocol govern preferential origin. Use the applicable rules and product-specific requirements to assess eligibility and keep the evidence supporting the origin you declare. *https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2021-11/Protocol_on_Trade2121996.pdf66966*
https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files

b) **Lesotho customs law -** The Customs and Excise Act, 1982 (Act No. 10 of 1982), as amended by Act No. 6 of 2021, provides for electronic customs processing at designated border posts under section 40A. Section 40B provides for registration of electronic declaration users. Section 47A

requires the Commissioner General to consider the rules of origin in agreements to which Lesotho is a party when determining origin.

c) **Customs and Excise Amendment Act 2021 -** Legal Notice No. 74 of 2022 amended the Customs and Excise Regulations, 1984. Regulation 39A and Schedule 9 address registration for the customs computer system. Regulation 39A also addresses access codes and requires immediate reporting to the Commissioner General where misuse of that system is suspected.

d) **Customs and Excise Amendment Regulations 2022 - How the clearance procedure applies**

The RSL Clearance of Goods Process Standard Operating Procedure in Automated Environment describes how to lodge a declaration, attach supporting documents, respond to queries and proceed through risk-based checks and release. Its Annexure 1 lists declaration documents, including an invoice and a certificate of origin where applicable and required. Follow the portal steps in this manual for the separate certificate application.

4. In this Manual, you learn;

1. How to access the e-CoO portal;
2. How to log in;
3. How to create an organisation profile;
4. How to apply for a SADC Electronic Certificate of Origin;
5. How to insert a digital signature;
6. How to view and print an issued or approved SADC e-CoO; and
7. Scanning the SADC e-CoO link (verification process)

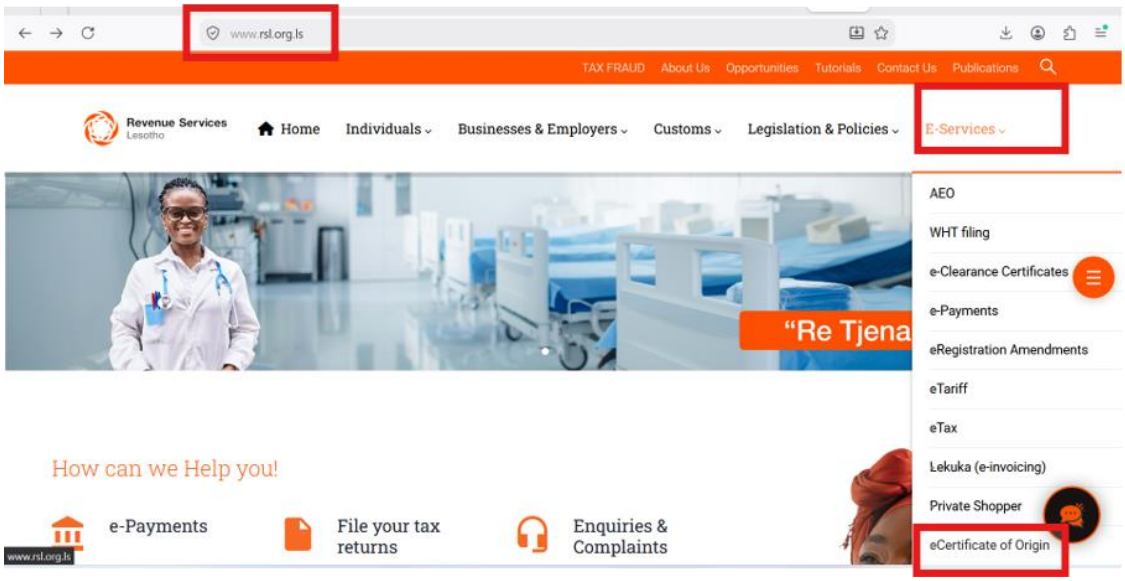
Section 2 - Access the portal and set up your trader profile

Before you start

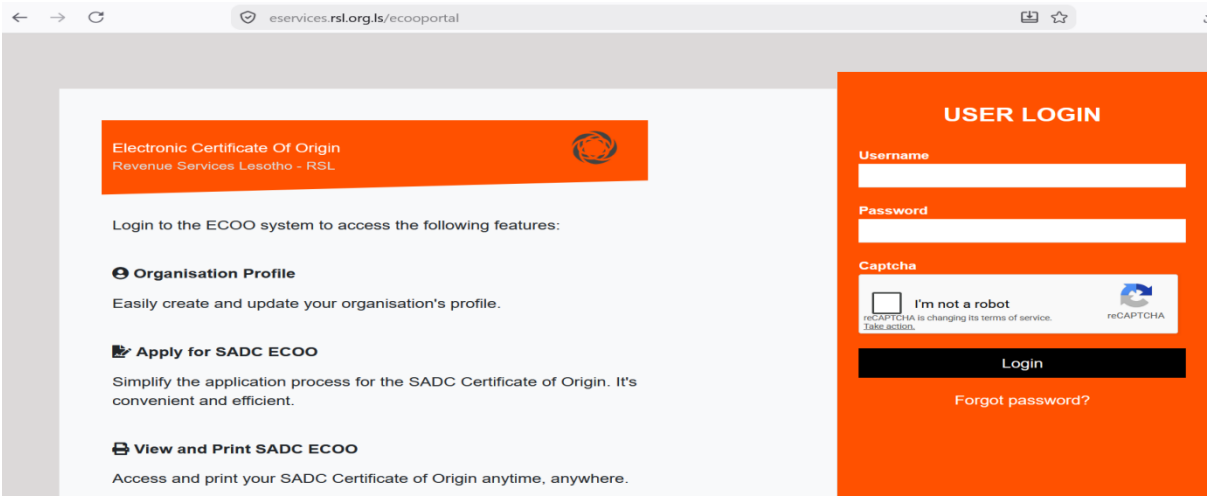
1. Have your organisation's Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), electronic Tax Clearance Certificate (eTCC) password for first time access and a working email address for the contact person;
2. Gather the trader documents requested on the portal and details of the products you intend to export. These are the documents that will enable RSL to verify that your goods originate in Lesotho and that the production process meets the applicable rules of origin prior to export, as a once-off process to approve the applicant as a Registered Exporter within the provisions of the SADC Trade Protocol. The trader documents required are;
    a) List of Products intended for export;
    b) Production capacity of the company;
    c) Sketch plan of the factory showing layout of machinery;
    d) Step by Step description of Manufacturing Process of each product, if more than one (1);
    e) Certificate of incorporation (or any other evidence) to show that the Company is registered and operates within Lesotho;
    f) List and number of employees involved in the manufacture of the products;
    g) Job descriptions for the employees;
    h) Proof of overheads e.g. rent bills, electricity bills, etc.

Step 1 - First access and registration

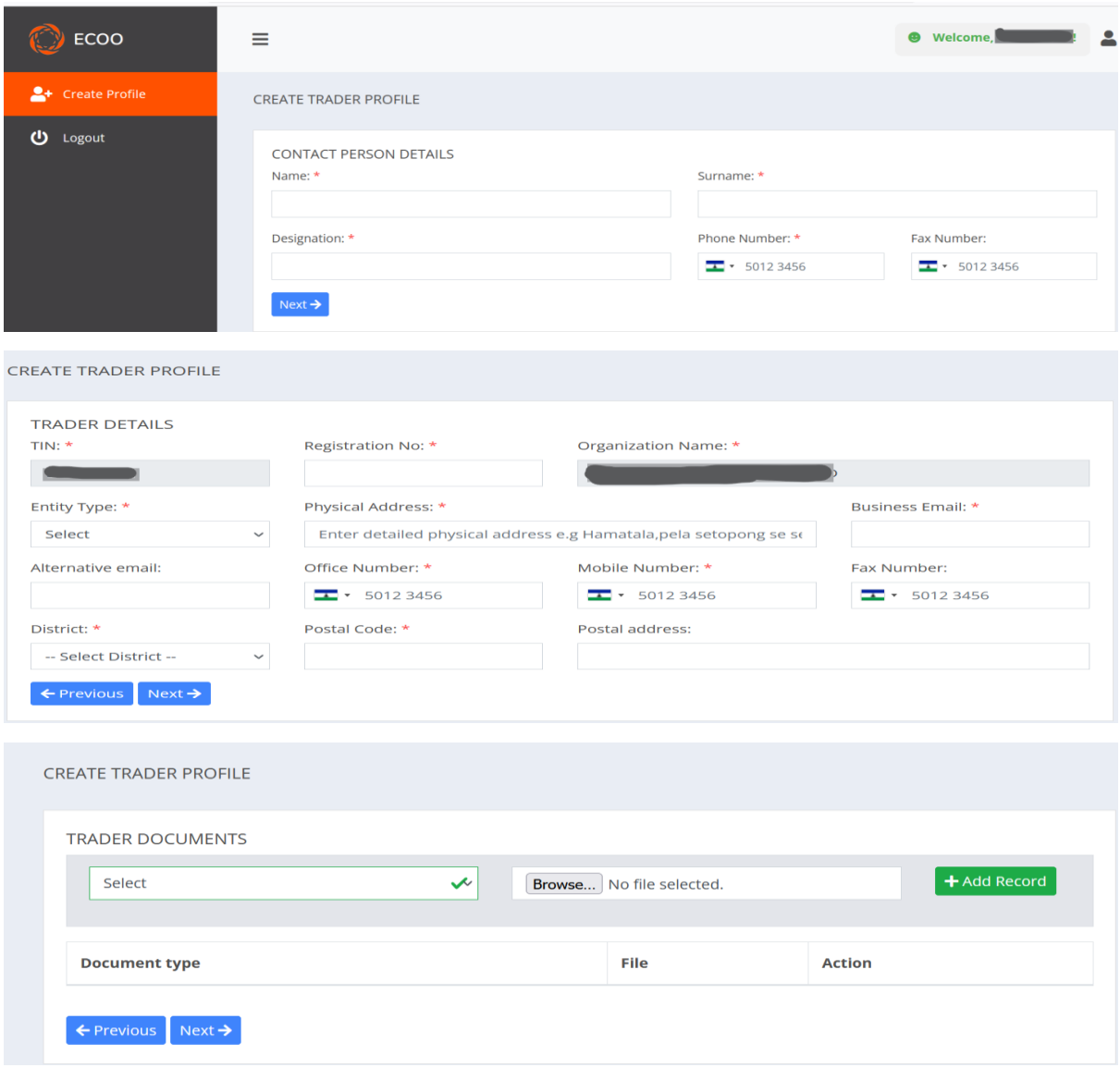
1. Visit www.rsl.org.ls and select E-Services, then SADC e-Certificate of Origin. You can also use the official portal link - Electronic Certificate Of Origin - Login;



2. Enter the organisation's TIN as the username and its electronic Tax Clearance Certificate (eTCC) password. Complete the CAPTCHA and select Log In;



3. Open Organisation Profile. Complete the contact person and trader details and upload the requested trader documents. Complete every field marked with an asterisk.



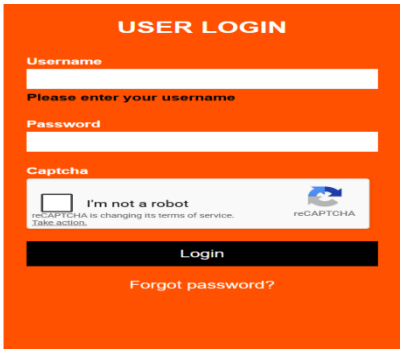
4. Select Save and Submit.
5. RSL review and approval of the trader profile - after submision, an RSL Origin Officer will review your registration and validate the information and supporting documents. If RSL needs to verify your production process, it will arrange a mandatory inspection at your company premises. Approval follows validation and satisfactory completion of any required inspection.
6. RSL will notify applicant of the decision. After receiving approval, the organization's manager signs in and uses Manage Users to set up the people who

will apply for certificates. If registration is rejected, follow the instructions in the notification or contact RSL for clarification.

Step 2 - Organization's Managers/Applicant Log In

Once the profile is approved and an email notification send to the registered email. Use your registered email address and new password of the Manager/Applicant above:

- Complete the CAPTCHA and select Login

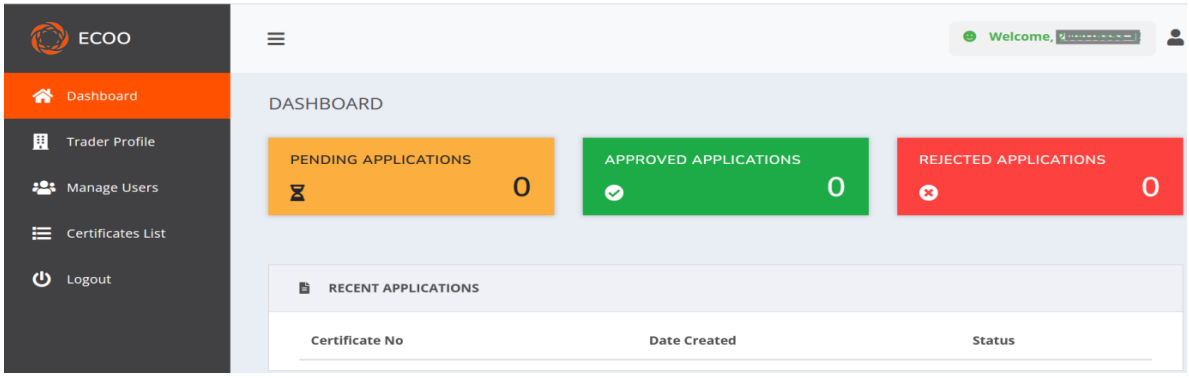


Forgot password?

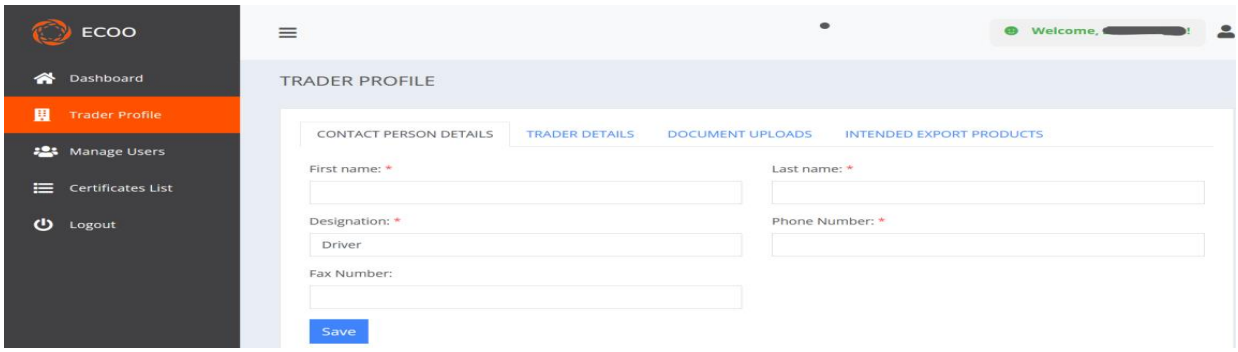
- Select Forgot Password and enter your registered email address.;
- Open the reset link sent to that address, enter and confirm your new password, then sign into the e-CoO Portal again;
- If the email does not arrive, check your junk folder and confirm you used the registered address.

Step 3 - DASHBOARD

After RSL approves the trader profile and sends the approval notice, sign in as the organization's manager. The dashboard shows pending, approved and rejected applications and provides access to Trader Profile, Manage Users, and Certificate List.



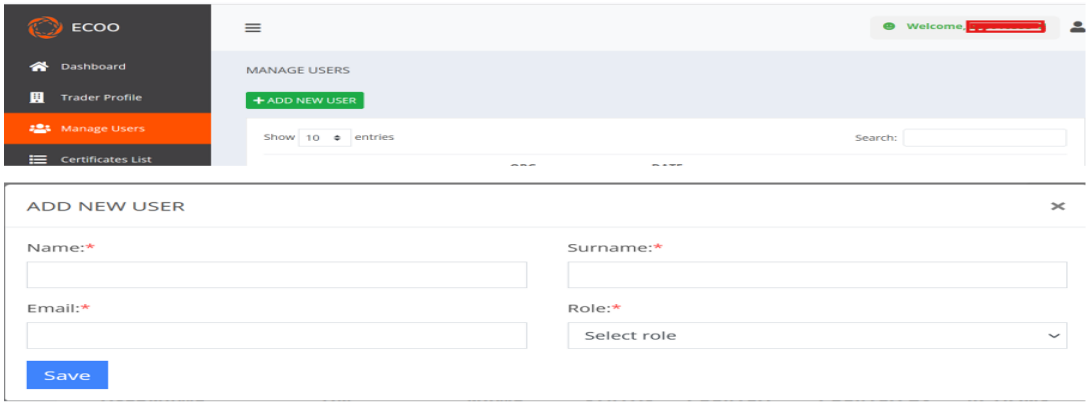
1. Open Trader Profile validate your information and update contact details, trader details, supporting documents and Intended Export Products;
2. Select Save and Submit after checking the changes.



Step 4 - Manage Users and upload Signatures;

The manager / the applicant shall add new users and assign roles. These can be staff members assigned import/export clearance roles or clearing agents to enable export cargo clearance processing before export. These users will be responsible to apply for each certificate of origin for each transaction.

1. **Add or update a user**
   - ➢ Add the user, complete the required fields and assign the role appropriate to their duties. Select Save;



   - ➢ Once the user has been created by the Manager. The NEW user shall receive an email and click the link on the email.
   - ➢ Ask the user to open the invitation sent to their registered email address and confirm their details.
   - → Use Manage Users to suspend accounts when access is no longer required and reactivate accounts when access is authorized again.

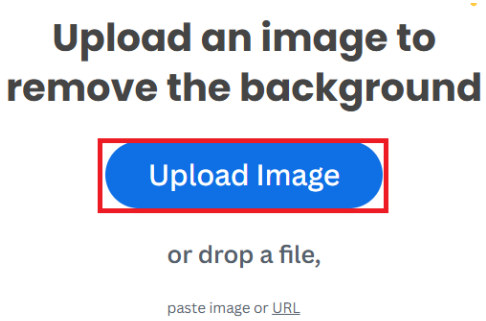
2. Users - Prepare the signature image

a) Save a clear image of your own authorized signature as a PNG with a transparent background;

b) Follow the four steps below to prepare your file using the free Remove.bg tool

→ Navigate to the official background removal tool using the link http://www.remove.bg/upload;

→ Upload Your Signature - Click the Upload Image button on the website and select your saved signature file from your computer;



→ Once processed, click the dropdown menu next to the Download button, then click Preview to download your image;

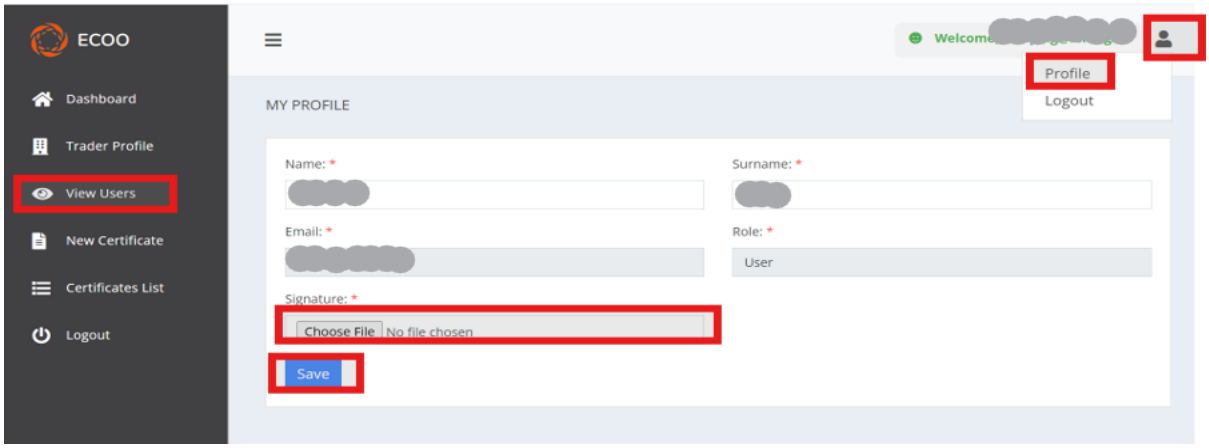
→ Open the Downloads folder on your PC to find your newly processed signature file, typically saved as a PNG image with a transparent background. You're now ready to upload it to the Certificate of Origin system.



3. Upload the signature

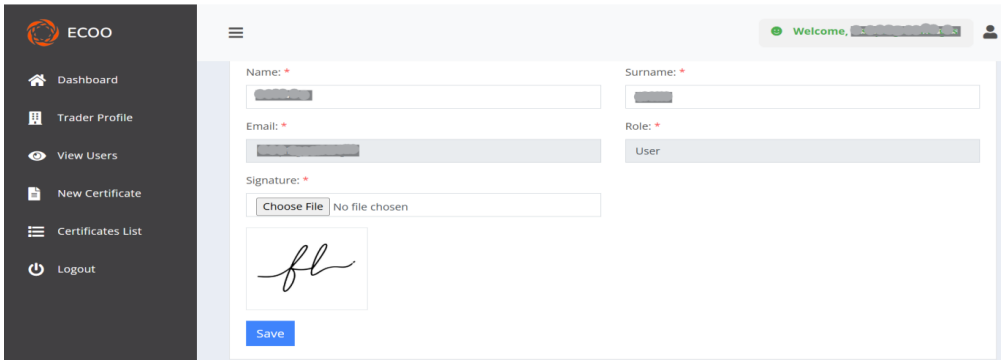
a) Open the invitation link and sign in with your registered email address and password;

b) Open View Users, select the user icon and choose Profile;



c) Select Choose File, attach your signature PNG and select Save.

d) Once your account is set up, use your registered credentials to apply for certificates on behalf of the organization.



4. Protect access to the account

Each User must use their individual account for routine portal access. Keep passwords, reset links and signature files secure. If you suspect misuse of the e-CoO account, contact RSL through its official channels. For suspected misuse of the customs declaration system, follow the immediate reporting requirement in regulation 39A(6).

Section 3 - Application for Certificates of Origin

1. Lodge the SADC export declaration in ASYCUDAWorld

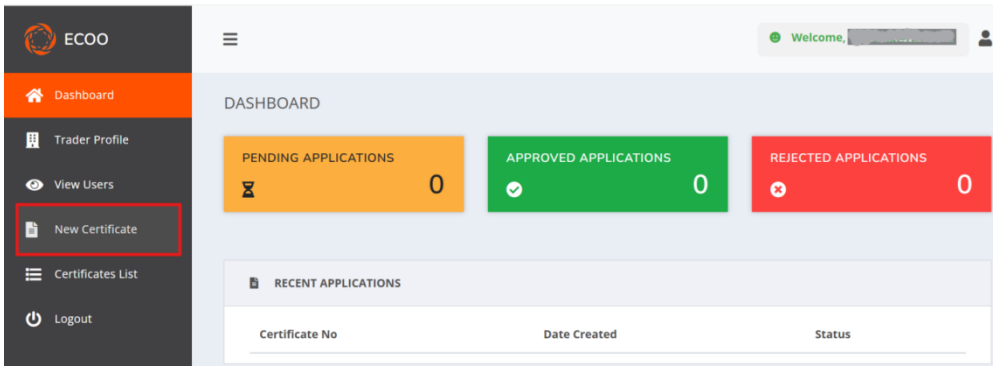
→ Complete the Single Administrative Document (SAD) with the appropriate customs procedure code. Check the exporter, goods descriptions, HS codes and other shipment details against the invoice and shipment records;

→ Attach the invoice and other applicable documents, such as an export permit where required. Validate and lodge the declaration. Keep its registration details for the e-CoO application;

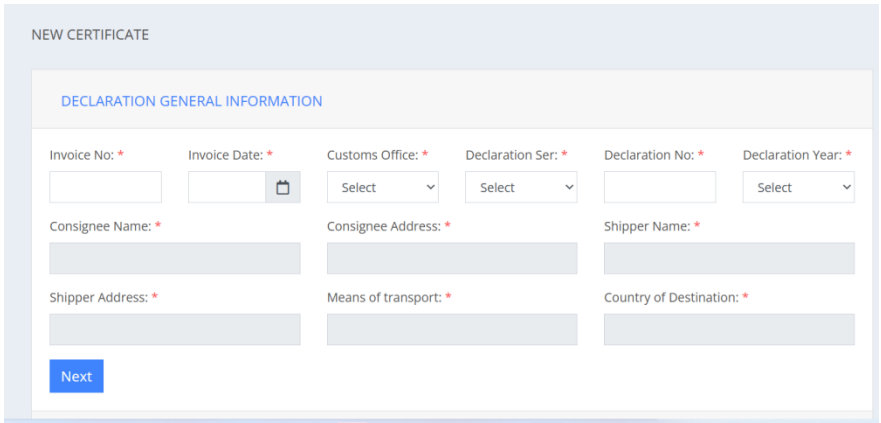
→ Check ASYCUDAWorld for any customs query. If you discover an error in the lodged declaration, use the ASYCUDAWorld query process to request a correction. Continue to follow any clearance and border instructions applicable to the shipment.

2. Create and submit the e-CoO application

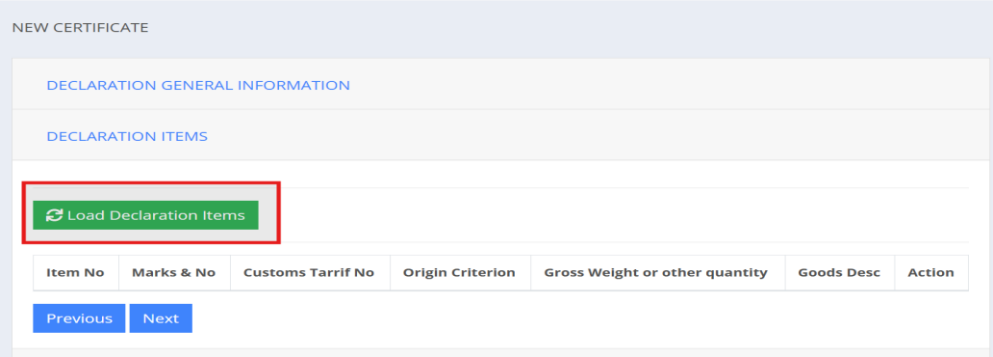
→ Sign in to the e-CoO portal and select New Certificate;



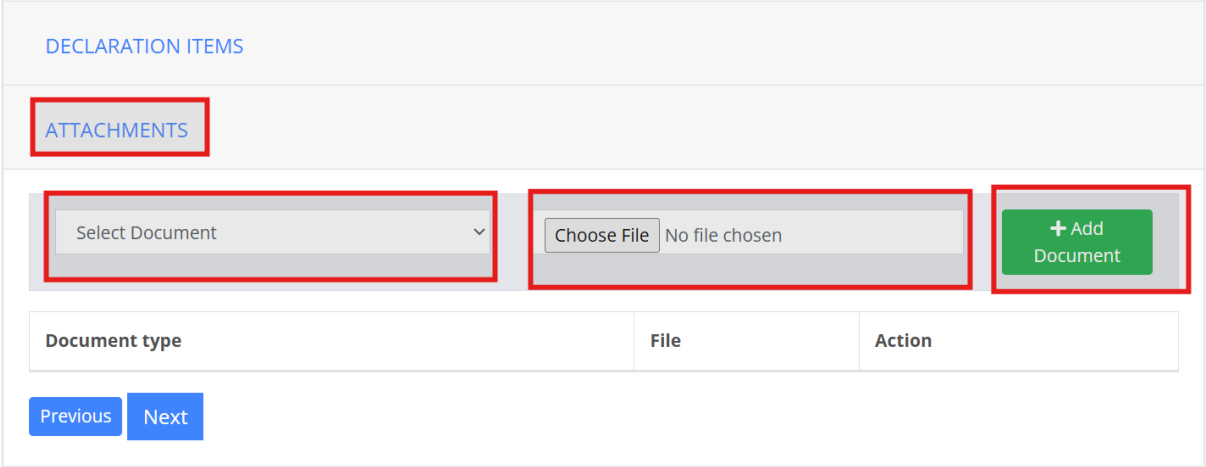
→ Enter the ASYCUDAWorld declaration details.



→ Fill in declaration items by clicking on the load declaration items button



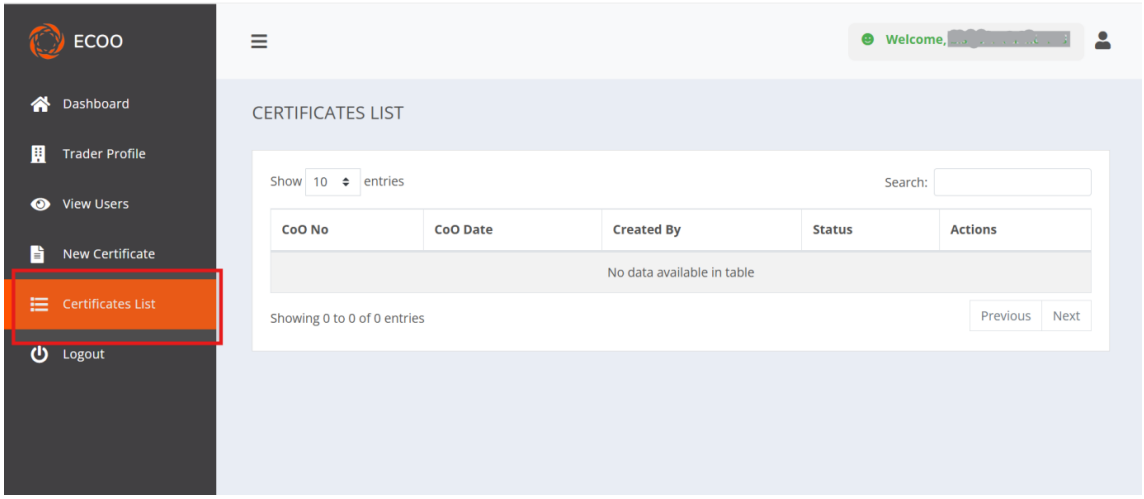
→ Attach supporting documents by selecting document and choose file then click on Add Document



→ Open Certificate Preview - check the exporter and importer details, goods, origin information and shipment details against the underlying records. Resolve discrepancies before submitting;

→ Submit the application;

→ Use Certificate List to locate the application and follow its progress. A list of all applied certificates shall be displayed with status (pending, approved, rejected) and appear in the certificate list tab.



3.Track and download the certificate

→ **RSL review and decision on your application**

An RSL Origin Officer reviews your application and checks whether the goods meet the applicable SADC rules of origin. Open a Certificate List to track the application.

1. **Pending -** check the portal for updates while RSL reviews the application;
2. **Approved** - the system issues the e-CoO with a unique certificate number and notifies you. Open the issued certificate, check the details and save the PDF;
3. **Rejected** - RSL will notify you of the reasons. If the issues can be corrected, address the reasons and resubmit. Only resubmit a claim for goods that meet the applicable SADC rules of origin.

4. View and save the issued certificate

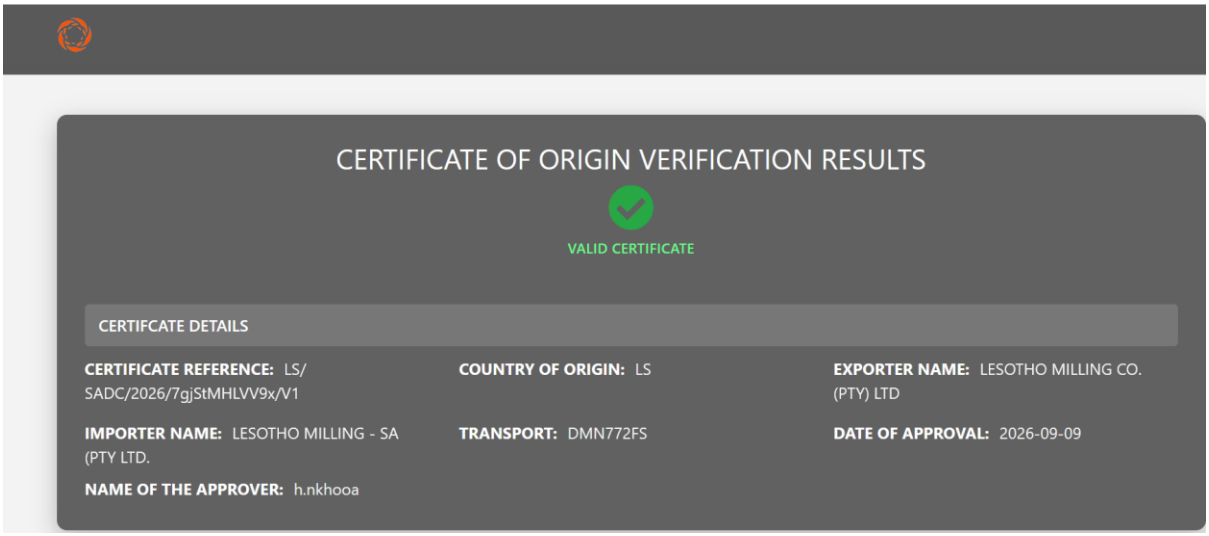
1. In Certificate List, select the approved certificate;
2. Under Actions, select View. Confirm that the reference and shipment details are correct;
3. Select the Print icon to open the certificate. Save it as a PDF using the available download or print-to-PDF option. Print a copy to accompany the shipment;
4. Give the issued PDF to the importer or their authorized representative for the preferential tariff claim on the Import Country.

→ **If the shipment details change -** If you find an error after issue or the shipment changes, contact RSL with the certificate and declaration references for instructions. Where the declaration also needs correction, raise the query in ASYCUDAWorld.

Section 4 - Verification of Issued Certificates

This section is for the **customs administration in the importing country**. Use the verification link or QR code on the issued SADC e-CoO to check its authenticity and compare the certificate details with the official verification record.

1. Open the verification link on the issued certificate or scan its QR code;
2. Compare the verification result with the certificate presented. Check the certificate reference number, country of origin, exporter and importer names, transport details, approval date and approving officer, where displayed.



3. If the link fails, the result is blank or the details differ, record the discrepancy and contact Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) through the official customs channels. Provide the certificate reference number and describe the issue so RSL can verify the record.

Safe Keeping of Records

Keep the issued certificates, the supporting documents of the shipment and origin records together with the declarations. Make them available if Customs requests evidence to verify origin or the declaration. This includes all production and commercial records.