



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION TO VIETNAM

Trade Section

EVFTA implementation – possible sources of information for SMEs

As the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) will make doing business easier and reduce export related costs, the SMEs will be important beneficiaries of this trade agreement. Even though the EVFTA does not contain a specific chapter for SMEs, provisions to support SMEs are included across the agreement (simplification of procedures, chapter on transparency, regulatory cooperation). SMEs can greatly benefit from removing customs duties, simplified rules, enhanced transparency, making it easier to bid for contracts, elimination of TBTs, strengthening IPR protection, etc. Companies that find that their goods are frequently held up at the border, or which struggle to meet local licensing requirements for service delivery, can raise these problems with their own governments, which can then utilise the government-to-government committees to push for improvement.

For the more straightforward questions that companies wanting to engage with Vietnam, the services of the Commission have prepared a number of on-line website or guides. These should help to get first useful information. Currently, the available sources are as follows:

1. In order to facilitate the understanding of the agreements with Vietnam, the EU Delegation has prepared a practical Guide (updated in 2019) which explains in clear and simple language the main outcomes and achievements of the agreements.

https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2016/june/tradoc_154622.pdf

2. The EVFTA text is available in all EU official languages at this website:
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2020:186:TOC> .

3. A lot of useful information for SMEs can be also found in the Market Access Database (<http://madb.europa.eu/madb/indexPubli.htm>)

The Market Access Database platform operated by the European Commission provides information to companies exporting from the EU. The database contains information about import conditions in third country markets such as Vietnam. It is accessible free of charge for anybody exporting from the European Union, including of course SMEs. The information that can be sourced from the Market Access Database includes:

- Duties and taxes on imports of products into specific countries
- Procedures and documents required for customs clearance in the partner country
- Trade flows in goods between EU and non-EU countries
- Main barriers affecting your exports
- Food safety/animal health/plant health measures
- Preferential agreements and rules of origin
- Useful links to services targeting small and medium-sized Enterprises

4. If on the contrary, the HS Code is known, but you do not know what it stands for or you need to know the name of the product category covered, the TARIC database will allow you a quick search https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/dds2/taric/taric_consultation.jsp .
5. Specifically drafted for the EVFTA, a document on rules of origins (RoO) prepared by the European Commission officials responsible for customs is available online at https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/sites/taxation/files/evfta-guidance.pdf .
6. Concerning intellectual property, the South-East Asia IPR SME Helpdesk supports European Union small and medium sized enterprises to protect and enforce their intellectual property rights in or relating to Southeast Asian countries. The South-East Asia IPR SME Helpdesk also covers Vietnam and provides free information and services on IPR and related issues, as well as training, materials and online resources.

<https://www.southeastasia-iprhelpdesk.eu/>

7. The Trade Defence SME Helpdesk offers importers and exporters easily accessible personal advice in case they are affected by Trade Defence Instruments, i.e. as anti-dumping or anti-subsidy measures, imposed in the EU) or elsewhere in the world.

trade-defence-sme-helpdesk@ec.europa.eu

8. The EU Trade Helpdesk (www.exporthelp.europa.eu)

The Export Helpdesk (EH) is a freely accessible online database for companies from non-EU countries which intend to sell products on the EU market. The system holds real-time information on the EU's import conditions for any type of product from machinery and chemicals to textiles, food and wine. Businesses can access applied customs duties for all goods listed in the EU tariff schedule and also retrieve the actual EU import requirements for these products, the applicable tax rates in the 27 EU Member states and comprehensive trade statistics going back to 2002.

Special features of the database are the EU's product specific requirements such as sanitary and phytosanitary rules, technical standards and labelling rules that can be searched product-by-product. The website is regularly updated and thus provides a reliable source of information. Most of the information is available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. When planning to export to the EU businesses can check:

- Which documents they need to produce to get access to the EU market (customs documents, import licenses, freight insurance papers) – the general import requirements
- Which EU legal requirements for human health, consumer safety, packaging, marketing and labelling apply to the product they intend to import – the specific import requirements
- Which import duties, tariffs and preferential and non-preferential tariff quotas apply to their products
- Which preferential arrangements the EU has with other countries and how to claim lower duty rates by respecting the rules of origin for a product
- The VAT rates and excise duties applying in each of the 27 EU Member States
- Trade statistics for trade flows between non-EU and EU countries.