



UGANDA NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS

**Pre-Export Verification of
Conformity to Standards (PVoC)
Operational Manual**

Introduction

Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) is a statutory body established by Act of Parliament, under the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC), and is responsible for matters of Standardisation, Quality Assurance, Metrology and Testing (SQMT). The aim of UNBS is to promote trade, enhance competitiveness of local industries and protect the health and safety of consumers.

Within its mandate, UNBS has the duty to inspect Commodities imported into the country, to ensure that they conform to mandatory Uganda standards. In its desire to improve the quality of imported Commodities, UNBS implements the **Pre-Export Verification of Conformity to standards (PVoC) program for general goods** through three (3) companies namely: -

TUV Rheinland, Intertek International Limited and Société Générale de Surveillance S.A (SGS) to carry out inspections on its behalf in the countries of origin. UNBS implements the **Pre-Export Verification of Conformity to standards (PVoC) program for used motor vehicles** through two (2) companies namely: - Quality Inspection Services INC. Japan and EAA Company Ltd.

PVoC is a conformity assessment procedure based on Article 5 of the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement (WTO/TBT Agreement). The program is designed and streamlined to be fully consistent with the rules, regulations and legitimate instruments incorporated in the relevant agreement of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). It takes into account: -

- the safety hazards inherent to the specific product (such as mechanical, electrical, thermal, fire or explosion, chemical, biological or radiation hazards)
- the severity of the hazards
- the homogeneity of the consignment ensuring that Commodities in a container are of consistent quality
- the final buyer and end user with respect to value for money
- Manufacture or sale of sub-standard commodities is a criminal offence under the UNBS Act Cap 327, Laws of Uganda. PVoC draws its legal mandate from legislation as contained in the Statutory Instrument No. 26 of 2018.

All stakeholders and service providers are expected to use this manual to guide them on how to undertake the PVoC process.

Definitions

1. **Accredited Body** Accredited bodies are:

- Laboratories accredited for commodities of the related group of commodities by a full member of ILAC,
- Product certification bodies accredited for commodities of the related group of commodities by a full member of ILAC,
- Laboratories of the appointed companies,
- Laboratory and certification bodies accepted in E/e certification scheme (vehicles, tyres and vehicle parts),
- Manufacturer laboratories, as long as all of the following are fulfilled:
 - Laboratory issues detailed and full Test reports according to the accepted standard,
 - Manufacturer has its QMS certified (ISO 9001:2015),
 - Copy of Quality control report shall be provided (Routine tests) and shall demonstrate effectiveness of the conformity system,
 - Laboratory shall provide method and list of test equipment (name of the apparatus, name of related test, manufacturer name, model number...) demonstrating the availability of the necessary equipment to perform the required tests.

2. **Acceptable standards**

Acceptable standards are:

- Uganda Standards as specified by UNBS Schedule of Compulsory standards;
- In absence of the above, International Standards, apply.

3. **Import documents**

Import documents are the documents lodged to customs at the entry point. They may include the following: -

- Customs bill of entry
- Invoice
- Bill of lading
- Road transit customs document,
- COC
- Import Declaration Form, amongst others.

4. **Certificate of Conformity (CoC)**

A certificate of conformity is a document issued by the appointed service provider to conforming commodities.

5. Non-Conforming Report (NCR)

A non-conforming report is a document issued by the appointed service provider in lieu of non-conforming commodities.

6. Certificate of Roadworthiness is a document issued by the appointed service provider to conforming used motor vehicles.

Abbreviations.

UNBS – Uganda National Bureau of Standards

URA – Uganda Revenue Authority

PVoC – Pre-Export Verification of Conformity

SQMT – Standardisation Quality Assurance and Testing

MTIC – Ministry of Trade Industry and Cooperatives

WTO – World Trade Organisation

TBT – Technical Barriers to Trade

ILAC – International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation

USD – United States Dollar

CoC – Certificate of Conformity

NCR – Non-Conforming Report

RFI – Request for Inspection

SP – Service provider

IEC – International Electro-technical Commission

ISO – International Organisation for Standardisation

ICD – Internal Container Depot

UAE – United Arab Emirates

UK – United Kingdom

FOB – Free on Board

EAA – East Africa Automobile

QMS – Quality Management Systems

EAC – East African Community

EN – European Nomenclature

ECE – Electrical and Computer Engineering

General Information

1.1 Definition

Pre-export verification of conformity (PVoC) is a type of conformity verification performed in the country of export/ origin that is essentially the assessment of the exporter/manufacturer's statement that their Commodities conform to agreed set of requirements which may include an audit of the production processes, documentary check of Conformity with regard to regulations, general inspection and testing to ensure that

specific commodities conform to the relevant Compulsory Uganda Specification or any other approved International Standards.

1.2 Objectives of PVoC

- To protect Consumers and the environment by ensuring importation of only quality-assured goods and preventing shipment into Uganda of substandard and hazardous products.
- To protect Uganda manufacturers from unfair competition of cheaper imitations of manufactured goods abroad and booster confidence of investors whose industries are currently under threat from the menace of substandard goods
- To reduce the cost of doing business by reducing clearance time of imported goods at ports of entry thus contributing to the competitiveness of Uganda in trade and investment.
- To ensure value for money for consumers and traders by preventing consumers from spending their hard-earned money on worthless and harmful goods that do not last.
- Improve tax revenue collection by preventing deceptive practices like mis-declaration of type and quantities of imported products.
- To create a better business environment for firms dealing in genuine quality and safe products thus bolstering the economy by increasing consumer confidence through trade in better quality and safer products.
- The efforts as well as resources of UNBS that would be channelled to testing imports, which amount to 60% of the total number of samples tested, would be diverted to testing products meant for export thereby promoting the growth of exports.
- Optimal use of resources by UNBS where the resources saved through PVoC can be channelled into market surveillance, promotion of quality standards and competitiveness in small scale industries in Uganda.

1.3 Benefits of PVoC

- Protect the health and safety of consumers and environment
- Protect the local industry from unfair competition
- Reduces fraudulent transactions by creating transparent trading ambiance
- Saves costs by eliminating demurrage, re-exportation and destruction
- Conforming commodities at a lower price; the PVoC program does not increase the price of the commodities. It instead encourages importers to select reliable suppliers who can provide available conformed commodities at a reduced price
- Facilitates timely clearance of goods

1.4 Obligations of the Importer

- ❖ Importer Buys Uganda standards from UNBS for the products regularly imported so as to know the standards requirements

- ❖ Before planning to make an order or buy the goods abroad, the importer contacts any of the PVoC service providers in Uganda to be guided on the physical location and contact of their office abroad, nearest to where the items are procured

- ❖ The importer can also Contact UNBS, or visits UNBS website to get contacts for the PVoC Service Providers in Uganda.

- ❖ Ensure that all product units issued with a COC irrespective of the PVoC Route bear a sticker of the UNBS Distinctive Mark obtained from the Bureau (The implementation for the application of the distinctive mark shall be amended as per the Tax Procedures Code (Tax Stamp) Regulations, 2018 for exercisable goods and the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (Use of the Distinctive Mark) Regulations, 2018).

- ❖ Ensure that all goods comply with Uganda standards requirements and that they are well marked for ease of traceability.

1.5 Procedure of PVoC

The procedure for assessment shall be as follows: -

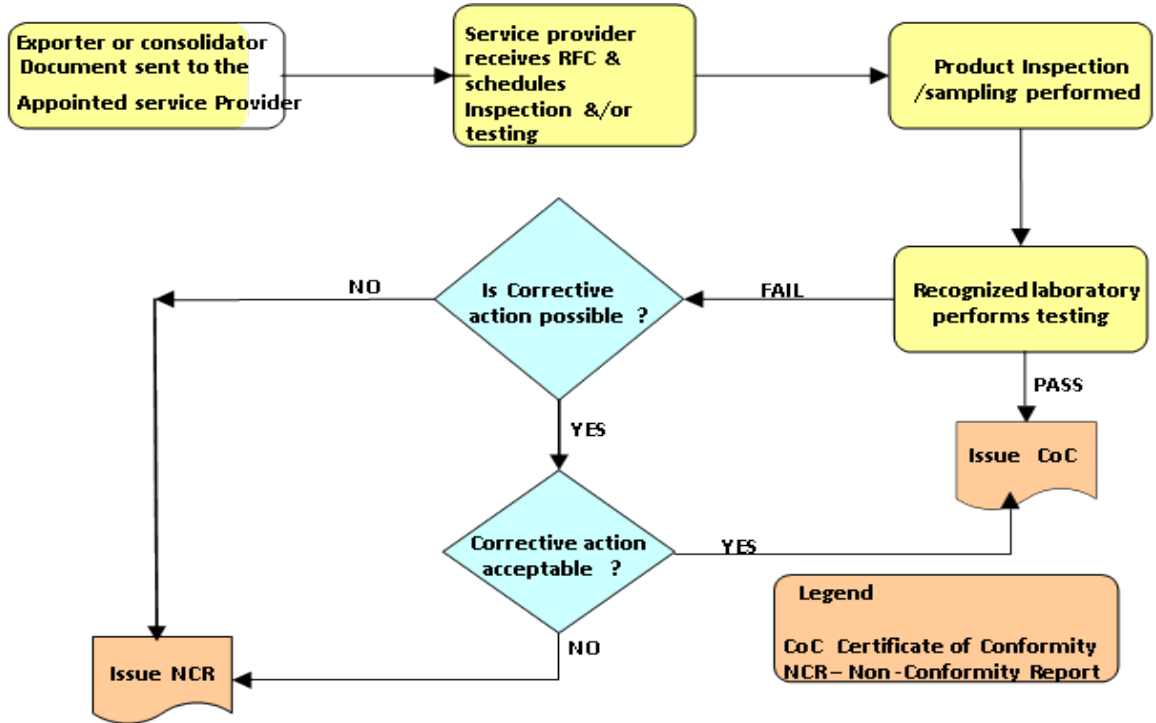
- a) Importer's (exporters) shall apply for the assessment of their commodities to one of the appointed service providers by filling in a copy of the request for Inspection.
- b) The "applicant" (Importer/exporter) shall provide the following to the appointed service provider:
 - Existing proof of conformity of Quality documents such as ISO 9001:2015

- Satisfactory Test reports from an accredited laboratory to ISO 17025, not more than one year old for food commodities and two years for non-food commodities

Document requirements for exporters of used motor vehicles

- De-registration certificate for used motor vehicles
 - Export certificate
- c) After presentation of the relevant documentation, the trader shall then choose to have their Commodities assessed for conformance to the relevant standards according to the product clearance route chosen.
- d) The appointed service provider shall then check the conformity proof provided by the Applicant. If the quality documents are not available, the service provider will advise on the way forward.
- e) When there is no other proof of conformity or those availed are not accepted, then testing of the commodities is required.
- f) When testing is required, the
- Testing shall be carried out by a Laboratory accredited by a full member of ILAC based on ISO 17025
 - Testing shall be carried out according to the essential requirements of the relevant standards agreed upon by UNBS
 - Test reports shall provide full identification of the sample, the test results, verdict and if possible photo of the tested items as per requirements of the ISO 17025
- g) When inspection is carried out, the inspector shall: -
- Perform visual verification of the specification of the line items
 - Performs visual verification of the available quantity of each line item
 - Carry out performance tests if feasible
 - Take photos of the commodities of the consignment (except when not allowed at inspection site)
 - Issue an inspection report (to be signed by exporter's representative on site)
- f) After the conformity assessment is done and with regard to the outcome, the trader shall be issued with a Certificate of Conformity for conforming goods or a Non Conformity Report for non-conforming goods.

PVOC PROCESS FLOW CHART



2.0 Product Categories

2.1 Category of Commodities subject to PVoC

Commodities subject to Pre-Export Verification of Conformity of standards shall have an FOB invoice value of more than USD 2,000.

The UNBS (Inspection and Clearance of Imports) Regulation, 2018 Schedule 1 Part 1 provides for a list of categories of commodities subject to PVoC as listed below.

Sno.	GROUP	CATEGORY
1.	I	Toys
2.	II	Electrical and electronics including solar panels and systems
3.	III	Automotive products and Inputs
4.	IV	Chemical Commodities
5.	V	Mechanical Materials and gas appliances including construction materials and items
6.	VI	Textile, Leather, Plastic and Rubber
7.	VII	Furniture including wood and metal articles
8.	VIII	Paper and Stationery
9.	IX	Protective Safety Equipment
10.	X	Food and Food products
11.	XI	Used commodities including Used Motor vehicles

2.2 Commodities that are Exempt from PVoC

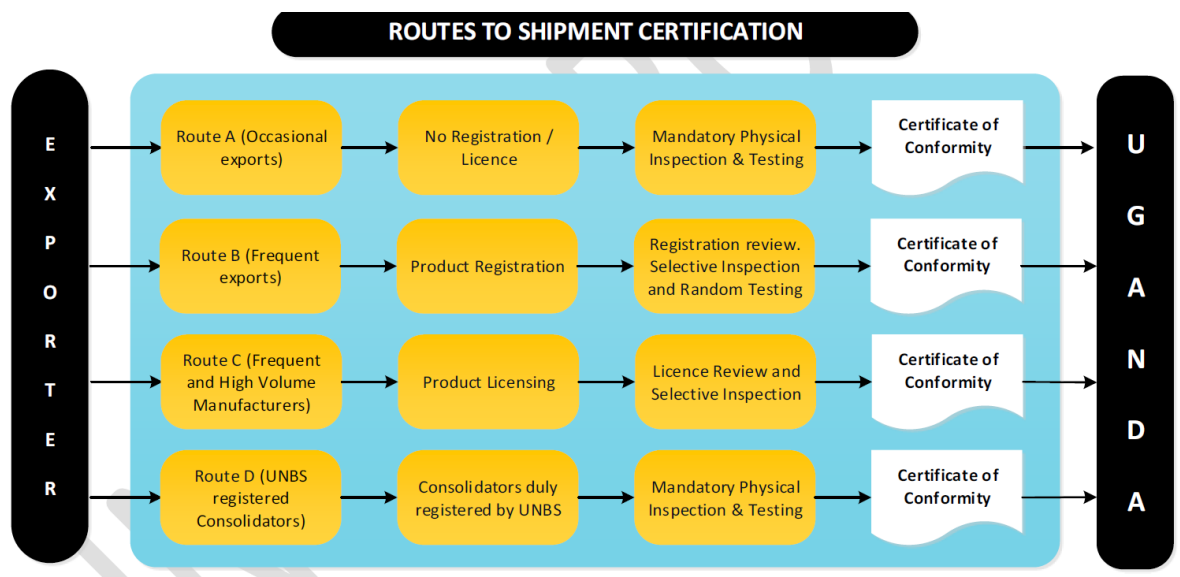
The UNBS (Inspection and Clearance of Imports) Regulations, 2018 Schedule 1 Part 2 provides for a list of categories that are exempted from PVoC as listed below.

Sno.	Commodities that are Exempt from PVoC
1.	A consignment whose Free on board (FOB) value does not exceed US\$2000
2.	Government project specific commodities whose procurement has an inbuilt or demonstrated quality assurance system that guarantees conformity to national standards

3.	Raw materials imported for use in a manufacturing process and not for sale
4.	Diplomatic cargo
5.	Personal effects of returning residents and expatriates
6.	Commodities that have a product certification mark and commodities from a partner state of the East African Community
7.	Industrial machinery and spare parts brought in a for a manufacturing process and not for re-sale
8.	Classified military, Police and Prisons hardware and equipment

3.0 Routes for Product Clearance

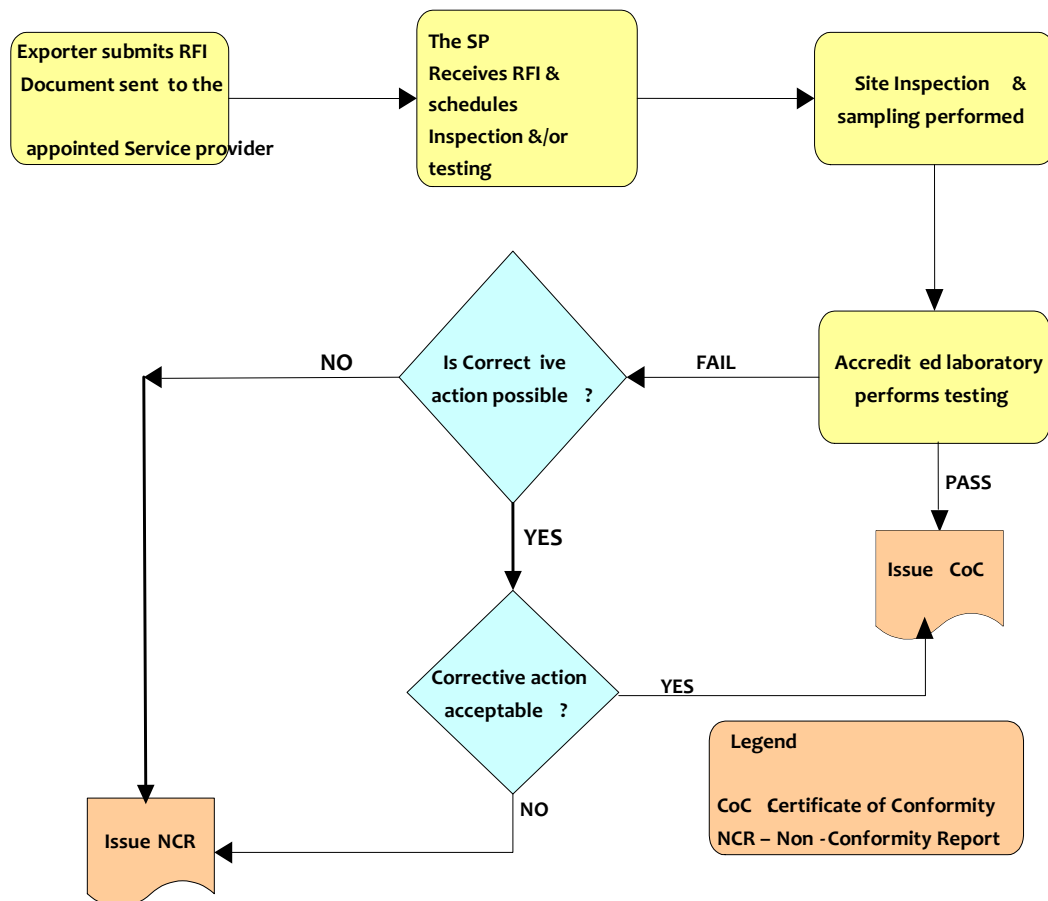
There are 4 routes used for product clearance in the PVoC Programme namely Route A, Route B, Route C and route D.



3.1 Route A:

This route is applicable to any type of Commodities and any trader/exporter; no prior registration is required.

Flow Chart for PVoC Basic Process - ROUTE A



3.2 ROUTE B:

This route is recommended for frequent exporters with homogeneous commodities and those registered commodities that may be shipped with other commodities. The route requires a self-declaration of compliance supported by substantiated evidence of conformity and consistency (test reports, certificates, Quality Management Certificates, etc). The exporter applies for Registration and forwards the request to the PVoC service provider. The service provider reviews the request including previous compliance history. Upon compliance to the technical review, a statement of registration is issued.

Registration for this route is annually renewable, subject to continual compliance. The PVoC service provider shall undertake surveillance

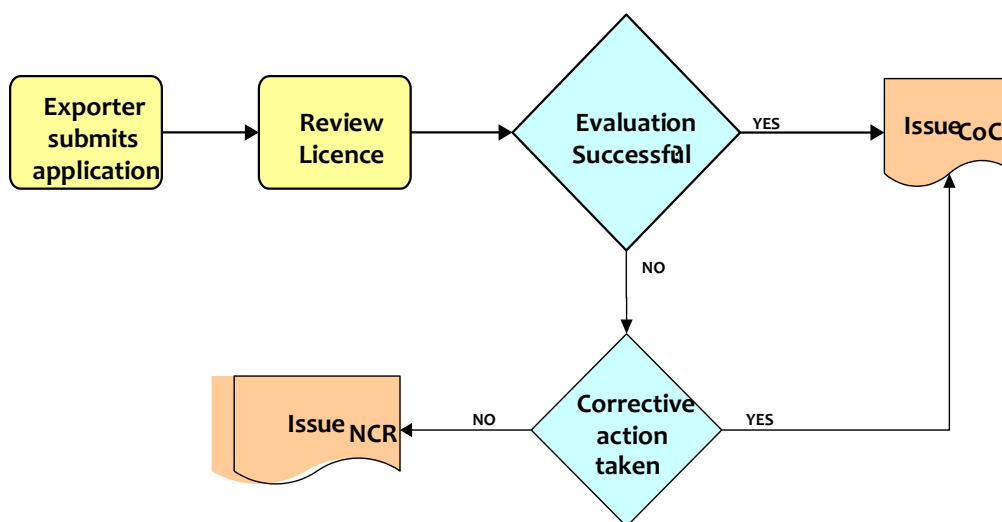
audits on the exporter twice annually and test the commodities at the service provider laboratories. Each time the exporter needs to ship to Uganda, a request for certification shall be made to the SP. Attachments including traceable test reports to the shipment and other quality documents shall be reviewed. If they comply a COC shall be issued and if they do not comply an NCR shall be issued. Issuance of CoC is based on the risk management system agreed upon by UNBS and SP.

3.3 ROUTE C:

This route is only for manufacturers and distributors who are duly authorized by manufacturers to represent them. It involves consistent shipment compliance, evaluation of test reports and additional testing to demonstrate full compliance with the Standards. The PVOC service provider shall undertake surveillance audits on the exporter twice annually and also test the commodities at the service provider laboratories two times in a year.

Licensing for this route is annually renewable, subject to continual compliance.

Flow Chart for PVoC Facilitation Process - ROUTE C



3.4 Route D

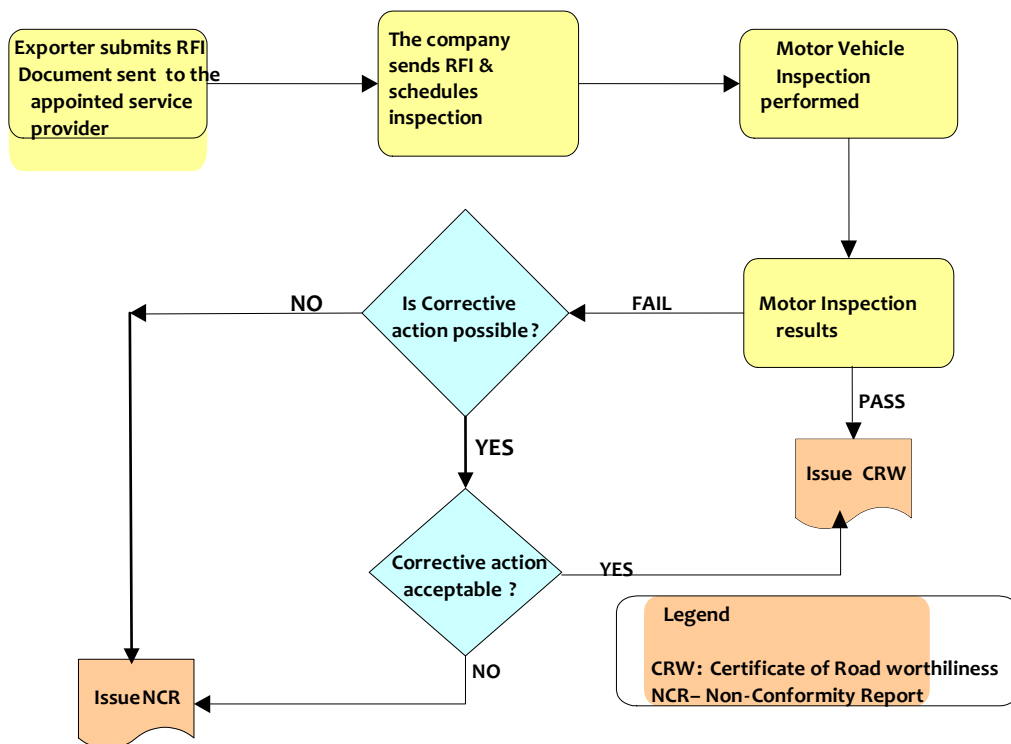
This is for small traders/groupage in nature who consolidate at specific identified and registered warehouses. This requires mandatory inspection and where required testing and sealing. Under this route the

registered consolidator requests for inspection on behalf of the importer.

3.5 Used Motor Vehicles

All used motor vehicles imported from Japan, UK and UAE shall undergo PVoC before they are shipped into Uganda. The exporter/importer shall submit the commercial invoice, export certificate and any other relevant documents to the PVoC service provider. Then he/she shall request for inspection of the used motor vehicle through the online database of the service provider. The scope of assignment for the service providers is that EAA Company Ltd and Quality Inspection Services INC Japan shall only inspect vehicles being imported from Japan, UK and UAE.

Flow chart for PVoC of used Motor vehicles



3.6 Online Attachments to COCs issued on the online database of the service provider

	Route A	Route B	Route C	Route D
List of mandatory attachments to SP Inspection online database for issuance of CoCs	1.Request for inspection 2.Commercial Invoice 3.Quality documents 4.Test reports traceable to the goods 5.Inspection report including the batch numbers 6.Photographs 7.CoC 8.Packing List(optional)	1.Request for inspection/Certification 2.Commercial Invoice 3.Quality documents 4.Test reports traceable to the goods 5.Inspection report including the batch numbers(optional) 6.Photographs 7.CoC 8.Copy of the statement of registration 9.Packing List(optional)	1.Request for Certification 2.Commercial Invoice 3.Quality documents 4.Test reports traceable to the goods (where applicable) 5.Licence evaluation report including the batch numbers 6.Photographs (optional) 7.CoC 8.Copy of licence 9.Packing List(optional)	1.Request for inspection 2.Commercial Invoice 3.quality documents 4.Test reports traceable to the goods 5.Inspection report including the batch numbers 6.Photographs 7.CoC 8.Packing List

4.0 Clearance of Commodities in Uganda

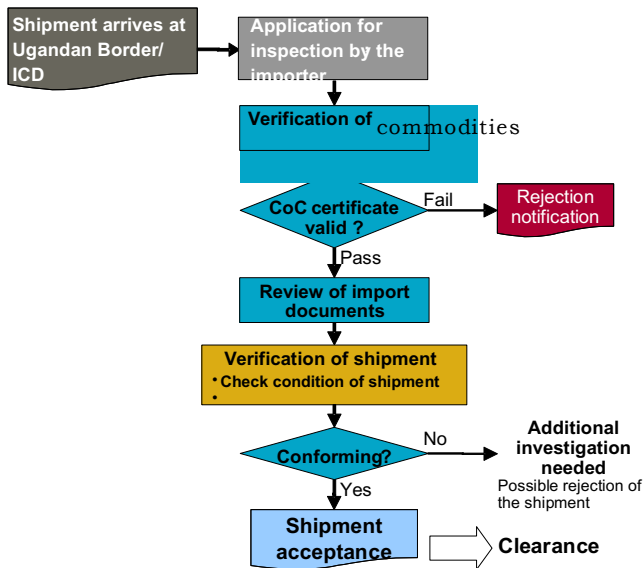
Import Clearance on entry into Uganda shall include: -

- Verification of the authenticity of the certificates issued; The COCs or CRWs must be traceable to the consignment presented for inspection.

- Verification that issued certificate covers commodities identified in import documents
- Verification of integrity of seals (if any identified in shipping documents)
- Physical verification of condition of the shipment (damage of container, alteration of cargo) including inspection

- Review of import documents which include: Customs bill of entry, Invoice, bill of lading, the road customs transit document (RCTD), etc. Upon satisfactory completion of the different tasks of the inspection at the entry point/ ICD in Uganda, acceptance of the certificate is confirmed by UNBS. The consignment is then permitted into the country and an Imports Inspection Clearance Certificate issued.

Flow Chart for Clearance of Commodities in Uganda



5.0 Fees structure

General goods

	Route A	Route B	Route C	Route D
General Commodities	0.500% FOB value	0.45% FOB value	0.25% FOB value	0.500% FOB value
	Minimum fee:USD235	Minimum fee:USD235	Minimum fee:USD235	Minimum fee:USD235
	Maximum Fee: USD3,000	Maximum Fee: USD3,000	Maximum Fee: USD3,000	Maximum Fee: USD3,000

Used Motor Vehicles

Used Motor Vehicles	Japan	USD 140	
	UAE	USD 125	
	UK	USD 200	
	Other countries	USD 140	

6.0 PVoC Service providers Scope of assignment

a) For the general Commodities, the appointed service providers shall offer pre-export verification of conformity services in any part of the world. There are no restrictions for these service providers.

b) The scope of assignment for the service providers is that EAA Company Ltd and Quality Inspection Services INC Japan shall only inspect vehicles being imported from Japan, UK and UAE

7.0 Legal Notice

PVOC is regulated under the Uganda National Bureau Of standards (Inspection and Clearance of Imports)Regulations, 2018 ,Statutory Instrument No 26 of 2018

8.0 Complaint handling

In the event of a dispute, dissatisfaction of services provider, an exporter shall submit the complaint in writing to the Executive Director, UNBS or by email pvoc@unbs.go.ug. A copy of this complaint shall be submitted to the relevant service provider. The relevant Service provider shall respond to and/ or resolve the complaint lodged within two (2) working days. A copy of the resolution of the complaint shall be filed by both UNBS and the relevant service provider.

