



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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Federal Department of Finance FDF
**The Federal Office for Customs and
Border Security FOCBS**
Directorate



Non-Customs Legislative Instruments 1 January 2024

FAQ on AEO status

Frequently asked questions

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FAQ on AEO status – 1.2024

1 General questions

1.1 What does AEO stand for?

AEO stands for Authorised Economic Operator. Given the international significance of this term, the English version is also used in German.

1.2 Is AEO status obligatory?

No.

1.3 At which types of company is AEO status aimed?

Companies that are entered in the commercial register of Switzerland or the Principality of Liechtenstein and whose business involves performing activities relating to the international supply chain may apply for AEO status.

1.4 What are the advantages of being an AEO?

AEOs are granted facilitations concerning customs security and safety checks. It is also planned to provide facilitations under [Art. 194 of the CustO](#) and [Art. 115 of the VATO](#) (sureties) in the future. However, these cannot be granted until the Federal Office for Customs and Border Security's [DaziT](#) transformation and digitalisation programme has been implemented (2020 to 2025).

In addition, there are other indirect advantages:

- Holders are able to analyse their own processes using the comprehensive "self-assessment form", and thus optimise their internal procedures and control mechanisms;
- Holders receive a seal of quality in trading (reliable and safe international supply chain).

AEO status is recognised in countries with which Switzerland has concluded an agreement (mutual recognition). In return, Swiss AEOs benefit from relief in those countries.

1.5 What are the criteria for obtaining AEO status?

- previous compliance with the rules (customs duties, tax and economic activity);
- availability of a system for managing commercial and, possibly, transport records which allows appropriate customs security and safety checks;
- proven financial solvency;
- appropriate security and safety standards.

1.6 Where can I find information on the criteria to be met by my company?

The legal basis is provided by the Customs Ordinance (in French, German, Italian. [SR 631.01](#); in particular [Arts. 112b](#) to 112g;). Further information on the criteria to be met can be found in the Swiss [AEO guidelines](#) and the [EU guidelines](#) and [related explanatory notes](#) (Annex 1b, p. 149 et seq).

1.7 Is information available in English?

No. Applications must be made in an official language of Switzerland; for this reason, some of our information is only available in those languages.

2 Submitting an application

2.1 Where can I find the self-assessment questionnaire and how is it structured?

You can find the [self-assessment questionnaire](#) on our website under "Services". It is an Excel file and is divided into six sections.

2.2 Can an individual company unit also apply for AEO status?

AEO status is granted only for entire companies or for individual company divisions (branches).

2.3 Is there any point in small companies acquiring AEO status?

AEO status can also bring benefits for small companies. The Federal Office for Customs and Border Security tries to take the specifics of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) into account, e.g. when checking security/safety standards or with regard to accounting.

2.4 In which countries is AEO status recognised?

Currently, Switzerland has an agreement with the EU on the mutual recognition of security/safety standards and the granting of AEO status, and has agreements with the United Kingdom, Norway and China. Similar agreements with additional countries are planned (Japan, possibly the United States and others).

3 Certification

3.1 How long does the certification process take?

This depends on the size of the company and the complexity of its business model. Overall, the certification process can be expected to take six months from start to finish. However, the time to completion varies widely, depending on the quality and amount of documentation and information submitted, and the number of applications received.

3.2 What does it cost to obtain AEO status?

The Federal Office for Customs and Border Security does not charge for granting AEO status. No involvement from external certification bodies or assessors is necessary. However, companies may incur costs relating to compliance with the criteria (e.g. construction-related measures).

3.3 Do I receive a certificate?

Yes, the Federal Office for Customs and Border Security will issue a certificate. The actual accreditation will be issued once certification has been completed.

3.4 Who can I contact with questions on AEO status?

- For support on the application and procedural questions, please contact the Federal Office for Customs and Border Security office responsible for your region:
 - Cantons AG, BL, BS:
Basel South Customs
Tel. +41 58 466 14 00
zoll.basel_sued_up@bazg.admin.ch
 - Principality of Liechtenstein and cantons AI, AR, GR, SG:
St Gallen/Liechtenstein Customs
Tel. +41 58 481 23 23
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