

ZEE Co.

Egypt Market Entry Guide

Regulatory Landscape & Import Framework

A practical guide for foreign manufacturers and exporters entering the Egyptian market — covering customs regulations, ACI compliance, CargoX digital documentation, and factory registration requirements.

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Egypt as a Trade Destination

Egypt is the Arab world's most populous country and one of Africa's largest economies, with a population exceeding 105 million and a strategic geographic position connecting Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. The country's import market is substantial and growing, driven by infrastructure investment, industrial development, and consumer demand.

Egypt's primary ports of entry are Alexandria (Mediterranean) and Port Said (Suez Canal), with additional capacity at Damietta and Sokhna. Cairo International Airport handles air freight. The Egyptian Customs Authority (ECA) operates under the Ministry of Finance and has undergone significant digitalisation in recent years.

Key Regulatory Bodies

Egyptian Customs Authority (ECA)

Primary customs administration body. Oversees import clearance, duty assessment, and compliance enforcement.

General Organisation for Export & Import Control (GOEIC)

Responsible for import quality control and conformity assessment for regulated product categories.

Ministry of Trade & Industry

Issues import licences and oversees trade policy, including factory registration requirements.

Central Bank of Egypt (CBE)

Regulates foreign currency transactions and import financing mechanisms.

Advance Cargo Information (ACI) System

Egypt's Advance Cargo Information (ACI) system requires that cargo data be submitted to Egyptian Customs before goods depart the origin country. This is a mandatory requirement for all shipments to Egypt and non-compliance results in cargo being held at port.

Key ACI Requirements:

- ACI data must be submitted at least 24 hours before vessel departure for sea freight
- For air freight, submission is required before aircraft departure
- Data must be submitted by the exporter or their authorised agent
- Required data includes: shipper details, consignee details, cargo description, HS codes, weight, volume, and vessel/flight information
- Amendments after departure are subject to penalties

ACI Non-Compliance Consequences:

- Cargo held at port pending ACI data submission
- Financial penalties applied by Egyptian Customs Authority
- Delays in customs clearance — typically 5–15 additional working days
- Potential return of goods to origin at shipper's expense in severe cases

How ZEE Co. Supports ACI Compliance

ZEE Co. coordinates ACI submission on behalf of our clients, working with freight forwarders and customs agents to ensure all required data is submitted accurately and on time. We review shipping documents before departure to identify and resolve any data gaps that could trigger non-compliance.

CargoX Digital Documentation Platform

Egypt has adopted CargoX as its official blockchain-based trade document transfer platform. CargoX enables the secure digital transfer of trade documents — including bills of lading, certificates of origin, and other shipping documents — directly to Egyptian Customs.

CargoX integration is mandatory for shipments to Egypt. Exporters and their agents must register on the CargoX platform and submit required documents digitally before or upon vessel arrival.

Documents Submitted via CargoX:

- Bill of Lading (Original or Telex Release)
- Commercial Invoice
- Packing List
- Certificate of Origin
- Insurance Certificate
- Any product-specific certificates (conformity, health, phytosanitary, etc.)

CargoX Registration Requirements for Exporters:

- Register at platform.cargox.io as a document sender
- Verify business identity and obtain a digital wallet
- Link your freight forwarder or customs agent as an authorised party
- Submit documents in the required format and within the required timeframe

ZEE Co. CargoX Support

ZEE Co. provides full CargoX coordination support for our clients, including document preparation, platform submission, and liaison with Egyptian Customs on document-related queries. We can also assist foreign exporters in understanding their CargoX obligations before their first shipment to Egypt.

Factory Registration Requirements

Egypt requires foreign manufacturers in certain product categories to register their factories with the Egyptian authorities before their products can be imported. This requirement applies primarily to food products, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and certain industrial goods.

Categories Requiring Factory Registration:

- Food products and beverages
- Pharmaceuticals and medical devices
- Cosmetics and personal care products
- Pesticides and agricultural chemicals
- Animal feed and veterinary products
- Certain industrial chemicals
- Baby products and infant formula

Registration Process Overview

Step 1: Determine Applicability

Identify whether your product category requires factory registration under Egyptian regulations. ZEE Co. can advise on this based on your HS code and product description.

Step 2: Prepare Documentation

Gather required documents including factory licence, quality management certificates (ISO 22000, GMP, HACCP as applicable), product specifications, and authorisation letters.

Step 3: Submit Application

Submit the registration application to the relevant Egyptian authority (GOEIC, NFSA, or Ministry of Health depending on category).

Step 4: Inspection & Approval

Some categories require a factory inspection by Egyptian officials or an accredited third party. Approval timelines vary from 3–12 months depending on category and completeness of documentation.

Step 5: Maintain Registration

Factory registrations require periodic renewal and must be updated when production facilities or processes change significantly.

Import Duties & Taxes

Egypt applies customs duties based on the HS (Harmonised System) code of imported goods. Duty rates vary significantly by product category, ranging from 0% for essential raw materials to 40%+ for luxury consumer goods. Additional taxes may apply:

- Customs Duty: 0%–40% depending on HS code and product category
- Value Added Tax (VAT): 14% on most imported goods
- Sales Tax: Applied to certain product categories in addition to VAT
- Excise Tax: Applied to tobacco, alcohol, and certain luxury items
- Development Duty: 1% applied to most imports

Egypt has preferential trade agreements with several trading partners that may reduce applicable duty rates, including the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA), the EU-Egypt Association Agreement, and COMESA. ZEE Co. can advise on applicable preferential rates for your specific products.

Prohibited & Restricted Imports

Certain goods are prohibited or restricted from import into Egypt. Restricted goods require special licences or permits. ZEE Co. conducts a compliance check on all sourcing enquiries to identify any applicable restrictions before proceeding.

How ZEE Co. Can Help

- Pre-import regulatory assessment for your specific products
- ACI and CargoX compliance coordination
- Factory registration guidance and documentation support
- Duty calculation and tariff classification advice
- Import licence and permit coordination
- End-to-end trade management from origin to Egyptian delivery

Ready to enter the Egyptian market?

Book a trade consultation at zeecotrade.com/consultation

Or submit an RFQ at zeecotrade.com/contact — our specialists respond within 24 hours.