

**OFFICIAL PUBLIC NOTICE**

LAUNCH OF THE  
**Pre-Export Verification of Conformity (PVoC)**  
**PHASE 1 PILOT PROGRAMME**

|                                        |                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Issued By                              | South African Bureau of Standards (SABS)                            |
| Notice Reference Number                | SABS/PVoC/2025/001                                                  |
| Date of Issue                          | 01 April 2026                                                       |
| Document Version                       | Version 1.0                                                         |
| Classification                         | Public Notice — For General Distribution                            |
| Programme Phase                        | Phase 1 PVOC Pilot Programme                                        |
| Programme Status                       | Transitional — Voluntary Participation Period                       |
| Authorising Instrument                 | Ministerial Directive — Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition |
| Programme Lead Institution             | South African Bureau of Standards (SABS)                            |
| Policy Authority                       | Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic)            |
| Certification Assessment Body in China | China Certification & Inspection Group Inspection Co., Ltd. (CCIC)  |

**IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS**

This public notice is directed at all importers, exporters, manufacturers, freight forwarders, customs clearing agents, retailers, industry associations, consumer bodies, regulatory authorities, and all other interested parties involved in the importation of consumer goods into the Republic of South Africa. All affected parties are strongly encouraged to read this notice in its entirety, retain a copy for reference, and register with the SABS PVoC Programme Office to receive ongoing updates and communications.

## SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Overview

The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) hereby formally and officially notifies all importers, exporters, manufacturers, traders, freight forwarders, customs clearing agents, industry associations, regulatory bodies, consumer organisations, and members of the general public that the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition has approved and issued a Ministerial Directive authorising the establishment and implementation of the Pre-Export Verification of Conformity (PVoC) Phase 1 Pilot Programme in the Republic of South Africa.

This notice serves as the official public announcement of the PVoC programme and provides comprehensive information regarding the programme's objectives, scope, institutional arrangements, operational procedures, stakeholder obligations, and engagement opportunities.

The SABS, as the national standards body of South Africa, is mandated to promote the standardisation of commodities and the rendering of services, to provide for the preparation, publication, and implementation of standards, and to promote quality in connection with commodities, the rendering of services, and the carrying out of construction works. The PVoC programme is a direct expression of this mandate in the context of international trade and import compliance.

### 1.2 Background and Context

South Africa is a significant market for internationally manufactured consumer goods, with a large volume of imported products entering the country annually through various ports of entry. Over recent years, regulatory authorities, consumer protection bodies, and industry stakeholders have raised growing concerns regarding the increasing presence of substandard, unsafe, counterfeit, and non-compliant consumer products in the South African marketplace.

These concerns include, but are not limited to:

- Consumer safety hazards posed by electrical appliances and electronic devices that do not meet minimum safety requirements, including risks of fire, electrocution, and explosion.
- Chemical and physical hazards present in toys and children's products that do not comply with applicable safety standards, exposing vulnerable consumers, particularly children, to serious harm.
- Structural and flammability risks associated with furniture and mattresses that do not meet required standards, potentially contributing to domestic fires and injuries.
- Unfair competitive disadvantage suffered by South African manufacturers who invest in compliance with national standards, but who compete against imported goods sold at artificially low prices because they do not bear the cost of compliance.
- Consumer deception and economic harm resulting from the sale of counterfeit and misrepresented products that do not perform as advertised or labelled.
- Regulatory pressure at ports of entry, where a high volume of non-compliant goods creates significant operational challenges for customs and border management authorities.
- Reputational risks to South Africa's trading relationships and market integrity arising from the unregulated flow of substandard imports.

The PVoC programme has been designed as a strategic, targeted, and effective intervention to address these challenges by establishing a robust pre-export verification system that confirms product compliance with applicable South African National Standards (SANS) before goods are dispatched from their country of origin.

### 1.3 Policy Context and Legislative Framework

The PVoC programme is consistent with, and complementary to, South Africa's existing regulatory and legislative framework governing product safety, standards, and consumer protection. The programme operates within the following broad policy and legislative context:

| Legislative or Policy Instrument                                                      | Relevance to PVoC                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Standards Act, 2008 (Act No. 8 of 2008)</b>                                        | Establishes the SABS mandate and authority over national standards |
| <b>National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications Act, 2008 (Act No. 5 of 2008)</b> | Governs compulsory product specifications and NRCS authority       |
| <b>Consumer Protection Act, 2008 (Act No. 68 of 2008)</b>                             | Protects consumers from unsafe and substandard goods               |
| <b>Customs and Excise Act, 1964 (Act No. 91 of 1964)</b>                              | Governs border control and customs clearance procedures            |
| <b>National Development Plan (NDP)</b>                                                | Supports industrialisation and quality manufacturing               |
| <b>South Africa's Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP)</b>                            | Supports local industry competitiveness                            |
| <b>Ministerial Directive — Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition</b>            | Direct enabling authority for the PVoC programme                   |

**Note:** *The PVoC programme does not replace or supersede any existing legislation or regulatory requirement. It operates as a complementary conformity assessment mechanism that reinforces and strengthens the existing regulatory framework.*

### 1.4 International Precedent

South Africa is not alone in implementing a pre-export verification of conformity programme. Many countries across the African continent and globally have implemented similar programmes to protect their markets and consumers. Notable examples include:

| Country      | Programme                                    | Administering Body                                       |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Kenya        | Pre-Export Verification of Conformity (PVoC) | Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS)                         |
| Nigeria      | Pre-Export Verification of Conformity (PVoC) | Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON)                  |
| Tanzania     | Pre-Export Verification of Conformity (PVoC) | Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS)                       |
| Ghana        | Destination Inspection Scheme                | Ghana Standards Authority (GSA)                          |
| Egypt        | Verification of Conformity (VOC)             | General Organization for export & import control (GOEIC) |
| Saudi Arabia | Saudi Product Safety Programme (SALEEM)      | Saudi Standards Authority (SASO)                         |

South Africa's PVoC programme draws on the lessons learned and best practices established by these countries, while being specifically tailored to the South African regulatory environment, market conditions, and trade patterns.

## SECTION 2 TRANSITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

### 2.1 Purpose of the Transitional Period

The SABS and the dtic recognise that the successful implementation of the PVoC programme requires adequate preparation time for all affected stakeholders, including importers, exporters, manufacturers, freight forwarders, clearing agents, and industry bodies. A mandatory implementation without a preparatory period would create unnecessary disruption to existing trade flows and supply chains.

For this reason, the programme will commence with a structured, six-month voluntary transitional period, during which no mandatory compliance obligations apply, and during which the SABS will invest significant resources in stakeholder engagement, training, and capacity building.

### 2.2 Transitional Period Details

|                      |                                                                     |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Duration             | Six (6) months                                                      |
| Start Date           | 20 March 2026                                                       |
| End Date             | 20 September 2026                                                   |
| Participation Status | Voluntary — no mandatory obligations for the first six months       |
| Enforcement Status   | No enforcement action during transitional period                    |
| Purpose              | Preparation, awareness, capacity building, and programme refinement |

For the avoidance of doubt, the following arrangements will apply to shipments falling within the scope of the PVoC programme:

- **Shipments made before 20 March 2026**

Goods shipped before 20 March 2026 will not be subject to CoC verification at the customs clearance stage.

- **Shipments made from 20 March 2026 to 20 September 2026**

For goods shipped between **20 March 2026 and 20 September 2026**, where no certificate of conformity (CoC) is provided, consignments may be subjected to risk-based random inspections, reviews, and compliance checks against applicable South African National Standards (SANS) by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS), for system testing, process validation, and operational readiness of the PVoC framework.

## **2.3 Activities During the Transitional Period**

During the six-month transitional period, the following activities will be undertaken:

### **By the SABS:**

- Publication and distribution of comprehensive guidance documents and operational manuals.
- Hosting of national stakeholder workshops in major commercial centres across South Africa.
- Conducting of importer and exporter webinars accessible to participants nationally and internationally.
- Delivery of technical training sessions on SANS standards and conformity assessment requirements.
- Establishment and operationalisation of the SABS PVoC Programme Office.
- Development and launch of a dedicated PVoC information portal on the SABS website.
- Engagement with industry associations, trade bodies, and professional organisations.
- Coordination with CCIC to ensure inspection capacity is established and operational.
- Coordination with SARS Customs and BMA to prepare border validation procedures.
- Publication of the detailed product schedule and operational guidelines.

### **By Stakeholders (Encouraged During Transitional Period):**

- Registration of interest with the CCIC
- Attendance at stakeholder workshops, webinars, and training sessions.
- Review of applicable SANS standards relevant to their product categories.
- Voluntary submission of products for pre-export inspection to build familiarity with the process.
- Engagement with CCIC regarding inspection registration and procedures.
- Internal compliance gap assessments to identify areas requiring attention.
- Submission of questions, comments, and feedback to the SABS PVoC Programme Office.

## **2.4 Post-Transitional Period**

Following the conclusion of the six-month transitional period, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic) will formally communicate further decisions regarding the mandatory implementation of the PVoC programme, including:

- The effective date of mandatory participation.
- Any grace periods or phase-in arrangements for specific product categories or stakeholder groups.
- Enforcement mechanisms and consequences of non-compliance.
- Any amendments or refinements to the programme scope based on lessons learned during the pilot.
- The timeline and scope of future phases of the programme.

All stakeholders are strongly advised to utilise the transitional period productively to familiarise themselves with the programme requirements, engage with the SABS PVoC Programme Office, and prepare their internal systems and processes for compliance.

## SECTION 3 SCOPE OF THE PHASE 1 PILOT PROGRAMME

### 3.1 Principles Guiding Scope Determination

The scope of the Phase 1 pilot programme has been determined based on the following principles:

- Risk-based prioritisation: Products are selected based on the nature and severity of the risks they pose to consumer health, safety, and economic interests.
- Market relevance: Products selected represent significant import volumes into the South African market.
- Regulatory gap: Products selected are currently unregulated by compulsory specifications under the NRCS, meaning there is a gap in the existing regulatory safety net.
- Pilot feasibility: The scope is manageable within the capacity of the pilot programme to allow for effective learning and refinement before broader expansion.
- International precedent: Product categories align with those targeted by similar PVoC programmes in other countries.

### 3.2 Product Scope — Phase 1

The Phase 1 pilot programme will apply to the following high-risk unregulated consumer product categories:

**Important:** *A comprehensive and detailed product schedule, including specific HS tariff codes and applicable SANS standards, please refer to the ministerial directive attached in this notice. Importers and exporters are strongly advised to consult the detailed product schedule to determine whether their specific products fall within the scope of the Phase 1 programme.*

### 3.3 Products Excluded from Phase 1 Scope

The following categories of products are not within the scope of the Phase 1 pilot programme:

- Products already subject to compulsory specifications administered by the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS), which are regulated under a separate and existing framework.
- Products regulated under other sector-specific legislation, such as medicines, foodstuffs, and agricultural products, which are governed by dedicated regulatory bodies.
- Products imported for personal use in quantities that do not constitute commercial importation.
- Products imported by government entities for official use, subject to applicable exemptions.

### 3.4 Country Scope — Phase 1

The Phase 1 pilot programme will initially focus on products exported from the People's Republic of China to the Republic of South Africa. This decision is based on the following considerations:

- China is one of South Africa's largest sources of imported consumer goods, making it a logical starting point for the pilot programme.
- A significant proportion of non-compliant and substandard products identified in the South African market originate from manufacturing operations in China.
- The China Certification & Inspection Group Inspection Co., Ltd. (CCIC) has established operational infrastructure, technical capacity, and experience in conducting pre-export conformity assessments, making it a suitable and capable inspection partner for the pilot phase.
- A focused geographic scope allows the pilot programme to be implemented, monitored, and refined effectively before expansion to other source countries.

**Clarification on Non-Discrimination:** The focus on China as the initial country of origin for the Phase 1 pilot is a technical and operational decision based on trade volume, risk assessment, and inspection capacity. It is not a trade restriction measure directed against Chinese goods or the People's Republic of China and is consistent with South Africa's obligations under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) and other applicable international trade instruments.

### 3.5 Future Phases

It is the intention of the dtic and the SABS to progressively expand the PVoC programme in future phases to include additional product categories, additional countries of origin based on trade volume and risk assessment, and a mandatory participation framework following the conclusion of the pilot and transitional periods. Announcements regarding future phases will be made through official government channels, the SABS website, and direct stakeholder communications.

## SECTION 4 INSTITUTIONAL ROLES AND COLLABORATION

### 4.1 Overview of Institutional Framework

The PVoC programme operates through a structured multi-institutional framework that brings together government departments, regulatory bodies, standards institutions, inspection organisations, and border management authorities. This collaborative approach ensures that the programme benefits from the full range of institutional expertise, authority, and operational capacity required for effective implementation.

## 4.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Participating Institutions

| Institution  | Full Name                                                           | Role and Responsibilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DTIC         | Department of Trade, Industry and Competition                       | Policy development and oversight; Ministerial authority; Programme coordination across government; International trade policy alignment; Communication of mandatory implementation decisions                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| SABS         | South African Bureau of Standards                                   | Technical implementation and management of the PVoC programme; post-arrival surveillance and random inspections of product conformity; Development and maintenance of applicable SANS standards; Oversight of CCIC inspection activities; Publication of guidance documents and product schedules; Stakeholder engagement and training; Operation of the PVoC Programme Office. |
| CCIC         | China Certification and Inspection Group Inspection Company Limited | Authorised pre-export inspection body in China; Physical inspection and testing of consignments; Issuance of Certificates of Conformity (CoC); Liaison with exporters and manufacturers in China; Reporting to SABS on inspection activities and findings                                                                                                                       |
| SARS Customs | South African Revenue Service — Customs Division                    | Verification of Certificate of Conformity authenticity at ports of entry; Integration of CoC validation into customs clearance processes; Referral of suspect consignments for further inspection; Data sharing with SABS and other regulatory bodies                                                                                                                           |
| BMA          | Border Management Authority                                         | Physical inspection support at ports of entry and land borders; Coordination with SARS Customs and SABS; Assistance with detention and referral of non-compliant consignments                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| NRCS         | National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications                    | Regulatory advisory role; Interface between PVoC programme and compulsory specification framework; Guidance on products transitioning between voluntary and compulsory regulation                                                                                                                                                                                               |

## 4.3 Coordination Mechanisms

To ensure effective coordination between participating institutions, the following mechanisms will be established:

- An inter-institutional programme steering committee chaired by the dtic, with representation from all participating institutions, meeting on a regular basis to oversee programme implementation, monitor performance, and resolve operational issues.
- A technical working group led by the SABS, responsible for maintaining the product schedule, reviewing applicable standards, assessing inspection reports, and recommending programme refinements.



- A border coordination protocol between SABS, SARS Customs, and BMA to ensure consistent and effective validation of Certificates of Conformity at all designated ports of entry.
- A data sharing and reporting framework to enable participating institutions to access and share relevant programme data.

## SECTION 5 COOPERATION BETWEEN SABS AND CCIC

### 5.1. COOPERATION BETWEEN SABS AND CCIC (MOU OVERVIEW)

The PVoC programme is implemented through a strategic cooperation between:

- South African Bureau of Standards (SABS)
- China Certification & Inspection Group Inspection Co., Ltd. (CCIC)

#### 5.1 Nature of the Cooperation

A formal **Memorandum of Understanding (MOA)** and operational agreements have been established to:

- Facilitate pre-export conformity verification services.
- Leverage CCIC's international inspection and testing footprint.
- Support capacity building and technical collaboration.

#### 5.2 Roles and Responsibilities

##### SABS:

- Programme owner and custodian in South Africa.
- Defines **standards, technical requirements, and compliance criteria.**
- Engages with regulators.
- Oversees governance, compliance, and programme integrity.

##### CCIC:

- Conducts inspection, testing, and verification in China.
- Issues Certificates of Conformity (CoC) aligned to SABS requirements.
- Provides technical support and global best practices.
- Supports capacity development and knowledge transfer.

## SECTION 6 ATTACHMENTS AND ENQUIRIES

### 6.1 Attachments

The following supporting documents are attached to this submission:

- Ministerial Directive approving the implementation of the PVoC Phase 1 Programme
- Frequently Asked Questions

### 6.2 Enquiries

For all general enquiries related to the PVoC Programme, stakeholders are requested to contact the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS):

-  **Email:** [info@sabs.co.za](mailto:info@sabs.co.za)

For registration processes, inspection requests, and operational enquiries related to certification, stakeholders may contact the China Certification & Inspection Group Inspection Co., Ltd. (CCIC) :

-  **Email:** [zafpvoc@ccic.com](mailto:zafpvoc@ccic.com)
- Website: [www.ccic.com](http://www.ccic.com)

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### END OF OFFICIAL PUBLIC NOTICE

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