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PLEASE ADDRESS CORRESPONDENCE  
TO THE GOVERNOR

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### OUTCOME OF THE REVIEW OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTROL POLICIES 2023 AND GENERAL REMINDERS ON FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTROL

Following the completion of the Annual Review of Foreign Exchange Control Policies and Procedures, the Central Bank of Samoa (CBS) wishes to advise of further relaxation in exchange controls from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023. The changes include new and increased delegations of authority to Authorized Foreign Exchange Dealers i.e. Commercial Banks and Money Transfer Operators (MTOs) and procedural changes. The easing of exchange control policies reflects the prevailing economic environment whilst ensuring the country's foreign exchange reserves remain at sustainable levels and all foreign exchange transactions out of Samoa are consistent with a safe and sound financial system.

#### A. Exchange Control Policy Changes

Type of Foreign Exchange Payment	Current	Starting 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2023
1. Transfer Overseas of local Investments funds (e.g. with the Unit Trust of Samoa and Samoa National Provident Fund Contributions)	Delegation to Commercial Banks and MTOs to process amounts up to SAT\$30,000.00 per applicant.	Delegated amount to authorized banks and MTOS is to increase to SAT\$50,000.00. Any amount in excess of SAT\$50,000 is referred to CBS.
2. Emigration from Samoa (i.e. emigration allowance)	No delegation limit	Delegation to authorized banks and MTOs for amounts up to SAT\$50,000.00. Any amount in excess of SAT\$50,000.00 is referred to CBS.

**These increased or new delegation of authority to the authorized commercial banks and money transfer operators are subject to the availability of relevant supporting documents.** As such, the general public is kindly reminded to cooperate and ensure that proper and related supporting documentations for these types of foreign payments are submitted to the authorized commercial banks and money transfer operators when processing payments overseas. Approval of overseas payments may not be granted unless appropriate requested documents are submitted at the time of processing.

#### B. Exchange Control Procedures

- I. **Payments abroad for all types of Professional Services fees (including consultancy and management fees)**
  - i. Please be reminded these foreign payment transactions require prior CBS approval.

- ii. Further, these types of payments are subject to prevailing tax legislations and applicants are reminded of these tax obligations prior to referral to CBS.
  - iii. Where specific tax exemptions may have been granted by the Ministry of Customs and Revenue, kindly provide such confirmation of tax exemption when applying to CBS for further consideration and exemption from this Exchange Control requirement.
- II. **Outward Remittance of proceeds from the sale of a property in Samoa or remittance abroad of proceeds for the purchasing of a property in Samoa where the vendor/transferor permanently resides abroad**
  - i. Please be reminded these foreign payment transactions require prior CBS approval.
  - ii. Documentary requirements are re-emphasized and strengthened to safeguard all parties involved in the foreign payment transfer.
  - iii. Consequently, the general public is kindly reminded to contact the Exchange Control unit of the Financial Market Department, when such payments are to be made.
- III. **Approvals by CBS issued on BOP2 forms**
  - i. Currently, for an application for overseas payments that was previously approved by CBS, any changes on the CBS BOP2 form can only be altered by an authorized CBS staff.
  - ii. From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023, for ease of processing, the authorized commercial banks and MTOs can amend or alter the amount to be remitted abroad on the CBS BOP2 form but ONLY where the amended amount is less than the approved amount by CBS. This amendment, however, is subject to procedural controls as advised to the authorized financial institutions. All other changes that may be required (such as for an amount higher than initially approved by CBS, the purpose of payment or beneficiary), are to be referred back to CBS for further consideration.

### **C. Reminders:**

- I. **Export procedures**
  - i. Any export of goods (valued in excess of SAT\$500.00) require an export permit from the Central Bank. Notwithstanding this minimum value for a permit, any export of domestically produced goods from Samoa must be reported to and cleared by the Ministry of Customs and Revenue (MCR) Customs Division.
  - ii. All exporters are to provide valid business licenses to CBS at the start of each year or at their first consignment at any time of the year.
  - iii. Exporters of agricultural products (such as taro) are kindly reminded to submit to CBS the relevant clearance from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF)'s Quarantine Division for their shipments.
  - iv. For any export shipment of Fish, the CBS Provisional Export Entry form must be completed and submitted with the endorsement by the MAF's Fisheries Division, by the Resident or Business Entity to the Central Bank before processing at MCR's Customs Division.
- II. **General Exchange Control procedures**
  - i. Only licensed commercial banks and foreign exchange dealers authorized by the Central Bank of Samoa are allowed to buy or sell foreign currency in exchange for Samoan Tala within Samoa. A list of authorized foreign exchange dealers and licensed commercial banks is available on the CBS website ([www.cbs.gov.ws](http://www.cbs.gov.ws)) or by contacting the CBS Financial Supervision & Regulatory Services Department on phone number 34100.
  - ii. All capital payment transfers overseas continue to require prior CBS approval except where delegated by CBS. These foreign exchange payments may include (but not limited to these) funds for investments overseas, dividend repatriations, proceeds from the sale of a local property, overseas borrowings etc.
  - iii. Most current payment transactions have been delegated to the authorized commercial banks and money transfer operators, subject to the availability of relevant supporting documents. As

such, the general public is kindly reminded to cooperate and ensure that proper supporting documents are submitted to these financial institutions **at the time** of processing any payments overseas.

- iv. For all importers, we strongly advise that proper and valid invoices are submitted to these financial institutions at the time of your request for payments abroad.
- v. Approval of overseas payments may not be granted unless appropriate requested documents are submitted. These exchange control documentary requirements are in line with international standards for the prevention of anti-money laundering practices and to counter terrorist financing activities to safeguard Samoa's financial system.

III. **Exchange Control Approvals from the Central Bank of Samoa**

- i. Applications submitted to CBS with relevant documentations generally take up to 3 days to process. This processing time can be significantly shortened when verification and supporting documents are intact.
- ii. Special exemptions to any exchange control requirements may be granted by the Central Bank but only on a case-by-case basis and where appropriate, but also subject to other prevailing legislations.

For further clarification and assistance on any Foreign Exchange Control matters, please refer to the Domestic Markets Division at Level 1 of the CBS Building or contact phone numbers 34101, 34153, 34178 and 34152 and/or email: [exchange.ctrl@cbs.gov.ws](mailto:exchange.ctrl@cbs.gov.ws)

More information can be obtained from the CBS Exchange Control Information Booklet which will be available on the CBS website ([www.cbs.gov.ws](http://www.cbs.gov.ws)).

Signed by: Maiava Atalina Ainu'u-Enari  
**GOVERNOR**