

Based on information collected up to July 2002

1. TARIFF MEASURES

Structure of the tariff schedule

Bahrain applies an eight-digit tariff nomenclature according to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS 96).

Tariff publications

Current information on customs-related matters is available from:

The Director General of Customs
Directorate of Customs & Ports
P.O. Box 15
Manama

12 MFN Duties

As of June 2000, the applied MFN tariff consists of ad valorem rates ranging from zero to 125%. Bahrain's tariff structure currently has seven bands: zero, 5%, 7.5%, 10%, 20%, 100%, and 125%. Most items are dutiable at rates of zero or 5%. Tariffs range from zero to 100% for industrial goods, and from zero to 125% for agricultural products. Mixed rates of 100% or specific minimum import duties are set on tobacco and tobacco products. Alcohol products enter at a rate of 125%. Imports under 11 tariff lines are prohibited; there are no rates associated with the prohibited tariff lines. Effective 1 January 2000, the Government removed customs duties on 43 food items, and reduced customs duties from 10% to 7.5% on consumer goods. However, under the Industries Support and Protection Act, tariff protection of up to 20% is provided for medical products, aluminium products, cotton buds, tissue paper, and edible oil. The Government also tends to give preference to Bahraini and GCC products up to a price difference of 10 percent, provided that standard specifications of kind and quality are met.

16 Temporary reduced duties

No duty is payable on imports of raw materials, machinery and equipment imported for local factories qualifying under the Local Industries Protection and Support Programme. Duty Drawback is allowed under resolution No. 2 of 1986, if certain conditions are met.

Preferential duties under trade agreements

19.1 Interregional agreements

On 19 February 1997, the Economic and Social Council of the Arab League decided to establish an Arab Free-Trade Area over a period of ten years starting from 1 January 1998. During the ten year period, member countries ought to reduce their respective tariffs by 10% annually. As from 1 January 2007, the free-trade area was scheduled to be fully operational. Algeria, Comoros, Djibouti and Mauritania did not join the Agreement. Lebanon,

Libya, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen did not start the implementation.

19.2 Regional and sub-regional agreements

As a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which includes Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain participates in the GCC's free-trade arrangement, providing duty-free access to all goods produced in the GCC countries provided that they meet the GCC's basic local-content requirements of not less than 40% and that the capital of the producing firm is at least 51% owned by citizens of GCC member countries. Under the recently signed GCC Agreement proposing a customs union by the year 2005, external tariffs will be lowered to three rates: zero; 5.5% for basic products including food and clothing; and 7.5% for luxury goods and electronics. Motor vehicles which currently face import duties of 20% are also to be included in the implementation of the agreement.

19.3 Bilateral agreements

Bahrain has signed bilateral free-trade agreements with Tunisia, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and Syria. The extent of tariff preferences granted under these agreements depends on the individual agreement.

6. QUANTITY CONTROL MEASURES

Licensing under the overall authority of:
Ministry of Commerce & Industry
P.O. Box 5479
Diplomatic Area
Manama

Bahrain does not have an import license per se, however, there are some restrictions on imports of certain items.

61.72 To protect animal health and life

Imports of live animals from countries other than Australia, the Bahamas, Barbados, Cyprus, Honk Kong, Ireland, Japan, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom require a prior permission from the Ministry of Works and Agriculture.

61.77 To ensure human safety

Imports of radioactive chemical elements and radioactive isotopes require a permission from the Ministry of Health for safety reasons.

Prohibitions

63.1 Total prohibitions

Imports under 11 tariff lines including live swine, oilseeds, poppy seeds, and cultural pearls are absolutely prohibited.

63.71 To protect human health

The importation of sugar confectionery not containing cacao, undiluted ethyl alcohol, brakes containing asbestos, and toys containing methyl chloride is

prohibited for human health reasons.

63.74 To protect environment

Ornamental birds, articles of ivory, and articles of cultured unworked pearls may not be imported in order to protect environment.

63.77 To ensure human safety

The importation of retreaded tyres is prohibited to ensure human safety.

63.78 To ensure national security

The importation of propellant powder and specified telecommunication equipment is prohibited to ensure national security.

63.8 Prohibition for political reasons (embargo)

As a member of the Arab League, Bahrain is officially committed to enforcement of the primary aspect of the League's embargo decreed by this institution in 1954 (as amended) with regard to products originating in Israel.

7. MONOPOLISTIC MEASURES

Single channel for imports

71.2 Sole importing agency

Imports of wheat are carried out only by Bahrain Import-Export Company. In addition, alumina, used in the production of aluminium, is imported only by the state-owned Bahrain-Saudi Aluminium Marketing Company (BALCO).

8. TECHNICAL MEASURES

Technical regulations

Standards are formulated and enforced by:
Directorate of Standards and Metrology
P.O. Box 5479
Manama

81.1 Product characteristics requirements

Bahrain's national standards are mandatory, whereas technical regulations do not enjoy national status until they are adopted as national standards. Most Bahraini standards are based on standards developed by the Gulf Standardization and Metrology Organization of the GCC (GSMO). The GSMO is currently reviewing conformity of Gulf standards with international standards.

A certificate of compliance in conformity with GCC standards is required for special purpose motor vehicles which have been modified.

Imports of food products are monitored and tested by the Ministry of Health to ensure compliance with the national food standards, and must be accompanied by certificates declaring them free from cyclamate as well as free from radiation and dioxin. Imported meat and poultry products require a

health certificate from the country of origin and a halal slaughter certificate issued by an approved Islamic centre in the country of origin. Bahrain strictly enforces shelf life standards on 58 of 75 food products listed in Gulf Standard 150/1993. Shelf life standards of the remaining 17 items are less stringently applied.

A number of imports require a no objection certificate from the competent authority. The Ministry of Agriculture issues the above for fertilizers, insecticides and fungicides; the Equestrian and Horse Racing Club for horses; the Ministry of Interior for fireworks, handcuffs, pedestrian controlled four-wheel mini cars, and arms and ammunition; and the Ministry of Information for aerals and aerial reflectors.

Line telephone sets with cordless handsets and all other telephone items require a certificate from the Ministry of Transportation saying frequency and waves are checked.

Natural pearls and articles thereof require a certificate from the Ministry of Commerce saying that the same are checked and OK.

All kinds of aerosols, air conditioning machines, refrigerators and freezers, motor vehicles, solvents, and certain spare parts require a certificate declaring them free from ozone depleting substances.

According to legislative decree No. 20 of 1983, with respect to Agricultural Quarantine, all imports of plants must be accompanied by an agricultural clearance certificate issued by the appropriate authorities in the country of export. Imports of flour, rice, wheat seed, and agricultural seeds and plants require a phytosanitary certificate.

In accordance with decree No. 1/1985, animal imports, which are restricted for health reasons, must be accompanied by sanitary certificates from the country of origin. Cats and dogs may only be imported from selected countries and must be accompanied by a health certificate from the competent authority stating that the animal is free from rabies. A veterinary certificate is required for live domestic and wild animals, bovine semen, inedible fish, and eggs in conformity with decree No. 5/1988.



81.2 **Marking requirements**

Imports from EU member states must display the exact country of origin. Marks of origin "Made in Europe" are not accepted.

Cigarettes and tobacco products must bear a warning against the health damages of tobacco.

Bird eggs require a country of origin stamp to safeguard consumer interest.



81.3 **Labelling requirements**

Bahrain has adopted food product labelling standards developed by the Gulf Standardization and Metrology Organization of the GCC (GSMO). Food labels must include product and brand names, production and expiry dates, country of origin, name of the manufacturer, net weight in metric units, and a list of ingredients and additives. All fats and oils must be specifically identified on the label. Labels must be in Arabic or Arabic/English



81.5 Testing, inspection and quarantine requirements

Imported plants and animals are subject to inspection by the Agricultural Quarantine Unit of the Ministry of Works and Agriculture



81.9 Technical regulations n.e.s.

Pharmaceutical products must be imported directly from a manufacturer who has a research department and must be licensed in at least two other GCC countries, one of which must be Saudi Arabia.

