

# Time Release Study

## Albania

December 2021

---

## About the World Bank Group's Trade Facilitation Support Program

The Trade Facilitation Support Program (TFSP), managed by the World Bank Group, was launched in June 2014 and provides support for countries seeking assistance in aligning their trade practices with the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA). Focused on supporting the full and effective implementation of the WTO TFA and related trade facilitation reforms, the TFSP is designed to provide practical and demand-driven assistance. The TFSP is financed by nine development partners: Australia, Canada, the European Union, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States of America. The International Finance Corporation is the implementer of the Europe and Central Asia Trade Facilitation Program, under whose auspices this report has been developed.

## Acknowledgments

This report on the 2021 Time Release Study in Albania has been prepared by Kazazi Consulting shpk under the supervision of the IFC project team, in collaboration with the General Directorate of Customs.

The IFC would like to acknowledge the support of the involved government and private sector stakeholders that provided their support for, and participated, in the Time Release Study.

Specifically, we would like to express our gratitude to all representatives involved in the study, which included representatives from the General Directorate of Customs, the National Food Agency, the Border Police, customs brokers, freight forwarders and the drivers of the measured consignments.

## Table of Contents

I. Introduction .....	8
II. Main Findings and Recommendations.....	11
III. Comparison of TRS 2021 and TRS 2018 .....	20
III.1 Port of Durrës.....	20
III.2 Road BCPs .....	24
III.3 Inland Terminals.....	26
IV. Goal and Methodology of the TRS.....	30
IV.1 General .....	30
IV.2. TRS Objective .....	32
IV.3. Methodology .....	32
V. Procedures and Steps for Implementation of the TRS .....	33
Phase 1: Preparation of the Study .....	33
Phase 2: Collection and Recording of Data.....	34
Phase 3: Data Analysis .....	35
VI. Detailed Process Review and Findings.....	36
VI.1. Port of Durrës (Maritime Transport) .....	36
VI.1.1. Import Procedures at Port of Durrës .....	36
VI.1.2. Export Procedures at Port of Durrës .....	40
VI.2. Import Procedures at BCPs and Inland Terminals .....	43
VI.2.1. Import Procedures at BCPs.....	44
VI.2.2. Imports in BCPs for Transiting and completing Customs Procedures at Inland terminals.....	49
VI.2.3. Import Procedures at Inland Terminals.....	50
VI.3. Export procedures at Inland terminals and BCPs. ....	53
VI.3.1 Exports at Inland Terminals .....	53
VI.3.2 Export Procedures at BCPs .....	56
VI.4. International Transit .....	58
VII. ANNEX (Questionnaires as attached) .....	59

## List of tables

Table 1. Questionnaire on the export procedure .....	9
Table 2. Questionnaire on the import procedure.....	9
Table 3. Questionnaire on the international transit.....	10
Table 4. Average release time in 2021 as compared with 2018.....	11
Table 5. Average release time for imports, 2018 vs. 2021, per state agencies and Customs Brokers.....	11
Table 6. Average release time for exports, 2018 vs. 2021, per state agencies and Customs Brokers .....	13
Table 7. Average import time for inland Customs Branches .....	16
Table 8. Average import time for BCP customs branches .....	17
Table 9. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for imports per agencies .....	21
Table 10. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for exports.....	23
Table 11. Comparison TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for imports in BCPs.....	24
Table 12. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for exports at BCPs.....	26
Table 13. Time taken by Customs Broker for Import Procedures .....	27
Table 14. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for imports at In-Land Terminals .....	28
Table 15. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for exports at In-Land terminals .....	28
Table 16. Number of exports, Imports, and International Transit in total and for the selected TRS Customs Offices in the year 2021 .....	31
Table 17. The number of import questionnaires at inland terminals and BCPs.....	44
Table 18. Number of import questionnaires at BCPs by transiting cargo and related inland terminal .....	45
Table 19. Number of import questionnaires collected at inland terminals, by the BCP they came from:	50

## List of Graphs

Graph 1. Reductions of time procedures for release goods in Albania from 2018 to 2021 .....	11
Graph 2. Reduced time for import procedures 2018 vs. 2021, per state agencies and Customs Brokers	12
Graph 3. Reduced time for export procedures 2018 vs. 2021, per state agencies and Customs Brokers .	13
Graph 4. Import control time at BCP-s 2018 vs 2021 .....	14
Graph 5. Import control time at Inland terminals 2018 vs 2021 .....	15
Graph 6. Average time for customs clearance for imports classified by channels.....	16
Graph 7. Average import processing time- Port of Durrës .....	20
Graph 8. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for imports per agencies .....	22
Graph 9. Average export processing time- Port of Durrës .....	22
Graph 10. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for exports.....	23
Graph 11. Reduction of time import procedures of BCP-s 2021 vs 2018.....	24
Graph 12. Average processing time for transited goods -Cross Border Agencies and Brokers.....	25
Graph 13. Average export processing time, per Cross Border Agencies. 2021 versus 2018 TRS. ....	25
Graph 14. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for exports at BCP .....	26
Graph 15. Average import time for agencies in inland terminals. 2021 versus 2018 TRS. ....	27
Graph 16. Average export time for agencies in inland terminals .....	28
Graph 17. Average time for international transit, 2021 versus 2018 TRS. ....	29
Graph 18. Average export time at Port of Durrës, 2021 versus 2018 TRS. ....	40
Graph 19. Number of export and import questionnaires for road transport.....	43
Graph 20. Average import time 2021 vs.2018 TRS.....	45
Graph 21. Custom channel time for imports at BCP, 2021 vs.2018 TRS.....	49
Graph 22. Number of consignments for inland terminals per BCP .....	49

---

Graph 23. Average import processing time for transiting from BCP to Inland Terminals, 2021 vs.2018 TRS. ....	50
Graph 24. Average import time at inland terminals. 2021 vs.2018 TRS.....	51
Graph 25. Average import channel time at in-land terminals, by channels.....	51
Graph 26. Average time of export processes In -Land Terminals.....	53
Graph 27. Average time of export processes in Inland Terminals, by channels.....	54
Graph 28. Average time of export processes In -BCP-s .....	56
Graph 29. Average export time in channels in -BCP-s .....	56

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AEO	Authorized Economic Operator
ASYCUDA	Automated System for Customs Data
AW	ASYCUDA WORLD
BCP	Border Crossing Point
CBRA	Cross-Border Regulatory Agencies
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
Ex1	Customs procedure, definitive exportation of goods
GDC	General Directorate of Customs
IFC	International Finance Corporation
Im4	Customs procedure, placing goods into free circulation (importation of goods)
NFA	National Food Authority
SAD	Single Administrative Document
T1	Transit document
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
TIMS	Transport Information Management System
TRS	Time Release Study
VC	Valuation Centre at Customs Headquarters
WBG	World Bank Group
WCO	World Customs Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

## I. Introduction

As a Member of the World Trade Organization, Albania is committed to implementing the Articles contained in the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). Article 7.6 of the TFA recommends members to “measure and publish their average release time of goods periodically and consistently, using tools such as the Time Release Study (TRS) of the World Customs Organization (WCO)”.

A TRS provides reliable and validated information on the time taken by border agencies to process and clear cargo during import, export, and transit transactions. It determines the time needed to carry out each step in the clearance process involving Customs and other government agency requirements. By analyzing the results of a TRS, government agencies regulating trade can identify where procedures are inefficient and develop strategies and plans on how to simplify, harmonize, and streamline these processes with the aim of reducing trade compliance costs and time. It thus provides an objective baseline against which the impacts of reforms and modernization can be measured and evaluated over time.

Thus, a TRS covers the following main elements:

- (i) The time taken between the arrival of the goods at the border and their release;
- (ii) A calculation of the average time required for the release of goods by Customs clearance points, and customs regime;
- (iii) The average time taken for the release of goods requiring the intervention of other border agencies;
- (iv) The average time taken for the release of goods selected for Green (no Customs intervention required), Yellow (examination of documents), and Red (physical examination on goods) channels;
- (v) Identification of procedural issues and their nature; and
- (vi) Identification of possible corrective measures and recommendations.

In December 2021, the General Directorate of Customs (GDC) of Albania, in coordination with the Border Police, and the National Food Authority (NFA), and supported by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), carried out the second Time Release Study in Albania to review the procedures applied and measure the time needed by commercial consignments to undergo import, export and transit procedures at: the Albanian seaport of Durrës (the largest port of Albania); the three most important border crossing points (BCPs) - Qafë-Thanë on the border with North Macedonia, Kapshtica on the border with Greece, and Morina on the border with Kosovo; and at the three main inland customs terminals (Vora/Tirana, Elbasan and Fieri).

The TRS was conducted by “Kazazi Consulting Shpk”, a local consultancy firm, with guidance and assistance from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), based on the methodology developed by World Customs Organization (WCO), whose software was used in data collection and processing.



This 2021 TRS uses the same methodology as the TRS carried out in 2018 and reviewed the same locations and the same modes of trade, thereby allowing for a direct comparison with the 2018 results.

The preparation of the study commenced in September 2021 with a series of meetings with involved participants, including the General Directorate of Customs (GDC), the Border Police and the Albanian National Food Authority (NFA), as well as several customs brokers.

Survey forms were prepared with the support of IFC experts, in consultation with the Customs Authority and customs brokers.

A one-day training for the survey takers (enumerators) was held on October 20, 2021. Most enumerators had already been engaged for the 2018 TRS and therefore brought the necessary knowledge and experience.

A two-day pilot of the TRS survey was organized on October 25-26, 2021, to identify any potential issues and shortcomings with the surveys or placement of the enumerators and to identify any adjustment to the survey forms where needed.

The field implementation of the TRS was carried out during 7 consecutive days, from November 8 (07:45) to November 14, 2021 (22:59), at all inland and maritime locations.

A total of 1,125 valid questionnaires were collected and analyzed as follows:

- 342 export questionnaires, out of which 33 export declarations in Port of Durrës, 153 export declarations at inland terminals, 155 export declarations at BCPs.

Table 1. Questionnaire on the export procedure

Questionnaire on Exports	Sea Port	BCP	In-Land Terminals
342	33	155	153

- 653 import questionnaires, out of which 67 import declarations in Port of Durrës, 286 import declarations at inland terminals, 295 import declarations at BCPs.

Table 2. Questionnaire on the import procedure

Questionnaire on Imports	Sea Port	BCP	In-Land Terminals
653	67	295	286

- 130 questionnaires on international transit, out of which 123 questionnaires at entry points and 7 questionnaires at exit points.

Table 3. Questionnaire on the international transit

Questionnaire on international transit	Entry point		Exit point	
	Sea port	BCP	Sea port	BCP
130	40	42	3	4

The period chosen for the implementation of the study is fully representative of normal traffic volumes. All commercial consignments passing through the chosen locations were included in the study.

The TRS team mapped the control and clearance procedures at the above-listed locations and with all agencies including Customs Authority, Border Police, National Food Agency (NFA) and Customs Brokers. The completion and collection of questionnaires was carried out by the enumerators, supervised by Kazazi Consulting Shpk project team and by IFC local experts. The entry of data into the WCO software was carried out by Kazazi Consulting team members trained and supervised by IFC experts.

The questionnaires reflect the itinerary of the goods from the arrival of the vehicle at the Albanian BCP to their release for free circulation. In the case of export, time from the start of the export procedure until the cargo is released to leave the country, in the case of imports, from the time the cargo is registered by the Customs Office until its release, and, in the case of international transit time from entry into Albania to exit from Albania. The data include the exact time taken by different agencies (Border Police, Customs Office, Customs Broker, and National Food Authority) that operate at BCPs or at inland customs terminals.

The overall objective of the study was to measure the average time spent for completing required procedures, to identify bottlenecks and to propose measures to reduce time and administrative costs for both the government and business operators engaged in import, export, and international transit operations.

The study compares the time and procedures measured in 2021 with those measured in 2018. It provides recommendations for further measures to be taken in the future to further streamline procedures and reduce import, export, and international transit times.

## II. Main Findings and Recommendations

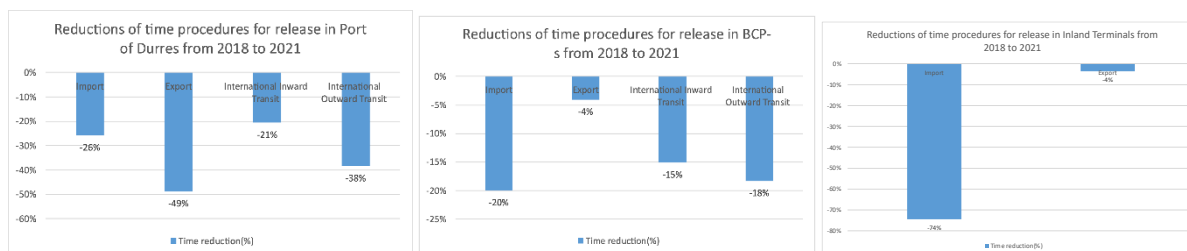
The total average times for carrying out all formalities related to importation, exportation and international transit were for the most part significantly shorter in 2021 than in 2018, as is shown in Table 4 below. This is a success story for the Albanian border agencies and the customs brokers.

Table 4. Average release time in 2021 as compared with 2018

No.		Port of Durrës (time in hours)		Time reduction (%)	BCP (time in hours)		Time reduction	Inland (time in hours)		Time reduction (%)	
		2018	2021		2018	2021		2018	2021		
1	Importation	4,55	3,38	-26%	2,58	2,07	-20%	7,38	1,88	-74%	
2	Exportation	6,48	3,33	-49%	1,22	1,17	-4%	1,40	1,35	-4%	
3	International Transit	Inward	2,58	2,05	-21%	2,32	1,97	-15%			-
		Outward	1,08	0,67	-38%	0,82	0,67	-18%			-

The highest improvements related to control and clearance procedures was recorded for the NFA and the Customs brokers, followed by Customs and Customs Brokers), but also the procedures implemented by the Border Police and NFA are shorter in 2021 than in 2018.

Graph 1. Reductions of time procedures for release goods in Albania from 2018 to 2021



Source: TRS reports on 2018 and 2021

Below is a more detailed breakdown by state agencies and private Customs Brokers.

Table 5. Average release time for imports, 2018 vs. 2021, per state agencies and Customs Brokers

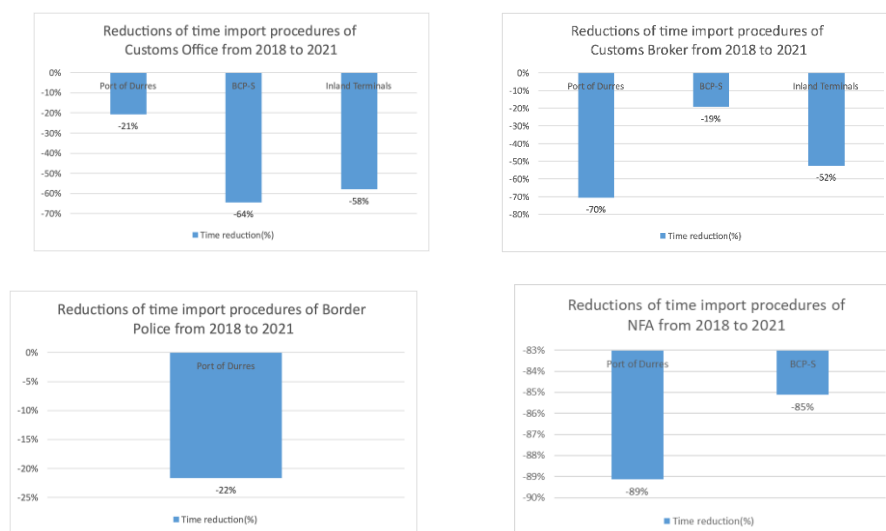
Customs Office	Port of Durrës (time in hours)		Time reduction (%)	BCP (time in hours)		Time reduction (%)	Inland (time in hours)		Time reduction (%)
	2018	2021		2018	2021		2018	2021	
		2,97	2,35	-21%	1,92	0,68	-64%	1,47	0,62

Customs Broker	Port of Durrës (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)	BCP (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)	Inland (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)
	2018	2021		2018	2021		2018	2021	
		1.02	0.30	-70%	0.78	0.63	-19%	2.35	1.12

NFA	Port of Durrës (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)	BCP (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)	Inland (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)
	2018	2021		2018	2021		2018	2021	
		0.92	0.10	-89%	0.45	0.07	-85%	-	-

Border Police	Port of Durrës (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)	BCP (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)	Inland (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)
	2018	2021		2018	2021		2018	2021	
		0.25	0.03	(0.22)	0.02	0.02	-	-	-

Graph 2. Reduced time for import procedures 2018 vs. 2021, per state agencies and Customs Brokers



Source: TRS reports in 2018 and 2021

Table 6. Average release time for exports, 2018 vs. 2021, per state agencies and Customs Brokers

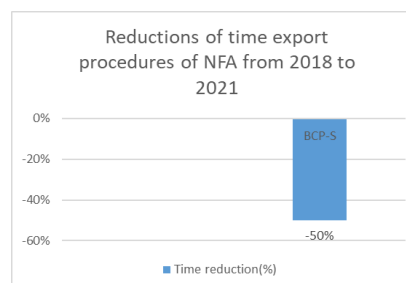
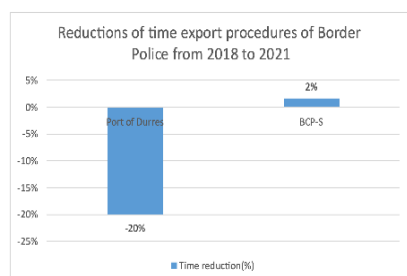
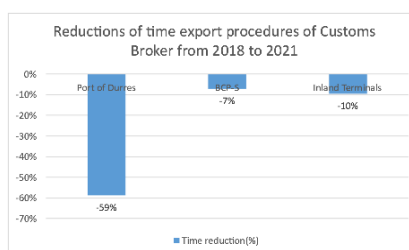
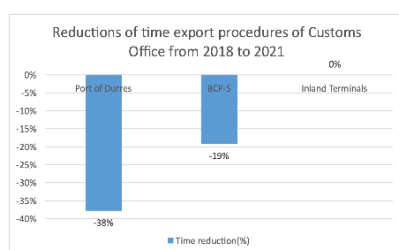
Customs Office	Port of Durrës (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)	BCP (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)	Inland (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)
	2018	2021		2018	2021		2018	2021	
		2.78	1.73	-38%	1.13	0.92	-19%	0.67	0.67

Customs Broker	Port of Durrës (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)	BCP (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)	Inland (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)
	2018	2021		2018	2021		2018	2021	
		0.48	0.20	-59%	0.23	0.22	-7%	0.70	0.63

Border Police	Port of Durrës (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)	BCP (time in hours)		Time reduction	Inland (time in hours)		Time reduction(%)
	2018	2021		2018	2021		2018	2021	
		0.08	0.07	-20%	-	0.02	no data	-	-

NFA	Port of Durrës		Time reduction(%)	BCP		Time reduction(%)	Inland		Time reduction(%)
	2018	2021		2018	2021		2018	2021	
		-	0.20	no data	0.10	0.05	-50%	-	-

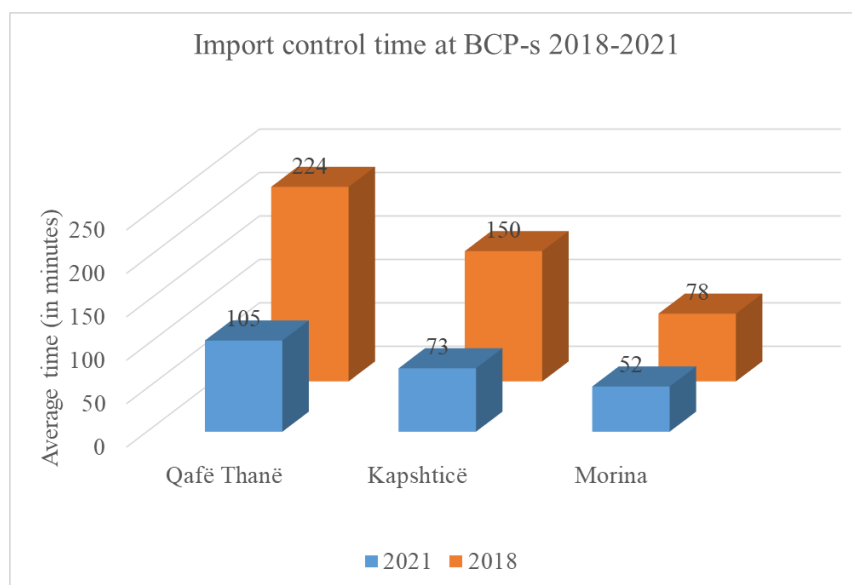
Graph 3. Reduced time for export procedures 2018 vs. 2021, per state agencies and Customs Brokers



Source: TRS reports in 2018 and 2021

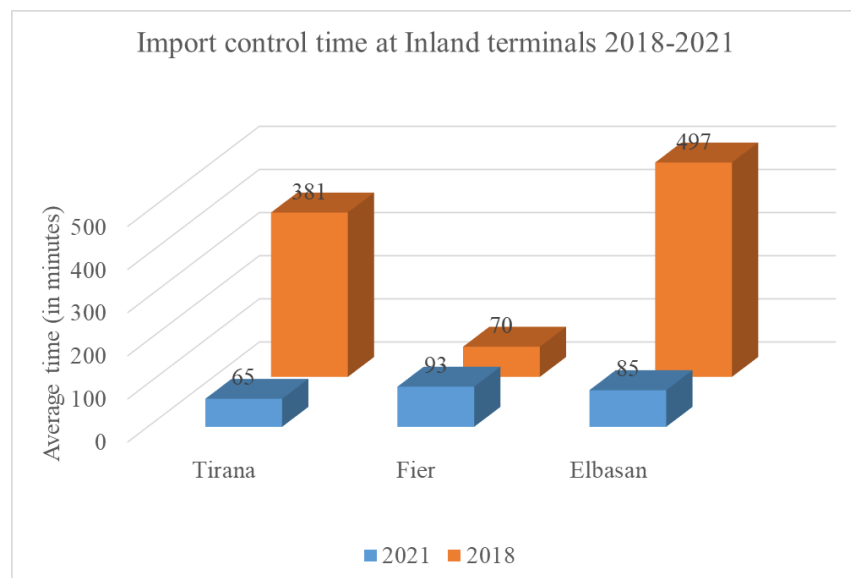
The 2018 TRS identified considerable differences in the processing time between BCPs and in-land terminals. These differences were again observed in 2021 TRS, but to a lesser extent. For example, in 2018, import controls at Qafë Thanë took on average 3 hours and 44 minutes, while in Kapshtica, 2 hours and 30 minutes, and in Morina, only 1 hour and 18 minutes. Import controls at the in-land terminals in 2018 took on average 6 hours and 21 minutes in Tirana, 1 hour and 10 minutes in Fier, and 8 hours and 17 minutes in Elbasan. In 2021, the times are lower and the differences between locations smaller: Import controls at Qafë Thanë took on average 1 hour and 45 minutes, while in Kapshtica, 1 hour and 13 minutes and in Morina, only 52 minutes. Import controls at the in-land terminals in 2021 took on average 1 hour and 5 minutes in Tirana, 1 hour and 33 minutes in Fier and 1 hour and 25 minutes in Elbasan. The harmonization process, which has obviously begun, should therefore be continued.

Graph 4. Import control time at BCP-s 2018 vs 2021



Source: TRS reports in 2018 and 2021

Graph 5. Import control time at Inland terminals 2018 vs 2021



Source: TRS reports in 2018 and 2021

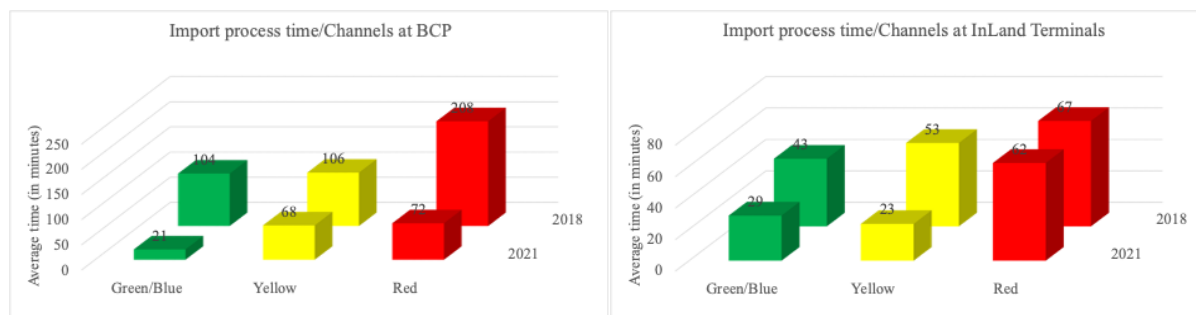
The 2018 TRS showed that scanning was performed on virtually 100% of consignments, increasing the time consignments were under Customs procedure. Among the 2018 TRS recommendations was that scanning should be based on risk. The 2021 TRS showed slight improvements. We therefore recommend that continued attention should be paid to the risk-based selection approach for scanning.

The 2018 TRS suggested a risk-based review of weighing criteria and in certain Customs points, to place the weighbridges into a more appropriate position. It appears that this has been accomplished with the exception of re-positioning the scale at Fier terminal.

Waiting time in export at the Port of Durrës should be improved. Safe, monitored areas for trucks and drivers that have finished the export procedures and are awaiting Border Police clearance to board the ferry should be established. This will significantly reduce the time in export procedure and improve the movements in the Port of Durrës.

In both BCP-s and in-land terminals the time spent for Customs clearance for declarations (Single Administrative Documents - SADs) classified in yellow and blue/green channel was relatively high in 2018. The 2021 results show that the green and yellow channels represent lower time compared to 2018. The number of declarations selected in “red channel” are reduced and the processing times involved improved in 2021, compared to 2018. Also, fewer consignments were classified as “red channel” – i.e., where a physical check of the goods was performed - which significantly reduced the average Customs clearance time. This may point to improved risk management practices by Customs and to improved compliance by the traders.

Graph 6. Average time for customs clearance for imports classified by channels



Source: Survey TRS 2021 and TRS 2018

International transit still has significant need for improvement. It remains obligatory for international transit declarations be printed out and manually processed. We strongly recommend that international transit declarations be processed electronically by ASYCUDA. The General Directorate of Customs (GDC) should accelerate measures to require electronic processing of transit declarations in all Customs Branches.

We also recommend that GDC should internally conduct a simplified TRS in its branches on a regular basis to identify issues and reasons for delays, to identify best practices in Customs Branches and promote and extend such best practices to other branches. GDC should, at least in yearly basis, evaluate the standards of all processes and staff performance linked with key performance indicators. The figures below show that significant time is consumed for the same or similar Customs procedures in different Customs Offices. By measuring and analysing those processes in different Customs Offices, the GDC may identify and promote best practices.

Table 7. Average import time for inland Customs Branches

No.	City	Subject	Import Procedure (minutes)
1	Tirana	Customs Broker	79
		Evaluation/Channels/Release Order	35
2	Fier	Customs Broker	22
		Evaluation/Channels/Release Order	54
3	Elbasan	Customs Broker	33
		Evaluation/Channels/Release Order	31



Table 8. Average import time for BCP customs branches

No.	City	Subject	Import Procedure (minutes)
1	Morina	Customs Broker	8
		Weighing	5
		Scanner	9
		Evaluation/Channels/Release Order	10
2	QafeThana	Customs Broker	22
		Weighing	2
		Scanner	28
		Evaluation/Channels/Release Order	22
3	Kapshtica	Customs Broker	39
		Weighing	5
		Scanner	16
		Evaluation/Channels/Release Order	52

Better managing of Customs terminal spaces will also help in facilitating the Customs procedures. During the study it was observed that some vehicle operators, after completion of the Customs procedures, leave their trucks in the Customs zones until later in the same day or even the next morning before they continue their journey. This increases the formal processing times and may cause congestion in the Customs area. In order to reduce these delays GDC may consider issuing an instruction requiring operators to depart from the premises expeditiously after the consignment's processing is completed or impose additional parking fees e.g., starting two hours after clearance is completed.

## Recommendations 2018 vs. 2021

<i>2018 TRS</i>	<i>2021 TRS</i>
Carry out a review of the control and clearance procedures of all border agencies. Issue/update Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for a streamlined control process. Check implementation.	While the time differences among border control points related to control procedures has been reduced, they still do persist. This recommendation is therefore still valid.
Review these procedures and take action to reduce processing times.	The 2021 TRS shows in part significant reductions of the time needed to inspect and process cargo.
Review the need for scanning. Significant time savings may accrue from a change in this practice. If scanning is done, the scanning authorization should be issued in a speedy manner, or if feasible, abolished entirely.	Continued attention should be paid to the risk-based selection approach for scanning. Scanning rates continue to be very high.
Review the need for weighing. The same criteria should be applied to all consignments. Significant time savings could be accrued from reducing the proportion of vehicles that should undergo this procedure.	It appears that this recommendation has been implemented with the exception of re-positioning the scale at Fier terminal.
Analyze channel procedures and processing times. Develop and apply uniformly, SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures). Rigorously apply risk management control selection in order to differentiate and reduce the times for red/yellow and blue/green channel processing.  Consider automatic release for blue/green channel after 30 minutes.	The 2021 results show that the time spent by cargo in green and yellow channels was lower in 2021 than in 2018. The processing time for blue/green channel is about 20-25 minutes. This is the time during which the Asycuda system generates a "P" number for the SAD, which means that the SAD is accepted and cannot be changed.  However, the blue/green channel release after 30 minutes is still not automatic. The release order is still manually printed. The 2018 TRS recommendation for automatic release after 30 minutes, <i>without officer intervention</i> , remains.
NFA procedures should be reviewed and standardized. Risk management should be applied to consignments subject to SPS controls.	Visible improvements were evidenced in NFA procedures, especially dedicated to advanced processing of documentation. The importers and exporters can send documentation in advance by email, which has contributed to the time reduction. A fully risk based, ideally computer-assisted selection system should be developed to further speed up processing times.

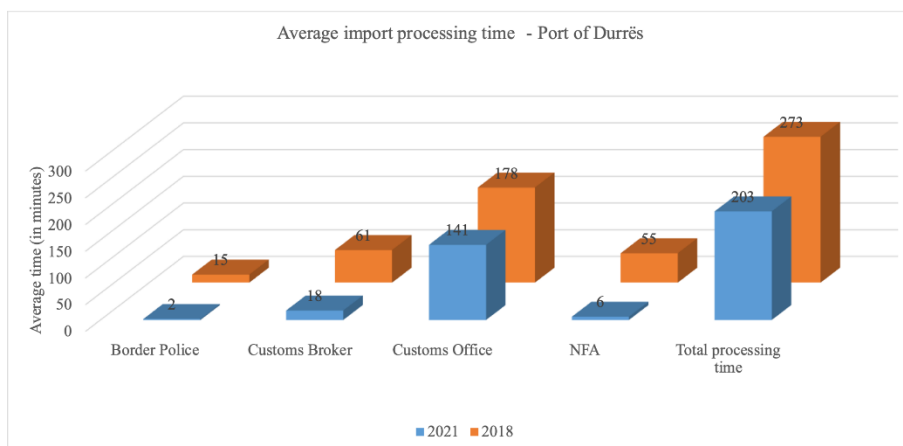
<p>Customs Agent time should be reviewed with a view to making more efficient / simplifying the work requirements for the agents.</p>	<p>Customs Agent time has come down quite significantly compared to the times recorded in the 2018 TRS.</p>
<p>To the extent feasible, improvements/ adjustments of the infrastructure and the positioning of the border agencies and their equipment be made so that procedures can be most efficiently carried out.</p>	<p>This is underway, including with the support of the EU and the World Bank Trade and Transport Lending Operation.</p>
<p>It is recommended that the Border Agencies establish the practice of carrying out TRSs on a regular basis, in order to monitor performance and improve it through TRS findings. Average time of import and export, at a minimum, should be included as a key performance indicator in trade facilitation action plans and/or the customs strategy.</p>	<p>This practice should be continued.  The General Directorate of Customs should conduct TRSs in all border points and promote best practices. There are certain processes and procedures more efficient in certain customs offices and they should be analyzed and promoted in other customs offices.</p>
	<p>Waiting time in export at the Port of Durrës could be improved by establishing safe, monitored areas for trucks and drivers that have finished the export procedures and are awaiting Border Police clearance to board the ferry.</p>
	<p>Customs should accelerate measures to require electronic processing of international transit declarations in all Customs Branches and discontinue the practice of requiring paper-based documents.</p>
	<p>General Directorate of Customs should organize joint trainings with Customs Brokers and business associations to collect opinions and analyze procedures in order to improve processes and reduce release time.</p>

### III. Comparison of TRS 2021 and TRS 2018 <sup>1</sup>

#### III.1 Port of Durrës

In 2018, the average time spent during importation via the Port of Durrës was 4 hours and 33 minutes; during 2021 the estimated time is 3 hours and 23 minutes. This is a reduction by over 70%. This time is calculated from the moment the vehicle arrives at the Port of Durrës terminal to the moment the vehicle exits the Port of Durrës, and the goods are released for free circulation. During 2021, the average time spent at the Customs Office is 2 hours and 21 minutes and at the Customs Broker 18 minutes. The National Food Authority took 6 minutes to process the goods that are subject to control under their legislation first in row at the same place and time with other customs procedure; in 2018, the average time spent at the Customs Office was 2 hours and 58 minutes, at the Customs Broker, 61 minutes, at NFA 55 minutes, and at the Border Police 15 minutes.

Graph 7. Average import processing time- Port of Durrës



Source: Survey TRS 2021 and TRS 2018

<sup>1</sup> The graphs presented in this study show average time breakdowns by percentages of the time taken to complete the procedures between two data points.

The questions on the questionnaires reflect all the steps taken in importation, exportation or transit. They are broken down into sub processes each having a start and end time. The average time taken for a procedure is calculated by determining the time interval between the start and end time. If the start and end time questions have not been completed, then the sub process of that questionnaire will not be included in calculating the times for that sub process as it is not considered valid for that sub process. However, the questionnaire could be considered valid for other time intervals – for example if the questions of arrival of vehicle at the location and departure of vehicle have been completed that questionnaire’s result for that time interval will be included in the overall main process average time. As a result, the average time for two or more sub-processes will not necessarily add up to the average time for the main process.

The process is facilitated through the classification of imports in respective “channels” of inspections, based on the assessment of risks associated with the importer, related cargo, broker involved etc.

For green/blue channels, the time from the moment the Single Administrative Document (SAD) is uploaded in ASYCUDA until the Customs approves the SAD, is on average 6 minutes. However, the average time from the first upload of the SAD until receiving the release order and exiting from the Customs Terminal is 1 hour and 2 minutes. This delay is mostly related to time spent by the drivers at the border point until they exit once they have received the release order.

For the yellow channel the average time spent from uploading SAD to issue of the release order is 1 hour and 24 minutes.

For the red channel the average time spent from uploading SAD into ASYCUDA until the issue of release order takes on average 1 hour and 41 minutes.

The time spent for border clearance in 2021 is significantly reduced compared to 2018.

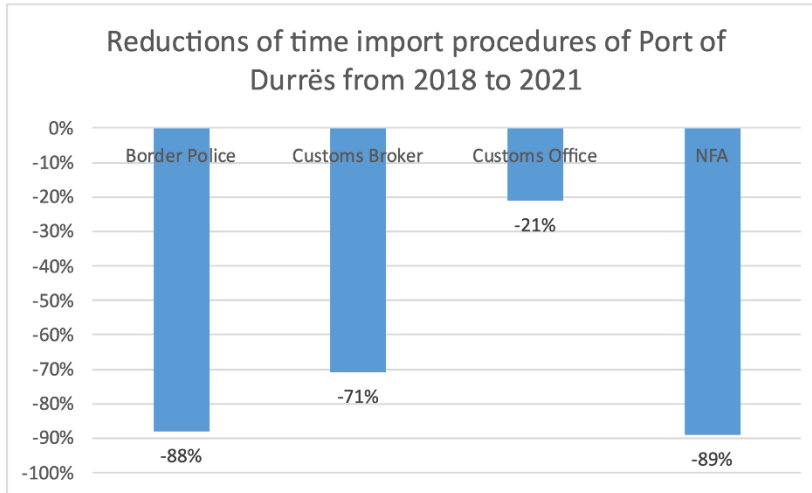
Table 9. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for imports per agencies

Import Processes	Agencies	Results on Agencies compared 2021 to 2018
Port of Durrës	Border Police	-88%
	Customs Broker	-71%
	Customs Office	-21%
	NFA	-89%

Source: Survey TRS 2021 and TRS 2018

The average time for exportation via the Port of Durrës was 6 hours and 29 minutes in 2018. In 2021, this process took only 3 hours and 21 minutes. The largest improvements were in the Customs Administration’s processing time and the time taken by the Customs Broker. The time of entrance of the cargo in Port of Durrës till the moment of uploading Single Administrative Document (SAD) takes 1 hour and 8 minutes, despite the very short physical distance between the two locations involved. Scanning and control by authorities takes 1 hour and 46 minutes. Border Police control takes 4 minutes.

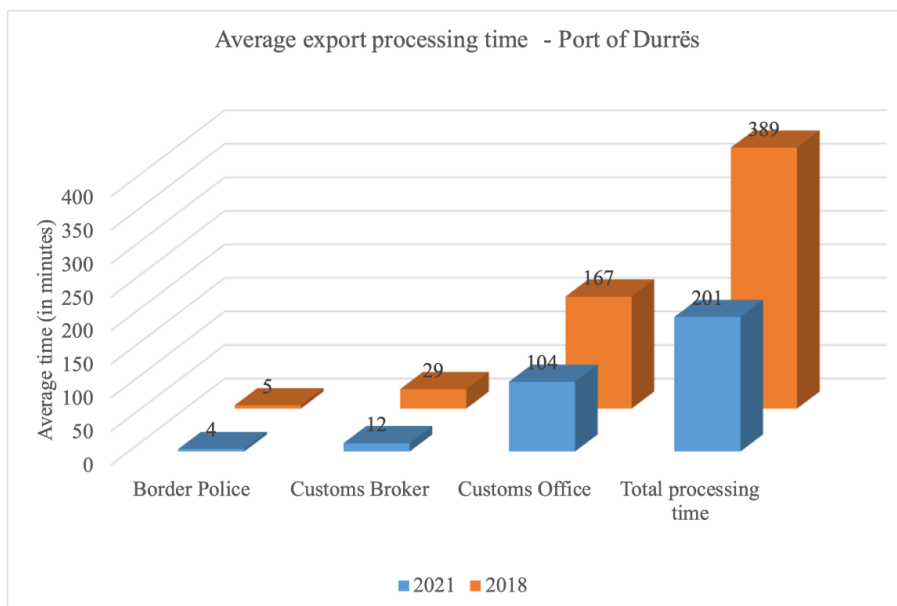
Graph 8. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for imports per agencies



Source: TRS reports data at 2018 and 2021

It appears likely that the main reason for this overall lengthy period is due to the fact that the Border Police does not allow cargoes which have completed the export processes to remain at the main ferry terminal. As a result, drivers choose to spend longer in between the control procedures in order to arrive at the ferry embarkation just in time.

Graph 9. Average export processing time- Port of Durrës



Source: Survey TRS 2021 and 2018

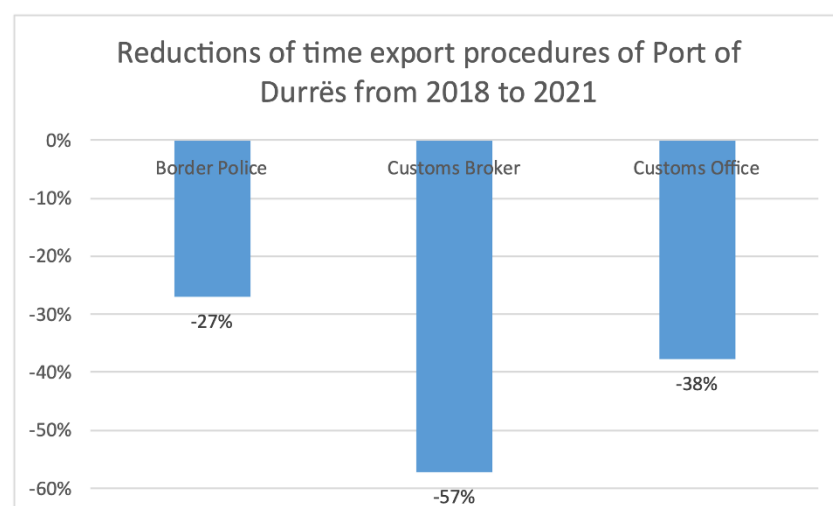
At the Port of Durrës, import and export entries are processed by Customs at different times of the day depending on whether the ferry is inbound or outbound. The time taken by the Customs Office for export customs procedures includes vehicle scanning and customs verifications, as well as waiting time. In 2021 these times were lower compared to 2018 despite the fact that a higher rate of scanning was performed as an additional security measure at the request of the Police Department. According to information gathered from site visits during the export process in Port of Durrës, 94% of the vehicles were scanned. Customs Brokers took an average of 12 minutes in 2021 to perform their work processes versus 29 minutes in 2018. The Customs Administration spent 1 hour and 44 minutes during 2021 versus 2 hours and 47 minutes in 2018. Border Police reduced time spent on export processes during 2021 with around 1 minute compared with 2018.

Table 10. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for exports

Export processes	Agencies	Reduction in time of Agencies on 2021 compared with 2018
Port of Durrës	Border Police	- 27%
	Customs Broker	- 57%
	Customs Office	- 38%
	NFA	No data

Source: Survey TRS 2018 and TRS 2021

Graph 10. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for exports



Source: TRS reports data in 2018 and 2021

### III.2 Road BCPs

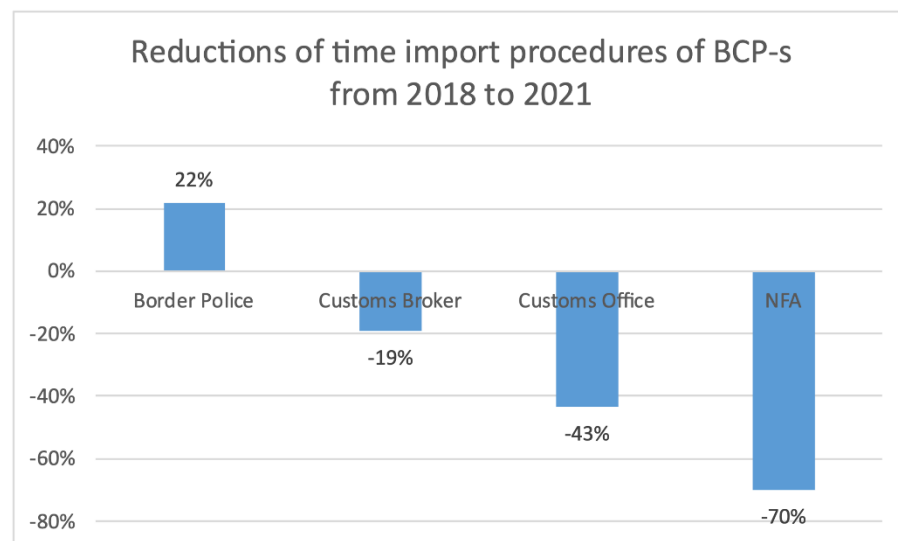
Import at the BCPs was measured as 2 hours and 3 minutes during the 2021 TRS. This is a 20% improvement over 2018, when it took 2 hours and 35 minutes. The Customs Administration reduced its processing time from 1 hour and 55 minutes in 2018 to 1 hour and 5 minutes in 2021, a reduction of over 43%. Custom Brokers reduced their time by 9 minutes, from 47 to 38 minutes, or almost 19% reduction. Inspections by NFA have spent less time with average 20 minutes during 2021(8 minutes) versus 2018(28 minutes). In all three BCPs the overall import processes were shorter in 2021 than in 2018.

Table 11. Comparison TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for imports in BCPs

Import processes	Agencies	Difference in time of Agencies in 2021 compared with 2018
BCP	Border Police	22% (time increased)
	Customs Broker	- 19% (reduction of time)
	Customs Office	- 43% (reduction of time)
	NFA	- 70% (reduction of time)

Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

Graph 11. Reduction of time import procedures of BCP-s 2021 vs 2018

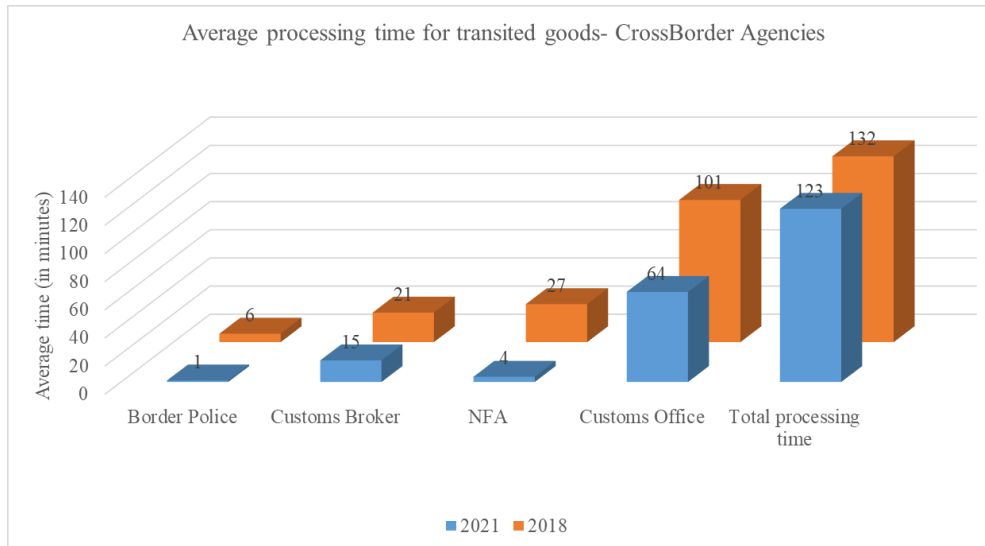


Source: Survey of TRS 2018, 2021

All procedures at the BCP for the vehicles in transit to the inland terminal took on average 2 hours and 3 minutes during 2021. The vehicle's arrival at the BCP starts the recording of time and finishes at the point of exiting the BCP for transit to the inland terminal. Customs Office takes on average 1 hour and 4 minutes, Customs Broker, 15 minutes, NFA takes average 4 minutes and the Border Police 1 minute.



Graph 12. Average processing time for transited goods -Cross Border Agencies and Brokers

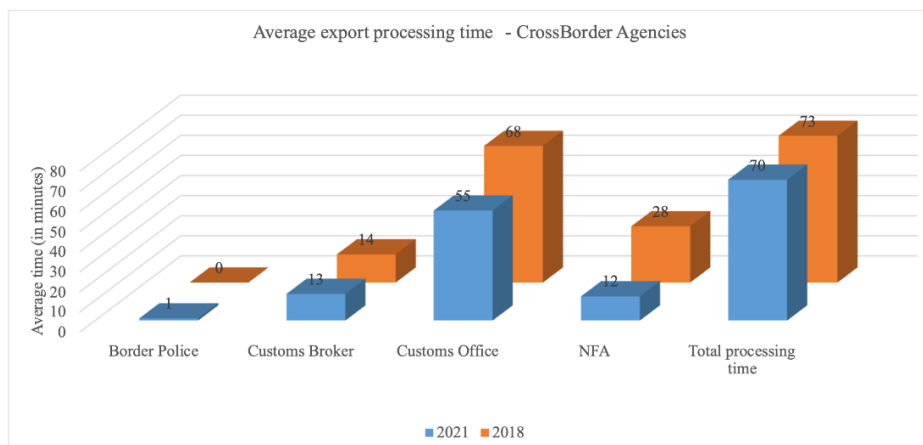


Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

The scanning and Customs verifications account for most of the time taken at the BCP. Overall, Customs and the Customs Brokers take less time to cover all the processes, compared to 2018.

Procedures for export at the BCP were recorded as taking on average 1 hour and 10 minutes in 2021. Compared to the 2018 TRS, there is only a small, 3-minutes time reduction overall. However, Customs Administration processing time is 13 minutes less than in 2018.

Graph 13. Average export processing time, per Cross Border Agencies. 2021 versus 2018 TRS.



Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

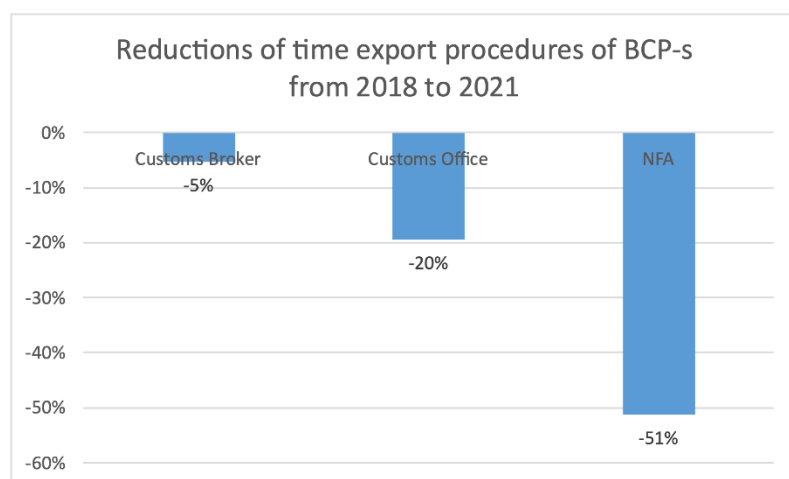
Overall processes of exports at BCP seems to have been improved by economic operators, with visible improvements in all agencies. Customs Office time is lower during 2021 compared with 2018. The improvement should have been more significant if a proper risk-based system was applied for selection for scanning. In TRS 2021 125 instances of scanning cargos were recorded out of 155 export consignments, while in 2018 were recorded 83 scanning cases out of 153 export consignments. Selection for scanning must be done based on a central risk-based selection system in order that only the cargos with associated risk be selected for scanning.

Table 12. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for exports at BCPs

Export processes	Agencies	Reduction time of Agencies on 2021 compared with 2018
BCP	Border Police	There are no data for 2018
	Customs Brokers	- 5% (reduction of time)
	Customs Office	- 20% (reduction of time)
	NFA	- 51% (reduction of time)

Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

Graph 14. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for exports at BCP

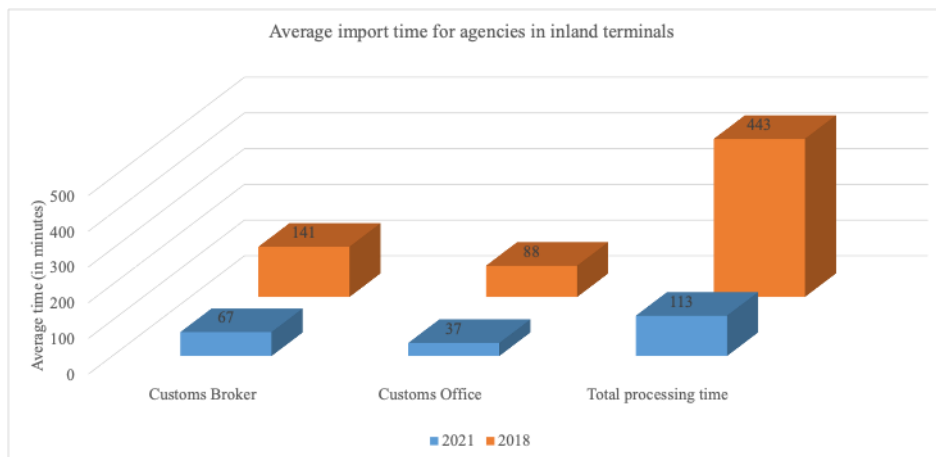


Source: Survey TRS 2018 and 2021

### III.3 Inland Terminals

At the inland terminals, the overall import process took on average 1 hour and 53 minutes during 2021 as compared to 7 hours 23 minutes in 2018. Customs Brokers took most of the time – 1 hour and 7 minutes in 2021 compared to 2 hours and 21 minutes in 2018. The Customs Administration time was 37 minutes during 2021, compared to 1 hour and 28 minutes' time in 2018.

Graph 15. Average import time for agencies in inland terminals. 2021 versus 2018 TRS.



Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

The time taken for import procedures at the Inland Terminals is closely related to and affected by the number of transiting vehicles which entered in in the Port of Durrës or in BCPs but did the Customs clearance in Tirana.

The Customs Broker time in Tirana is higher compared to other inland terminals and even to the BCP agencies. The Table below gives the average time spent by Customs Brokers in all TRS selected Customs Offices. The highest percentage of declarations is processed at the Tirana Customs Office.

Table 13. Time taken by Customs Broker for Import Procedures

No.	City	Subject	Import Procedure (minutes)
1	Tirana	Customs Broker	79
2	Fier	Customs Broker	22
3	Elbasan	Customs Broker	33
4	Morina	Customs Broker	8
5	Qafë Thanë	Customs Broker	22
6	Kapshtica	Customs Broker	39
7	Port of Durrës	Customs Broker	18

Source: Survey TRS 2021

The below table gives the visible improvements in time spent by Customs Brokers and Customs Offices in inland terminals.

Table 14. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for imports at In-Land Terminals

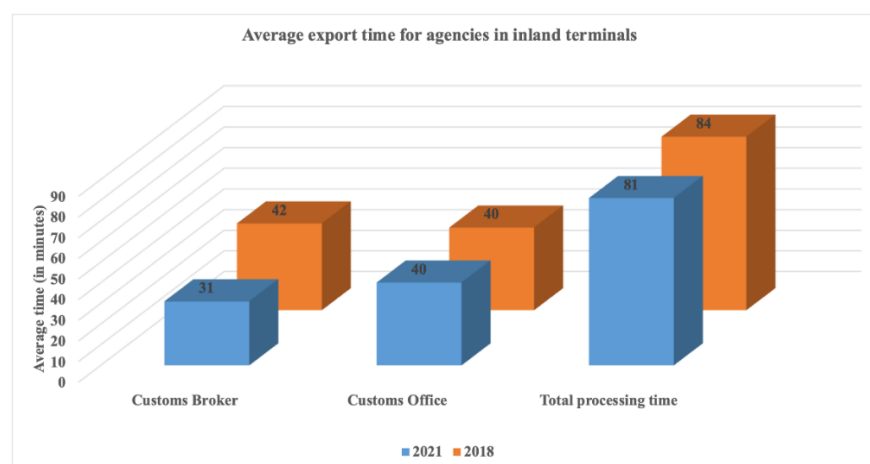
Import processes	Agencies	Reduction time of Agencies in 2021 compared with 2018
In -Land Terminal	Customs Broker	- 52% (reduction of time)
	Customs Office	- 35% (reduction of time)

Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

The Customs Office has reduced the time of import processes at In-Land terminals by 31 minutes (or by 35%) during 2021 compared to 2018. Customs Brokers have reduced processing time of imports by 1 hour and 14 minutes (or by 52%) during 2021 compared to 2018.

The average time for exportation in road transport at In-Land terminals during 2021 is 1 hour and 21 minutes. There are only two agencies that deal with export procedures at inland terminals: The Customs Office and the Customs Broker. Both agencies take, on average, 1 hour and 11 minutes to complete the export procedures at Inland Terminals.

Graph 16. Average export time for agencies in inland terminals



Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

The Customs Office's has no change in 2021 compared with 2018. Customs Brokers have improved their time by 11 minutes compared to 2018.

Table 15. Comparison of TRS 2021 vs. TRS 2018 results for exports at In-Land terminals

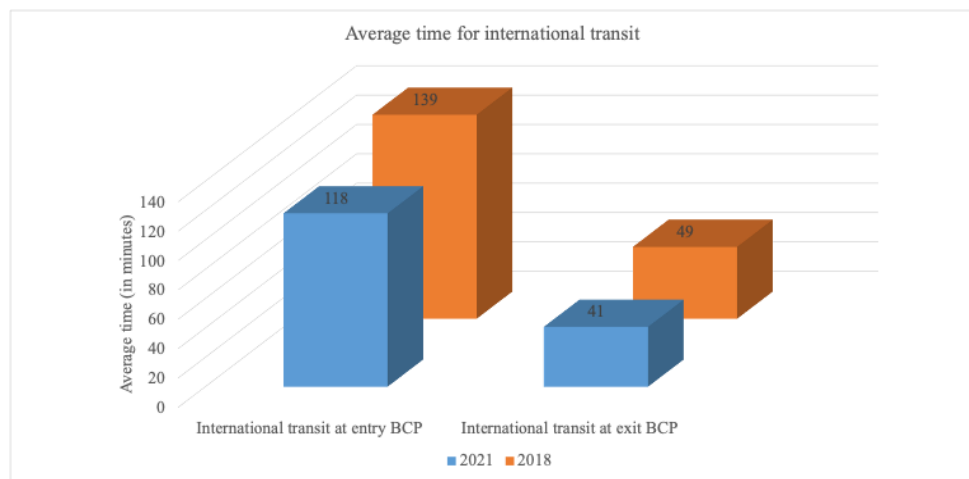
Export processes	Agencies	Results on Agencies compared 2018:2021 (time reduced in %)
Inland Terminals	Customs Broker	- 26%
	Customs Office	0%

Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

The export procedures at the Inland Terminals for the Customs Brokers include the time taken to verify, scan and upload the documentation in ASYCUDA. The time taken for Customs Office involves verification of documents, weighing and sealing. Customs Offices spent on average 6 minutes with green channel procedures, 20 minutes with yellow channel and 37 minutes with red channel. They also spent in average 17-18 minutes for sealing and weighing vehicles.

All the activities of the international transit procedures took on average 2 hour and 39 minutes, out of which 1 hour and 58 minutes at the BCP entry and 41 minutes at the BCP exit.

Graph 17. Average time for international transit, 2021 versus 2018 TRS.



Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

## IV. Goal and Methodology of the TRS

### IV.1 General

The Albanian General Directorate of Customs (GDC) has emphasized the facilitation of Customs procedures for export, import, and transit of cargo. To apply best trade facilitation practices, the Albanian National Committee for Trade Policy Coordination and Facilitation of International Trade approved a comprehensive National Plan aiming at trade facilitation – “The National Plan for Trade Policy Coordination and Trade Facilitation 2017-2020”<sup>2</sup>. Point 14 of the Plan requires “Measuring the time of cargo processing” and accordingly delivery of the Time Release Study (TRS).

Albania has undertaken important international and regional commitments to align its procedures with the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The use of a TRS is addressed in the TFA under Article 7.6, according to which “Members are encouraged to measure and publish their average release time of goods periodically and consistently, using tools such as, *inter alia*, the WCO Time Release Study”. Also, Article 22, point 1 of the Additional Protocol of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), approved by the Parliament with Law No. 18/2018, foresees the establishment of a system of measure and publication of the average time for cargo release. This Time Release Study (TRS) is the second one conducted in Albania and is based on the methodology of the WCO.

The Albanian Customs Code provides simplified customs’ procedures for many operators, such as Authorized Exporters, Authorized Economic Operators (AEO), (using mostly green channel for Customs purposes), as well as for specified commodities. The benefits for an AEO status are:

- easier admittance to Customs simplifications;
- fewer physical and document-based controls, related to security & safety and other Customs legislation;
- prior notification in case of selection for physical control (related to safety and security);
- prior notification in case of selection for Customs control (related to other customs legislation);
- priority treatment if selected for control;
- possibility to request a specific place for Customs controls
- recognition as a secure and safe business partner, Improved relations with Customs and other government authorities;
- reduced theft and losses;
- fewer delayed shipments;
- improved planning;
- improved customer service;
- improved customer loyalty;
- lower inspection costs of suppliers and increased co-operation, etc.

Currently, the most used simplified Customs procedures are the authorized consignments. Eight companies have been granted the status of Authorized Economic Operator.

---

<sup>2</sup><http://www.tregtia.gov.al/index.php/en>

The Albanian Customs Administration consists of the General Directorate of Customs (GDC) and 17 Customs offices across the Albanian Customs territory. The GDC operates under the Ministry of Finance and Economy. Due to different types of state BCPs in Albania, i.e., road, air and sea, there are four classifications of Customs Branches in Albania:

- a) Border Crossing Points (BCPs) such as Morina, Kapshtica, Qafë Thanë, Kakavija, Tri Urat, Hani i Hotit;
- b) Maritime Customs offices such as Durrës, Vlora, Shengjin, Himara and Saranda;
- c) Internal terminals or Inland Terminals such as Fier, Elbasan, Tirana, Berat;
- d) The airport Customs Office at Rinas, at “Nene Tereza” Airport.

Taking into account the volume of the Customs declarations processed at the 17 Customs Branches in Albania, and as suggested by the representatives of the GDC, the TRS was focused on measuring the time of Customs procedures in the road and maritime transport. The Airport “Nene Tereza” receives mostly small consignments and was therefore not included in the TRS. The Port of Durrës has the major maritime Custom Office. Three inland Border Crossing Points included in the analysis are Morina, Qafë Thanë, and Kapshtica. Morina connects the commerce with Kosovo, Qafë Thanë connects the commerce with North Macedonia and Kapshtica connects the commerce with Greece. Three inland terminals were chosen: Tirana, Fier and Elbasan representing the inland terminals with the largest volumes of cargo. The above selected Customs offices have treated for the year 2021 about 69% of the total number of exports, 70% of imports and 32% of international transits. The below table gives the number of exports, imports, and international transits in total and for the TRS selected offices.

Table 16. Number of exports, Imports, and International Transit in total and for the selected TRS Customs Offices in the year 2021

	<i>Number of exports</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number of imports</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number of transits</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Total Albania 2021</b>	<b>178,759</b>		<b>437,978</b>		<b>138,179</b>	
Tirana	19,309	11%	131,649	30%	917	1%
Elbasan	15,408	9%	5,177	1%	16	0%
Fier	5,282	3%	8,134	2%	17	0%
Kapshtice	3,156	2%	16,829	4%	10,403	8%
Qafë Thanë	19,594	11%	12,713	3%	17,771	13%
Morine	19,677	11%	13,288	3%	11,706	8%
Port of Durrës	41,523	23%	117,212	27%	3,250	2%
<b>Total TRS selected customs offices</b>	<b>123,949</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>305,002</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>44,080</b>	<b>32%</b>

Source: Ministry of Finance

## IV.2. TRS Objective

The goal of the project was to measure accurately and precisely the time required for the release of goods and to identify inefficiencies and bottlenecks in the release procedures. The target group included all commercial vehicles coming in and out of Albania, importing or exporting goods, or transiting.

The main objectives of the TRS were to:

- identify bottlenecks and/or constraints affecting the release of goods;
- establish a baseline for trade facilitation performance measurement;
- identify opportunities for trade facilitation improvements;
- comply with the commitment to measure and publish the average cargo release time, undertaken under international and regional agreements.

The Albanian Medium-Term Strategy of the Management of the Public Finances<sup>3</sup> 2014-2020, envisages specific indicators on the Customs Administration's performance, but information about the average time of import and export declarations processing was not available. The TRSs will provide the baseline.

## IV.3. Methodology

The team followed the Time Release Study methodology of the World Customs Organization (WCO) in all the phases of preparing and implementing the Study, analysing the findings, and defining the recommendations.

The materials and tools used in the implementation of the Study included the WCO "Guide to Measure the Time Required for the Release of Goods – Version 3" and the WCO recommendations.



2. [https://financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Albanian\\_PFM\\_strategy\\_2014-2020-1.pdf](https://financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Albanian_PFM_strategy_2014-2020-1.pdf)



## V. Procedures and Steps for Implementation of the TRS

The TRS process implemented in Albania included the following:

- Phase 1 - Preparation of the Study
- Phase 2 - Collection and Recording of Data
- Phase 3 - Analysis of Data and Conclusions
- Phase 4 – Post Implementation – Monitoring Implementation of Recommendations provided in the study report (This phase will be implemented after the acceptance of the report and its recommendations)

### Phase 1: Preparation of the Study

The team developed process maps and narratives of the inspection and clearance processes at BCPs and terminals, the same way as on the first study during 2018.

On October 18, 2021, a meeting was held with representatives of the three agencies present at the border: The Border Police, the Customs Administration, and the Albanian National Food Authority (NFA). The purpose of the meeting was to remind them of and to introduce them to the TRS and its proposed implementation methodology and to seek their co-operation, for the second study.

It was decided again that the TRS should be implemented at the most frequented Customs Offices, for the most represented Customs procedures (exportation Ex1 and importation Im4/Entry for home use declaration form), the volume of goods and modes of transportation (maritime and road).

Three BCPs: Morina, Qafë Thanë, and Kapshtica, as well as three inland terminals: Tirana, Fier, and Elbasan were chosen as the busiest border and inland locations. The Port of Durrës was analysed separately as the biggest Customs Office in Albania and represents the maritime import and export. In total, over 70% of all import and export declarations in the country were captured in this way.

To ensure that data collection is as comprehensive as possible, it was decided that the questionnaires should be collected for all types of goods and that a questionnaire should accompany a consignment throughout the importation/exportation process.

The questionnaires were drafted in English and Albanian.

The questionnaires were prepared for the two modes of transport (road, sea), separately for import and export procedures, separately for the Port of Durrës, inland terminals and BCPs, and separately for international transit (inward and outward), so there were 8 types of questionnaires in total:

1. Questionnaires for export and questionnaire for import at Port of Durrës
2. Questionnaires for export and questionnaire for import at BCPs
3. Questionnaires for export and questionnaire for import at the inland terminal
4. Questionnaires for inward transit and questionnaire for outward transit

The GDC sent an email notification to all the Customs Offices where the TRS was going to be undertaken, informing them in detail on what the TRS would include and instructing them to cooperate and facilitate all processes involved in completing the questionnaires.

The training for the survey takers was held on October 20, 2021.

The Customs Administration coordinated the obtaining of permits which the surveyors needed to be able to stay at the border Customs Offices.

A two-day pilot of the TRS survey was organized on October 25-26, 2021, to identify any shortcomings in the survey forms and correct them (if necessary) and to ensure the planned locations for the enumerators were appropriate together with the TRS Project team, as follows:

- for maritime transport on October 25-26, 2021, at Port of Durrës Customs;
- for road transport on October 25-26, 2021, at three BCPs – Qafë Thanë, Kapshtica and Morina, and three internal terminals: Tirana, Elbasan and Fier.

After the pilot project, meetings were held with the enumerators and representatives from Customs Administration and Customs agencies and some improvements were made to the questionnaires to better reflect and measure the real procedures.

For the importation of “groupage consignments”, it was decided that the questionnaires were to be completed just for one product - the most valuable of the groupage - independently of the SAD number of each importer.

The questionnaires were prepared for the two modes of transport (road, sea), separately for import and export procedures, for the Port of Durrës, for inland terminals and BCPs, and separately for international transit (inward and outward), so there were 8 types of questionnaires in total, as follows:

1. Questionnaire for export and questionnaire for import at Port of Durrës;
2. Questionnaire for export and questionnaire for import at BCPs;
3. Questionnaire for export and questionnaire for import at the inland terminal;
4. Questionnaire for inward transit and questionnaire for outward transit.

## Phase 2: Collection and Recording of Data

The TRS was carried out in the third week of November 2021, at all the selected customs branches.

- Data collection within the TRS for maritime transport was carried out for 7 consecutive days, from November 8 (07:45) to November 14, 2021 (22:59), at the Port of Durrës Customs Office.
- The TRS for road transport was conducted in the period November 14 (08:00) – 20 (22:10), 2021 at Qafë Thanë, Morina and Kapshtica BCPs and November 8 (07:45) – 14 (16:00) at Tirana, Elbasan, and November 8 (07:45) – 14 (16:00) at Fier internal terminals (7 consecutive business days).
- Data collection within the TRS for international transit was carried out for 7 consecutive days, from November 8 (07:45) to November 14, 2021 (22:59).

Saturday is a business day for all Customs Offices in Albania<sup>4</sup>.

Time measuring included all the consignments undergoing the Customs procedures Ex1 – exportation and Im4 – importation BCPs, at inland terminals and at the Port of Durrës, as well in international transit, at entry and exit points. A consignment that comes to a BCP can undergo import clearance at the BCP, or the consignment can go for transit to internal terminals. This is because based on Article 11, para 2 of the Albanian Customs Code, the Customs clearance takes place at the Customs Office where the importer is registered for tax issues. In special cases, the importer can apply at the GDC to obtain necessary permit to do the import clearance at a Customs Office that is different from the Customs Office where the import is registered.

Each vehicle was followed from the time it arrived at the BCP until it was finally released from Customs control (for importation) in the Customs Office, or from the time it left the Customs territory of the Republic of Albania (for exportation). A specific questionnaire, as mentioned, was developed for each importation, exportation, and international transit procedure.

All surveyors had a visible badge with the logo and name of the project. The surveyors were responsible for collecting the completed survey forms and properly storing them in the Customs Office during the TRS implementation.

The surveyors reported on the efficiency of the TRS implementation daily and recorded key observations or incidences affecting the efficient clearance of goods.

### Phase 3: Data Analysis

The data presented in this report is extracted from the WCO's Time Release Study software. Based on the time data for declarations collected in the TRS and entered into the web-based software, an average time is given between two data - or time - points. The graphs and tables presented in the TRS of 2021 show average time breakdowns by percentages of the time taken to complete the procedures between two data points and comparison with previous TRS in 2018.

The average time for two or more sub-processes will not necessarily add up to the average time for the main process as the results have not been weighted for different volumes in each process.

---

<sup>4</sup>The main purpose of Saturday work was to finish the time estimation of import/export procedures started one day before and that were unfinished. The vehicle had to be parked waiting the next day when the surveyors were at the BCP to finish the time estimation. The following day was not part of the questionnaires period of the project. The new vehicles that arrived at terminal or BCP were asked to provide the general data, but no time estimation followed. For this reason, some of the questionnaires are completed only partially.

## VI. Detailed Process Review and Findings

### VI.1. Port of Durrës (Maritime Transport)

#### VI.1.1. Import Procedures at Port of Durrës

There are five, main maritime Customs Offices in Albania, including Lezha, Vlora, Saranda, Himara and Durrës. The biggest maritime Customs Office is the Durrës Customs Office at the Port of Durrës, the largest port of the country, selected for this reason to be part of the TRS. The survey covered 67 import questionnaires, completed for consignments of import procedures at the Port of Durrës Custom Office. The questionnaires followed the vehicle from the moment it arrived in the Port of Durrës, through sea or land transport until the vehicle exited/left the Port. For every consignment containing goods subject to veterinary or phytosanitary control the necessary inspection was performed by the appropriate agency and, also in all cases (per Police Directive), the vehicles were scanned. The fieldwork was performed from November 8, 2021 (8:42 AM) to November 14, 2021 (until 1:44 PM).

According to the data obtained from the TRS, the average time for maritime importation is 3 hours and 23 minutes, which includes the time from the moment the vehicle arrived at the Port of Durrës terminal to the moment the vehicle exited the Port. Out of this, the Customs Office take 2 hours and 21 minutes, the Customs Broker 18 minutes, the Border Police around 1 minute.

The time taken by the Customs Broker in the Customs clearance process is calculated in 2 phases, the first when receiving the documentation from the driver and uploading in the system, and the second after the Customs has approved the declaration and the Customs Broker delivers the approved SAD and the Release Order to the driver of the vehicle. This amount of time is on average 18 minutes.

The Customs processing time is the time from the moment the Customs broker uploads the information into ASYCUDA and the SAD is prepaid, until the Customs issues the Release Oder.

Customs valuation plays a role in the time needed for import procedures at Port of Durrës, in the inland terminals and the BCPs. The Customs valuation is done by the Valuation Centre (VC) at the GDC<sup>5</sup> as foreseen by Instruction No. 5 of the General Director of Customs dated January 26, 2018. Once the SAD is electronically submitted in ASYCUDA by the Customs broker, the system does the risk-based assessment for that SAD and selects<sup>6</sup> it to the green channel (no control at all), blue channel (post clearance check), yellow channel (documentary check), or red channel (documentary and physical check). If the SAD is

<sup>5</sup><http://www.dogana.gov.al/dokument/1555/udhezim-nr-05-date-26012018>

<sup>6</sup> The AW Selectivity Module is an automated environment that enables a risk-based selectivity to all imports, exports, and transits. The system automatically compares a given set of data (e.g., from a goods declaration) against all currently active risk profiles. Based either on the selection criteria at national/local level or randomly, the system automatically will provide a selectivity channel (red/pink/yellow/blue or green) to a customs declaration. Red channel means both documentary check and physical examination. Pink channel means examination by the use of nonintrusive tools (i.e., radioactivity or scanner). Yellow channel means documentary check. Blue channel means post-clearance check/audit (after declaration has been automatically authorized to be released). Green channel means automatically release without a check.

channelled as “red”, the Customs Office of Port of Durrës performs the physical control. If the SAD is routed to the yellow channel, the VC does the documentary check for valuation purpose. Both the VC at the GDC and the Customs Office have access to, and can see the SAD in, ASYCUDA.

If the SAD is in the green channel, there is no Customs control or valuation by the GDC. The SAD remains in ASYCUDA for 20 minutes (+/-) and if it is not rerouted, the system automatically generates a “P” number, which means “Admitted”. If the SAD is in the blue channel, it means that the Customs control will be done within five days after the free circulation. The Customs Officer at the Customs Branch has to verify if the free circulation depends on the fulfilment of other requirements, such as submission of licenses, authorizations by other institutions, inspection control, and if the Customs Officer needs to do the checks for the fulfilment of these procedures.

The VC at GDC performs the documentary check of all SADs that are routed to the yellow and red channel. If the SAD is in the red channel, the Customs Officer at the Customs Office where the consignment is declared, does the physical checks, such as scanning or weighing, numbering, photo taking, uploading the goods, and so on. If the VC at the GDC asks for additional documentation for Customs valuation, it informs via email the Customs Broker. If the VC at the GDC does not approve the transaction value and specifies the reasons in SAD for not accepting the transaction value, the importer has the right to appeal the decision within 10 days at the Customs Office. The goods are kept at the terminal/BCP until a decision is made by the Director of the Customs Office.

Time	Activities of all import procedures at the Port of Durrës
	<p><b>The average time of importation at Port Durrës is 3 hours and 23 minutes.</b> The average time of the Customs Office is 2 hours and 21 minutes that including the average time spent in completing the customs requirements that include: weighing, customs registration, customs controls, scanning and customs-exit procedures.</p>
<p><b>2 minutes</b></p>	<p><b>Border Police:</b> Once the vehicle arrives at the Port, the driver first goes to the Border Police point. The Border Police perform documentary and visual checks and complete the registration of the vehicle in the Transport Information Management System (TIMS). It takes around 2 minute to do that.</p>
<p><b>1 minutes</b></p>	<p><b>Customs registration (parking entrance):</b> The Customs registration takes on average 1 minute. This amount of time includes the time taken for the Customs Office to enter the information on the vehicle at the entry registry.</p>
<p><b>18 minutes</b></p>	<p><b>Customs Broker:</b> The Customs Broker takes the documentation on the consignment from the driver, scans it, uploads it electronically in ASYCUDA, and completes the SAD prepayment for the presentation to the Customs Office. This on average takes 18 minutes. Up to 10 minutes is taken by the Customs Broker to carry out the SAD prepayment, while 8 minutes is the time spent with driver for handing the documents, scanning the documents and other administrative work during the process. Once the Customs Broker has submitted electronically the documentation in ASYCUDA and completed the SAD prepayment, the Customs Broker waits for inspections and customs procedures, such as scanning, weighing, Customs valuation, Customs controls.</p>
<p><b>2 hour and 21 minutes</b></p>	<p><b>Customs Procedures:</b> After the Customs Broker uploads documentation in ASYCUDA, the Customs Office starts its work. The GDC has to perform a valuation for Customs duties, and for this reason, the Customs procedures include the time taken by the Customs for scanning, customs valuation, documentary, and physical checks, if necessary, until the Release Order is issued. This amount of time is on average 1 hour and 25 minutes.</p> <p>When all the Customs requirements are met for the SAD, the declaration is considered admitted and the system automatically gives a serial number for that SAD that starts with “P”, which means “Approved”. The Customs Officer of the Customs Branch where the SAD routed in red channel, is submitted (Port of Durrës) then performs the following: 1) signs and seals the section “C” of SAD. “Cleared” is written on the seal; 2) prints the Release Order; and 3) gives back copies of the SAD and the Release Order to the Customs Broker or the driver.</p> <p><b>Scanning:</b> During this study, most of the cases were scanned. As explained below, considerable time is taken by the Customs procedures for the vehicles that are selected to the red channel. This amount of time is on average 29 minutes.</p>

	<p><b>Weighing:</b> At the Port of Durrës, the vehicle needs to be weighed if selected for yellow or red channel inspections. This amount of time is on average 10 minutes.</p> <p>In subtotal: Customs procedures 85 min + Scanning 29 min + Weighing 10 minutes + lost time 17 min.</p> <p><b>Documentary check:</b> The documentary check was carried out for 101 SADs (or 41.7% of the total), which were routed to the yellow channel.</p>
<b>41 minutes</b>	<p><b>Exit:</b> From the moment the Release Order is issued to the Customs broker or the driver until the vehicle exits the Port of Durrës it takes 41 minutes.</p> <p>After receiving the Release Order, the driver goes to the exit point. It takes 17 minutes to get there given the Customs Office location inside the Port.</p> <p>At the Customs Exit Point (where exit is registered), the driver presents the Customs Office with all the documentation of the vehicle. The Customs Officer at the Exit Point checks the documents and then completes the exit register with the number of the SAD and the vehicles' plate number. This means that the vehicle can leave the customs point. It takes on average 11 minutes for the Customs Officer to perform this check.</p> <p>The overall time taken to exit have clearly improved between 2018 and 2021.</p>

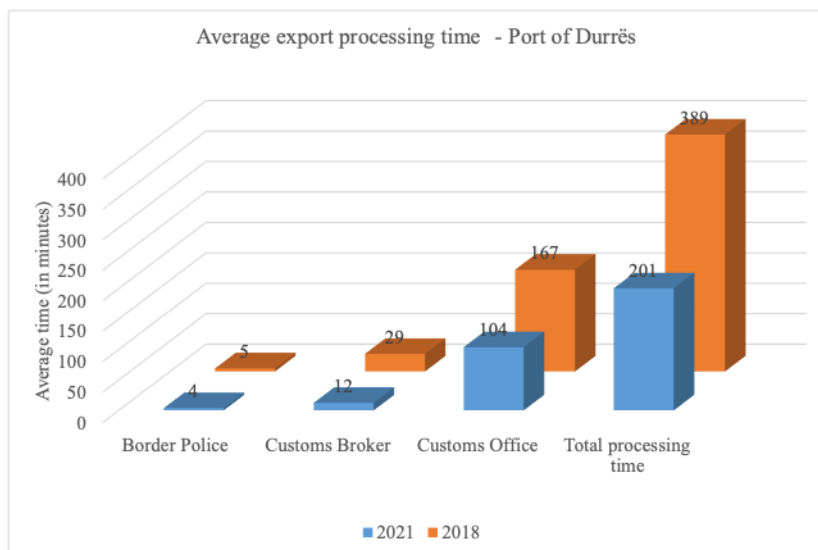
### VI.1.2. Export Procedures at Port of Durrës

The survey processed 33 export declarations at the Customs Office of Port of Durrës. The first procedure at Custom Office at Port of Durrës is registration and delivering papers to Customs broker. The chart below starts with the weighing of all the vehicles that are classified as red channel. According to the data obtained, the average time for exportation procedures in Port of Durrës is 3 hours and 21 minutes. The Time from entrance till the moment of uploading Single Administrative Document (SAD) was 1 hour and 8 minutes. Scanning and NFA took 35 minutes. Controls from Border Police until cargo exit, took 4 minutes. The average time taken for Customs procedures was 1 hour and 44 minutes and time spent with the Customs Broker was on average 12 minutes.

The graph below shows detailed information concerning the periods and procedures in the exportation of goods from Port of Durrës.

The Customs Office’s average time of up to 3 hours includes the time taken for weighing, customs registration, Customs procedures, sealing and exiting the customs point.

Graph 18. Average export time at Port of Durrës, 2021 versus 2018 TRS.



Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021



AVERAGE TIME	EXPORT ACTIVITIES AT PORT OF DURRËS
<b>3 hours and 21 minutes</b>	<b>It takes on average 3 hours and 21 minutes to perform all export procedures at the Port of Durrës (201 minutes).</b>
<b>23 minutes</b>	<p><b>Weighing:</b> Once the truck enters the terminal and the SAD is uploaded by the Customs broker the consignment should be weighed if it has been routed to the red channel, this amount of time is counted from the vehicles' arrival at the terminal until the end of weighing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It takes on average 7 minutes for the vehicle to join the queue for weighing.</li> <li>• It takes on average 14 minutes waiting in the queue.</li> <li>• It takes on average 2 minutes to get weighed.</li> </ul> <p>Weighing is not mandatory but based on risk assessment. At the Port of Durrës, weighing is performed for 25% of the consignments.</p>
<b>12 minutes</b>	<p><b>Customs Broker:</b> It takes on average 12 minutes for the Customs Broker to obtain documentation from the drivers, scanning the documents, submitting them electronically in ASYCUDA and submitting hard copy documents (for red channelled SADs) to the Customs Office.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) It takes 3 minutes from the moment the driver arrives at the Customs Broker's office until the Customs Broker receives the document;</li> <li>2) It takes 12 minutes on average from the time the Customs Broker receives the documents until the Customs Broker scans the documents and uploads them in ASYCUDA;</li> <li>3) In case the SAD is classified under red channel, it takes 14 minutes from the moment the Customs Broker scans the documents, uploads them in ASYCUDA, and presents the SAD as hard copy documents to the Customs.</li> </ol>
<b>1 hour and 44 minutes</b>	<p><b>Custom procedures:</b> Once the Customs broker presents the SAD and hard copy documents to the Customs Office (hard copy only for red channel), the Customs Office starts the procedures until the Release Order is given to the Customs broker. This amount of time is on average 1 hour and 44 minutes and includes the time spent on each of the steps below. Based on the export declaration, the Customs Officer issues the Scanning Order. Scanning and delays of the Customs Officer in issuing the Release Order take most of the time.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) It takes on average 1 hour and 17 minutes from the moment the Customs Broker presents the SAD and hard copy documents (only in red channel) to the Customs until the Customs starts checking the documentation and verifying/crosschecking it in ASYCUDA. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Scanning:</b> Every vehicle routed to the red channel must get scanned. Once the SAD is submitted in the system, the Customs Office issues an Authorization Order that the vehicle has to be scanned. It takes 22 minutes for the vehicle to get scanned. It takes on average 17 minutes waiting in the queue and around 5 minutes to get scanned.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>b) After the scanning, the vehicle goes to the export terminal, without documentation. Meanwhile, the scanning Customs Officer sends the declaration and the scanning image to the responsible Custom Office that will perform the export Customs procedures. If the scanning image is clear and no items of concern are detected, the Customs Officer does only documentary checks. If the scanning image is unclear (the marking in the scanning image is red), the Customs Officer carries out joint controls with the Police Officer at the export terminal. If everything is in line with the customs requirements, the Customs Officer closes the export declaration in ASYCUDA by adding a “P”, which means “Approved”. It takes 31 minutes from the moment the vehicle is scanned up to the moment the Customs Office starts the documentary verifications. This time is linked with the verification of the scanning image (only in red channel).</p> <p>2) From the moment the Customs starts checking the documentation and verifying/crosschecking it in ASYCUDA until the Release Order is issued, it takes on average 28 minutes, out of which:</p> <p>a) Documentary check (Customs verifies documentation and verifies/crosschecks it in ASYCUDA) takes on average 2 minutes.</p> <p>b) From the moment the Customs completes the verification and cross-checks it in ASYCUDA until it starts registering the export declaration in ASYCUDA, it takes on average 8 minutes.</p> <p>c) It takes on average 3 minutes for the Customs Officer to register the export declaration in ASYCUDA. During the survey time, there were no cases in which the submission of additional documentation or physical examination was necessary.</p> <p>d) From the moment the Customs Officer registers the declaration in ASYCUDA until the Release Order is issued to the Customs broker, it takes on average 23 minutes. The approval of the export declaration is done by inserting a “P”, which means “Approved” in a special box of the export declaration. Customs does not wait until scanning is completed in order to verify the documents and perform all other needed controls</p> <p>After that, the Customs Office issues the Release Order and gives a copy of the documentation back to the Customs broker.</p>
<b>40 minutes</b>	<b>Arrival at Customs exit point:</b> It takes <b>40 minutes</b> for the driver to get to the Customs exit point after he received the Release Order from the Customs Office.
<b>13 minutes</b>	<b>Exit Customs Procedures.</b> It takes on <b>average 13 minutes</b> for the Customs Office to complete the exit registry procedures. The Customs Officer verifies the export declaration and checks the documentation of the vehicles that carry the goods for export. The Customs Officer then enters it in ASYCUDA and does the release of the export. This means that the vehicle exits the Customs territory for export.
<b>28 minutes</b>	<b>Arrival at Border Police:</b> After the Customs Officer completes the exit registry, the driver proceeds to the Border Police to do the checks there. It takes on average 28 minutes for the driver to get to the Border Police after finishing all Customs export procedures.
<b>4 minutes</b>	<b>Border Police:</b> Border Police performs exit controls and registration. It takes on average 4 minutes for the Police Officer to complete these controls.
<b>5 minutes</b>	<b>Exit ferry:</b> After completing the Border Police controls, the vehicle exits the Port of Durrës. It takes on average 5 minutes.

## VI.2. Import Procedures at BCPs and Inland Terminals

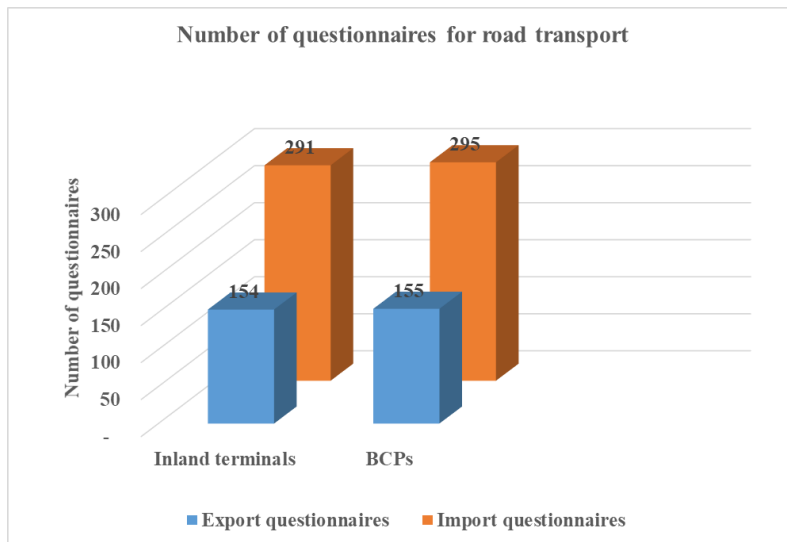
The TRS analysed the average time utilized for import procedures that allow for free circulation of goods for home consumption conveyed by road transportation (IM4) at three BCPs and three inland terminals, as well as the average time of export procedures required for definitive export (Type Ex1), through these Customs Offices.

The TRS focused on three BCPs and three inland terminals. The three BCPs are Morina, Qafë Thanë, and Kapshtica. Morina is at the border with Kosovo, Qafë Thanë is at the border with Macedonia, and Kapshtica is at the border with Greece. The three inland terminals are Tirana, Elbasan, and Fier.

- In road transport, the TRS covered measuring the average time of import procedures for free circulation (Im4) carried out at three BCPs and the average time of transit import procedures for the consignments that enter BCPs and are transited for import clearance at inland terminals.
- The TRS also covered measuring the average time of export procedures (Ex1) for consignments, for which the export declaration is completed at inland terminals and are transiting to the three BCPs to exit the Albanian territory.

In total, 581 questionnaires were collected on import declarations and 308 questionnaires on export declarations at the three BCPs and the three inland terminals during 2021.

Graph 19. Number of export and import questionnaires for road transport



Source: Survey TRS 2021

The TRS for road transport was carried out from November 8 (8:00 AM) to November 14 (10:10 AM), 2021, at Qafë Thanë, Morina, and Kapshtica BCs, and from November 8 (1:00 PM) to November 14, (11:37 PM), 2021, at Tirana, Elbasan and Fier inland terminals (7 successive business days; Saturday is a business day for the inland terminal).

For import procedures, every vehicle was monitored from the moment it arrived at the border of the territory of Albania until it exited the BCP or the inland terminal.

For the export procedures, every vehicle was monitored from the moment it entered the BCP or the inland terminal until the vehicle exited the Albanian territory.

There was a uniform questionnaire for importation and or exportation procedure, separate for BCPs and the inland terminals. The questionnaire also included a box for the SAD number of the Customs declaration. The questionnaires had separate lines for the importers' names and the license number of the vehicle. (See Annexes) Since the TRS aims at analysing the time taken for every vehicle to complete all import or export procedures, and to avoid the issues of confidentiality of the data, the analysis of the questionnaires was done based on the license number of the vehicles. According to the TRS study, the average import time is as follows:

- All import procedures at BCPs for free circulation, starting from the moment the vehicle arrives at the BCP until it exits the BCP during 2021, take on average 2 hours and 3 minutes for all BCP points. This was 32 minutes faster than during the 2018 TRS when the average time was 2 hours and 35 minutes.

The TRS analysed 581 import questionnaires. Out of them, 295 questionnaires IM4 were analysed at the three BCPs: Morina, Qafë Thanë and Kapshtica. The remaining 286 questionnaires were taken in the three inland terminals: Tirana, Elbasan and Fier, as shown in the below table.

Table 17. The number of import questionnaires at inland terminals and BCPs

<b>Inland terminals</b>	<b>No. of import questionnaires</b>	<b>BCPs</b>	<b>No. of import questionnaires</b>
<b>Elbasan</b>	24	Kapshtica	148
<b>Fier</b>	37	Morina	16
<b>Tirana</b>	225	Qafë Thanë	131
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>

Source: Survey TRS, 2021

### VI.2.1. Import Procedures at BCPs

As explained above, a consignment that enters Albania at a BCP can go through the Customs import clearances at the BCP or it can be transited to an inland terminal to complete the Customs import clearance procedures. Out of 295 Im4 questionnaires, 183 completed all the import procedures at the BCPs, while 112 transited to the inland or other terminals for import procedures, as shown in the table below.

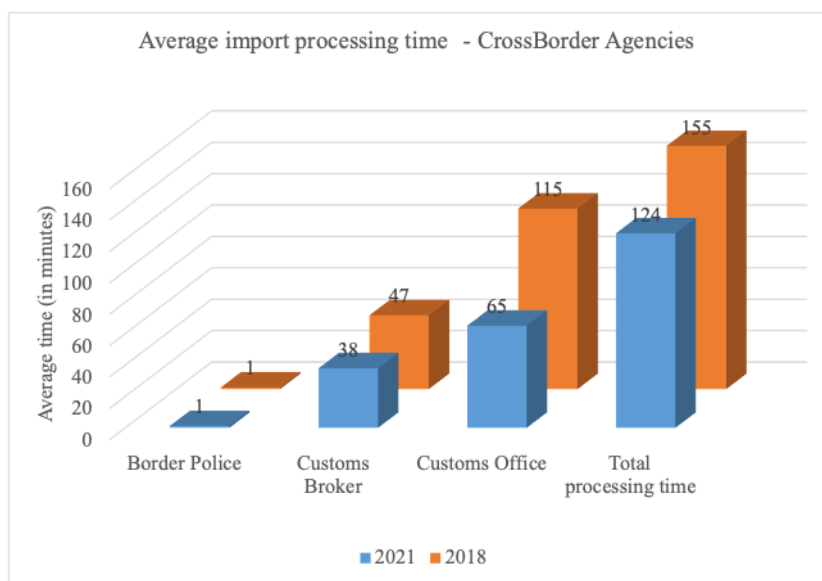
Table 18. Number of import questionnaires at BCPs by transiting cargo and related inland terminal

BCPs/ cargo transiting to Inland Terminal	Port of Durrës	Elbasan	Tirana	Fier	Local (BCP) clearance	Total
Kapshtica	13	5	25	4	101	148
Morina	1		2		13	16
Qafë Thanë	7	11	42	2	69	131
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>183</b>	

Source: Survey TRS, 2021

This part analyses the time taken to perform all import procedures for the consignments that arrive at BCPs and are released for free circulation.

Graph 20. Average import time 2021 vs.2018 TRS.



Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

Average Time	<b>ALL IMPORT ACTIVITIES AT BCPs (IM4) - QAFË THANË, KAPSHTICA AND MORINA</b>
<b>2 hours and 3 minutes</b>	<b>All import procedures for free circulation, starting from the moment the vehicle arrives at the BCP until it exists the BCP, takes on average 2 hours and 3 minutes –in Qafë Thanë, Morina and in Kapshtica (123 minutes).</b>
<b>2 minutes</b>	<b>Weighing:</b> On arrival at the BCP, the vehicle needs to be weighed if selected only for red channel inspections. During the TRS study, the weighing of the vehicle was done for 46% consignments.
<b>1 minute</b>	<b>Border Police:</b> Once the vehicle enters the BCP, it takes on average 1 minute for Border Police controls.  The Border Police procedures take only 1 minute for the documentary and visual checks and for completing the registration.
<b>38 minutes</b>	<p><b>Customs Broker:</b> After completing the checks with the Border Police and the Customs registration, the driver goes to the Customs Broker.</p> <p>It <b>takes on average 38 minutes</b> from the moment the driver arrives at the Customs Broker’s office until the Customs Broker completes the SAD, scans, and uploads the documentation to ASYCUDA system, makes pre-payment of Customs duties and delivers hard copy of documentation to Customs if SAD is selected for red channel inspections. Compared to the average time spent on 2018 there is an improvement of 10 minutes, but the brokers now perform more activities than in 2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It takes on average 16 minutes from the moment the Customs Broker receives the documents until the Customs Broker scans them and uploads them in ASYCUDA. Customs Brokers has improved the time spent for this activity compared with 2018 by at least 8 minutes.</li> <li>• It takes on average 3 minutes for the Customs Broker to complete the prepayment of the SAD;</li> <li>• It takes on average 4 minutes to deliver the hard copy documents to Custom when SAD is selected for red channel inspections.</li> <li>• The difference of 15 minutes is attributed to time taken by the driver.</li> </ul> <p>The Customs broker submits the documents for inspection to the NFA Inspector. The Customs broker must notify the inspection agencies two days before the arrival of goods.</p>

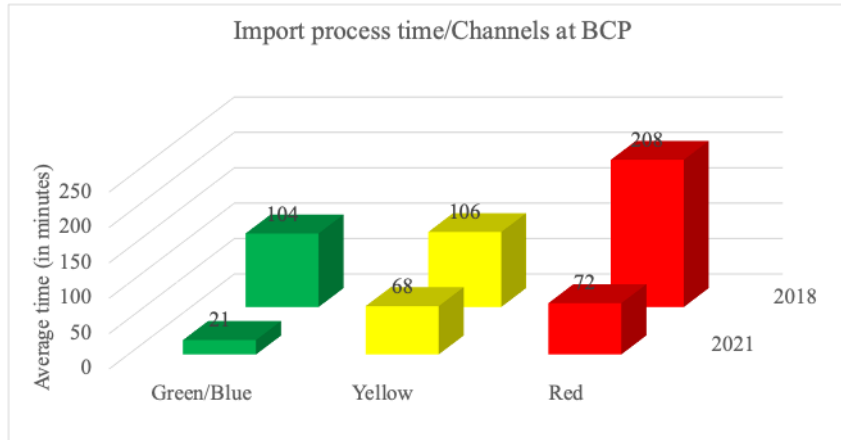
<p><b>8 minutes</b></p>	<p><b>NFA Control:</b> A total of 31 consignments were subject to NFA control. The inspection control performed by the NFA encompasses veterinary inspection service, and phytosanitary inspection for food safety. The time expended for controls by inspection officers was counted from the moment the control started and includes documentary check and identification of goods, physical examination (if any), sampling, drawing up of the administrative decision and making the decision available to the Customs broker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It takes 3 minutes for the NFA inspector to take the documents and finish the documentary check;</li> <li>• The registration process in the NFA system and delivery to the Custom Office takes 5 minutes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>65 minutes</b></p>	<p><b>Customs Procedures:</b>  Customs Office controls are measured from when the SAD is submitted electronically in ASYCUDA until the Release Order is issued and includes: scanning, documentary verifications in ASYCUDA, documentary checks, physical control if necessary, and issuing the Release Order once all the Customs requirements are met. This takes on average 1 hour and 5 minutes.</p> <p>Most of this time is spent on scanning, the Customs Office verification in ASYCUDA, and documentary checks.</p> <p><b>Scanning:</b> Scanning is performed for 46% of all vehicles that enter the BCPs. It takes on <b>average 21 minutes</b> from the moment the Customs Broker submits the SAD in ASYCUDA and finishes the prepayment of duty and taxes until the Customs Office issues the Scanning Authorization.</p> <p><b>Documentary Check:</b> Once the SAD is in ASYCUDA, the VC at the DGC carries out the customs valuation of that SAD. It <b>takes 20 minutes</b> for the VC to inform the Customs broker about the customs valuation, after the Customs Broker has taken the scanning results.</p> <p>The Customs procedures depend on the channels the SAD is routed through. For SADs routed to green channel, no documentary control and physical examination are carried out.</p> <p>As shown below, the time difference for review of SADs selected for blue/green channel and those routed to the yellow channel, is around 12 minutes. The rest of the time is taken up by the Customs Office documentary checks until the Release Order is issued. For the SADs that are under the yellow channel, the <b>documentary check</b> takes on average 19 minutes from the moment the documentary control starts until the P number is issued.</p> <p>In subtotal: Customs Procedures 39 min + Scanning 21 min + Weighing 2 minutes + lost time 3 min.</p>

	<p>During the survey time, consignments under the red channel takes on average 52 minutes.</p> <p>In the three BCPs, a considerable time was taken for the SADs selected for the blue/green channel and the yellow channel. There has been a 28-minute improvement in the time taken by the Customs broker to complete the SAD prepayment compared to 2018. The Customs Office has also become faster: Selection to the blue/green channels takes 18 minutes fewer, for the yellow channel, 5 minutes, and for red channel, the time is now only a quarter of that in 2018. When all Customs procedures are completed, the letter "P" (admitted) is inserted into a box on the SAD. The Customs Office then proceeds with issuing the Release Order.</p> <p>The Customs Officer prints the SAD, stamps it, and prints the Release Order and signs it. Both documents are given to the Customs broker to be presented at the Customs exit point.</p>
<b>3 minutes</b>	<b>Exit:</b> From the moment the Release Order is given to the Customs broker until the time the vehicle exits the BCP, is on average 3 minutes.



The below table gives the average time spent for import customs procedures in BCPs according to channels.

Graph 21. Custom channel time for imports at BCP, 2021 vs.2018 TRS.



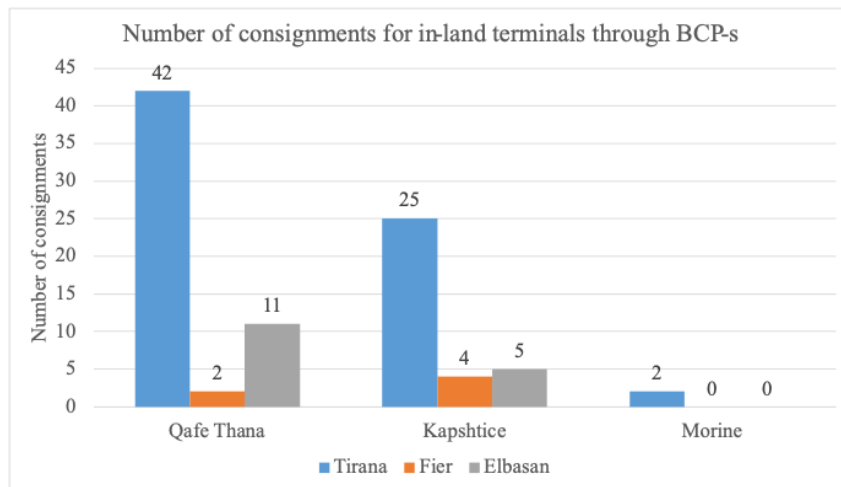
Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

There is a clear reduction in time during 2021 for all channels, green/blue with 80%, yellow with 36% and red channel with 65%. The key element which has been indicate the reduction of time during import procedure at BCP is Customs Office with average 50 minutes less.

**VI.2.2. Imports in BCPs for Transiting and completing Customs Procedures at Inland terminals**

During the survey, 91 vehicles entered the three BCPs and transited to the three inland terminals: Tirana, Elbasan and Fier. The graph below shows the terminals where the consignments were transited to and processed.

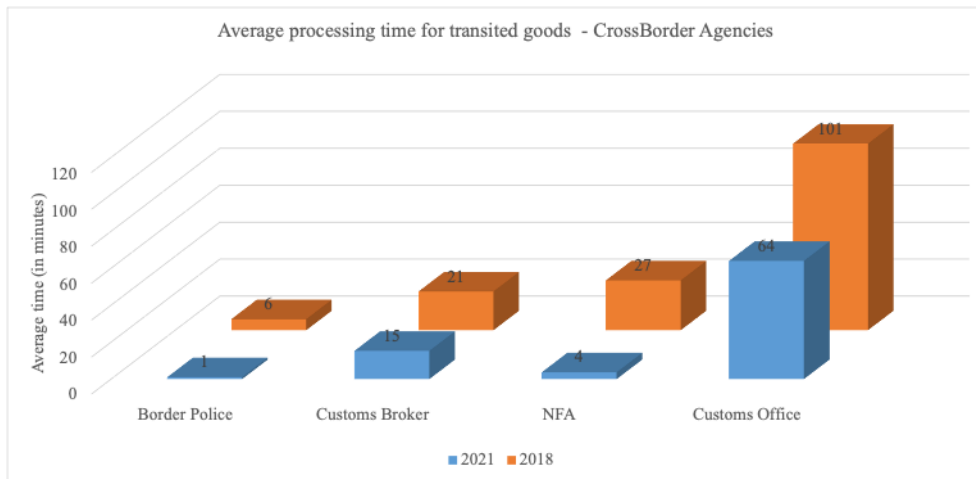
Graph 22. Number of consignments for inland terminals per BCP



Source: Survey TRS 2021

At the BCPs it took 2 hours and 3 minutes on average to process consignments transiting to inland terminals. The Customs Office takes on average 1 hour and 4 minutes (including weighing, scanning, Customs controls), the Customs Broker 15 minutes, the National Food Authority 4 minutes, and the Border Police 1 minute.

Graph 23. Average import processing time for transiting from BCP to Inland Terminals, 2021 vs.2018 TRS.



Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

### VI.2.3. Import Procedures at Inland Terminals

After a vehicle leaves the Border Crossing Point, it proceeds to the inland terminal for Customs clearance.

A total of 286 questionnaires were collected for such consignments coming from the BCPs Qafë Thanë, Morina, Port of Durrës and Kapshtica.

Table 19. Number of import questionnaires collected at inland terminals, by the BCP they came from:

Inland terminal/ Is cargo arriving from	Port of Durrës	Kapshtica	Morina	Qafë Thanë	Total
<b>Elbasan</b>	9	5	0	11	24
<b>Fier</b>	31	4	0	2	37
<b>Tirana</b>	156	25	2	42	225
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>286</b>

Source: Survey TRS, 2021

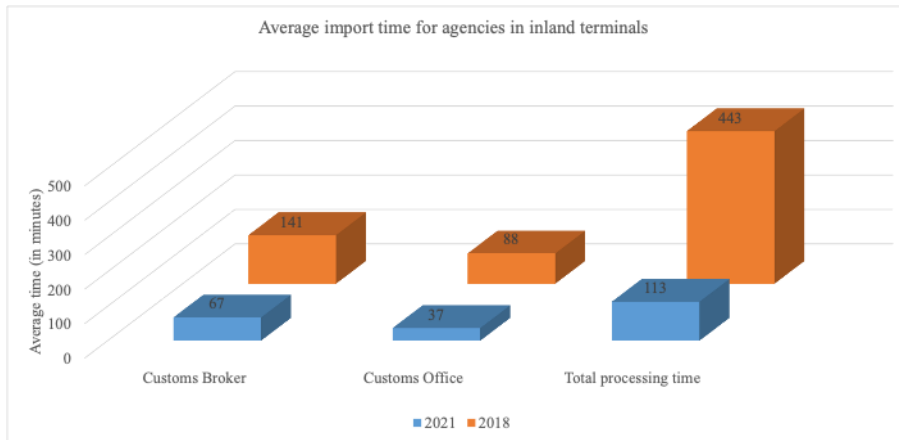
The import procedures at the inland terminals take on average 1 hour and 53 minutes. This includes the time from the moment the vehicle enters the inland terminal until the vehicle exits the inland terminal. The Customs Office takes on average 37 minutes, while the Customs Broker takes 1 hour and 7 minutes. Nine minutes are recorded as wasting time by drivers within the terminal. The time taken by the Customs

Office includes the time taken for the Customs registration, Customs procedures and the time taken to complete the exit registration.

The graphs below show the average time and import processes completed for the importation of goods in road transport at the inland terminals. Transiting vehicles that arrive at the terminals in the later afternoon and at night, will be processed during the next day when the inland terminal reopens. This affects the overall average processing time.

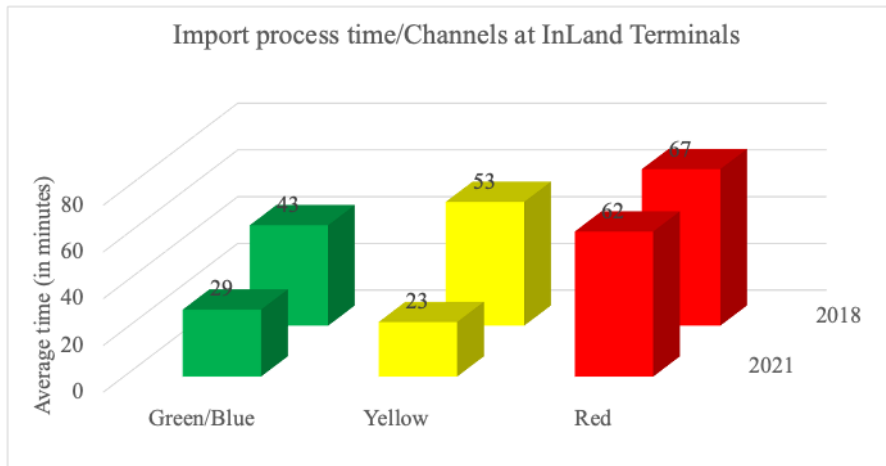
At inland terminals, there are only two agencies operating: The Customs Office and the Customs broker.

Graph 24. Average import time at inland terminals. 2021 vs.2018 TRS.



Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

Graph 25. Average import channel time at in-land terminals, by channels.



Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

AVERAGE TIME	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>All import procedures at inland terminals Customs Office</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>TIRANA, ELBASAN AND FIER</b></p>
<b>1 hour and 53 minutes</b>	It takes on average <b>1 hour and 53 minutes</b> to complete all the import procedures in inland terminals (113 minutes).
<b>1 minute</b>	<b>Customs registration:</b> When the vehicle enters the terminal, it goes directly to the Customs Office to get registered. From the moment the vehicle enters the terminal until the Customs Office completes the registration of the vehicle at the entry register, it takes on average 1 minute.
<b>37 minutes</b>	<p><b>Arrival of the driver at the Customs Broker's Office:</b> After the Customs Officer completes the entry registry, the driver goes to the Customs Brokers' office.</p> <p>The Tirana, Elbasan and Fier inland terminals deal with the declaration for free circulation that comes in transit from the BCP. Transiting vehicles must present themselves at the inland terminal within a deadline specified in the transit declaration. This time is foreseen by Custom procedure for domestic transit, and it is not included in our study. Regardless of the time (day or night) the driver has to present himself at the inland terminal within the schedule deadline of transit declaration. The inland terminals have an "Admission Office" at the entry point, which is open 24 hours to register the transiting vehicles. If the vehicle arrives for example at 2 AM, the Customs Officer at the entry point registers the vehicles, but all other procedures (Customs broker) will only be done the next morning. The official opening hours of the terminals are: Tirana from 9 AM to 5 PM, Fier from 8 AM to 3 PM and Elbasan from 8 AM to 3 PM. Twenty-seven consignments arrived at terminal the afternoon or evening/night and had to wait for processing the next day.</p> <p>This process takes an average 37 minutes.</p>
<b>1 hour and 7 minutes</b>	<b>Customs broker:</b> The Customs Broker collects documents from the driver and submits them electronically to Asycuda (SAD, cargo, and transit documents) This takes on average 1 hour and 7 minutes. The time that Customs Broker takes to present SAD and hard copy documents to Customs is on average 33 minutes, this process is mainly required for red channel.

### VI.3. Export procedures at Inland terminals and BCPs.

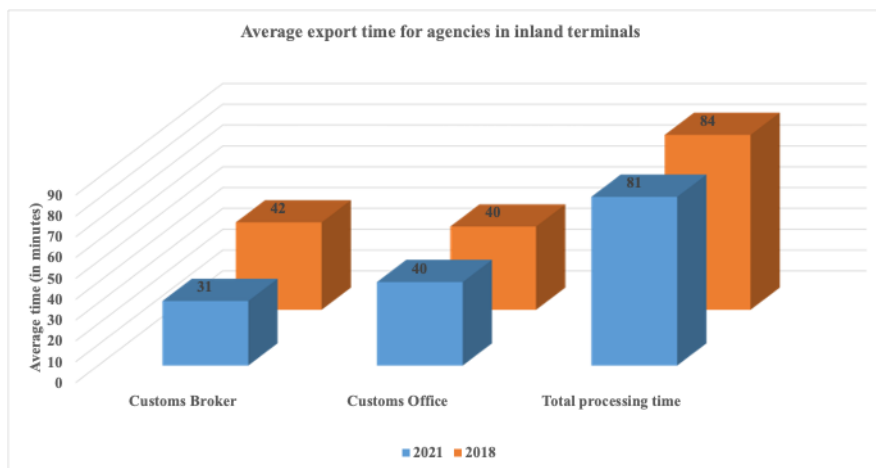
The TRS analysed the timing of export procedures in road transportation for 308 questionnaires at the three TRS inland terminals and the three BCPs (153 export questionnaires at inland terminals and 155 export questionnaires at BCPs as shown in Graph 17).

The average time for exportation in Inland Terminals has resulted on average 1 hour and 21 minutes, while the average time for exports done at BCP the average time has resulted 1 hour and 12 minutes.

#### VI.3.1 Exports at Inland Terminals

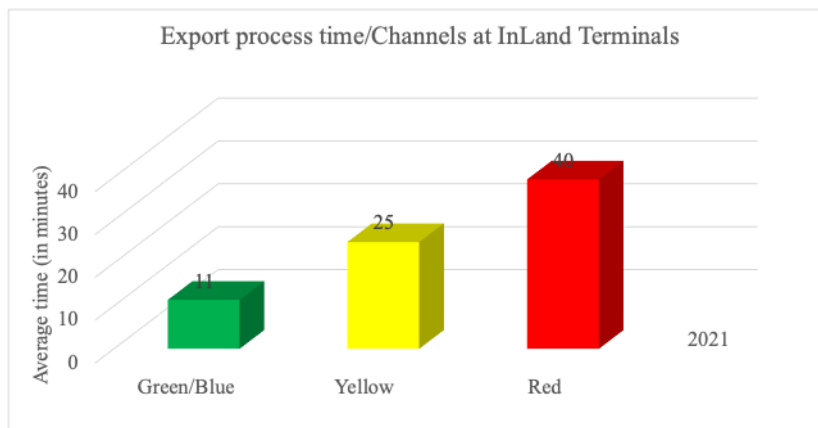
The table below shows the time periods and procedures pertaining to the exportation of goods at the inland terminals, where the total time spent is 1 hour and 21 minutes (or 81 minutes). Only the Customs Office and the Customs Broker deal with export procedures. Registration at entrance Customs Terminal, Weighing, Customs Office and Exit registration from Customs Terminal as given below, belongs to Customs Office time.

Graph 26. Average time of export processes In -Land Terminals



Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021 (Please note that the total processing time measures the time from entrance in the inland terminal until exit from inland terminal. The difference (in average in 2021, 10 minutes) is time lost by the driver and not included in the Customs Broker time, nor in the Customs Office time.

Graph 27. Average time of export processes in Inland Terminals, by channels



Source: Survey TRS 2021

AVERAGE TIME	Export procedures at the inland terminals in Tirana, Elbasan and Fier
<b>1 hour and 21 minutes</b>	<b>All export procedures at the inland terminals in Tirana, Elbasan and Fier take 1 hour and 21 minutes (81 minutes)</b>
<b>2 minutes</b>	<b>Weighing:</b> Once the vehicle enters the terminal, it needs to be weighed. In Tirana and Elbasan, the weighing scale is inside the terminal. In these cases, it takes on <b>average 2 minute</b> from the moment the vehicle enters the inland terminal until the weighing is completed. A total of 76 vehicles were weighed during the TRS. Sixty - eight of the vehicles were weighed inside the terminal and 8 vehicles were weighed outside the terminal. In Fier, the weighing scale is outside the terminal, so the vehicle is weighed before entering the terminal and the driver gives the weighing document to the Customs Broker as part of the documentation.
<b>1 minutes</b>	Custom registration: It takes 1 minute for the Customs Office to complete the registration of the vehicle at the entry register.
<b>31 minutes</b>	<b>Customs Broker:</b> It takes on <b>average 31 minutes</b> from the moment the driver arrives at the Customs Broker’s office until the Customs Broker submits of SAD to ASYCUDA system and SAD registered.

	<p>Within this time, the Customs Broker prepares all the documents required for export declaration of goods, scans and uploads them electronically in ASYCUDA and then submits hard copy documents to the Customs Officer.</p>
<b>26 minutes</b>	<p><b>Customs procedure:</b> This amount of time is counted from the moment the Customs Broker has submitted documentation (for red channel hard copy of documentation is also required), to the Customs Officer, until the Release Order is issued. The average time recorded by Customs Office for approving the SAD in the green channel is 6 minutes.</p> <p><b>Documentary check</b> (yellow channel) took 19 minutes on average, for 95 declarations.</p> <p><b>Physical examination</b> (red channel) took on average 37 minutes from the moment the declaration is classified for red channel inspection until the completion of the Inspection Act.</p>
<b>21 minutes</b>	<p><b>Seal and exit Customs Point:</b> After the export declaration is assigned “P” in the system, which means that the export declaration meets all the requirements, the vehicle is sealed, registered at the Exit Customs Point and exits the inland terminal. These procedures take on average 10 minutes. Lost time in between above procedures is 10 minutes.</p> <p>In total: Customs Broker 31 min + Customs Office 40 min + lost time 10 min (from entrance to exit).</p>

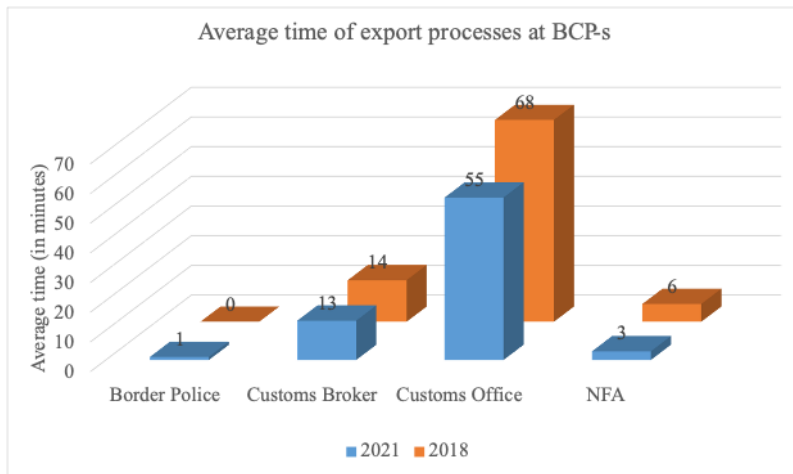
In Tirana, the Customs Broker time is on average 31 minutes, longer than in the other terminals due to huge volume of customs clearances as most of the businesses use Tirana inland terminal.

When the export Customs procedures are done at inland terminals, the consignments go to the BCP to exit Albania. The time of travelling from the inland terminals to the BCP is not included in the calculations.

### VI.3.2 Export Procedures at BCPs

The average amount of time taken to complete the export procedures at the three BCPs, for the consignments that have completed the export declaration at the inland terminal is 1 hour and 12 minutes. This includes the time from when the vehicle arrives at the BCP until it exits the BCP. The Border Police takes 1 minute, the Customs Office procedures take on average 55 minutes, the Customs Broker, 13 minutes, and the NFA 3 minutes.

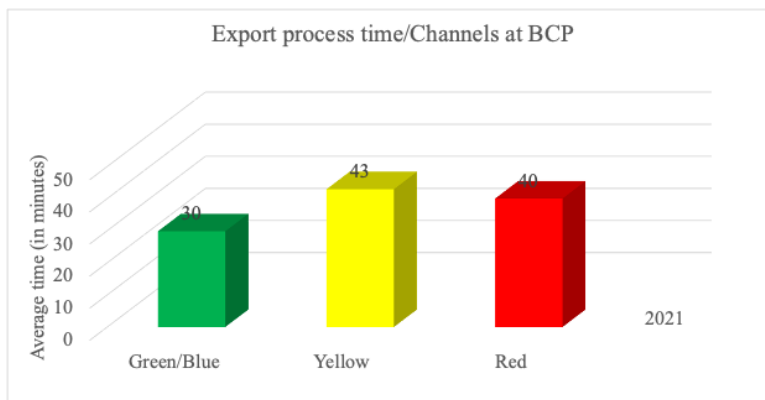
Graph 28. Average time of export processes In -BCP-s



Source: Survey TRS 2018, 2021

The time taken for the different channels, assigned based on risk, is shown below. The yellow channel takes longer than the red channel.

Graph 29. Average export time in channels in -BCP-s



Source: Survey TRS 2021



<b>AVERAGE TIME</b>	<b>All export procedures at BCPs in Qafë Thanë, Morina and Kapshtica</b>
<b>1 hour and 12 minutes</b>	Export procedures at the BCP is on average <b>1 hour and 12 minutes (72 minutes)</b> .
<b>9 minutes</b>	<b>Weighing:</b> It takes on average 9 minutes from the time of arrival of the vehicle at the BCP until it is weighed.
<b>13 minutes</b>	<b>Customs Broker:</b> It takes on average 13 minutes from the time the driver arrives at the Customs Broker's office until the Customs Brokers scans the documents and uploads them in ASYCUDA.
<b>3 minutes</b>	<b>Inspection control by NFA:</b> Only in 24 cases was the inspection control necessary and it took only 3 minutes (documentary check only). The main role of the BCP inspection control for export is to check whether the goods have the required veterinary or phytosanitary documentation for the exported goods and the inspectors keep a copy of the documentation.
<b>55 minutes</b>	<p><b>Customs procedures:</b> From the moment the SAD is in ASYCUDA, the Customs Office starts to perform all the necessary verifications until the Release Order is issued. This takes on average 32 minutes.</p> <p>The channel designation affects the time taken. For blue/green channel the average time is 23 minutes. Both the yellow and red channel take 31 minutes. The vehicle goes to the queue for scanning.</p> <p><b>Scanning:</b> It takes on average 23 minutes from the time the vehicle joins the scanner queue until the vehicle is scanned. Out of 155 vehicles observed during the TRS, 125 (or 80%) were scanned.</p> <p><b>Customs control:</b> This time is counted in case of marks during scanning (these marks refer to when the scan has identified unclear areas of the vehicle, and additional verification is therefore needed) from the moment the Customs Officer registers the declaration in ASYCUDA until the Customs Officer verifies the documentation and completes the exit registry. Marks in scanning is the case where scanning process has noted unclear areas of the vehicle, and extra verification needed to clarify the situation by the customs.</p>
<b>1 minute</b>	<b>Exit:</b> It takes 1 minute for the Customs Officer to complete the exit register.
<b>1 minute</b>	<b>Border police:</b> The last step in the exportation procedure is the control by the Border Police which performs the inspection of passport and vehicle-related documents. This procedure takes 1 minute of time.
<b>Lost time</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>

## VI.4. International Transit

The TRS analysed 130 questionnaires to measure the time taken for international transit. All activities of the international transit procedures took on average 2 hours and 39 minutes, out of which 118 minutes (1 hour and 58 minutes) at the BCP entry and 41 minutes at the BCP exit.

<b>AVERAGE TIME</b>	<b>All activities of international transit at entry point of BCPs.</b>
<b>1 hour and 58 minutes</b>	<b>The international transit procedures take on average 1 hour and 58 minutes at the entry point in the territory of Albania.</b>
<b>3 minutes</b>	<b>Weighing:</b> It takes on average 3 minutes to weigh the vehicle.
<b>1 minute</b>	<b>Border Police:</b> It takes only 1 minutes for the Border Police to perform the visual check and to register the vehicle in the TIMS.
<b>3 minutes</b>	<b>Custom Registration:</b> The registration of the vehicle at the entry register takes 3 minutes.
<b>25 minutes</b>	<b>Scanning:</b> The vehicle scanning takes 25 minutes. Waiting in the queue takes most of the time.
<b>7 minutes</b>	<b>Customs Agent:</b> This time is counted from the moment the Customs Agent receives the scanning results and submits the transit documentation to the Customs. It takes on average 7 minutes.
<b>53 minutes</b>	<p><b>Customs Control:</b> Once the Customs Agent has submitted the transit documentation, the Customs starts with the verification of seals, document review, and physical examination if required. If everything is in line with the Customs requirements, the Customs Officer registers Carnet TIR<sup>7</sup> or Carnet ATA<sup>8</sup> and then signs it and stamps it.</p> <p><b>Document review takes on average 5 minutes.</b></p>

<sup>7</sup>"CARNET TIR" is an international transit documentation, used for customs purposes, for the transport of goods from a Customs office of departure to a Customs office of destination under the procedure, called the TIR procedure, laid down in TIR Convention, 1975

<sup>8</sup> Carnet ATA" is international transit documentation, used for customs purposes, for the transport of goods from a Customs office of departure to a Customs office of destination under the procedure, as laid down in Istanbul Convention on Temporary Admission, of June 1990.

<b>13 minutes</b>	<b>Exit time:</b> This estimates the time from the moment the vehicle arrives at the exit point until it exits the BCP. It takes on average 13 minutes.
	<b>All activities of international transit at exit points of BCPs</b>
<b>41 minutes</b>	<b>The international transit procedures take on average 41 minutes at the exit points of the territory of Albania.</b>
<b>3 minutes</b>	<b>Custom Registration:</b> The registration of the vehicle at the Customs exit register performed for every vehicle, and it takes on average 3 minutes
<b>39 minutes</b>	<b>Scanning:</b> Scanning is not done for all vehicles. Vehicles were scanned in only 8 cases and it took 39 minutes.
<b>6 minutes</b>	<b>Customs Agent:</b> This time starts from the moment the Customs Agent receives the scanning results until the Customs Agent submits the transit documentation to the Customs Office. It takes on average 6 minutes.
<b>4 minutes</b>	<b>Customs Control:</b> Once the Customs Agent has submitted the transit documentation, the Customs starts with the verification of seals, document review, and physical examination if required. If everything is in line with the customs requirements, the Customs Officer registers Carnet TIR or Carnet ATA and then signs and stamps it.
<b>3 minutes</b>	<b>Border Police:</b> It takes only 3 minutes for the Border Police to perform the visual check and to register the vehicle at TIMS.

## VII. ANNEX (Questionnaires as attached)