

# Freight Forwarding in KSA: Paperless Clearance (Vision 2030) for Fashion Retail Logistics by Sea

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**Abstract:** This study examines Saudi Arabia's transition toward a paperless, fully digital logistics ecosystem under Vision 2030, focusing on sea freight for fashion retail. The paper evaluates the roles of SASO, SABER, and FASAH in digitizing certification, documentation, and customs clearance processes. Findings indicate that automation, pre-arrival declaration submission, and integrated platforms significantly reduce clearance time, processing costs, and operational errors. The paper provides an end-to-end process overview and demonstrates how digital logistics infrastructure enhances supply-chain efficiency.

**Keywords:** Paperless Customs, FASAH, SABER, SASO, Vision 2030, Sea Freight, Fashion Retail, Logistics Automation.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 initiative focuses on transforming logistics and trade infrastructure to position the Kingdom as a global supply-chain hub. With increasing demand from the fashion retail sector, efficient sea-freight processing is essential. The introduction of digital platforms such as SASO's SABER system and the ZATCA-backed FASAH platform has modernized product registration, compliance verification, manifest submission, and customs-clearance processes. This paper explores how the digital ecosystem enables faster, transparent, and paperless sea-freight logistics.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing studies on trade digitalization highlight benefits such as reduced delays, improved regulatory compliance, and enhanced visibility across supply-chain partners. Saudi Arabia's reforms align with global best practices implemented in regions adopting electronic single-window systems. However, limited research specifically assesses the fashion-retail sea-freight process in KSA, creating a knowledge gap this paper addresses.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Data is compiled from regulatory documentation, operational reports, and process mapping from freight-forwarding and customs-clearance workflows. Industry practices from apparel-import operations were analyzed to understand the real-time functionality of SASO, SABER, FASAH, and

related platforms.

## IV. SYSTEM OVERVIEW

### ➤ SASO

The Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO), established in 1972, sets national product standards and regulates goods entering or exiting the Kingdom. SASO ensures conformity to safety and quality requirements. To streamline certification, SASO introduced SABER for digital product registration and conformity processing.

### ➤ SABER

SABER serves as the digital gateway for obtaining conformity certificates for regulated and unregulated consumer products. Importers register products, upload technical documents, and obtain certifications that are validated at customs through FASAH.

### ➤ FASAH

FASAH, operated by ZATCA, is the national single-window trade platform enabling importers to submit documents, monitor shipments, process payments, and complete customs procedures electronically. MASAR, the tracking module, provides real-time status updates.

## V. FINDINGS AND PROCESS MAPPING

### ➤ The Study Highlights the Paperless Fashion-Retail Import Process as Follows:

- Electronic manifest submission prior to vessel arrival

- Online BOE submission via Saudi EDI
- Uploading invoice, packing list, certificate of origin, SABER certificates
- Automatic customs-duty calculation based on HS Code and invoice value:
  - ✓ CIF: based directly on invoice value
  - ✓ FOB: +2.6% added
  - ✓ EXW: +4% added
- Tracking shipment status through FASAH manifest
- Pre-Bayan submission for pre-arrival clearance
- Delivery Order collection and SADAD payment processing
- Customs inspection and electronic approval
- Payment to port and railway authorities
- Final gate-pass issuance and container release

The 24-Hour Clearance Program allows declarations 48 hours before arrival, drastically reducing delays.

## **VI. DISCUSSION**

Digital integration across SASO, SABER, and FASAH reduces manual intervention, lowers error rates, and ensures regulatory compliance. For the fashion-retail sector, which relies on fast-moving seasonal products, reduced lead time directly improves commercial performance. Automation also supports transparency, traceability, and reduced operational bottlenecks.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 digital-trade reforms have successfully modernized sea-freight logistics. The integration of SASO, SABER, and FASAH creates a fully paperless environment that enhances clearance speed, regulatory compliance, and supply-chain efficiency. These improvements enable fashion retailers to benefit from faster delivery cycles and reduced operational costs.

## **REFERENCES**

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