

World Ceramic Tiles Forum – The review of HS codes for ceramic tiles

17 November 2016



I. Context – The Harmonised system



The Harmonised System:

- Is the universal basis for Customs tariffs and the international trade statistical system
- Composed of custom codes consisting of six digits, legal and explanatory notes

Changes to the system:

- Keep system adopted to market realities
- Need to be well designed
- Can be made by the WCO every four to six years

I. Context – The revision of HS codes 6907 and 6908

Currently valid HS codes

6907 - Unglazed ceramic flags and paving, hearth or wall tiles; unglazed ceramic mosaic cubes and the like, whether or not on a backing

6907.10 -- Tiles, cubes and similar articles, whether or not rectangular, the largest surface area of which is capable of being enclosed in a square the side of which is less than 7 cm

6907.90 -- Other

6908 - Glazed ceramic flags and paving, hearth or wall tiles; glazed ceramic mosaic cubes and the like, whether or not on a backing

6908.10 -- Tiles, cubes and similar articles, whether or not rectangular, the largest surface area of which is capable of being enclosed in a square the side of which is less than 7 cm

6908.90 -- Other

I. Context – The revision of HS codes 6907 and 6908

WCTF 2012: approval of a common approach towards the revision of HS 6907 and HS 6908

Proposed changes by the WCTF:

- Abolition of distinction between glazed and unglazed tiles
 - Structure based on water absorption capacity of tiles
 - Creation of five sub-codes corresponding to ISO categories of water absorption
 - Creation of additional code for finishing/technical products
- ▶ These proposals have been partially implemented.

II. The current situation



HS codes, valid from 2017

6907 – Ceramic flags and paving, hearth or wall tiles; ceramic mosaic cubes and the like whether or not on a backing; finishing ceramics.

Flags and paving, hearth and wall tiles, other than those of subheadings 6907.30 and 6907.40

6907.21 -- of a water absorption coefficient by weight not exceeding 0.5%

6907.22 -- of a water absorption coefficient by weight exceeding 0.5% but not exceeding 10%

6907.23 -- of a water absorption coefficient by weight exceeding 10%

6907.30 – Mosaic cubes and the like, other than those of subheading 6907.40

6907.40 – Finishing ceramics

6808 – This heading will be deleted.

III. Modifications of explanatory notes



Explanatory notes:

- Specify the meaning of HS codes
 - Are not legally binding
 - Provide guidance in the use of the HS
- ▶ influence on classification of goods

III. Modifications to explanatory notes

Changes provisionally approved by the WCO Revision Sub-Committee on the general definition of ceramic tiles categories:

“This heading covers ceramic flags and tiles, including quarry tiles, commonly used for paving or for facing walls, hearths, etc..

Flags and paving, hearth or wall tiles are thinner in relation to their surface dimensions than are building bricks. Whereas bricks play an essential part in constructional work, forming the very framework of the building, flags and tiles are more especially intended for fixing by cement, adhesive or by other means to the surface of existing walls, etc. They also differ from roofing tiles in that they are usually flat and do not need to be pierced or provided with nibs or otherwise shaped for interlocking and that they are designed to be placed side by side without overlapping. Flags are larger than tiles and are usually rectangular; tiles may be of other geometric shapes (hexagonal, octagonal, etc.). Tiles are mainly used for facing walls, mantelpieces, hearths, floors and paths; flags are more especially used for paving or flooring, or as hearth slabs. Both categories may be made from clays or other inorganic raw materials, usually shaped by extruding or pressing at room temperature but can be formed by other process, then dried and subsequently fired at temperatures sufficient to develop the required properties. However types which have to withstand heavy wear are often vitrified, for example, tiles of stoneware, or porcelain (china) or of fired steatite (e.g., tiles for lining grinding mills, etc.).

The wear resistance and the vitrification rate vary depending on the structure of tile. These structural features are characterized by the absorption capacity of water. A high water absorption level corresponds to a porous structure. A low water absorption level corresponds to a compact (vitrified) structure.”



Outstanding questions:

- ➔ *Date of publication of HS explanatory notes:* Not earlier than December 2016;
- ➔ *Will the explanatory notes refer explicitly to the ISO vacuum test method:* The WTO has voted twice in favour of such express reference, but this decision will only take effect 3 months after the vote provided that no new « reservation » has been notified;
- ➔ *What test method to apply in the transitional phase?* It will depend on the date of publication of the explanatory notes and the publication of modified standard 10545-3.
- ➔ *What about stocks or goods invoiced before 31 December?* Customs declarations submitted after 31 Dec. have to comply with the new HS codes.

IV. Next steps – transposing codes to regional level



Currently existing sub-categories at regional level:

| Division into sub-categories based on... | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| ...size | ...size and water absorption: | ...size and material: | ...size and other technical criteria: | ...material: | ...use: | ...other technical criteria: |
| Mexico, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, USA | Jordan, Iran | EU, Ukraine, Morocco | China, Israel | Russia | Indonesia | India |
| No further division into sub-categories: | | | | | | |
| Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Japan, Nigeria, Switzerland | | | | | | |

IV. Transposing HS at regional level – current status

- China, Turkey, Malaysia, Israel, Australia, Mexico, Indonesia, Argentina, Brazil, Ukraine and the EU have replied to the request by WCTF secretariat for information on status of implementation;
- Only the EU and Mercosur have approved their regional codes, but only published in the EU, not yet in Mercosur; EU and Mercosur have followed the recommended approach (i.e. limit the regional codes to the HS codes, without introducing sub-categories at 8 digits); the process in Israel is not completed but customs have indicated that they would follow the same approach;
- In other countries, the process has not been completed. At least the ASEAN, the US and Mexico have indicated their intention to maintain sub-categories on glazed/unglazed;



Thank you

For any question:

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