**Basic overview of Customs Clearance**

* **Primary Participants in the Customs process**

**US Customs and Border Protection (CBP):** U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), under the Department of Homeland Security, is the lead agency responsible for managing U.S. borders and regulating international trade. CBP ensures lawful importation by examining shipments for admissibility, collecting duties and fees, enforcing trade laws, and coordinating with other federal agencies. Through inspections, investigations, and compliance enforcement, CBP safeguards national security and promotes legitimate trade.

**Customs Broker**: Customs brokers are licensed and regulated individuals or entities authorized by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to assist importers and exporters in complying with federal import and export regulations. They are responsible for submitting the required documentation and payments to CBP on behalf of their clients and charge a fee for their services. Customs brokers are expected to possess comprehensive knowledge of entry procedures, admissibility requirements, classification, and the various import laws, trade policies, and legal obligations governing international trade

**Importer of record (IOR):** An Importer of Record (IOR) is the owner, purchaser, or consignee of imported goods, or a licensed customs broker appointed to act on their behalf. The IOR is legally responsible for ensuring the goods comply with all U.S. import regulations and is obligated to file the entry, submit accurate documentation, and pay all applicable duties, taxes, and fees to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

* **Custom Clearance Process:**

Customs clearance is the official process of getting imported goods legally admitted into the United States. This involves submitting detailed information about the shipment—such as the type of goods, their value, origin, and purpose—to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Importers must also ensure that the goods comply with all applicable U.S. laws and regulations, including those enforced by other government agencies like the FDA, USDA, or EPA, depending on the product.

As part of the process, duties, taxes, and any other required fees must be calculated and paid before the goods are released for entry into U.S. commerce. Customs clearance also includes a review for compliance, admissibility, and enforcement concerns such as intellectual property rights, prohibited items, or trade polices and restrictions.

While the process can be complex—especially for first-time importers—working with a Licensed Customs Broker or having a solid understanding of the requirements can help ensure shipments are cleared smoothly, legally, and without unnecessary delays.