



भारत सरकार GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
 वित्त मंत्रालय MINISTRY OF FINANCE  
 राजस्व विभाग DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE  
 केन्द्रीय अप्रत्यक्ष कर एवं सीमाशुल्क बोर्ड  
 CENTRAL BOARD OF INDIRECT TAXES AND CUSTOMS  
 सीमाशुल्क आयुक्त का कार्यालय  
 OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS  
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**Permanent Trade Facilitation Committee- Minutes of the meeting held on 24.09.2024 - Reg.**

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A meeting of the Permanent Trade Facilitation Committee was held at 03.00pm on 24.09.2024 in the EDI Hall, Custom House, Cochin. Shri. Gurkaran Singh Bains IRS, Commissioner of Customs, chaired the meeting.

The following officers of Customs were present.

1. Shri. Gurkaran Singh Bains IRS, Commissioner
2. Shri. P. Senthil Kumar IRS, Additional Commissioner
3. Shri. Ashwin John George IRS, Joint Commissioner
4. Shri. Ashif A. IRS, Deputy Commissioner
5. Shri. Jimmi Joseph IRS, Deputy Commissioner
6. Shri. Harrison Antony IRS, Deputy Commissioner
7. Shri. K.S. Bijumon IRS, Assistant Commissioner
8. Shri. Roy K. Mani IRS, Assistant Commissioner
9. Shri. Anil Raj R IRS, Deputy Commissioner
10. Smt. C T Bindhu IRS, Deputy Commissioner
11. Shri.KMadhukumar IRS, Assistant Commissioner

The various trade and government agencies were represented by the following persons:

1. Shri. Suraj Muraleedharan, Cochin Customs Broker's Association
2. Shri. Andrew Antonio Fernandes, Cochin Customs Broker's Association
3. Smt. Dhanya K.N., FSSAI
4. Shri. George Abraham, Coir Board
5. Shri. P.G. Todkar, Coir Board
6. Shri. Abraham Philip, Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry
7. Shri. Varghese George, Kerala Steamer Agents' Association
8. Shri. Prakash Iyer, Kerala Steamer Agents' Association
9. Shri. T.K. Biju, Sr. Assistant Traffic Manager, Cochin Port Authority
10. Shri. Alex k Nixon, Seafood Exporters Association of India
11. Shri. Rajeev M.C., FIEO
12. Shri. Biju R, PETTA CFS
13. Shri. V. Veeraraghavan, GDKL CFS
14. Shri. Biju D, CAC
15. Shri. K. Manoj Kumar, CAC
16. Shri. Rakesh K L, KSIE,CFS
17. Shri. George Prakash James, Wharf Supdt, Cochin Port Authority
18. Shri. Bijumon.P, MPEDA-RD Kochi
19. Shri. Kuruvilla Xavier, DP World
20. Shri. S.Shivkumar, CONCOR CFS
21. Shri. Asif.PA,AFDC
22. Shri. Sajith D, CIAL

The Chair welcomed the members to the PTFC meeting and appreciated the fact that representatives from most of the stakeholders were present at the meeting. Thereafter fresh points were taken up for discussion.

#### FRESH POINTS FOR DISCUSSION.

#### **Points raised by The Consolidators Association Cochin:**

**1: Delay in issuing fresh AEO certificate as well as its renewal.**

Some members of the Association had informed that there were delays in the issue of fresh licenses and its renewal.

The Chair informed stakeholders that the pendency of applications was examined and it emerged that only 4 cases were pending at AEO T2 level. Out of the 4 cases, investigation had been initiated against 2 applicants which needed to be analyzed in detail. The other 2 cases had already been forwarded to the International Custom Division (ICD) of the Board for final decision. There was no application pending for more than the prescribed time limit in the case of AEO T1 and AEO T3 categories. The chair further requested the stakeholders to provide specific details in respect of discussion points as the association had only submitted that there was delay in issuing AEO certificates. The chair suggested that had the association come up with specific details such as no. of applications pending, date of submission of each application, communication, if any, received from the concerned section etc., the issue could have been discussed more effectively to find the solution. The Chair further asked the association representative, whether they would like to add anything more to this point, to which the association representative replied that they did not have any specific details. The Chair then suggested the representative to discuss the matter again with their members and if any issues are there they can have a one-on-one discussion on the matter.

**2: SCMTR - Parent/Child registration and Training on usage of SCMTR.**

It was submitted by the association representative that some of the members are facing issues while registering in ICEGATE. He submitted that the even after repeated attempts, some of the members were not able to get their firm registered in ICEGATE. They raised concern that online filing of manifests are mandatory from November and requested to solve the issue at the earliest.

The Chair informed that DG system was requested to conduct a webinar on step by step procedure for registration and online filing of manifests. The Chair hoped that the webinar will be scheduled shortly and the date and time will be shared with all the stakeholders. Shri. P. Senthil Kumar IRS, Additional Commissioner informed that he is in contact with the DG System, who assured him that they will conduct the webinar as soon as possible. Shri. P. Senthil Kumar IRS, Additional Commissioner requested the association to inform its members about the webinar.

**Points raised by The Cochin Custom Brokers Association:****1: Downtime of the ICEGATE site and inordinate delay in ICEGATE services.**

The representative of Cochin Custom Brokers Association informed that many a times association members were not able to file bill of entry for the clearance of imported goods within stipulated time due to technical glitches in ICEGATE. As a result, the members had to pay late fee charges

under section 46(3) of the Customs Act. They requested to take necessary steps to exempt them from payment of late fee if the delay had happened due to issues related to ICEGATE connectivity.

The Chair informed that if the stakeholders are forced to pay late fee charges due to technical issues, they shall represent with specific details such as screenshots of ICEGATE page. The Chair further assured that lenient view will be taken on the late fee charge if the non-compliance from the stakeholders were due to system related issues.

## **2: Issues faced by AEO clients:**

If a bill of entry filed by AEO client was stuck for payment of duty due to queries raised by FAG or any other technical issues, the importer would not be able to clear his other imports as the duty payment is pending for the first bill of entry.

The chair informed that the matter will be looked into further and would take up at the appropriate level/forums.

## **3: Extension of additional space for bonding under same Private warehousing license.**

It is a regular trade practice that depending on the seasonal demand and favorable global prices, importers import additional quantities of goods and store them in a bonded storage facility by filing warehousing bill of entry. This practice is especially prevalent in the bulk liquid cargo segment and importers sometimes require additional bonded storage tanks to store this extra quantity under the same Private warehousing license.

The Chair informed that addition or separation on the same warehouse license can be done. However, in case of Liquid bulk cargo, every tank has a different storage capacity and on based of the storage capacity, goods proposed to be stored in the private warehouse at any point of time can be ascertained. For storage of Petroleum products and chemicals, approval of Regulatory Authorities like PESO is also required. All the tanks available in liquid bulk cargo terminals do not have the PESO approvals. While licensing the premises for storage of such goods in a tank, approval by the PESO is mandatory. The Chair assured that where the additional space has approval of PESO, requests would be approved within 5 working days provided they fulfill all other requirements.

## **4: Delay in endorsing the renewed foreign Courier Licence**

At Cochin, it is one of the mandatory requirements to obtain the license from abroad issued by the country from/to where the Courier Agent intends to import/export courier consignments. On expiry of tenure of such license, it can be renewed and extended. Same has to be endorsed

in the courier license issued by Cochin Customs. The procedure for endorsing the renewed foreign License takes 1-2 months now, whereas it took only 5-10 days earlier. This is causing unnecessary delay as couriers from those places are not permitted till they are accepted by the Local Customs. Moreover this system is not there in any airports in India. The request is that the Procedure may be smoothed and delay may be avoided.

The chair informed that the matter will be taken up and ensured that the process will be completed within 5 working days (currently it is 8 – 9 days) and it will not be further delayed unless there is a valid reason

### **5: Errors in IGM and late submission of the same**

Some Liners are submitting the IGM very late and the inward is being filed on the same day. This does not give enough time to correctly file the Bills of Entry as some time the IGM differs from the BL mainly on the issue date and the type of packages.

Suggestion: The Liners may share the IGM with the Association before filing the same so that they can ascertain any discrepancies and correct it before filing the IGM / BEs.

The chair informed that as per section 30(1) of the Customs Act, 1962, the IGM need to be filed prior to the arrival of the vessel. The present issue is to be resolved among the Stakeholders i.e., Steamer Agents and Customs Brokers. The Chair proposed Steamer Agents to put maximum efforts to minimise the errors while filing the manifests. Further, Shri. P. Senthil Kumar IRS, Additional Commissioner, requested Steamer Agents to file manifest online as per the SCMTR regulation. The representative assured that they will start filing manifest online as per the SCMTR regulations.

### **Points raised by Kerala Steamer Agents' Association**

#### **Point no. 1:**

MIV CFS was holding around 1400 containers of their members in their premises for about a month from July 27 to Aug 27, 2024. They had to file a case to get back the containers. Risk involved is that it can happen to any other members as well.

No representative from MIV CFS was present. The Chair informed that it is not a Customs notified Area and it is a private dispute. The matter is already in the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala. So this Commissionerate has no say in it.

#### **Point no. 2:**

It is requested to share SOP in the boarding formalities.

The Chair informed that the Public Notice 13/2023-24 dated 27.04.2023 was already issued in this matter as per Board circular which

came in March 2023. Every officer is supposed to mandatorily wear body camera with audio and video recordings during boarding for full transparency.

### **Other points raised**

**Point 1 :** Shri Alex K Nixon, representing Seafood Exporters Association of India requested that, for the re-export of returned containers containing seafood where the time limit is 6 months, the time limit may be extended to 1 year similar to that of other re-export goods, as considerable time is required sometimes to process or repack the food item and re export it.

The Chair informed that since seafood is an edible item which will have a specified shelf life, the time limit cannot be extended.

**Point 2 :** Shri Alex K Nixon, representing Seafood Exporters Association of India also informed about the new export-related benefits available under Duty Drawback, RoDTEP, and RoSCTL schemes for exports via courier as on Sept 12, 2024 by way of amendments to the Courier regulations and new circular to Stakeholders. He requested that the officers and stakeholders may be sensitized on this via a webinar or something similar.

The Chair informed that this incentive will be mostly beneficial to high valued products like Jewellery and not normal commercial items. The chair said that the suggestion will be considered.

**Point 3 :** Shri Alex K Nixon, also informed that in cases where an Indian entity imports goods from its related companies located outside India, the Indian importers have to undergo an additional procedure with Special Valuation Branch (SVB) which is complex and time consuming.

The Chair informed that the SVB issue is not handled by this Custom House. However a letter can be sent to the Commissionerates having SVB, requesting to speed up the process.

**Point 4 :** Shri Abraham Philip of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry reported that in few instances in which export consignments were picked up by system for examination on holidays and Sundays, the traders had to wait till next working day to get the examination done, which affects the business.

The Chair informed that this involves multiple stakeholders. Customs officers can be posted if other stakeholders are also available to complete the process. The Chair also suggested to submit a formal written request with complete details regarding this.

Since no other points were raised by the members for discussion, the Chair concluded the meeting by thanking the members and said that the date for next meeting of the Permanent Trade Facilitation Committee will be intimated.

This is issued with the approval of Commissioner of Customs (Chairman, PTFC).

Signed by  
Jimmi Joseph  
Date: 25-11-2024 11:01:07

**(Jimmi Joseph)**  
**(Deputy Commissioner)**

Submitted to:

1. The Chief Commissioner of Central Tax, Central Excise & Customs,  
Thiruvananthapuram Zone, Cochin. [for information please]

Copy to:

ADC/JC, All DC/AC/All members of PTFC/ EDI (for uploading on  
customs website)