Circular- 10/2016-Customs

F.No.450/147/2015-Cus-IV
Government of India
Ministry of Finance
Department of Revenue
(Central Board of Excise and Customs)

Dated: the 15th March, 2016

To,

All Chief Commissioners of Customs / Customs (Preventive),
All Chief Commissioners of Customs and Central Excise,
All Commissioners of Customs / Customs (Preventive),
All Commissioners of Customs and Central Excise.

Sir/Madam,

Subject: Implementing Integrated Declaration under the Indian Customs Single Window- reg.

Kind reference is invited to Board's Circulars No. 09/2015 dated 31.03.2015 and Circular No. 03/2016 dated 03.02.2016 regarding the Indian Customs Single Window. To re-capitulate, the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) has taken-up the task of implementing 'Indian Customs Single Window Project' to facilitate trade. This project envisages that the importers and exporters would electronically lodge their Customs clearance documents at a single point only with the Customs. The required permission, if any, from Partner Government Agencies (PGAs) such as Animal Quarantine, Plant Quarantine, Drug Controller, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, Textile Committee etc. would be obtained online without the importer/exporter having to separately approach these agencies. This would be possible through a common, seamlessly integrated IT systems utilized by all regulatory agencies, logistics service providers and the importers/exporters. The Single Window would thus provide the importers/exporters a single point interface for clearance of import and export goods thereby reducing dwell time and cost of doing business.

Online Clearance from Participating Government Agencies (PGAs)

2. In this backdrop the Board has issued the circulars referred to above, to introduce a system of online clearance between Customs and the Department of Plant Protection, Quarantine and Storage (DPPQ&S), Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Drug Controller (CDSCO), Animal Quarantine (AQCS), Wild Life Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and Textile Committee. With the introduction of this facility, clearance from these regulatory agencies is flowing online, and the hard-copy of 'No Objection Certificates' (NOCs) is no longer required for clearance of goods. This online clearance under Single Window Project has been rolled out at main ports and airports in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai so far. It will be gradually extended across the country.

Integrated Declaration under Customs Single Window Project

3. CBEC has since developed the 'Integrated Declaration', under which all information required for import clearance by the concerned government agencies has been incorporated into the electronic format of the Bill of Entry. The Customs Broker or Importer shall submit the "Integrated Declaration" electronically to a single entry point, i.e. the Customs Gateway (ICEGATE). Separate application forms required by different PGAs like Drug Controller, AQCS, WCCB, PQIS and FSSAI would be dispensed with.

4. The Message Format specifications of the Integrated Declaration, which is to be filed electronically has been published on ICEGATE. The Integrated Declaration captures the particulars of items required by each PGA. The Integrated Declaration will be applicable for consignments to be cleared under the Indian Customs EDI Systems. For the clearance of imported goods in the manual mode, separate documents prescribed by the respective agencies will continue to apply.

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5. Since over half of the data required by the PGAs was common with the Bill of Entry, the Integrated Declaration includes a set of standardized and rationalized data, resulting in a 60 percent reduction in the total number of data fields that the trade had to manage in their systems or in hardcopy. Besides, the integrated Declaration replaces 9 separate forms that an importer or his broker was supposed to file with various agencies. These are Customs Bill of Entry, Customs valuation declaration, Application for import of livestock products, Application for import of pet animals/aquatic/other animals, birds and poultry (chicks), Application for quarantine inspection and clearance of imported plants/plant products, ADC Drug sheet for import (Appendix – II), Additional ADC Sheet for drug category and composition, Application for post shipment examination by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, and Application form for NOC from FSSAI for food items imported into India.

Declarations and Undertakings

6. Apart from incorporating the forms mentioned in para 5 above, the Integrated Declaration will also include different types of undertakings, declarations, and letters of guarantee that are presently required to be submitted on company letter heads. The Integrated Declaration has a portion to capture the text of these declarations, undertakings and letters of guarantee etc. in the form of statements. These statements have been standardized and codified, so that while submitting the Integrated Declaration, the importer specify the statement codes, and the printed copies of the Bills of Entry will contain the corresponding standardized texts.

Supporting Documents

7. The Integrated Declaration has a separate section on the particulars of supporting documents to be provided along with the Bill of Entry. The Importer or his Customs Brokers can also provide details of the supporting documents using this section.

8. CBEC is in the process of procuring IT infrastructure to capture digitally signed copies of the supporting documents. Once this facility is implemented, the need to provide hardcopies of supporting documents will be dispensed with.

Risk-based Inspection under Integrated Declaration

9. The Integrated Declaration would also gather data/information for implementation of a system of selective inspection and testing by all PGAs, which is crucial for promoting "Ease of Doing Business". Following the decision of the Committee of Secretaries, all PGAs will select consignments for documentary examination, physical inspection and testing based on risk, and all PGAs will use CBEC's Risk Management System in which, the necessary selectivity criteria will be introduced.

10. The Risk Management Division has developed a module for introducing a dynamic, risk-based selection of consignments. This module will incorporate criteria developed in consultation with the PGAs. The module will determine whether the bill of entry should be referred to a PGA for NOC, what kind of documentary examination, physical inspection of goods, and testing will be necessary. This module will also implement the rules of delegation of authority from PGAs to Customs for inspection of goods, verification of documents and drawl of samples.

Processing of bill of entry under Integrated Declaration

11. Upon filing of the Integrated Declaration, the bill of entry will automatically be referred to concerned agency, if required, based on risk. The system has been modified to enable simultaneous processing of bill of entry by PGA and Customs.

Implementation Schedule

12. The specifications of bill of entry format for the Integrated Declaration along with the agency-wise guidelines have been uploaded on the ICEGATE website. The Single Window Project (SWP) team has already held number of familiarization session with the stakeholders, including the service providers who responsible for maintaining the Remote EDI System software on behalf of importers and brokers.

13. The ICEGATE facility will be available for testing of the integrated declaration with effect from 15/3/2016, March, 2016. The Integrated Declaration will go live with effect from 1st April, 2016.

Training/ Familiarization with Integrated Declaration and Single Window Project

14. All stakeholders are requested to carefully go through the Integrated Declaration Form and the process outlined. This is a major initiative of the Department and is expected to significantly simplify and expedite the clearance process. In this regard, the Single Window project team has addressed several gatherings of trade at different forums in order to explain the concept of the Single Window and the Integrated Declaration. To further familiarize the trade about the content of Integrated Declaration, detailed presentations and interactive sessions will be held at all major Custom locations across the country in the third week of March, 2016. The schedules and venues for these training sessions will be notified separately by the respective Commissioner.

Monitoring and Feed back

15. To facilitate smooth roll out of Integrated Declaration, feedback and queries may be addressed by email to meena.rajendra@nic.in and Nsm.ices@icegate.gov.in. References in hardcopy may be sent to Commissioner (Single Window), Centre Of Excellence, Tower 3&4, NBCC Plaza, PushpVihar, Sector-5, Saket, New Delhi-110077, Fax No. 011-29563902.

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Yours faithfully,

A.K. Sapra
OSD (Cus. IV)