



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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### **Minutes of the Permanent Trade Facilitation Committee meeting held on 04.01.2024**

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A meeting of the Permanent Trade Facilitation Committee was held at 03.00 PM on 04.01.2024 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.

S/Shri/Smt

1. Gurkaran Singh Bains IRS, Commissioner
2. P. Senthil Kumar IRS, Additional Commissioner
3. Ashif A. IRS, Deputy Commissioner
4. Jimmi Joseph IRS, Deputy Commissioner
5. P. Vijaya Kumar IRS, Assistant Commissioner
6. K.S. Bijumon IRS, Assistant Commissioner
7. Roy K. Mani IRS, Assistant Commissioner

The various trade and Government organizations related to trade were represented by S/Shri:

1. A.A. Fernandez, Cochin Customs Broker's Association
2. M. Prabhakar Kini, Cochin Customs Broker's Association
3. Biju K, CFS Petta
4. Dr. C. Saravanan, Central Drugs Standard Control Organization, Cochin
5. Dhanya K.N., FSSAI
6. Prakasiny V.S., Coir Board

7. George Abraham, Coir Board
8. Manikandhan M., Spices Board
9. Abraham Philip, Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry
10. Santhosh Kumar, Kerala Steamer Agents' Association
11. Prakash Iyer, Kerala Steamer Agents' Association
12. Antony Kottaram, Federaion of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry
13. Biju T.K., Assistant Traffic Manager, Cochin Port CFS
14. V. VeeraRaghav, CFS GDKL
15. Rakesh K.C., KSIE CFS
16. C.S. Ranawat, Plant quarantine, Cochin

The Chairman welcomed the members to the meeting. The Chairman informed that due to administrative constraints, PTFC meeting could not be conducted since June 2023. However, whenever issues arose the same were discussed with the concerned and resolved at the earliest.

Thereafter fresh points were taken up for this meeting.

### **FRESH POINTS FOR DISCUSSION.**

#### **Fresh points raised by The Cochin Customs Broker's Association:**

##### **Point No. 1:**

For ships calling at Willingdon Island at the Ernakulam and Mattancherry wharves, carrying bulk, break bulk, and liquid cargo, Bills of Entry when registered in the customs system, if assessed under RMS system, get automatically routed to an appraiser posted at ICTT Vallarpadam instead of appraisers at the Custom House or at Q10 CFS. Hence separate request is to be taken up every time with ICTT posted appraiser to change the queue to that of the Q10 appraiser who assesses such Bills. Appraisers posted under MOT are unable to process the Bills when the vessel entry inward is granted after office hours and on holidays until the queue is changed on the next working day from that of the ICTT appraiser to the appraiser posted under MOT (generally Q10 CFS officer). Therefore, grant of out of charge gets delayed.

It was suggested that all Bills of entry pertaining to bulk, break bulk, liquid cargo be routed to the appraiser at Q10 CFS instead of ICTT appraiser.

The Chairman informed the stakeholders that the system is designed in such a way that all RMS Bills will be routed to appraiser posted at ICTT, Vallarpadam and it is not possible to automatically route them to the officer posted at Q10 CFS. However, Commissioner suggested that the association should sensitize importers that at the time of filing Bill of Entry, the type of cargo should be mentioned as "BULK", so that, the officer at ICTT Vallarpadam could identify the item. Further, necessary directions would be issued to the officer at ICTT to transfer such bills *suo moto* to officer posted at Q10 CFS and in other cases request received for transferring the BE should be cleared on the same day on all the working days.

**(Action : AC (Docks) to issue necessary direction to the AO at ICTT, Vallarpadam)**

**Point No. 2:**

The Bills of entry for bulk and liquid cargo are generally filed as "Provisional" as exact cargo quantity will be known only after completion of vessel discharge operation and receipt of final draft survey or final ullage survey report. Hence such bill of entries are filed as "Provisional" activating "Second check" by giving the remark as "Bulk / Liquid Cargo - hence to be assessed as Provisional and on second check basis". Despite this, in most cases, FAG officers opt for first check assessment even if there are sufficient documents presented for second check assessment. Hence further processing of BE will be possible only after arrival of vessel and after submitting the examination report by the examiner to forward to FAG section for assessment.

Some FAG officers remove the "Provisional" option from the filed BE and assess it as "Final" which warrants a separate request to recall and reassess the BE as "Provisional". This causes delays in the process of clearance and the importer is unable to avail the benefit of completion of assessment of bill of entry prior to arrival of vessel and for remittance of duty. Invariably this cause delay in issuance of OOC and for delivery of cargo from port. In some cases it is seen that FAG officers opt for BG for assessing the BE provisionally, which too requires recall and reassessment

ultimately causing delay in issuance of OOC.

The Association suggested that FAG officers be sensitized to permit the request for provisional assessment of BE related to bulk and liquid cargoes on second check basis if the importer had requested it in the BE and if all documents are in order. Further, FAG officers should not insist on BG if BE is requested to be assessed as “Provisional” unless it is clearly necessary.

The Chairman informed that the assessment practices of FAG officers are not in the control of this Custom House. However, since it is a genuine issue, the matter would be discussed in the NAC meetings and concerned FAG Cell would be sensitized.

**Point No 3:**

Currently, Cochin Customs accept requests and application by emails through Sevottam desk and process all requests and applications only through e-office. But, the status of file could be known only to the officers and is not accessible for applicant or the public. The Association suggested that as in the case of BE /SB, where, live status verification is possible in ICEGATE, e-office file status/application verification should also be available online in public domain or at least in a dedicated system in customs office accessible to the applicant at any time

The Chairman informed that government e-office files or their movement details cannot be made available to the public automatically. However, suitable requests can be made under provisions of the RTI Act.

**Point No 4:**

If AEO number of importer is entered in BE/SB, such bills are unable to be filed and system is giving negative acknowledgement when filed in ICEGATE.

Shri Ashif A., Deputy Commissioner informed that in such cases the concerned importer/exporter may send an email to “sysmgr.cok1@icegate.gov.in” with screenshots of the error so that the matter can be taken with the concerned ICES helpdesk.

**Point No. 5:**

In the CBLMS portal there is no option to update CBLR license validity and details in respect of directors of the firm. Repeated emails to CBLMS helpdesk elicit a response which states that the “issue has been raised and will be resolved soon”.

Shri P. Senthil Kumar, Additional Commissioner, and Shri P. Vijaya Kumar, Assistant Commissioner, addressed the above point. Regarding updation of validity of license, as per the Regulation 9(1) of CBLR, 2018, read with Notification 62/2021 – Cus. (N.T) dated 23.07.2021, any license granted under CHALR 1984, or CHALR 2004, or CBLR 2013, or the CBLR 2018 shall be valid for lifetime, until & unless it is revoked. Therefore, there is no requirement for applying for renewal of the license. Although there is no expiry date for a CB License, an expiry date has to be mandatorily entered in the ICES, so that the electronic filing of the bills is not halted. Further, as there is no option for License Renewal on CBLMS, the Customs Brokers may submit their renewal requests through Correspondence Section, till an option for renewal is enabled on CBLMS.

Regarding the difficulty in updating the details of directors in CBLMS portal, Shri P. Vijaya Kumar stated that the issue has already been taken up with the CBLMS Helpdesk. Further, he informed that applications for change of directors may be forwarded through the Correspondence Section, till the issue is resolved

**(Action : AC (I&B) to coordinate with CBLMS Helpdesk to solve the issue at the earliest.)**

**Point No. 6:**

Inordinate delays are being faced in the following cases which are causing undue hardship to Trade:

- a. Delay in finalizing provisional assessment and returning of cancelled bonds for liquid cargo.
- b. Delay in issuing final assessment orders which causes delay in the submission of refund applications.
- c. Delay in cancellation of bonds submitted against rice exports.

The Chairman informed that most provisional assessments are pending finalization for want of original documents. The Chairman further assured that once the proper documents are received, the assessment would be

finalised within a week and requested the stakeholders to take up the matter with the concerned importers for timely submission of documents so that the bonds are closed without any hassle.

**(Action : AC (Appraising) to monitor the pendency of provisional assessment.)**

**Point No. 7:**

Undue delay in assessment by FAG: It takes 6 to 7 days to get the BE assessed leading to trade having to incur demurrage and detention charges.

The Chairman informed that currently assessment procedure and dwell time are being monitored by the Nodal Officers of NACs to avoid delay in assessment. Since the introduction of this mechanism, instances of delays have come down drastically. The Chairman further suggested that the concerned stakeholders may utilize the facilities such as Turant Suvridha Kendra (TSK) and Anonymous Escalation Management (AEM) when there is undue delay in FAG Assessment.

**Point No. 8:**

Members of CCBA have reported that DPD containers are being selected for 100 percent examination/scanning and/or testing. The concerned Customs officers then instruct to amend the IGM and nominate a CFS for this purpose. This process is time consuming and results in payment of demurrage at the Port which allows only 5 days' free time. The CCBA also suggested that concerned Customs officer may select a few containers and permit to be moved to CFS for examination/testing without amending the IGM.

While addressing the issue, the Chairman requested the association to popularize the facility of DPD among their clients as the percentage of DPD clients is low in Cochin Customs as compared to other Commissionerates. Regarding the issue, the Chairman informed that once an import consignment is selected for 100% examination by RMS all the containers covered under the said Bill of Entry are required to be moved to the concerned CFS for examination. The Chairman suggested that a CFS code may be given even for import consignments of DPD clients. To this,

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Shri Prabhakar Kini replied that at ICTT, the stacking is done separately for DPD consignments. Once CFS code is mentioned, the same will be stacked along with the consignments meant for CFSs. Also, as there is an en bloc movement system, when the import consignment of a DPD client is selected for examination, the CFS themselves will take the containers from ICTT which would further increase the expense. The Chairman then suggested that stakeholders may discuss the same with the representatives of ICTT Vallarpadam for a solution in respect of stacking of containers for en bloc movements of DPD consignments. Shri Prabhakar Kini further suggested that space may be identified inside ICTT itself for examination of consignments of DPD clients. The Chairman informed that since representative of ICTT was not available during the meeting, this issue could be taken to its logical conclusion only when all stakeholders were present.

**Point No. 9:**

The processing of Shipping Bills on weekends is held up due to late release of the Shipping Bills for examination.

Shri Roy K. Mani, Assistant Commissioner, informed that officers attend export assessment work on Saturdays and other holidays, except on Sundays, and that assessment and release of all the bills are completed by 5 pm on those days and no pendency has been reported so far. Shri Abraham Philip, representative of the ICCI informed that SBs are being held up due to system related issues and there is no fault on the part of Customs Department. The Chairman appreciated the same and requested the stakeholders to submit the volume of consignments which were held up due to system related issues. The Chairman assured that if there is considerable volume which is getting affected, possible measures would be taken to clear the same even on closed holidays.

**Point No. 10:**

After the release of Bill of Entry by PQ and FSSAI, the same is not linked to the Customs system and the CBs are required to manually request their updation in the system to obtain OOC.

The Chairman informed that the issue is system related. Further,

representatives from PQ and FSSAI also informed that the issue is system related and is faced all over the country; that the NOCs are sent to the concerned officers manually or via email. The Chairman suggested that a designated email should be shared with PQ and FSSAI at the earliest and NOCs may be forwarded to the said email address. The Chairman further assured that AC (Docks) would be monitoring the said email regularly to reduce delay. The Chairman further requested PQ and FSSAI to provide a write up regarding issues in the system and assured stakeholders that it would be taken up with DG (Systems). Commissioner directed DC (EDI) to take up the matter with DG (Systems) within a week after incorporating inputs received from PQ and FSSAI.

**(Action: (1) DC (EDI) to take up the matter with DG (System) along with the write up received from PQ and FSSAI; (2) AC (Docks) to share an email with PQ and FSSAI for forwarding respective NOCs)**

**Point No. 11:**

G-card examination has not been held by Cochin Customs for more than 4 years.

The Chairman informed that a plan has been finalized for conducting the examination in the month of February, 2024.

**Fresh points raised by Kerala Steamer Agents' Association**

**Point No. 1:**

Permission for "one door open" export for onions from Cochin as is the practice in other ports in India.

The Chairman informed that currently export of onion is prohibited vide DGFT Notification No. 49/2023 dated 07.12.2023 and the issue would be addressed once the prohibition is withdrawn.

**Point no. 2:**

Permission for online vessel clearance.

Shri P. Vijaya Kumar, Assistant Commissioner informed that earlier vessel clearance was done online and there were some server related issues resulting in delay. Therefore, at the request of agents, the manual mode was adopted. He further informed that there are no hurdles in reverting to



online mode. Shri Prakash Iyer then informed the Chairman that they would reconsider the issue and revert.

### **Fresh Points raised by Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

#### **Point No. 1:**

Duty payments are being done online during which there is a possibility of an interruption with the internet connection or an issue with the Bank site or some other errors. In such cases, the whole process has to be initiated again as the duty challan cannot be retrieved or posted on the payment site for 24 hours. As this is a long period of time, demurrage and other expenses are incurred especially when the following day is a holiday which then results in the container being picked up only after 3 or 4 days. Previously it was possible to verify all the pending challans in the transaction incomplete tab and the payments could be done within a maximum of an hour.

Shri Ashif A., Deputy Commissioner, informed that the issue is system related and the affected party may send an email to "sysmgr.cok1@icegate.gov.in" with a screenshot of the error to take up the matter with concerned ICES helpdesk.

#### **Point No. 2:**

All exporters have been requested by Cochin Customs to renew their factory stuffing permission although the permission issued has a clause that it "shall remain valid till the permission holder surrenders it or till it is revoked/suspended by the competent authority". Exporters had to either take the containers back to the factory or containers were taken to CFS for Customs Examination.

The Chairman informed that the permission to self-seal export goods from a particular premise, once granted, shall be valid unless withdrawn by the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs, for non-compliance of law, rules and regulations. Shri P. Vijaya Kumar, Assistant Commissioner, informed that initially the permission was granted for a definite period and there is an expiry date in such cases. He further informed that such cases if brought to the notice of the I&B Section, would be taken up on priority.

**(Action : AC (I&B) to renew the validity of self sealing permission granted promptly after receiving the request from the concerned)**

**Point No. 3:**

After LEO, Shipping Bills are not getting uploaded in EDPMS (Export Data Processing and Monitoring System). Similarly Bill of Entries are not getting uploaded in IDPMS (Import Data Processing and Monitoring System) because of which banks are not releasing funds to the exporters/importers.

Shri Ashif A., Deputy Commissioner, informed that as per the advisory for updated SB EDPMS Enquiry issued by ICEGATE, ICEGATE users can now raise the query related to rectification of SB EDPMS status which is available publicly. Also, rectification of SB EDPMS status and foreign exchange realization details are available under ICEGATE login and the IEC holder can check the amount realized by RBI EDPMS system on ICEGATE portal.

Similarly, BE IDPMS status is also available publicly, whereas rectification of BE IDPMS status and foreign exchange realization details are available under ICEGATE login and it is possible to check the amount realized by RBI IDPMS system on ICEGATE portal.

CBIC does not have any access to the RBI portal of IDPMS/EDPMS. The data of ICES/ICEGATE flows to RBI site automatically without any manual intervention. If there is any error shown in the status of SB/BE in EDPMS/IDPMS the error code can be checked with the list of error code given below of SB/BE Status, the ICEGATE account holder can submit the request for rectification of error after logging into their ICEGATE account. If the issue still persists, they may contact RBI through their bank.

**Other points raised****Point 1:**

Shri V. Veera Raghav, CFS GDKL informed that currently PQ inspection is being done once in a day due to which the containers are held up inside the CFS for a very long time. He requested that PQ inspections be conducted twice a day.

Shri. C.S. Ranawat, Asst. Director, Plant Quarantine informed that the importers file applications only after 11.00 AM. The PQ officer can go for the inspection only after scrutiny of applications which causes the delay. He suggested that importers file the application one day in advance to avoid delay.

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Thereafter, Shri Abraham Philip, representing ICCI thanked the Department for addressing the issues raised by the stakeholders.

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

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

**(JIMMI JOSEPH)**  
**(DEPUTY COMMISSIONER)**

**Date: .01.2024**

**Submitted to:**

1. The Chief Commissioner of Central Tax, Central Excise & Customs, Thiruvananthapuram Zone, Cochin.

**Copy to:**

Joint Commissioners/All DC/AC/ All members of PTFC/ EDI (for uploading on website)

**Copy for necessary action to :**

AC (Appg), AC (I&B), AC (Docks), DC (EDI)