

Government of India
Ministry of Finance
Department of Revenue
Central Board of Excise & Customs

Press Release

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In line with the Budget announcement made by the Honourable Finance Minister, as part of the “Ease of Doing Business” initiatives, the Central Board of Excise and Customs, Government of India has launched Customs SWIFT (Single Window Interface for Facilitating Trade) clearances.

The Customs SWIFT enables importers/exporters to file a common electronic ‘Integrated Declaration’ on the ICEGATE portal. The Integrated Declaration compiles the information requirements of Customs, FSSAI, Plant Quarantine, Animal Quarantine, Drug Controller, Wild Life Control Bureau and Textile Committee and it replaces nine separate forms required by these 6 different agencies and Customs. With the roll-out of the Single Window, CBEC has also introduced an Integrated Risk Management facility for Partner Govt. Agencies (PGAs), which will ensure that consignments are not selected by agencies routinely for examination and testing, but based on the principle of risk management.

With this development today, Indian Customs is amongst a few select countries that have functional Single Window clearances, inclusive of multiple PGAs and integrated risk based selection. Implementation of Single Window is by far one of the most complex systems integration efforts that have been taken-up by the Directorate General of Systems. To introduce the Single Window and the ‘Integrated Declaration’, IT Systems government departments and private sector agencies also had to be changed. The whole exercise has been co-ordinated well and all this was possible due to unstinting efforts put in by officers of Directorate General of Systems and Single Window team.

The Single Window system is a crucial implementation of trade facilitation measure for goods clearance at the country’s points of entry and exit. Efficiency in the import and export procedures would save large sums of money for the importers and exporters in reduced trade-related costs and delays. By requiring all participating government agencies to publish standard operating procedures and timelines, the Committee of Secretaries headed by the Cabinet Secretary has set benchmarks and goals for all related regulatory agencies. In order to work collaboratively with agencies and industry stakeholders, port and central level Customs Clearance Facilitation Committees (CCFCs) have been established to simplify and streamline their interagency procedures and documentary requirements for import and export of cargo.

According to the Chairman, CBEC Shri Najib Shah, the time and cost associated with import and export clearances has been a matter of concern for the Government. In order to reduce the transaction costs and decrease cargo release time, a number of steps have been initiated by the Central Board of Excise and Customs. A significant leap in this direction is the launch of the Customs Single Window. Shri Shah added that there was strong willingness and support from all stakeholders for the Single Window project. The Department’s

outreach program and enthusiastic private sector participation helped the department to launch the project in a timely manner.