

A joint knowledge initiative by **Vizag Industrial Scan & Vizag Customs**

Single Window Interface for Facilitation of Trade (SWIFT)- another step towards "Ease of Doing Business" by Indian Customs



J.M. Kishore, IRS
Asst. Commissioner of Customs, Vizag

Indian Government's initiatives for improving "Ease Of Doing Business", have picked up momentum. Several facilitation measures are being taken by the Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC) in the last few months. As part of the same, CBEC has taken-up the task of implementing 'Indian Customs Single Window Project' to facilitate trade. A catchy name - SWIFT is given to the project.

This project envisages that the importers and exporters would electronically lodge their Customs clearance documents at a single point only, that is with the Customs. The required permission/clearance, 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 is made possible through a common, seamlessly integrated IT systems utilized by these 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.

It is expected that the implementation of SWIFT would reduce dwell time (time taken from filing import declarations till clearance of the imported goods) and cost of doing international business.

The three benefits of SWIFT:-

- ✓ Trade does not have to approach different agencies for clearance of imported goods.
- ✓ Reduces interface.
- ✓ Reduces dwell time & cost of business

What is the additional facility for importers in this SWIFT: For the benefit of Trade and readers, I would give the basic procedure involved in importation. Importers/Customs Brokers, for the purpose of import, file certain declarations

either in Service Centre located in the Custom House or from their offices through the private software provided / installed.

above mentioned agencies. The Integrated Declaration for Import captures all relevant data/details required by these other agencies

Customs, the same would be taken by these agencies as these agencies have integrated their IT infrastructure with the Indian

Nature of Goods	Permit / Authorization	Authority to give permit/approval/clearance
Plants and Plant materials (Chapters 6 to 07) & Wood (Chapter 44) etc.	Plant Quarantine Clearance, Import permit	Plant Protection Officer (PQ Authorities) located in Visakhapatnam
Food & Edible Articles (Chapters 4 to 23)	No Objection Certificate (NOC)/ Confirming to standards specified in FSSAI Act, 2006	Food Safety Security Authority of India (FSSAI) / Regional public health Lab (RPHL) in Vizag
Animals/ Related import products (Chapter 1 to 5 etc)	Animal Quarantine Clearance	Animal Quarantine Authorities located in Air cargo complex, Hyderabad
Drugs / Pharmaceuticals Cosmetics (Chapter 29, Chapter 30 etc)	NOC	Assistant Drug Controller/Drug Inspector located in Air cargo complex, Hyderabad
Textile and Textile articles (Chapter 50 to 63 etc)	Test certificate	Textile Testing Laboratory, Chennai

Alternatively they also file import related declarations in the

and once the data/details are submitted in the EDI with

customs EDI system. (See Chart)

- **How SWIFT works:-** The steps involved in the process are explained in simple language as under:
- Upon filing, import declaration (detailed Bill of Entry Message format is available at <https://icegate.gov.in/Download/>) will be routed automatically to concerned Agencies on the basis of declared Customs Tariff Heading.
- Concerned agency will process declarations, verifies the fee payment particulars and grant NOC/ Clearance in their own system.
- Their own system, sends the message to Customs Central Server and the clearance would be received by the Customs Officers located in Port/CFS's for giving Out of Charge.
- Import goods Out of Charge (OOC) is given by Customs only after the Agency enters Response Options (RO) for all items of the Bill of Entry.
- Physical copy of NOC is not necessary/given by the agencies.

ICEGATE website. In case of import of certain goods, separate permits/approvals/clearances are required to be obtained by the importers from other Governmental agencies. A few of such requirements are as under: (See Chart)

In the past, importers used to make separate applications with relevant details of their imported items to the above mentioned Government Agencies at the time of import, apart from the declarations given to the Customs. Thus, after introduction

What is expected from Importers/Trade :-

Since the entire process of declaration and clearance is done in system, due caution may be exercised by Trade while giving the declarations in the system while filing for import of goods.

Guidelines for Trade:

- ✓ Obtain/gather/possess complete relevant details of the import item before filing the declarations with Customs.
- ✓ For detailed understanding of Single Window, documents - Agency wise guidelines, clarification about errors while filing the Bills of entry, for import of various types of goods, Trade may check the document published in ICEGATE :

✓ Those filing Bills of entry declaration from their offices using private software may ensure that the RES Package provider updated the software given to you is in accordance with the Indian Customs EDI software.

✓ Use Service centre located in Custom House in the initial stages till the process is stabilized as it is noticed that private software is yet to be completely updated.

✓ Custom house, Visakhapatnam issued Public Notice 04/2016 Dated 28-03-2016 giving all the details of the SWIFT available in website - <http://vizagcustoms.gov.in/notices/public/PB4.PDF>

✓ Full details of SWIFT and related documents are available in ICEGATE website at https://icegate.gov.in/Single_Window.html.

✓ In case of difficulty in filing, Trade may contact 24X7 helpdesk facility **Toll Free 1800-3010-1000 or write to icegatehelpdesk@icegate.gov.in or nsm.ices@icegate.gov.in** Trade may also contact Taxpayer Service Centre in the Custom House Visakhapatnam Ph: 0891-2825123 or EDI Section 0891-2825128 for clarification of their doubts.

(The writer is Assistant Commissioner of Customs (Capacity Building & Outreach Programmes), Custom House, Vizag) Please send in your comments/thoughts to jmkishore@gmail.com or info@viscan.in.

Agency wise guidelines	https://icegate.gov.in/Download/Agency_wise_Filing_guidelines_29_March_2016.pdf
B.E. Filing error list	https://icegate.gov.in/Download/BE_Filing_error_List.pdf
Single Window FAQ	https://icegate.gov.in/Download/SW_Declaration_FAQ_1.1.pdf

Mandatory declarations while filing the Bill of Entry:

Integrated declaration – Mandatory declarations

RBI

- AD CODE - mandatory
- Payment method Code – Mandatory

Customs

- Invoice Table :
- Whether Buyer and Seller are related? - Mandatory
- Third party details – Optional
- ITEM Table
- End-use - Mandatory
- RSP Applicability – Y/N/Q/T/D – Mandatory
- Accessory Status- Mandatory
- Others
- HSS Level – preceding level – Mandatory

Future

- AEO Code, Country & Role
- UCR No & UCR Type
- Deferred Payment

of Single Window, submission of as many as 9 (nine) different types of separate documents with information to the other Governmental Agencies is dispensed with.

Integrated Declaration for Import: Now, Trade need not submit separate data/details to the